



BLACKTHORNS COMMUNITY PRIMARY ACADEMY

NEWSLETTER – 1st December 2017

What's great at Blackthorns?

In Class RT, discovery time is very productive and the children are making positive choices and taking more ownership of the learning environment.

Class 1C have completed their first published pieces of writing.

Class 2N have completed their innovative writing books. Truly amazing writing through the whole writing process.

Class 3C have been understanding and using the term commutative in maths lessons.

The spelling progression has been excellent in Class 4H.

In both Year 5 classes, the children have shown great maturity in discussions based on the new class text. The children have responded well to the scientific aspects of the text.

Class 6J excellent work in cross curricular PE linked to science and electricity.

Morning Arrangements

Please be aware that the academy gate opens at 8.30am and children are expected to arrive between 8.40 and 8.50am. There is a small group of children arriving at the academy very early every day, often long before the gate is opened. I am aware that staff have spoken to some of the parents of these children, but they are still waiting by the gate from 8.15am every day. To be very clear, parents are responsible for their children until 8.40am (KS2) and 8.50am (KS1/EYFS) and their safety is a concern if they are being dropped off very early each morning as an alternative to arranging suitable childcare.

At the opposite extreme, we also have an increasingly large group of children arriving late most days. The school day begins at 8.50am and the children go straight into a learning activity. Therefore, if a child arrives in the classroom at 9am each day, they will have missed almost an hour of learning each week and the equivalent of two school days each term. I am aware that the parking situation in the roads around the academy is very challenging, but it is important that children arrive on time and are ready to start learning.

Please can parents of children in Key Stage 1 ensure that they say goodbye at the bottom of the steps on the playground each morning, rather than accompanying their child in, as this can also disrupt learning at the start of the day.

Pupil Premium

Your child might be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

If a child is entitled to Free School Meals, the school will also get additional funding, known as the Pupil Premium Grant'. This funding can be used to support parents in paying for school trips, after school clubs and other support within school.

Please see Mrs Day in the academy office, in confidence, if you would like to find out more about this funding. If your child is in Class RT, 1C or 2N and they already have free school meals, please still come and speak to us if you think you might be entitled to the extra funding to support your child's education.

Nativity Tickets (Rec/Year 1C & 2N)

There are no seats left for the performance on Monday 18th December. However, there are a limited number available for Tuesday 19th December. Tickets will be issued next week.

Christmas Jumper Day

As in previous years we will be supporting the **Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day on Friday 15th December**. All children are invited to wear a Christmas jumper on this day and, rather than asking for a contribution from families, we will be donating the proceeds from the collection at the end of our Christmas Service. Children can also wear their own trousers/skirts on this day, rather than school uniform.

Christmas Service at All Saints Church

We will again be celebrating Christmas with a service at All Saints Church, Lindfield. The Carol Service will take place on **Friday 15th December at 2.00pm** to which you are warmly invited. The children will walk to the church after lunch leaving at approximately 1.15pm - if anyone is able to walk with us please let the class teacher know (each class will need 5/6 helpers). The service will finish at approximately 2.45pm when you will be able to collect your child (please advise the teacher before you take your child). If you are unable to collect your child from the church we will walk them back to school to be collected at the end of the day as usual.

For safety reasons, as for previous services, we request that **only two adults per family** attend the service. We will not be issuing tickets, but will be relying on our families' goodwill and honesty in complying with this request.

Adverse Weather

As temperatures are beginning to drop, I feel it is important that I remind you of the arrangements should the academy need to close due to extreme weather. Firstly, I would like to assure you that the decision to close the academy, in consultation with governors, is always a last resort. In making this decision, we consider the safety of the school site, as well as the safety of pupils, parents and staff when travelling to and from the Academy. The majority of class teachers do not live in the Haywards Heath or Lindfield areas. We will always endeavour to make an early decision and announcement should the academy need to close, but of course the conditions do not always allow this to happen.

Communications to parents regarding a closure will be through ParentMail, our school website, our Twitter and Facebook pages, the West Sussex website and via local radio stations (Heart FM, More Radio and BBC Sussex). In the event of a heavy snowfall during school hours and a decision being made to close the academy early, a message will be sent using ParentMail and all those not registered with Parentmail will be telephoned. However, we would like to encourage all parents to register (with two email addresses if possible) with ParentMail if they can.

We will always open the academy if we possibly can, but parking in and use of Blackthorns Close and the normal school gate may not be possible. If this is the case, school staff will be available to inform parents and pupils of any necessary changes to our usual school routines. We have occasionally had to delay the start of the school day to ensure that the hill is safe for pedestrians. We will not inform the radio stations of any timing changes, these will be communicated through ParentMail, Twitter, Facebook and the school website.

Healthy Snacks

For children in Early Years and Key Stage 1, a healthy snack is provided at break time each day. Children in Key Stage 2 are invited to bring in a healthy snack from home if they would like to. Children should not be eating packets of crisps or chocolate bars at break times.

School Keep Clear Improvement Programme

There is currently a consultation regarding parking restrictions around the academy. The link below enables you to comment on this:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/traffic-regulation-orders/about-tros/comment-on-a-tro/>

Key Dates for the next two weeks:

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Tuesday 5 th December | - | Yrs 1C,2N,3C & 4H to All Saints Church `Christmas Experience` |
| Thursday 7 th December | - | Yr 1C Visit to Toy Museum |
| Friday 8 th December | - | FOBs Hot Chocolate Friday |
| Tuesday 12 th December | - | Panto `Aladdin` for whole school FOBs hamper donation day/non-school uniform (details to follow) |
| Wednesday 13 th December | - | Chartwells` Christmas Lunch |
| Friday 15 th December | - | Christmas Jumper Day (Save the Children) Christmas Service at All Saints Church at 2.00pm |

As always, please feel free to come and speak to me or another member of the senior team (Mr Jordan, Mrs Neller and Mrs Dodd) if you have any queries or concerns about anything. We are only able to take action on issues when these are shared with us.

Kind regards

Marianne Brand