

NEWSLETTER for Blackwell First School



Blackwell First School,
St. Catherine's Rd.,
Blackwell,
Near Bromsgrove,
Worcestershire.
B60 1BN
December 2023

Yellow and Blue Classes enjoyed their visit to Birmingham Rep to see 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' before putting on their own performance. It was amazing!

Dear Families,



The production at the Rep Theatre was amazing and the children gain so much from experiencing such high quality theatre. This has supported their English learning over the last month.



Nursery shared their Dough Disco and wonderful singing using our Kodaly singing method. They were fantastic!



The children in Red, Green and Purple Classes performed their Nativities. Each class produced a wonderful programme as their project work. We hope that you enjoyed their wonderful collages on the front covers. Projects make learning meaningful and support motivation and attitudes to learning.

We all wish you a very Happy Christmas and hope that 2024 starts well for everyone.

We are so proud of the children for their hard work leading up to Christmas and for making Christmas so special with their wonderful productions. The Christmas concerts give the children the opportunity to take part in 'large' performances that develop their confidence and resilience. The filming has enabled the development of other skills such as public speaking, performing their singing and dances.

Our vision at BFS is to support the development of the 'whole child' and in order to do this, we develop the following Values and Key Competencies.

VALUES

*Respectful and responsible citizens *Competent and confident learners *Aspirational individuals

KEY COMPETENCIES

*Co-operation *Communication *Independence *Resilience
*Problem solving

Everything that we do in school is designed to support the development of these values and competencies. Whether it is Learning Partner work, planning events such as the Book Festival or creating their own programmes for the productions, all that we do contributes towards these aims.

At home, you could (and many of you do thank you) support the development of these areas by:

- **RESPECT**- Supporting good manners, including pleases and thank yous as well as making good eye contact when the children are spoken to;
- **RESPONSIBLE**- Giving the children responsibilities such as making their bed, clearing away from the table;
- **COMPETENT**- Supporting them with their reading and practising of basic mental maths;
- **CONFIDENT** – Supporting them in having a positive growth mindset when tackling and overcoming challenges;
- **ASPIRATION** – Talking about their place and contribution to society and the possibilities open to them, without gender stereotype;
- **CO-OPERATION** – Learning to share, wait for a turn, speak to others;
- **COMMUNICATION** – Expecting the children to talk and engage with you, giving eye contact and responding to your questions politely;
- **INDEPENDENCE** – Carrying their own bookbags and remembering to change books at school. If they say, 'I don't have a pencil,' rather than giving them one, say 'How are you going to solve that problem?'
- **RESILIENCE** – Children need to face disappointment and boredom in order to learn to deal with life's knocks. Give them time to be bored and learn to entertain themselves and
- **PROBLEM SOLVING** – Playing with bits and bobs in the garden will promote problem solving, so get them outside!

CHRISTMAS FILM

Keith Woolford filmed the children's plays last week and you can still order a version to stream. Please let the office know office@blackwell.worcs.sch.uk

CHRISTMAS storynight

Thank you to the PFTA for supporting Christmas Storynight and the gift fair in the hall. It was a lovely evening and whilst enjoying themselves in school, the children raised much needed funds for school. Thank you!

EASTER HOLIDAY CLUB

This year, we are running a holiday club from 25th-28th March during the Easter holiday break. If your child will access this provision, the school office will be sending home booking forms in the new year. This is an opportunity for the children to play with their friends, take part in a range of sporting, outdoor play and craft activities. We hope this provision is helpful to those families who will be working during this week of the school holiday.

PFTA Thanks to the PFTA for the superb events which have kept us resourced in school this term. Thank you to our wonderful Tea and Toast volunteers for tirelessly supporting school, along with those who purchase the cakes and lollies! This has raised over £1,000 since September. This helps us to part fund a member of staff and is great for the children. During these times when schools are cutting staff, we want to continue to offer the best we can.

HOW YOUR CHILD IS PROGRESSING

The children are at the end of their first term and you have spoken with classteachers to determine how well they are progressing at this point in the year. This is based on internal assessments that are moderated. After Christmas, teachers will work with them again based on the last assessments before then assessing their progress and meeting with you in the Spring Term to help inform you of their progress half way through the year. Teachers will always talk to you if they have concerns about a child's progress or if children are working below national expectations and require additional support. Please do come and speak to staff if you have any queries.

PUPIL SAFETY AND ANTI BULLYING

As part of PSHE work in school and whole school work in Collective Worship, we focus on how to keep children safe and how they keep themselves safe. The emphasis is on them being safe themselves and how they do this. The children risk assess their classrooms and activities with the classteachers and also risk assess situations and Forest School in order to support their own developing understanding of how to keep safe.

We teach them about water, rail, road and online safety as well as 'stranger danger' but online safety is by far the most prevalent stranger danger in the world we now live. For this reason, each half term the teachers highlight the need to stay safe online by not sharing personal information and helping children understand what this is (full name, school, address, phone numbers etc) and knowing that people that are online may not be who they say they are. Children are naturally trusting and that is wonderful but not always safe so please help us share this message at home.

Bullying happens in every environment, workplaces, clubs and schools and the key to preventing it from escalating is being vigilant and helping children know what it is. We explain that bullying is not children falling out, but persistent and repeated unkindness targeted at one person or a small group by another group. We tell the children to tell adults if it happens to them and also tell their friend, who may witness it, to tell us. We give children strategies for standing up to bullies and know that when it happens at Blackwell we are usually quick to respond and stop it from becoming a significant issue. If the children talk to you at home, it is often hard to determine what is normal falling out and what could be the start of bullying. It is always better to be cautious and talk to school staff who will investigate rather than let issues drag on and become more serious. Thank you for your support with this.

Chicken checkers

Thank you to our Year 4 chicken checkers and also families who are looking after the chickens at weekends and over the holiday. Teaching children how to care for animals is important and we thank families who are helping with this. Please check with Mrs Hilton if you need a key to access school during the holidays.

SCHOOL SPORT – Teachers are working hard in PE lessons to ensure that they not only teach skills but also enable the children to be physically active for much of the time. The Government has set targets for children to advise schools and families to keep children active to reverse the increase in obesity in children.

ARTS – The children have enjoyed attending both the Birmingham Hippodrome to watch the Dear Santa and also The Lion. The Witch and the Wardrobe at the REP. These experiences broaden and deepen the curriculum and bring learning alive for the children. We thank you for helping to make these occasions possible. It was moving watching the children's responses to the REP trip as they watched professionals performing 'their' parts from our version of the production .

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP During Advent we discussed patience with the children and the skill of waiting. The advent calendars in school and at home teach the value of waiting and patience. During the final weeks of advent, we shared the messages of Christmas as part of the curriculum work on Christianity.

MRS EDNEY- Happy Retirement!

Mrs Edney, after over twenty years of service, retires this week. We are so sorry to lose her expertise and support but wish her all the very best as she moves on to a new chapter in her life. From her silly dances, lovely singing, support for myself and colleagues and patience 'extraordinaire', we say farewell and THANK YOU for being part of Blackwell's journey for almost ten years. HAPPY RETIREMENT TO YOU! Miss Kuriger we take over the leading of Enrichment Clubs and After School Club and we look forward to working with her in this new capacity. She will continue to teach Blue Class each afternoon. Mrs Birley will be moving on in February and we thank her for her support and work in Red Class. Miss Andersen will shadow Mrs Birley during January before moving into this role in February.

BROAD CURRICULUM AND AFTERNOON CLUBS

For many years, we have offered free extra curricular clubs each afternoon to enable 100% of our children to take part in wider curriculum activities that support their 'whole child' development. In these clubs they can practise and apply skills taught through the National Curriculum but also develop new skills that the conventional curriculum doesn't offer. Our after school clubs continue this offer, with an emphasis on creative and sporting activities to enable children to receive the broad offer to which they are entitled. Our school day curriculum also ensures that all children have a strong foundation in a wide curriculum, including the arts, technology, humanities and sport. Through providing children with these broad opportunities, we open their minds and eyes and support them in seeing possibilities beyond their known world. This is how we bring aspiration to them.

- 5.1.24 TED for teachers
- 8.1.24 School opens for all
- 16.1.24 7pm PFTA meeting on zoom
- 17.1.24 Reception Hearing tests
- 23.1.24 Blue Class temple visit
- 29.1.24 Green Class temple visit
- 31.1.24/1.2.24 PARENT CONSULTATION MEETINGS
- 5.2.24 Yellow Class temple visit
- 8.2.24 Yellow Class Bake Sale after school
- 9.2.24 CHANGE THE RULES DAY- PFTA event
- HALF TERM
- 18.3.24 Nursery/ Reception Singing on the Steps (8.45am- ish!)
- 18.3.24 5.30-6.30pm EASTER STORYNIGHT
- 19.3.24 Green and Purple Singing on the Steps (8.45am- ish!)
- 20.3.24 YELLOW CLASS ASSEMBLY 8.45am
- 21.3.24 GREEN CLASS ASSEMBLY 8.45am
- 21.3.24 Purple Class Bake Sale
- 22.3.24 Yellow and Blue Singing on the Steps (8.45am-ish!)
- 25-28.3.24 HOLIDAY CLUB