



NEWSLETTER for Blackwell First School

...developing the whole child...



Visiting the Hindu temple enabled the children in Year 4 to engage in 'real life' experiences; following on from their RE learning this half term. Our curriculum is steeped in opening children's eyes to the wider world and providing them with opportunities to develop cultural and religious appreciation.

February 2023

Dear Families,

Here at Blackwell, the children benefit from educational visits closely linked to the curriculum.

The children enjoyed their 'Our World' project after visits to Birmingham Central Mosque, Singer's Hill Synagogue, the Hindu temple and St Catherine's church. Through RE learning, they explored different religions, opening their eyes to the wider world. Such an exciting topic is being followed by a global history topic of 'Long ago, Far away' and the children will be exploring the Middle East this half term. Opening the children's eyes to their place in a global world is important as the children will be global citizens when they enter the world of work. We are preparing them for their futures.

During last half term, an annual Worcestershire County Council Inspection and a Governor Open afternoon took place and two governors monitored the work of the school with a focus on Maths and Safeguarding, the quality of the broad curriculum and learning attitudes. They were impressed by what they saw, including the children's behaviour and engagement, both in and out of school and the expectations and skills of all staff and children. They have provided us with some actions to support us further, which is helpful.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support of both your children and the school, and we look forward to working with you all over the coming months.

Special thanks to everyone on the PFTA and those supporting events who are enabling us to purchase resources at this very challenging time for school budgets. I am sure you can imagine that staff cover costs and energy costs have risen significantly, without any further government funding. Our school budget has been taken up almost entirely with running and staffing costs, meaning we rely heavily on fundraising from the PFTA and are grateful to them for their excellent work. The PFTA has also kindly agreed to fully fund the considerable cost of bell boating for the Year 4 children, during a year when Year 4 families already fund the children's residential trip. This is a significant cost and all children will benefit from this as they move into Year 4.

Thank you for returning parent questionnaires. We always send them out at this point in the year as it provides feedback for us for the rest of the year rather than being an end of year feedback which is easily forgotten. Thank you for your ongoing positive comments and support.

Finally, please do get in touch with either myself or the classteachers after school if you would like to ask any questions about your child's learning or any other aspect of school life. We are always here to help. Parent Consultation meetings will take place this half term and teachers will share some 'home friendly' targets and we would be grateful for your help with these, as extra practise, will help the children to make more progress.

Many thanks and best wishes,
Mrs Moss



The children enjoyed a fabulous visit to the Birmingham Central Mosque and all of these visits supported the children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.



Singer's Hill Synagogue in Birmingham hosted a visit for us and the children received a tour of the building, learning lots of new facts. Children have also visited St Catherine's Church as part of work on Christianity.



The Torah scrolls were a highlight of the visit to the synagogue. Learning about special aspects of different religions has supported the children's curriculum learning.



Our school vision, values and key competencies drive our curriculum planning and experiencing the wider world, beyond Blackwell, is an important part of developing respectful and aspirational children.

SCHOOL SPORT/ HEALTH AND THE ARTS

Sport- Competitive events have been taking place between schools across Bromsgrove and the Year 3 children have enjoyed a gymnastics festival at Alvechurch Middle School this half term. Mrs Webb will plan for a Sport's Day for families to attend during the summer term. We will keep you informed. An After School Sport club will also resume after Easter. All children have enjoyed afternoon yoga club and access to additional after school ones will also be available.

Arts – All of the classes will work with Mark Riley, artists in residence, this term to create artwork for our back playground.



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

We start the half term considering friendship and as part of this will explain bullying to the children. Understanding and identifying when and how being unkind or falling out moves into bullying is a challenge. The message we give the children is to always tell both adults in school and at home if something is happening that worries them and we will work to help them solve such problems.

End of Day and Parking

After School Club children often use the trail and back playground after school. It would be helpful if families having a chat could socialise on the front playground until gates are closed.

Please also remember to park safely and courteously to support our school neighbours. We have distributed some safe parking slips for neighbours to place on windscreens when their driveways are blocked to help remind people. Many thanks.

Parent Consultations - keeping you informed

Now that we are in the second term of the year, we can reflect on the children's progress so far this year. It is time for Parent Consultation meetings soon and letters will be sent home for you to book appointments. These times are opportunities to consider the children's progress so far this year, share information regarding their social and emotional development and any other relevant information that the teachers and families find useful to share. If you have specific issues that will require further discussion, the classteachers may advise you to book a separate appointment so that they do not keep other parents waiting unnecessarily. These appointments will take place on site, unless you specifically book a phonecall or zoom appointment, in order for you to view your child's workbooks.

As a school we aim to keep you informed about how to **support your child** and also about their **progress** through:

- School newsletters that keep you up to date with school events as well as educational news;
- Class newsletters and homework sheets that share the learning in each class so that you are aware of learning in all curriculum areas each half term;
- Early Years workshops;
- Reports (1 short and 1 longer), that provide information on your child's progress in line with the assessments teachers complete in school;
- Information meetings prior to moving year group;
- Website with all learning for each year group and
- Termly parent consultations.

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Thank you for your returned questionnaires. We have analysed them and share the responses with you below.

Areas families see as strengths (100% agree or strongly agree):

- My child is happy
- My child feels safe
- Blackwell makes sure its pupils are well behaved
- Blackwell deals with bullying effectively
- Blackwell lets me know how my child is doing
- My child has SEND and they are well supported
- Blackwell lets me know how my child is doing
- My child does well
- There is a good range of subjects available
- My child can take part in clubs and activities
- Blackwell has high expectations – some comments were made about the school getting the balance of expectation just right
- Blackwell supports my child's wider personal development
- I would recommend this school to another parent

Areas with less than 100% agree or strongly agree (still 98% or above agree or strongly agree):

- Concerns are dealt with properly (This was one response, but we would appreciate a conversation to consider how we could better support a concern raised).
- Two questionnaires requested more sport so we have sent home a sport newsletter explaining what takes place already and also employed an external football coach for KS2 children.

If you wish to discuss any of these areas, please do come into school to make an appointment. Here is a selection of comments, thank you.

...Thank you to all the staff...for giving our daughter the best start on her education journey. She is happy and loves learning...

...I could not be happier with the tuition, guidance and support given to him. He is thriving not only academically but as a confident and content child...

...We feel proud to be at Blackwell First School...

...the care and support received is wonderful, our daughter comes home every night bursting to tell us what she has learnt that day...

...the commitment of the teachers and staff shines through life at BFS...

...feel very lucky to have such a great school on our doorstep...

...I can't recommend the school to other parents highly enough...

...very supportive and nurturing environment...

...feels like one big family...

...love the community feel that the school events create...

...always feel that we can approach staff with any concerns and they are dealt with promptly...great at giving support and advice when we are having a parenting wobble...

...the school is a really special place...

...could not be happier with the teaching and learning...

...all staff members are friendly, caring and go above and beyond to look after the children...

...an extremely inclusive school that strives for the very best for all children...

...thank you, as always to all the staff who continue to keep BFS the caring, friendly and forward thinking school it has been for the past 8 years that we have been fortunate enough to have three children with you...

...super progress, lasting friendships and a well developed love of learning as well as being instilled with a sense of independence and self assurance...

Comic Relief- March 17th
Wear something Red and bring a donation for charity.