

News from Mr Edwards-Grundy

Our Value for the start of this academic year is Unity/Co-operation. In Collective Worship on Monday morning, staff and children had a lot of fun exploring what these Values mean in the everyday life of the school.

Reflecting on the first full week in school, I shared with staff yesterday that unity does not mean that we are all the same - in fact it is often quite the opposite. Unity is about community and togetherness; it is about working together for a common goal. Diversity is not the enemy of unity.

Unity does not deny that we all have a variety of opinions or beliefs. As the media coverage following the Queen's death has reiterated time and again, she was a woman of strong faith and yet she welcomed and celebrated others, whatever their views. This past week, whatever the range of views on the monarchy itself, the country has been united in recognising a life of exceptional service.

Unity, like our other values, does not come easily, it takes commitment and hard work. As we all settle into the new academic year, everyone needs to work together, to co-operate with one another and to be open to different ways of working and playing that will enable us all to flourish. I am looking forward very much to all that the year will bring.

On Friday, I had the pleasure of welcoming our new ODST School Improvement Advisor into school. Frances Bartlett, herself a former Headteacher and Ofsted inspector, will be working alongside the school over this year, providing external challenge and support. It was a joy to walk through the school with Frances, spending time in every classroom, talking about the learning that was taking place and watching how well classes are already working together. Over the year Frances will look at all aspects of our school and work with many members of the staff team.

At the end of this first full week in school, I would like to say a huge well done to your children. They have risen to the challenges of their new classrooms, teachers and routines and have settled into their learning with confidence. And if you noticed your children coming home looking a bit glittery one day and humming a Christmas carol...our apologies! We are delighted that members of The Friends have this year committed to helping all our children produce Christmas card designs that you will be able to buy to help raise funds for our school. My thanks to the individuals who have been in school helping your children with their designs this week.

Newsletter

Thank-you Ma'am

As the nation mourns the death of Queen Elizabeth, and prepares for her funeral on Monday, staff have been reflecting on some of the wisdom that she shared over the years.

The quote below, from 2002, expresses a view shared by many across our community.

'I know just how much I rely on my faith to guide me through the good times and the bad. Each day is a new beginning.'

I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, to take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings, and to put my trust in God.'

Values Awards

There was lots to celebrate when certificates were awarded in Collective Worship this week, with children being recognised for showing the Values they have needed to help them settle in, welcome newcomers and apply themselves to their learning.

Children were reminded that living our Values will help bring more of heaven on earth, which will make a difference to all of us.



News from Around the School

In Collective Worship on Friday mornings, it is always a joy to see examples of work that the children have completed during the week. These times also provide an opportunity for your children to talk in front of the whole school about their learning. This week, the children in Year 4 shared the artwork that they have undertaken this week – we think you will recognise the children from their artwork. Well done Year 4 for looking so carefully at yourselves as you have completed your self-portraits.



Parking

As a school we are very fortunate to have access to a very large car parking area adjacent to our site.

We encourage everyone to walk, cycle or scoot to school, but if you really have to drive, please use the car park.

The zig zags outside the school mark an area where parking (and stopping to drop off) is prohibited. Please also do not park in neighbouring residential roads.

The car park directly in front of the school is for staff only (unless you or your children have a disability). We ask that you do not use the gateway to turn, or drop off, as we have seen several near misses from our office windows as a result of people doing this.

For the safety of our whole community, please be considerate when dropping off and picking up.

Sensory Garden

Those of you who have toured our school, will have been shown the 'Sensory Garden'. This space, in the heart of our school, is full of large leafy plants and small trees that are lovely to touch, smell and look at.

Over lunchtimes, our Sensory Garden is open to all children who are seeking a bit of quiet, or time away from the business of the school playground.

There are activities for children to join in with, as well as a higher adult-child ratio. Children can come and go as they please.

If your child can find lunchtimes a challenge, please do remind them to drop into the Sensory Garden.

Curriculum evenings

We are aware that a minority of our parents are affected by clashing curriculum evening times next week.

If you are affected by a clash, please pick up the paperwork from the session that you cannot attend. If, having read the paperwork, you have any remaining questions, please do speak to the teacher concerned, who will be very happy to chat with you.

Over the next week, curriculum information will also be posted on year group pages on our school website.

Contacting staff

At The Blake School, we have an open-door policy. If you have any concerns or questions, we encourage you to speak to staff within your child's class team as quickly as possible. Strong communication between home and school supports not only your child's learning, but also their wellbeing.

During the pandemic, many staff shared their email addresses, as this was necessary to enable online learning.

It has now been agreed however, in order to protect staff wellbeing, that individual staff email addresses should no longer be shared, other than by agreement between a member of staff and individual parents.

If you wish to contact a member of staff by email, please send your email, clearly indicating the member of staff who you wish to contact, to the office email address – office.3600@blake.oxon.sch.uk. Emails will be forwarded to the staff concerned, without delay. Please however do be aware that during the school day staff are in classrooms and outside of school hours they have other planning and meeting commitments that may cause a delay in responding.

Please be assured that all urgent matters are attended to and sending emails to the office, rather than to an individual teacher helps to ensure this.

*Loving, learning and
flourishing in community*