



Birches First School

*Believe, Grow, Succeed ...
...to be the best 'me' I can be.*

November 2022

Issue: 3

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British Value: *The Rule of Law*

Birches Value: *Belief & Resilience*

Dear Parents...

Welcome back! I hope that you all have had a wonderful half term and the children have had a fantastic break, enjoying and engaging in some fun activities that this time of year brings!



We really did have an actioned packed first half-term and are delighted with



all the learning and experiences the children have had. Reverend Simon delivered a superb Harvest assembly and the children have participated with



such enthusiasm for our chosen charities and School Council Fundraising Day-I am very proud of them all! The Diwali Dance Workshop on Friday was fabulous, I popped my head in the Hall to see every class working hard on their

dance routine and was amazed by the wonderful talented dancers we have in school!



This half term without a doubt will be a busy one leading up to Christmas, I am delighted to announce each year group will be performing over the festive season at school and cannot wait to hear the Christmas songs being rehearsed as we come back to school!

We will be in a position to start Forest School with some year groups as Mrs Burkitt finishes her qualification as a Forest School Leader – (CONGRATULATIONS)(all children will have the opportunity during the year to participate -they are on a rota!)...November and December are going to be very busy! Please as always if you have any questions contact the school office.

Best wishes from Miss Varricchione & the Birches Team.

Cross Country Event

Miss Hulme and Mrs Burkitt were so proud of the Y3/4 children that represented Birches First School. They did an amazing job, we came 4th in both so unfortunately we have just missed out on qualifying to the next stage. However as Isla came first in her event she has automatically qualified and will be competing in the District Final in March/April.

Parents' Evening/Reading Workshop/Parent Survey

Thank you to all the parents who came to school for our Parents' Evening and Reading Workshop. I hope you found it useful, please do contact us if there is anything further we can do to help and support.

A Parent Survey will be sent home this week, asking parents for feedback regarding the school. This is an annual survey whereby we take the responses very seriously and action feedback so we can improve our school for everyone. I hope you take the time to answer the survey, thank you.

Remembrance Day/Poppies

From Tuesday 1st November we will be selling Poppy Appeal items in class...this year there is a choice of:

A Zip Pull 50p

Wrist Band £1.50

Reflector 50p

Snap Band £2.00



Children are to bring in the correct money.

Thank you for your continued support with our chosen charities.



Bonfire Lunch Friday 4th November

The kitchen is preparing our annual Bonfire Lunch. Please complete the survey linked previously texted by Wednesday 2nd November so that Mrs Blakeway can cater accordingly.



Reception/Year 1/Year 2 do **not** need to pay this is included with Universal Free School Meals.

Menu:

Hot dogs or Quorn dogs, Baked beans or Sweetcorn, Chips and Sparkle Cake



Anti-Bullying Week
Anti-Bullying Week 2022 is coordinated in England and Wales by the Anti-Bullying Alliance.



This year it will take place from 14th to 18th November 2022 and has the theme 'Reach Out'. At Birches we will start with **Odd Socks Day on Monday 14th November**, where adults and children wear odd socks to celebrate what makes us all unique.

We have many learning experiences planned throughout the week to support our zero tolerance to bullying at Birches.

A special assembly regarding NSPCC; Speak Out Stay Safe a letter will be sent out with the information before the assembly, so parents are aware of the content.

First School/Middle School Admissions 2023

Please be aware that the School Admissions Application System will open on **1st November 2022** for First and Middle Schools. Staffordshire Y4 parents should have received an Admission Letter for Middle School 2023. If you have not had this; please contact the office.

You should only use this system if your child lives in **Staffordshire**. The closing date is **15th January 2023**.

Please note if you reside in Wolverhampton, please contact Wolverhampton Admissions directly.

Please note that children who currently attend our school Nursery will need to apply for Reception 2023/24. Admission to the Nursery class does NOT guarantee a place in the Reception class ; a separate application must be made which will be subject to the admissions criteria.

Nursery September 2023/2024

Applications opened **1st September 2022** until **24th March 2023**. All applications should be delivered to **Birches First School Office** marked **Nursery Admissions 2023**. Offer letters will be posted to parent/carers on **17th April 2023**. An application form can be found on our website.

Current Nursery 2022/2023

We currently have availability for both morning and afternoon sessions, please contact the school office. We can take children as soon as they are 3 years old (charges apply) and also offer 'Rising 3' provision (funded from the term after their 3rd birthday) so your child may start our Nursery after the date of their 3rd birthday. Please contact the school office for more information...we will always be happy help.

Harvest Donations

Thank you so much for all the donations that were given to school. I know 'The Well' really appreciated the generosity from our school community, particularly at a time where all families are feeling financial pressures.

Thank you



Children in Need
BE
SPOTACULAR



The School Council met on the last day of term, to count the money raised from PJ/Teddy Day. We raised an amazing £132.40. The School Council have some ideas on how to spend the money raised-a slide, football goals and a see-saw-we will be discussing the viability and cost in our next meeting!

Following our discussions to support Children in Need the School Councillors have decided:

Friday 18th November 2022-

- Children to come dressed up in Spotty Theme 50p donation
- School Council will paint spots on children's faces for 50p
- We will be hosting a spotty Cake sale-cakes 50p a cake



We welcome any donations for our spotty/dotty cake sale!
Please bring cakes in by Thursday 17th so we can prepare, thank you as always for your support.

PFA Fundraising

Spooky Movie Night!

Wow what an uptake! We all had a fantastic time, the excitement in the school was immeasurable...a huge THANK YOU to everyone that helped before, during and after the event.

Thursday 24th November- Christmas Fayre (Adults Only)

Please note the change of date

The School Hall will have twinkling lights, minced pies, mulled wine, a festive atmosphere and fabulous gifts on sale for you to buy for Christmas. Further details of market stalls to follow. We hope you can come to this evening event to kick-start the Christmas festive season!

CHRISTMAS!

I know we are a month away, but preparations will begin this week! In order for you to make plans I have included 'December' in this month Dates for the Diary. A letter will be sent out closer to the time to inform parents of how we organise the Christmas Performances and how many seats are allocated per child.

I would like to inform parents now to make arrangements that on the Nursery/Reception and Y1/2, Y3/4 performances pre-school children will not be invited to attend. I fully understand this causes a divide, however in order for all the children to be heard and their 10 seconds of fame to be celebrated we simply say no to pre-school children to avoid any disappointment. I hope you can understand that this is a very difficult decision but one for the best interest of all the children performing and all parents who wish to capture that moment perfectly.

Please note we WILL be hosting a Dress Rehearsal on the Monday for Year 1 and Year 2, then Year 3 and Year 4 – this will be a rehearsal and is open to any Grandparents who may wish to attend, due to a limit of tickets for the other performances.

Attendance- Reminder

As you are aware we are monitoring attendance throughout school. If your child's attendance dropped below 90% you will have received a letter at the end of half term which explains how we are now monitoring attendance much more closely. Following guidance, a percentage below 90% is classed as a persistent absentee and should be closely monitored by school.

I would also like to bring to your attention your child's punctuality, if they are late to school after the register closes this will be marked as a 'Late' and this is deemed as an 'unauthorised absence'. All unauthorised absences are closely monitored by the Local Authority. If the lateness to school persists, legal action in the form of a Penalty Notice or Prosecution under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 may follow.

Further to this, you will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time (holidays). As a school we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority if your child's absence from school is unauthorised for a holiday.

The Penalty Notice fine would be: -

- £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £120 per parent, per child if paid between 21 – 28 days.
- If the fine is not paid within 28 days, you may be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996

If anyone would like to discuss any attendance issues/concerns with me than I am happy to meet with you to listen and support you, in the best possible way.

Safeguarding Leads

At Birches First School the safety of our children is of upmost importance. It is everyone's responsibility to safeguard our children but speak to one of the people below if you have concerns.



Miss Varricchione
Headteacher
Designated Safeguarding Lead



Miss Hulme
Year 2 Teacher/
Assistant Headteacher
Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Lead



Mrs Lloyd
Nursery Teacher
Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Lead



Mrs Banks
Club Manager/ Year 3 TA
Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Lead

Safeguarding

As you are fully aware Safeguarding is our priority at Birches, we pride ourselves on the care, nurture and support we offer our children.

Please click on the below link to our Safeguarding Page where our Safeguarding Policy and information may be found. If anyone has any Safeguarding concerns, questions or comments please do contact me and I will be willing to offer any support, guidance you may need.

<http://www.birches.staffs.sch.uk/safeguarding/>

Paediatric First Aid

I am delighted to inform you that Miss Seabridge and Mr Hallmark are both now fully qualified as Paediatric First Aiders (PFA).

They join, Mrs Banks, Mrs Buckley and I as PFAs. For your information, all other staff working at Birches have Basic First Aid Training to ensure anyone can administer First Aid straightaway in any given situation.

Please note December has been included so you can plan to attend the magical and special Christmas performances. A separate letter will follow with further information regarding the performances.

Dates for the Diary	
1 st November	Welcome Children Back to School
11 th November	Armistice Day
14 th -18 th November	Anti-Bullying Week
15 th November	Y3 Stone Age to Iron Age Workshop
18 th November	Be Spotacular – Children in Need
21 st November	Christmas Decorations to be brought into school
24 th November	Christmas Fayre 6pm – 8pm
30 th November	St Andrew's Day
1 st December	Christmas Clothes and Christmas Disco
2 nd December	Year 3 and Year 4 Carols around the Tree
5 th December	Dress Rehearsal Y1-Y4
6 th December	Year 1 and Year 2 Christmas Performance and Special Awards 6pm start, children at school for 5.30pm
7 th December	9am Nursery Christmas Performance and Special Awards
7 th December	1.15pm Reception Christmas Performance and Special Awards
8 th December	Year 3 and Year 4 Christmas Performance and Special Awards 6pm start, children at school for 5.30pm
9 th December	Christmas Dinner and Jumper Day Tree Festival at St Nicolas' Church Codsall
14 th December	Visiting Pantomime Goldilocks and the Three Bears
15 th December	School Christmas Parties
16 th December	Break Up Children invited to wear Christmas Jumpers etc.

Birches Values:

Belief **I**ndependence **R**esilience **C**uriosity **H**onesty **E**nthusiasm **S**uccess

Our Mission Statement:

Believe, Grow, Succeed...to be the best 'me' I can be.