



## NEWSLETTER 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Dear Parents,

Firstly, I cannot believe that we have already got to the end of half term! Thank you for all your support with our launch of Times Tables Rockstars and we have enjoyed listening to children as they now discuss passionately the times tables battles around school. This has been a fantastic success and I would like to pass on thanks for Mr Dale and Miss Mullany, our Maths Leads, for the launch! We took part in our first national 'battle' last week for National Number Day and our 'Most Valuable Player' certificates were presented in assembly on Friday. Brodie was the overall most valuable player for school in the battle and we came in the top 1000 schools, which is a great achievement for our first try!



*Here we see Year 3 pupils fully engaged in the 'TT Rockstars Battle' on National Number Day, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025! Children loved dressing as their rock star avatar. Our Maths link Governor Job enjoyed watching the battle commence!*



*For being a wonderful  
Teaching Assistant*

**Thank you and Good Luck**

This week we will be saying farewell to the wonderful Mrs Webb, our Reception teaching assistant, who is moving to a new area. We are incredibly grateful for all her hard work over the years as part of the Early Years team and wish her the best of luck in her new home.

Mrs Bradley and Mrs Knowles will officially be taking over Mrs Webb's role after half term.

## Phase 2 of relocating classrooms- Reception and Year 3 swap



As part of our improvements to the use of the school building and our transition work for pupils ready for September we will be doing phase 2 of our classroom move by Easter, so Reception will be moving over to the original purpose built classrooms where Year 3 are now and Year 3 will be moving in to the main part of school where Reception currently are so that they are closer to Year 2 and the junior classes. We are planning this move early for three reasons.

Firstly, in the summer we will be starting the planned replacement of the whole school roof, so will have limited access to the main building (this move would originally have happened last summer but we were not able to get in to the building till right at the end of the holidays). The open plan nature of the classrooms, where Year 3 are now, is not ideal when teaching two separate classes at the same time, but is perfect for Reception children who need to be able to access indoor and outdoor continuous provision, with high quality play and exploration as well participating in smaller group adult-led sessions in the same room. Even the toilets down near these rooms are still the Reception height toilets that were originally installed 15 years ago!

Secondly, although in theory, keeping the Reception class near Pre-School should have worked, the access from the classroom they are in now to the outside space is really difficult due to the layout of the doors and windows. The classroom space itself has been lovely and pupils are enjoying having a quieter space to learn and play. However, we need to make sure that continuous outdoor provision is available at all times for our youngest pupils and this way they will have access to lots of space ready for the better weather in the summer term. This will be a permanent move for the better for both year groups. Watch this space as we prepare the outside area near this classroom over the coming weeks.

Lastly, by now, we should have been preparing to start accepting the first of our 2 year old pupils, but this has been delayed till the end of the year, due to several Nursery projects across the Trust. We will be sending out expressions of interest forms towards Easter to see which families would be interested in their child being able to attend from the term after their second birthday. This is part of the reason for Reception moving from the Pre-School building this year, to give us space for our new younger pupils. We will let parents know if this is something we will be able to offer from September 2025, but it may be a Jan 26 launch at this point in time.



## Helping our pupils with transition

We will also be starting transition work with staffing, so Miss Mullany and Mr Dale will each be spending two afternoons a week in Reception, working alongside Mrs Harrison/Mrs Paden, to start to work with their future children and one afternoon a week either Mrs Harrison or Mrs Paden will be popping over to work with Mrs DeJesus and the Pre-School team to support our Pre-School pupils. This keeps that magic of our teamwork approach that the school is famous for, where pupils are able to create positive relationships with a wide range of staff across the team.

In Year 1 and 2, we will be keeping the separate model for teaching Reading, Writing, Phonics, Spelling in the mornings, but now that Year 1 have completed their Reception to Year 1 project for the Trust, they will be moving back to having mixed year group teams for the afternoons. The essence of the success of our school is that pupils get to work with pupils in different year groups and work with different staff across the team and this is something we have missed over the past term and a half for our Key Stage 1 team. This also enables us to continue to provide interventions in afternoons and pupils in Year 1 and 2 will get more Music, PE and French time on Tuesday afternoons when in three groups not four, as up to now we have had to alternate Music and French every week for these children when working in separate year groups to be able to fit everything in.

If you have any spare moving boxes that you might be able to donate to help us pack up the classrooms for Year 3 and Reception we would be really grateful, please just pop them in to the office.

## New Volunteer policy and application form available from the office.



If you have any spare time and would like to come and join our small group of volunteers we would love to hear from you. It might be that you have a couple of hours a week where you could come and hear pupils read, or you may like to help with Art lessons, support us with the preparation of resources for lessons etc or even a bit of weeding and planting, whatever you can do to help we would love to hear from you. There is a new 'Volunteers in School' application pack which is available from the office and we would need to apply for a DBS for you which can take a few short weeks, but then you will be able to join the Blacks Firs Volunteers! Thank

## Governing Board- Appointed Governor vacancy



We are still on the lookout for a person to join our governing board as an appointed governor, someone not in a parent position, who is linked to our community and would not mind giving up some time as a professional to come and join the team. Meetings are held 4 times a year and each governor is linked to an area of learning or school development, so we ask that the governors each do a visit a term to meet with the relevant member of staff, discuss ideas, speak with pupils, check plans and policies etc to see how we are supporting your children. The governing board is so important in acting as an extension of the Board of Trustees of our MAT, The Learning Partnership and we appreciate the time taken to support us as a school. Many companies do allow employees to have time off for governor roles as part of their commitment to community/charity work, so if this is something that a member of your family or colleagues may be interested in please get in touch with either myself [ajones@black-firs.co.uk](mailto:ajones@black-firs.co.uk) or with our Chair of Governors [shazmashakoor@black-firs.co.uk](mailto:shazmashakoor@black-firs.co.uk)

### Events over next half term and beyond...

Thank you to our talented parent Amy Cheetham for coming in to update our Welcome Board at the front of school with some of our key dates. Please see the photo below. We also have World Book Day on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March. Last year, some classes decided to trial having a theme for the day, but we feel that it is better to leave this open to families this time around, as you may wish to recycle costumes. The theme is just 'Your Favourite Book Character' and we look forward to judging the costumes. There will be a £5 book token for the best dressed boy and best dressed girl from each class.

Other dates will follow, but the main ones we have been asked about is Sports Day and Town Sports: Following feedback from last year's event we are going to trial doing this on one day, on a Friday to help families who may need to book time off as we are aware it is often easier to book close to a weekend.

**Infants Sports Day ( Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) is planned for Thurs 19<sup>th</sup> June morning only from 9.15am.**

**Junior Sports Day will be in the afternoon of the same day Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June from 9.15am through till 2pm, with the finals being held in the afternoon from 2pm. In case of bad weather we will move the sports day event to the following Friday (27<sup>th</sup> June as the reserve school sports day).**

Pre-school will hold their own mini Sports Day on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July in the morning.

**Town Sports is booked for Weds 2<sup>nd</sup> July (reserve day 3<sup>rd</sup> July).**





We will be closing for half term on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February, after our KS2 disco so we wish you all a happy Valentine's Day. Have a great week for half term and we look forward to seeing you back at school on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February!

*Anne Jones*

Mrs Jones,  
Headteacher