



NEWSLETTER for Blackwell First School

...developing the whole child...



Would you fancy meeting these characters as you sailed across the ocean or into a harbour at night? Blue Class children have been applying previous drawing skills to perfect these dubious pirate pictures. From sketching to hatching and cross hatching, they have done a great job!

February 2024

Dear Families,

The children have returned to school after half term well and enjoyed considering whether they would have signed up to the life of a pirate during Tudor England. As they explore the life of famous pirates during the Tudor times, they will learn more about the life of the Tudors and how different it was from life today. Please enjoy some of the pirate art that the children have produced as part of their application and revisiting of previous skills. What a great job they have done! Having meaningful opportunities to revisit prior learning helps the children to broaden and deepen their learning.

As part of the Dilemma based Learning that they considered on the introductory day after half term, they discovered reasons for piracy and the dilemmas faced by Tudors.

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 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. We will address any queries.

Remember 'Singing on the Steps' during the last week of term as well as an after school 'Singing on the Steps' for the Choir. This will take place at 3.45pm on the final Tuesday of this term.

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.

I visited school this week and enjoyed seeing the children and staff and will look forward to returning to school after a little more surgery and some treatment. Miss Townsend and the staff are continuing to do a marvellous job during my absence.

Finally, please do get in touch with either myself via email 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 will be cooking up some 'pirate treats' as part of DT and from combining ingredients in Red Class, to designing recipes and combining and heating in Blue Class, the children's cooking skills develop as they move through school.



Please join us for QUIZ NIGHT on March 8th to raise funds for school and the children. Check the PFTA poster on parentapp or email office@blackwell.worcs.sch.uk for further information. Fish and Chip supper included and a bar is available... Can you beat the staff team? Or the governor team? There's a challenge!

SCHOOL SPORT/ HEALTH AND THE ARTS

Sport- Competitive events have been taking place between schools across Bromsgrove and the Year 2 children will enjoy a dance festival this half term. Mrs Webb will plan for a Sport's Day for families to attend during the summer term, usually during the Friday before May half term in the morning. We will keep you informed. An After School Sports continue this half term and all children have enjoyed afternoon sports club.

Arts – All of the classes will work with Mark Riley, artists in residence, next term to create artwork. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery has reopened and you may enjoy a trip to see an exhibition of the Victorian pre- Raphaelite paintings, some of which we have enjoyed learning about in Collective Worship and lessons. Edward Burne Jones and Kate Bunce are local Birmingham painters and the children may recognise some of their work.



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

We start the half term considering Caring 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 QUESTIONNAIRES

Thank you for your returned questionnaires. We had a huge number of returns this year and are particularly pleased that you returned them considering that many of you had already completed the ParentView for Ofsted. 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
- My child has SEND and they are well supported
- Concerns are dealt with properly
- 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):

- Blackwell lets me know how my child is doing – 1 response requesting termly academic reports and we will consider moving the Spring one to the previous autumn as understand that waiting from July to March in a long time

One questionnaire acknowledged the increase in sport provision over the previous year but would like more sport. We will send home a sport newsletter explaining what takes place already and external coaches, including football for KS2 children, are working in school to ensure that the children are taught PE, offered sport enrichment (afternoon clubs) and also extra curricular sport. If there is something specific that the school could provide, please do chat with Mrs Moss and we will happily consider further options.

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.

*... Not just a school but a community where our children are encouraged to become the best versions of themselves- academically and otherwise...
...We cannot speak highly enough of the school, and would recommend it to any other parent without hesitation!... We moved to the area for the school and have absolutely no regrets!... It is a magical place which supports the whole family and is the heart of the community in Blackwell. It is obvious that staff work incredibly hard and feel so committed to the school...
...A school that is always looking ahead and is never complacent. Superb leadership coupled with detailed knowledge of, and care for, all of its families. I'm always astounded by the brilliant mental maths abilities and strategies- child number 3 now showing us it is definitely the school's strong subject teaching making all the difference... committed and passionate teachers and staff who are so dedicated to ensuring children are building the skills and capabilities that will serve them in the future... we, as parents, appreciate the communication we receive and how we are made to feel included in his education every step of the way... having the option to learn through extra curricular activities has been fundamental to their development. Both of our children thrive in a group with different aged children – school has taught them the crucial communication skills and given them the chance to adapt to different situations... one very special school...*

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 have been 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 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.

World Book Day
We celebrate reading all of the time and plan 'dressing up' events when it matches our projects. This means that children **do not need to dress up on March 7th**, but if they would like to bring in a book that they love, to share, they'd be most welcome.