



Birches First School

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

October 2023

Issue: 2

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British Value: *Individual Liberty*

Birches Value: *Belief & Independence*

Dear Parents...

Well, I can hardly believe we have been back at



school for a month and what a month it has been. All children and new staff (Miss Ayling/Miss Fisher) have settled in remarkably well and it is lovely to see all our new children in a variety of year groups happy and enjoying being part of our Birches Family. We have had



a super time as a school celebrating Roald Dahl Day, supporting Jeans for Genes and hosting a Macmillan Coffee morning/Cake Sale. Y3 Have



already been on their first school trip of the year, Early Years have started their Forest Schools and KS1 and KS2 have enjoyed their after-school clubs!



Football has been a huge hit again with Mrs Burkitt and Mrs Lawley! We have already seen our amazing Boys and Girls Football Team play their first match and what a credit they were to Birches. As their number one fan, I am constantly proud of them, and I truly



am so impressed by their resilience,
determination and passion-go
Birches!



A huge thank you to Mrs Burkitt and Mrs Lawley for coaching our Birches Team.

We have further fixtures lined up and we are currently practising with the children who have been selected to represent Birches for the Cross Country Event in a few weeks' time...what a busy month already!

I hope you all were happy with the photographs taken by David, he really does put the children at ease and ensures the children are as relaxed as possible to achieve the best pictures for you. Any feedback would be appreciated.

Further to that it has been so special to invite Grandparents into school today for our annual Grandparent event, I hope they all enjoyed themselves and the children too, it really has been such a wonderful and special day, one for the children and Grandparents to cherish!

Please note we return to school **Tuesday 7th November** as Monday 6th School is closed for our Multi Academy Training with Codsall Middle and St Nicholas First School.

I hope that you all manage to have a wonderful half term break; I know there are many delightful celebrations that happen at this time of year...have as much fun as possible and most importantly please take care, stay safe and come back healthy and happy ready for (dare I say it).....

.....**C H R I S T M A S!!!**

We will be planning our Christmas activities when we return and will release dates for plays and productions in due course.

Best wishes

Miss Varricchione & the Birches Team

Cross Country Event

I am delighted that our Sporting Events are well under way!
Our Cross-Country event for Y3 and Y4 will be held at Perton First School,
Wednesday 18th October, 4pm -5.15pm.

The children have practising at lunchtime, and I know they will do the 'best' they possibly can, and they know no matter what the outcome we are so proud of them for being confident and willing to participate in an unfamiliar event!
Go Birches!

(We do have a football event the following day so would be very grateful if the Birches' competitive uniform is returned washed the following day-THANK YOU!)



Harvest Donations

We would like to continue our tradition of helping others who are less fortunate than us and are asking if our school community would be kind enough to donate gifts of tinned and packaged food to help and aid The Well Charity or Local Residents.

The Well is based in the City of Wolverhampton where they distribute food to families and single people who are struggling to buy food and other essentials.

In addition, if you know of anyone locally who would benefit from a Harvest parcel, please do get in touch and the School Council and I will organise this for you.



A box will be placed at the entrance to the school gate from **Monday 2nd October** to **Friday 6th October** for you to place any items you may wish to donate.

World Mental Health Day Tuesday 10th October **WEAR YELLOW**

The positive mental health and wellbeing of the children at Birches continues to be of the utmost importance to us all on a day-to-day, week-to-week, term-on-term basis; it is included in both our taught curriculum and is intrinsic to the ethos of our school. Over the last couple of years, with all that life has thrown at us all, never has it been more important that we are aware of our own and others' wellbeing and that we show empathy for those who are finding this a struggle.

With this in mind, the children at Birches will be taking part in activities on Tuesday 10th October to promote and support World Mental Health Day. Please show your support by wearing something **YELLOW!**

Welcome to Parent Meetings

I cannot thank you enough for the support you have expressed coming to the Welcome to Meetings. I hope that you did find them useful and feel more informed about the year ahead.

I am fully aware that we have launched several new initiatives such as BoomReader, Marvellous Me and parents new to the school are getting to grips with all the additional support offered such as Spelling Shed, 1 Minute Maths, Purple Mash, Ten Town, Numbots/TT Rockstars etc how the brain frazzles!

A page has been created on our website to assist in the first instance, however, please do contact us/speak to me if you need any guidance on the above.

Please remember it not our expectation that children access all the above every night. Your class teacher will have informed you of the priorities each week such as phonics, spellings, reading, handwriting...if you have any questions please do get in touch, we are here to support you with any aspect of home learning.

School Website-Parents-Information and Advice

<http://www.birches.staffs.sch.uk/information-and-advice/>

I hope it helps.

Dyslexia Friendly Week 2nd October – 6th October

We are looking forward to celebrating and raising awareness in school. This year teachers are setting tasks within the classroom to help children understand the daily challenges anyone with dyslexia may have to overcome. We will be looking at famous celebrities with Dyslexia and discussing our personal Growth Mindset in order to achieve, as well as concentrating on our mental Health!

Jeans for Genes/Macmillan Coffee Morning Fundraising

Thank you all so much for donating and coming along to our coffee morning to support the above special charities. **A special thank you to all who made and donated cakes-so very kind of you.**

We raised an amazing **£102** to support families and children with birth defects or incurable genetic diseases and **£94.21** for Macmillan to support families through very tough and upsetting times.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

School Council Friday 27th October



During a School Council Meeting myself and the council walked around school seeing how we could improve the outside for all the children.

The children are VERY passionate about having some more play equipment and we looked to see how this may be possible. I have organised a meeting with a playground specialist company to which the councillor will be involved! I have had a 'Health' warning that the cost could be between £4000-£5000! So, we have some work to do!

The School Council and I have met to discuss options of how they would like to start to raise funds for our school followed by a democratic vote!

They voted that on **Friday 27th October** children will be allowed to come to school dressed in their favourite colour for a 50p donation and if they would like to bring a teddy, they can donate 50p. Money to be brought to school **Thursday 26th October**.

Children can do both or one of the activities-as the School Council said...then people have the choice-linking to our British Values of 'Individual Liberty'.



I am aware this is Reception Forest Games Day, therefore, please can Forest School clothes come into school on this day if your child chooses to wear their favourite colour.

We look forward to a fun filled day.

Phonic Workshop Wednesday 4th October 2023

Parents have been invited via letter from Mrs Buckley to come to school on **Wednesday 4th October at 6pm** to join Mrs Buckley and Mr Jones to support your understanding of phonics and to share some of the terminology and teaching practices we use with the children.

We hope that this session will help you to feel empowered to help your child with their reading and spelling at home. It is vitally important **Year 1 Parents** attend as your child will be taking the **Phonic Screening Check in June 2024** and this session will aid you in supporting your child at home ready for the check.



PFA Fundraising Meeting

We will be hosting our annual **AGM Meeting Thursday 12th October at 7pm** in the school staffroom.

As a small school we rely heavily on the support from the PFA and this year an amazing £2532.89 was raised at our annual Summer Fare-**THANK YOU**. We will be discussing and allocating some of the funds at the meeting.

As you are aware Nationally Schools are having to set deficit budgets due to the impact of all the cost increases compared to the growth in funding, which is why it is so vital for us to raise funds to ensure all the children can enjoy enhancement opportunities at school. So, please if you can support us in anyway or have any new/fresh ideas to bring to make any exciting changes to our usual fundraising ideas we would really love to hear them and welcome you along.

Three Peak Challenge

Some members of the PFA and past parents have walked the Yorkshire Three Peaks over the weekend!

I hope they all managed to be blister free and celebrated the triumph at the end of what I should imagine was a very gruelling day!

To support the group in their fundraising effort visit

justgiving.com/page/7codsallmomsconquertheyorkshirethreepeaks-1691740031796



Attendance

As you are aware we are monitoring attendance throughout school to ensure we reach the 96% Attendance as set by the Government. If your child's attendance drops below 90% you will receive a letter which explains further course of action produced by our Education Welfare Officer, VIP. I would also like to bring to your attention your child's punctuality; if they are late for school after the register closes (8.45am) this will be marked as a 'Late' and this is deemed as an 'unauthorised absence'. If your child is late, you will be required to sign your child/ren into school on the School Entry System in the foyer explaining the reason why.

As per last year we will be sending out information regarding your child's attendance percentage through Marvellous Me so you are aware of your child's attendance throughout the year.

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

Please see our Attendance Policy for further information.

<http://www.birches.staffs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Attendance-Policy-2023.pdf>

If anyone would like to discuss any attendance issues/concerns with me, I am happy to meet with you to listen and work out any solutions we possibly can.

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. It is everyone's responsibility to Safeguard our children but please do speak to one of the people below if you are worried.

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| Miss S Varricchione Headteacher | Miss S Hulme Assistant Headteacher | Mrs E Buckley EYFS Leader/Reception Teacher | Mrs C Banks Club Manager/ Year 3 TA |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead | Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead | Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead | Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead |

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/>

If you have a concern about the safety of a child contact Staffordshire Children's Advice and Support (SCAS) by clicking [here](#) or by phone; **0300 111 8007**

Opening times: Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.00pm, Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm
Outside of the hours above, on weekends or bank holidays, please contact the
Emergency Duty Team by phoning **0345 604 2886**

Governors / Local Academy Board (LAB)

Birches First School is one of the members of Codsall Multi Academy Trust (CMAT, established October 2016) along with Codsall Middle School and St Nicholas First School. CMAT is governed by its Trustees and Members and operates within the confines of the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Each school within the MAT is supported and governed at local level by a Local Academy Board which is led by a Lead. Our LAB Lead is Mrs Karen Lawley who can be contacted by email on gov.Karen@birches.staffs.sch.uk Karen carries out many of the roles previously carried out by a Chair of Governors.

The Local Academy Board's (LABs) Role

LABs are expected to have a strong focus on core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- Overseeing the school's curriculum and pedagogy
- Monitoring and challenging the progress of the school in achieving its priorities
- Ensuring all pupils are included and have opportunities to thrive

Categories of LAB Member

There are five types of school LAB Member on our Board:

Parent Members – elected by the parents and carers of children in school

Co-opted Members – selected by the Governing Body to bring the expertise of the local community to the school

Staff Members – elected by employees of the school, with the exception of the Headteacher who holds an ex – officio role.

LAB Members

LAB members are typically elected for a term of 4 years. LAB members sit within either of two committees and report formally back to the MAT Board termly.

The 2 committees are:

Teaching and Learning and **SEN Safeguarding and Wellbeing**. Each committee meets termly.

| Teaching and Learning LAB Committee Members | SEN Safeguarding and Wellbeing LAB Committee Members |
|---|--|
| Mrs K Lawley Ms A Clifford Mr K Goodrich VACANCY Miss S Hulme Miss S Varricchione | Mrs K Lawley Mrs K Clifford Mr T Abbiss VACANCY Miss S Hulme Miss S Varricchione |

If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a LAB member, then please contact Miss Varricchione office@birches.staffs.sch.uk outlining any skills or experiences that you feel would make you a suitable candidate.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

| Dates for the Diary | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 2 nd October | Grandparents' Day |
| 2-6 th October | Dyslexia Friendly Week Awareness |
| 3 rd October | Birches Friendly Football Match v Perton First 3.45pm at Birches |
| 4 th October | Phonics Meeting 6pm- Invites sent |
| 10 th October | World Mental Health Day WEAR YELLOW |
| 12 th October | PFA Meeting 7pm School Staffroom |
| 16 th October | Parent Interviews Nursery – Year Four 3.30pm – 6.00pm |
| 18 th October | Cross Country Event Perton Middle School 4-5.15pm |
| 19 th October | Lane Green Vs Birches First (Away) 4.00pm Parent Interviews Nursery – Year Four 4.00pm – 7.00pm |
| 24 th October | Pattingham Sixes-Boys 9am-No spectators |
| 25 th October | Pattingham Sixes-Girls 9am-No spectators |
| 27 th October | School Council Fund Raising Day Wear your Favourite Colour to School- 50p Bring a Teddy – 50p |
| 27 th October | Break Up-Happy Half Term |
| | |
| 6 th November | INSET School CLOSED to Children |
| 7 th November | Return to school |
| 10 th November | Remembrance Day |
| 13 th November | Multi-Faith Day-Diwali |
| 17 th November | Children in Need Day |
| 24 th November | Bilbrook Light Switch on 6pm Details to Follow |

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.