



Birches First School *Believe, Grow, Succeed*



December 2020

www.birches.staffs.sch.uk

Issue 4

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Autumn Term Birches Value: *Resilience* British Value: *Rule of Law*

Dear Parents,

I can hardly believe that it is December! What a strange and busy year it has been and continues to be! With the arrival of our magnificent Christmas tree last week the festive season has well and truly arrived at Birches! The school is full of the sound of children singing in preparation for our Christmas DVD which is a delight for the ears...how much it has been missed. We have parties and many fun activities planned for the children to enjoy in the lead up to Christmas.

I would like to inform you that Mrs Stubbs is leaving Birches at the end of the term, she has successfully been appointed as Assistant Headteacher at Bloxwich Academy. The staff, Governors and I wish her all the best with the next stage of her career, we know she will be amazing! Mrs Ferretti will be taking the lead as Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) from January to August, again, I know all parents will be reassured that this vital role is in safe hands. Nursery parents will be informed regarding the successful candidate after interviews next week.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the children and all of our parents as well as the extended school community for their support of the school this term -we couldn't do it without your co-operation.

Have a wonderful break-enjoy the precious memories. May your heart and home be filled with all of the joys the season brings.

MERRY CHRISTMAS and best wishes

from Miss Varricchione



Christmas DVD

As you are aware we are filming and producing a DVD of all the children singing Christmas songs. Children are to come to school dressed in their own clothes and Christmas Jumpers with any accessories they wish to wear on **Thursday, 3rd December**.

Birmingham Children's Hospital Jolly Jumper day Friday 11th December

We have been approached by a parent in the community to support Birmingham Children's Hospital this year. Children are invited to wear their own clothes with Christmas Jumpers for a £1 Donation on Parent Pay. Please see link to find out about their story:



<https://www.bch.org.uk/News/lifes-a-picnic-for-young-fundraiser>

Christmas Cards

Class teachers have decided that the children will make Christmas cards in school to be given out to their class friends. Each child will make a card and every day leading up to Christmas a child will receive one from the box. This way all the children will have a card and have the opportunity to make one. Therefore please note NO personal Christmas Cards are to be brought into school this year. Thank you.

Staff Gifts

I have had many emails asking me about this! I would like to express that staff **DO NOT** expect anything, however, if you feel you would like to do so then staff will accept gifts and are responsible for quarantine. As always we are VERY grateful-I think we all need a bit of joy at the moment!

Inclement Weather

If it snows heavily this winter, school closures will be decided on a local school group basis and announced on local radio from 7.00am onwards. Therefore, if any Codsall schools are mentioned it will mean **all** Codsall and Bilbrook schools, including Birches are closed. We will also text all parents if school is closed so you can be sure to know what is happening.



Please be assured that should school remain open following snow fall, Mr Tomkinson will grit the following areas: the path to the playground, the entrance to the main school building, toilets and mobile from the playground. Although the path at the back of the school **WILL** be gritted please take extra care when collecting children as this path can remain slippery. Do take care in icy conditions in all areas of the school site and ensure that children are well supervised and also walk sensibly.

End of Term Awards

We are very proud of all of our children and their achievements.

On the final day of term we look forward to presenting our special, end of term awards to children in each class (via our Teams Friday Celebration Assembly!). Class teachers select four children for making exceptional effort or progress in one of the following areas over a term 'Effort and Improvement', 'Following the Golden Rules', 'Mathematics' and 'English'. They are very special awards and these elected children should be VERY proud of this accolade.



The school community will be notified via the website.



Christmas Parties

We are very excited to host our Christmas parties...



Tuesday, 15th December: Year 3- 'Chippy' Party AFTER SCHOOL 3.15-5pm

Thursday 17th December: Early Years -Parties in the morning

Thursday 17th December: Year 1 and 2- Parties in the afternoon

Thursday 17th December: Year 4- 'Chippy' Party AFTER SCHOOL 3.15-5pm

Children are invited to come to school dressed in their party clothes- please remember sensible shoes and coats-children will still be outside for lunch and playtimes.

Year 3/4 Further details have been posted on our school website.

THANK YOU...

We would like to thank everyone who has supported the school this term. The following has been raised by our fantastic school community. AMAZING!

British Legion Poppy Appeal : £TBC

Children in Need : £141 Jeans for Genes : £153
Young Minds: £151



THANK YOU!!!!!!

Communication

During the Autumn Term all parents received either an email or telephone call from their child's class teacher regarding how their child settled back into school.

I feel it is important as we have not held our normal 'Meet the Teacher' and 'Individual Private Parent Interviews' that parents receive some correspondence at the end of the term. All class teachers will be sending out a 'Celebration Newsletter' for you to read. The aim of the newsletter is to keep you informed of the wonderful activities and learning opportunities that take place within the year group and truly should be celebrated!

Government Restrictions

As the national lockdown ends this week we will all be feeling more anxious and worried about what lies ahead within our Tier 3 Banding. We will each have our own thoughts on the decisions being made in government but we have no control over these. We do however, have the power to influence our own little community. Therefore, within school we are continually meticulously implementing our guidance.

Following Covid safety guidance, we continue to ensure that classrooms are well ventilated which does mean that windows and doors are open. Staff are finding that they are needing to layer their clothing; thermal vests and more have been purchased! Please think about this if your child is feeling the cold - temperatures in classrooms will be lower than usual for this time of year so it is more than likely that children will need those 'extra layers' which can always be removed. Do please remember to label any extra garments which children may wear!

Finally, I would personally like to thank the children in each class for their remarkable behaviour and attitude during the Autumn Term. Sitting forward facing, only socialising within their class, having limited resources (due to Covid restrictions) can be hard going, however, they come to school every day smiling and adapted to all new measures imposed magnificently...they really are an absolute joy and credit to us.

Teachers' Worklife Balance

As you are aware due to the many restrictions imposed within schools, First/Primary teachers are having even less non-contact time from their classes (assemblies/playtimes etc) than ever.

We are in very challenging times, workload has significantly increased not only preparing lessons but, cleaning apparatus, tables, chairs etc. between sessions and not to mention the home-learning that must be provided for any child who is self-isolating. As always our fabulous teachers NEVER 'grumble' or 'complain' and continue happily (often working from 8am-6.30pm at school and then continuing into the evening) knowing they are doing the very best they possibly can for the children-ensuring they are both safe and happy.

As communication is limited and face-to-face conversations are not taking place please can you ensure that only emergency emails are sent to class teachers. I would ask you to be very mindful of the constant pressures that teachers are under. Currently some teachers are having an overwhelming amount of emails from parents and although I have already expressed in previous Newsletters that teachers can respond in a timely manner which is convenient for them they feel a duty to respond to all emails. Please before emailing teaching staff could your answers be found via our Newsletter, Website or calling the office.

It is my duty to protect the teachers...where would we be without them?!

Thank you so much for your understanding.

Online Safety

Mrs Cain, our Computing lead would like to make you all aware of the following website:

The National Online Safety (www.nationalonlinesafety.com)

The website offers free training courses for parents and has a wealth of information such as parent guides and resources. Please see web addresses below for parent online safety courses.

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/courses/online-safety-klass-for-parents-and-carers-ages-4-7>

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/courses/online-safety-klass-for-parents-and-carers-ages>



<https://oursaferschools.co.uk>



Christmas Dinner Day-Wednesday 16th December

You will have received information regarding our school Christmas Dinner for children. To get in the festive season, the children are again invited to wear their Christmas Jumpers etc on this day...we are getting our use out of them this year!

Please pay for the meal via Parent Pay by 9/12/2020 So Mrs. Blakeway can make the necessary arrangements. Many thanks.

December Diary Dates

30th November– 4th December

Y2 Phonic Check

Thursday 3rd December

Christmas/Jumper & Accessories for filming

Friday 11th December

Christmas Jumper Day- £1 Donation to Birmingham Children's Hospital on Parent Pay

Wednesday 16th December

Christmas School Dinner (Can wear Christmas Jumpers etc again!)

Thursday 17th December

Class Christmas Parties

Friday 18th December

Break Up Collection: Nursery/Reception:1.40pm, Y1: 1.45pm, Y2:1.50pm, Y3:1.55pm Y4:2.00pm

School will close slightly earlier than planned so that all decorations can be cleared, and all rooms thoroughly cleaned before the holiday. **No After School Club.**

Return to school: Monday 4th January 2021-TIMES the SAME as before.

Birches Values:

Belief Independence Resilience Curiosity Honesty Enthusiasm Success

Our Mission Statement;

Believe, Grow, Succeed