

NEWSLETTER

for Blackwell First School

...developing the whole child...

March 2021

Dear Families,

After a slightly warmer half term break, we welcome everyone back for the second half of this academic year and look forward to welcoming back the whole school following the restricted attendance in operation after Christmas. It seemed like a long last half term.

This half term, we are all enjoying a new topic of 'Native Americans' with a focus on different aspects of historical enquiry. The class newsletters shared the children's learning with you and explained how this topic is adapted for the different age groups.

When all of the children return to school next week, we will share our Sea Shanty and Rainbow Children songs in order to support this transition, alongside the many strategies following the advice of our Educational Psychologist, Anita Soni. We are also producing a short film to support this transition and will send home the link at the end of the week for you to watch with your children over the weekend to prepare them.

On the final day of last half term, a Governor Open afternoon was held and three governors monitored the work of the school with a focus on the broad curriculum and remote learning. They were impressed by what they saw, including the children's engagement, both in and out of school and the expectations of all staff and children. We had our annual review yesterday with external inspectors (not Ofsted!) and I will let you all know once we receive the report. Thank you to families who braved the zoom interviews with them.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support of both your children and the school, especially Stay at Home superhero families for the ongoing challenges of Home Learning, and we look forward to working with you all over the coming months as we return to a 'more normal normal'. Special thanks to everyone on the PFTA and those supporting events who are supporting us with purchasing resources at this very challenging time for school budgets.

As we move towards schools reopening fully, it is important that out of school everyone follows the government guidance in order that we prevent COVID-19 transmission as much as possible. This means no household mixing, no playdates and avoiding travelling in cars with other families wherever possible. When restrictions are lifted towards the end of the month, there may be outdoor social mixing but please support us by avoiding indoor contact and contact outside of class bubbles. We just want to stay open for you all!

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.

Best wishes, Mrs Moss

Mia has enjoyed her work this week judging by the report that she sent in to her teachers. Good work Mia!
Jess has taken on the role of housekeeper and has been tidying and sorting shoes in her house. Well done Jess!

The children in school have been learning too! Here are some photographs to share...
DT in Green Class creating Native American dreamcatchers and learning new joining skills.



Enjoy sharing their DT puppet theatres in Blue Class.

Excellent tidying of cushions, sorting shoes and opening and closing blinds from Dom. I wonder if Mummy and Daddy are sitting with their feet up yet? Have you taken on all of their jobs?



Our Year 4s have started their 'Job Scheme'. This means that they have applied for jobs either at home or school and been allocated one and then trained for the role!



Evie has been busy taking out the bins at home and will earn 'Blackwell pounds' for her hard work which can be saved in our 'Blackwell Bank' (name to be announced soon following our High Street shop naming competition.)



Elizabeth has been working hard on grounds maintenance at her house. I wonder what she will decide to spend her hard earned salary on? Miss Townsend will no doubt share ideas when everyone is back at school.

Dear Miss Townsend and Miss Kurige,
For my laundry job I have:
1. Helped to take the sheets on the bed.
2. Put the washing machine on using the control panel.
3. Put the machine on the spin cycle.
4. I'm going to help to put it out on the line.
5. I'm going to try to pair up odd socks the washing. Mummy doesn't like that but I do.
groom mia

SCHOOL SPORT/ HEALTH AND THE ARTS

Sport- Mrs Hampton has prepared our new Wake and Shake 'Faith' for this term and everyone at home and school has enjoyed learning it. It is quick! I wonder whether some families may continue using it daily as a wake up each day?

Arts – We are looking forward to preparing an end of term celebration for you, remotely, so look out for further details. We hope you enjoyed the Sea Shanty and Mrs Penfold is very very busy sewing together over 200 squares for our community quilt! I think she has already snapped a few needles.



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

We started the term with the theme of 'CARING' and considered caring for others, our community and the planet we live on. This week, we will learn about how to be a good friend during 'FRIENDSHIP' and find out what bullying is. We will discuss how to help others if they are being bullied and the approach that everyone should take if they are feeling bullied or think someone else is. The message is, 'always tell the teachers and also your families and together we can help.'

We enjoyed sharing, 'Rain before Rainbows', a beautiful book provided by Max and Lyla and a perfect description of the positive times ahead. We have sent it out on the ParentApp for you all to share.

Improving the site

Thank you to Mrs Wilson for all her hard work with maintaining the site!

Trim trail- Over half term, new bark has been delivered and spread across the trim trail, Nursery and Reception outdoor areas to ensure that the trail is well covered.

High Street – Thanks to the generous donation received from a family last year, we are finally building a mini High Street for the children to use to develop their wider awareness of the world. This will hopefully happen over Easter and will be perfect to introduce to the children during the summer term.

Parking- As traffic increases as more children return to school, please remember to leave DRIVEWAYS clear and also the zig zags. This is out of courtesy to our neighbours as well as for the safety of the children.

Emailing the school – If you wish to pass on messages to teachers and are not able to speak with them directly, please use the office@blackwell.worcs.sch.uk email and not their individual school emails or class emails. The class emails are only for remote learning so will hopefully be out of use now. This ensures that messages are monitored promptly, even when teachers are teaching. Thank you.

COVID-19 return to school March 2021

School will open for everyone next week and we look forward to welcoming everyone back. In order to keep both children and staff safe, as well as your wider families, please follow the advice below:

- Keep children at home if they have any illness and if in doubt, book a COVID-19 test;
- Self testing is being introduced for families, please take part in order to protect everyone at home and school (details to follow);
- Follow all government guidance on restrictions;
- Wear face coverings for drop off and collection at all times;
- If possible, leave dogs at home or carry them onto site in order to avoid increased congestion at the school gate;
- Keep the school gate area clear and
- Arrive and depart as swiftly as possible and if you are having a conversation with others, please wear your face covering or keep a distance of at least two metres (it's further than you think!).

It will be fantastic to have everyone back and we know that you will find the break from Home Learning a relief. We are so grateful for the tremendous work you have shown and it will definitely support the children when they return to school. Thank you.

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
- Concerns are dealt with properly
- My child has SEND and they are well supported
- Blackwell lets me know how my child is doing
- 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 (but still 97% or above agree or strongly agree):

- Blackwell makes me aware of what my child learns during the year

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:

... We are so grateful our children are at BFJ and thank you all for limiting the impact of COVID restrictions on them. The Rainbow Project was the most wonderful idea and gave them all such a unique and special focus...

...In an extremely challenging time for children starting a new school, BFJ has managed to make settling in an easy and gentle process for both parents and the nursery children...

...No one pushes him to do anything too quickly, the staff really pay attention to the children's personalities and tailor learning to the individual. The communication is second to none and we cannot thank BFJ enough...

...The standard of teaching he receives at BFJ is exceptional. His health and wellbeing is well looked after, reflecting the school's vision of nurturing the 'whole child'...

...The support school provided to the children during the first lockdown (and this current one!) was incredible; providing not only excellent learning support, but also a huge sense of unity during a period of such separation...

...The school and teachers have been amazing and gave so much support during lockdown...

...The support from BFJ has always been exceptional but I feel that through lockdown we have really seen what sets the school apart from the rest...

...The resilience and independence taught at the school has certainly been put to good use during this pandemic...

...The staff at Blackwell go above and beyond to ensure children are happy and progressing well and communication with parents is exceptional...