

Red Class sharing the reply they received from the Armitages, author and illustrator of the Lighthouse Keeper series.



NEWSLETTER for Blackwell First School

...developing the whole child...

Green Class singing to the school.



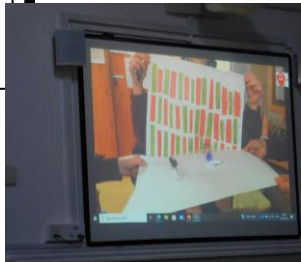
January 2025

Dear Families,

What a super start we have had to 2024 with our 'Let's Perform' and 'Beliefs' topics! The children have used their skills to plan and deliver a performance to their friends in other classes. (See photos)

The Year 4 children will visit a Hindu temple as part of their learning about Hinduism. The visits are an important part of their learning as it brings to life the facts that they have learned about in their classrooms.

Yellow Class sharing a puppet show, Purple Class retelling a story and Blue Class demonstrating their Willow Pattern gymnastics.



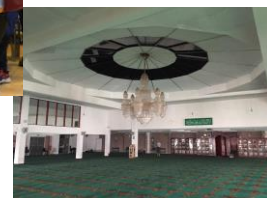
We have started our new topic, 'Beliefs' this week and many of the children are looking forward to visiting a special place of worship before half term.



The Year 1 children learn about Judaism and will visit a Synagogue.



They are also learning about different religions and will enjoy fabulous trips to places of worship (see photos). With conflict around us in the world, developing the children's tolerance, understanding and respect is increasingly important. Each class focuses on a different world religion and through both classroom lessons and the enriching visits to the places of worship, the children will hopefully develop into kind, tolerant adults. Rev Sheri supports us with visits for Nursery and Red Class.



It is so important that the children read both their phonic linked reading books and 'real' books (phonic linked) and that you share their library books, designed to develop vocabulary and comprehension skills later in school. Reading stories at bedtime (or any other time) at home is also important and helps the children's language development. Did you know that children need to learn 8 new words each day to develop an age appropriate vocabulary by the age of 11? 5 of these are learned in school and usually around 3 at home and reading books is a good way in. If you are short of ideas about which books to share at home, then look at the children's Home Reading cards or look at links on 'Carnegie Greenaway' awards for ideas. It is crucial that the children's language is developed by them being exposed to texts that are above their reading age.



Help us to help them by ensuring they take responsibility for themselves wherever possible. Try to encourage concentration in the children rather than a flitting between activities. The more support you can give by talking to the children about their learning, sharing books, practising mental maths and focussing on practising skills shared on class newsletters will only benefit them as they move through the school. Working together will help the children achieve these skills sooner. **Our homework sheets and class newsletter have lots of ideas for how to help your child learn at home.**



In our conflict filled world, it is crucial that we support the children in developing tolerance and respect for people of all faiths and no faith. Our RE learning supports this.

At Blackwell, each year group has a religion of focus during RE learning:
Reception- Christianity
Year 1- Judaism
Year 2- Christianity
Year 3- Islam
Year 4- Hinduism
We follow the Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for RE and the children explore the factual aspects of the religion, including beliefs and practices.

We have also been collating the responses from parent questionnaires and thank everyone who has completed one. We will be waiting until the deadline before feeding back to you on results.

The teachers are really looking forward to welcoming you into school later this term to enjoy sharing the children's work books with you as part of parent consultation meetings.

Thank you as always for your support.

Best wishes, Mrs Moss



Worcestershire Hills Trust Partnership

Annual Review

Following our latest Ofsted report (December 23), we will not receive an Ofsted inspection for a few years. In the meantime, we continue to be reviewed annually by Worcestershire Hills Trust alongside Partnership Headteachers. Our review will take place later this year and will focus on actions from the Ofsted inspection and progress towards those actions.

Governors continue to review the work of the school on an ongoing basis with regular visits and open days.

These reviews support the school's action planning.

As families, we appreciate your support and the feedback on the latest parent questionnaire supports us in further developing provision. We will feedback on the outcome of this questionnaire shortly, but if you have any concerns, we would welcome a face to face meeting to discuss matters.

Many thanks for your support.

SCHOOL SPORT/ HEALTH AND THE ARTS

Sport- All Sporting Fixtures at other schools have been set for this year and we continue to develop sport in PE lessons and to have our Sport's Club as part of enrichment and extra curricular clubs.

Arts – We are excited to work with Mark Riley on developing the school with some whole school art work. They will represent the school and the community that is at its heart.

Many thanks to the PFTA for their support with funding new ipads, waterproofs and we are fundraising for a music room. THANK YOU!



Reading support at home

The children in Red and Green Classes learn to read using Little Wandle phonics. Purple Class upwards also use the strategies from the programme to support reading with the older children.

There is a short video below that explains how to help with reading at home. This includes why the children bring home a phonic matched book as well as a 'Reading for Pleasure' book. Many thanks for supporting your child's reading.

[Click here](#)

Hot lunches Mrs Barker, Mrs Miles and Miss Shepherd prepare freshly cooked homemade lunches which are enjoyed by 75% of the school, including most staff. Everything is made fresh each day and is a healthy, hot meal for the children at lunch time.

Please encourage those eating sandwiches to choose hot meals on some days (or all) as it is such a good meal and a far healthier option than much of what is in lunchboxes. Thank you.

Please remember that we are here to support you all. We are a telephone call or email away.

Best wishes to you all,
Mrs Moss

HELPING AT HOME

As teachers, we know that we are only part of the children's success with learning and that children have a far greater chance of success in education if they are supported at home. We are very fortunate to have a school where children are very often well supported. **Below is a list of ways you can support your child at home:**

- Give your child time and talk to them (expecting eye contact) and a discussion where the children speak to you in sentences;
- Give them time off so that they don't feel they are constantly 'working';
- Use the homework sheet as a guide to what the children are learning and this will enable you to talk more about school (even if they don't complete the homework activities);
- Read with the children at least four times a week, asking them to talk about what they are reading and not just read the words;
- Read them bedtime stories as this helps to develop language and vocabulary (suggestions are on the Home Reading Cards);
- Practise mental maths as outlined on the homework sheets as these skills form the basis of the children's ability to calculate in maths and
- **Children in Y2-4 need help to learn their times tables by heart out of order- please help them.**

Finally, the children are children. They need time to rest and sleep, please make sure they have plenty of sleep and time away from electronic games/ toys, particularly before bedtime. (Current advice is no blue light for at least an hour before bedtime).

Professional development

Our staff have the most up to date professional development, in line with research and during the autumn term, some highlights have been:

- Writing curriculum and planning
- Foundation subject planning
- Emotion coaching and growth mindset for new staff

New staff always have a detailed plan of induction CPD to ensure that they are quickly up to speed.

This ensures that the children have the best possible teaching with highly skilled staff.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP Our themes for the next two weeks are **Tolerance and Wonderful World**. We will think about Tolerance in the context of sharing and playing out on the playground and also in the wider world context of tolerating other viewpoints from our own, both cultural and religious. We will consider works of art and stories that support our understanding of these complex themes.