

Blackford C of E Primary School

Newsletter

February 2024

Dear Families,

Welcome back to a new half term and hopefully a drier and less windy half term! I hope you all managed to find some time to spend with family and friends over the half term break.

Just as a reminder, Blackford CE School also contributes to the Eden Lyne Buzz magazine which is published quarterly. For £5.00, if you would like to receive a copies of this informative, local magazine, please contact the school office.

Our next Parents' Coffee session is Friday 26th April at 2.15pm. Everyone is very welcome to come along and hear what has been happening in school. It is also an opportunity for parents to let me know what is working well and what we can do together to make Blackford CE School even better!

I hope to see many of you before then at our Parents' Evening which takes place on **Wednesday 20th March**. Details will be sent out nearer the time.

As ever, please do contact me through the school office if there is anything you would like to discuss with me, or catch me in the school yard.

Thank you for your continued support,

Lindsey Slater
Headteacher

Our Church Family

Community Service

It was wonderful to welcome our friends and families to the community service in St John's church last half term. Our theme for Collective Worship was 'Compassion' and Reverend Ian shared the miracle story of Jesus turning water into wine, with some fabulous acting from our children!

Thank you to everyone who was able to join us. We look forward to our next community service on **Tuesday 27th February 2024**.

Please note the earlier start time of 9.00am.



Attendance Matters!

As I am sure you will be aware, there is a national drive to improve attendance. The government is investing £15 million over 3 years to provide intensive support to schools and families to tackle 'persistent' absence. If your child's attendance is below 80%, this is equivalent to 38 days in a school year - or 8 weeks! This has a significant impact on your child's education and research evidences that where attendance is lower than 90% pupils, achieve lower GCSE grades than pupils with better than 90% attendance.

Currently, our whole school attendance is 92.3% which is below the national attendance rate of 94.3%. Over the next couple of weeks, I will be sharing more information about your child's attendance and offering advice and support if your child's attendance is below 95%. In the meantime, please do contact me if you are concerned or have any questions about your child's attendance. Regular school attendance is important and can only be tackled if it is a home / school partnership. We are here to support you and your child.

Christmas Activities

The lead up to Christmas was as busy as ever in school and staff and governors worked incredibly hard to make this time magical for the children. The infants and juniors made the trip over to Newcastle's Theatre Royal to watch the very funny pantomime 'Pinocchio'. Watching live theatre is such a wonderful experience for children and 'Pinocchio' didn't disappoint!

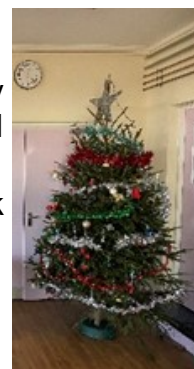


Santa and Santa's helpers braved the weather to deliver some parcels to the children which were gratefully received. Santa's sleigh was even adorned with a parasol! Undoubtedly, the highlight was Santa's four-legged helper!

Our thanks go to John Forrester and his daughter Christina who helped Santa with his visit!

The Christmas party, carol service and Christmas Jumper Day all made for a very busy but fun period in school! Our thanks go to Aero Nurseries who very kindly and generously donated a Christmas tree to the school.

Thank you also to Westlinton Parish Council for their generous funding of a book and selection box for every child – the children were delighted with these gifts!



School Council

Air Ambulance Collection

Thank you so much for your generous Air Ambulance collection, there were well over 50 bags which our School Councillors helped prepare for the collection van. It was a horrible, wet day for them!

Once we know how much we have raised, we shall let you know. Thank you also to our church family who generously donated bags.



Tree Planting

On another wet, windy day (there have been a lot of them!), our School Councillors planted five fruit trees. We are part of the Young Trees Champion For Schools and as part of this, we received fruit trees to plant. We are very grateful for the advice and support from William Mark, who is a professional gardener. William helped the children to plant the trees and has given us very sound advice on how to look after them.

Thank you also to Natalie Kennedy who arranged for the trees to be delivered. We very much look forward to watching our apple, plum and cherry trees blossom and grow!



Curriculum

Maths

NSPCC Number Day

Just before half term, we held the NSPCC Number Day and raised over £40 for NSPCC - thank you! The children enjoyed a morning of using their maths knowledge to tackle some Maths 'problem-solving'. The children have also created a wonderful number line which will extend the length of the corridor.



Times Tables Rock Stars (TTRS)

This term we have raised the profile of TTRS and the children (and staff!) have risen to the challenge! Thank you parents for supporting your child with accessing TTRS from home - it really is boosting your child's fluency and recall in multiplication and division. Our display in school is keeping track of all our TTRS superstars!



Mrs Brown

Maths Leader

Reading for Pleasure

Across school, we are promoting of reading, and particularly 'Reading for Pleasure'. Each class has a reading book and time is spent every day reading to the children. Children need support to develop the habit and love of reading and reading stories helps to build a child's imagination as well as exposing them to rich vocabulary. In the infant classroom we have revamped our reading corner to make this space a wonderful, inviting reading area. Thank you to Natalie Kennedy, Gemma Thomlinson and Gemma's Mum (Grandma) who came along one Saturday morning and painted this area. It is wonderful and our children love it - thank you!



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Mrs Cruickshank

Reading Leader

Border Reiver Visit!

Year 3 and 4 have been studying the Border Reivers as part of their local history study. We invited David, a curator from Tullie House, along to show us some Border Reiver artefacts which the children were able to handle and explore. It generated a lot of questions from the children and really brought the history teaching alive. A fabulous afternoon!

Mrs Noble

History Leader



Music

Sing Up!

At Blackford CE School we love to sing! Before Christmas, our juniors took part in Carlisle Cathedral's Outreach Programme and along with Carlisle Cantate Choir, Inglewood Junior School and Kirkbride School, the children gave parents and families two wonderful evenings of music. The children had rehearsed for a number of weeks, under the careful direction of Ed Taylor and Mrs Brown and their singing was just stunning. So much so, we even got a mention on BBC 5Live! We might be a small school, but we have a mighty choir!

Mrs Brown

Music Leader



Sport

Small Schools' 5-A-Side Football



Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 children took part in the Small Schools' 5-a-side football competition at Harraby 3G. Both teams performed brilliantly and thoroughly enjoyed their morning - despite the cold wind! It was the children's first time competing in this competition and we are all very proud of how enthusiastic the children were. Y3/4 looked super smart in the new Blackford School football strip too!

Y5/6 team: Sadie, Sophie, Ethan, Rory, Joesph, John

Y3/4 team: Max, Claudia, Jared, Georgie, Tom, Sophie

Thank you to Katie from GLL for preparing the children and giving your support on the day. We look forward to taking part in more football competitions in the future.

Sports Hall Athletics

Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 children had the opportunity to take part in the Sports Hall Athletics competition and once again, our children demonstrated wonderful resilience and determination. From relay races to high jumps to long jumps - the teams performed brilliantly and everyone had fun! Well done everyone!



High 5 Netball

Year 5/6 took part in their very first High 5 Netball competition at Harraby 3G - and what a team they were! We played against a number of other small schools, led by the netball coach from Trinity School. High 5 netball allows each team member to take on a different position every 10 minutes and so speed and concentration is required. Well done to the team, we are very proud of you all!

Mrs Combe

PE Leader



Parents, Teachers and Friends of Blackford CofE School (PTFBA)

The PTFBA committee have been extremely busy in the background applying for grant funding and setting up as a Community Interest Company (CIC). Our key project is to develop the grounds of the school and make it a safe space where families can come and enjoy time playing with their children. Our school grounds are opened up to everyone in the community after school hours, so please do come and use them. The yard is a great place to teach your child to ride a bike, or just to let off some steam!

Following on from the PTFBA Annual General Meeting, we are delighted that a committee of Co-chairs, Secretary and Treasurer have been established:

Co-chairs: Kate Coulthard and Natalie Kennedy

Secretary: Michelle Raine

Treasurer: Heather Henderson

If you are able to support with the PTFBA, please do contact either Kate or Natalie:

Kate Coulthard: KC.PTFBAchair@blackford.cumbria.sch.uk

Natalie Kennedy: NK.PTFBAchair@blackford.cumbria.sch.uk

Donations and Grant Funding

We are very close to reaching our target of £30,000 for the new community Play Tower. Westlinton Parish Council secured £20,000 funding from Beck Burn Windfarm which is just amazing! Thank you also to the Cumberland Building Society who have donated £100 towards our outdoor play project and to Mount Farm B&B who voluntarily dismantled the old play tower and gave a very generous donation towards our new one. Thank you!

We are now seeking **donations of bark, compost/top soil, tree logs, tarpaulin, cable reels and pallets**. If your company is able to donate any of these resources we would be very grateful! Thank you.

Family Bingo

Gemma Thomlinson and her family organised a Christmas Family Bingo Evening in The Rockcliffe Centre and raised a wonderful £560 towards the Play Tower! Thank you to Gemma, Holly and family for organising the stalls and the bingo evening and thank you to everyone who donated bingo prizes and supported the event.



Gemma is now planning an Easter Fair which will take place in school on **Saturday 23rd March**. Details will follow nearer the time. Thank you Gemma!

Diary Dates

Date	Event / Location	Time
Wednesday 21st Feb	Cumberland Charity Day	All day
Tuesday 27th Feb	Family Worship - all welcome	9.00am
Friday 1st March	PTFBA School Disco - details to follow	5.00pm - 6.30pm
Thursday 7th March	World Book Day - details to follow	All day
Friday 15th March	Red Nose Day - details to follow	All day
Wed 20th March	Parents' Evening	3.30pm - 5.30pm
Friday 22nd March	Y5/6 High 5 Competition	12.30pm - 3.00pm
Saturday 23rd March	Easter Fair - details to follow	TBA
Thursday 28th March	Last day of term	3,20pm
Tuesday 16th April	Summer Term Starts	8.50am

Easter Holidays	29th March 2024 - 15th April 2024
May Bank Holiday	6th May 2024
May Half Term	27th May 2024 - 31st May 2024
Summer Holidays	Monday 22nd July 2024 - Tuesday 3rd September 2024

Please note the dates for statutory tests 2024:

- KS2 SATS (Y6) Monday 13th May 2024 - Thursday 16th May 2024
- Year 4 Multiplication Test Check Week commencing 3rd June 2024
- Phonics Screening Test (Y1) Week commencing Monday 10th June 2024