

NEWSLETTER

for Blackwell First School - Blue Class



Welcome back after the half term break and what a good first half term we have had. The children have settled happily and quickly into Blue Class where they are working hard, with enthusiasm and are stepping up to the higher Year 4 expectations. Our first two topics, 'Ancient Egypt' and 'Planet Earth' provided an inspirational start to the year. Sharing their learning during Open Evening and through their floor book, a London adventure, going on an autumnal woodland walk, scarecrow making, cross country running and ending with a family assembly were just a few of the highlights. All of that in only one half term, and there are plenty more exciting learning opportunities in this half term too!

TOPIC

'Best Books' is our new topic with the children exploring some of the works of Charles Dickens. The project the children will be working towards is planning and preparing for our **Book**



Celebration Day on Friday 29th November. We started our topic by exploring real-life dilemmas about our Book Celebration Day, thinking about what to include, not to include, how it should run, how we could involve the school community etc. Dilemma-based learning engages the children in team work and problem solving whilst learning real-life knowledge and developing an understanding of different viewpoints.

Art and Science are the main subjects taught during this topic. PSHE, Music, Computing, French, P.E. and Philosophy for Children will be taught each week too. See our 'Curriculum' page on the school website for more information.

Through Art, children will firstly learn about JMW Turner and his watercolour techniques. They will use a 'wet on wet' watercolour technique to create landscapes of scenes from favourite books and also explore a more modern technique used by the artist Georgia O'Keeffe to paint elements from nature.

Science lessons will focus upon investigating and learning more about solids, liquids and gases. Children will develop their scientific skills of comparative and fair testing as well as classifying and grouping. Knowledge of the world will further develop as we learn about the water cycle.



Children will make their own decisions about how to share their learning with other classes as part of our Book Celebration Day.

YEAR 4 JOB SCHEME

Two of our school values we help our children develop into are respectful and responsible citizens and aspirational individuals. To promote these values, this half term the children will learn about the importance of money and jobs during PSHE lessons.



At Blackwell, children are given the opportunity to take part in an *optional* Year 4 Job Scheme. This involves applying for a job and earning Blackwell pounds! This scheme encourages responsibility and enterprise in the children and gives them a head start towards adulthood. We look forward to having our Job Vacancy board up and running before Christmas and application forms will then be sent home.

LITERACY

The Charles Dickens classic, 'Great Expectations' and 'Little People, Big Dreams' are the texts to inspire the children's reading, communication and writing skills.

Posing questions, predicting, summarising, inferring, identifying good word choices and using dictionaries as they explore the texts will help to develop their reading skills.

The children will plan and write a biography about Charles Dickens in the style of a comic strip. Their audience will be Yellow and Purple Class to support them with their history learning later on in the year. Having an audience when writing gives the children a purpose and greater motivation to write. The children will learn how to write effective sentences using adverbials, subordinating conjunctions and good word choices. The children continually work towards their personal writing targets and it has been great to see many children achieving their first couple of targets already.

In Spelling, the children will learn how to spell words with prefixes il-, in-, im- and ir-, words with the 'ay' sound spelt with 'ei', 'eigh' and 'ey' and words from their personal spelling lists. Please see the homework sheet for the tricky words of focus for this half term.



Take a look back at last half term...



Exploring John Brunson's painting techniques



Exploring 4-digit numbers



Experimenting with pneumatic systems in D.T.



Playing tuned instruments from staff notation

NUMERACY

During Numeracy, children will be consolidating and developing their use of mental and written methods for addition and subtraction and the application of these skills when problem solving. Mental maths will focus on the 4- and 11 times tables, recalling number bonds to 100 and 1,000 (multiples of 50 only for the latter), doubling and halving numbers to 100 fluently (even numbers only for halving) and rounding any 4-digit number to the nearest 10, 100 and 1,000.

TIMES TABLES

Oh no you might say! We had to learn them and so do children of today! Learning times tables is a very important part of children's mathematical development and in Key Stage 2 we use these facts all of the time in many areas of the maths curriculum. We help the children learn them at school in a variety of ways from old fashioned chanting, to games such as bingo and Bing, Bong, Zong! The APP 'Squeebles' is also popular with the children. However, to help the children **learn them by heart** we need you to help us too! Please encourage your child to practise their times tables at home. Like daily reading practice, **daily times table practice** makes a significant impact on their learning. The aim is for them to be able to recall any of the taught times tables within 3-5 seconds. Thank you for your continued support. It makes such a difference.

If there is anything you wish to ask about, please come and speak to us at the end of the school day or send an email to office@blackwell.worcs.sch.uk. Many thanks. Miss Townsend and Miss Kuriger