



# Birches First School

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

November 2023

Issue: 3

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**British Value: Rule of Law**

**Birches Value: Success & Independence**

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 am delighted with all the learning and experiences the children have had and have been amazed by the quality and quantity of work the children have completed, they really needed a rest! I am very proud of each and every one of our wonderful children!

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 I personally cannot wait to hear the Christmas songs being rehearsed this week in school!

We have been invited to perform at BOTH Bilbrook and Codsall Light switch on this year! I am delighted that our children have been asked to sing and would encourage as many of you to join us at this festive event to showcase our amazing children! I will send a separate letter with all the details!

Before all this, we must not forget we will be supporting and promoting Anti-bullying Week, Nursery Rhyme Week and hosting celebrations for Diwali followed by a Sports enrichment day for all the children...and we thought last half term was busy! I look forward to showcasing all these wonderful experience and opportunities with you all.

Best wishes from

Miss Varricchione & the Birches Team.

## Sporting Events

### 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, the Y3 Boys have qualified (WHOO HOOO!!!) and as Isla came first (Second Year Running-just saying!) she has automatically qualified and they will be competing in the District Final at Cheslyn Hay with a hope to competing in Keele...

I would like to take the opportunity to remind all children and parents that we are only a one-form entry school, therefore, we do have less children to volunteer/select and that is why I am always so incredibly proud, because as a small school we do amazingly well, I feel this factor should not be over looked and we should celebrate as such!

### Pattingham Sixes

Year 3 and Year 4 Girls and Boys participated in a tournament at St Chads in the last week. Again, the teams did incredibly well, showing amazing teamwork and fantastic sportsmanship. Thank you for being such amazing children and representing the school so superbly.

I am sure you will all join me in thanking Mrs Burkitt for leading and training the children along with Mrs Lawley and Miss Hulme, the children are very lucky to have such fantastic, dedicated and caring adults working with them and encouraging them all the way!

## Parents' Evening

Thank you to all the parents who came to school for our Parents' Evening. I hope that those who were able to attend enjoyed looking at books, around the classrooms and discussing how your child/ren have settled with their new teachers and routines.

We hope you found this to be a useful and positive experience and as always if there is anything further you would like to discuss please do get in touch.



### Parent Survey

A Parent Survey will be sent home this week, asking parents for feedback regarding the school. This an annual survey and 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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.



## Anti-Bullying Week

Anti-Bullying Week 2023 is coordinated in England and Wales by the Anti-Bullying Alliance.



This year it will take place from 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and has the theme 'Make a Noise About Bullying'. At Birches we will host our **Odd Socks Day** on **Tuesday 14th November**, where adults and children wear odd socks to celebrate what makes us all unique...this is a day later due to Multi-Faith Day. We have many learning experiences planned throughout the week to support our zero tolerance to bullying at Birches.



## Harvest Donations

Thank you so much for all the donations that were given to school. The kind gentleman from 'The Well' really appreciated the generosity from our school community, particularly at a time where all families are feeling financial pressures. He was so grateful for the produce donated by Birches.

**Thank you**

## **First School (Reception)/Middle (Y5) School Admissions 2024**

Please be aware that the School Admissions Application System opens on the **1st November 2023** for First and Middle Schools. Staffordshire Y4 parents should have received an Admission Letter for Middle School 2024 and Nursery parents a letter via text on 11/10/23. 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 2024**. **Please see link below to assist you:-**

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Admissions-primary/Apply/Overview.aspx>

**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 2024/25. 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 2024/2025**

Applications opened **1st September 2023** until **15<sup>th</sup> March 2024**. All applications should be delivered to **Birches First School Office** marked **Nursery Admissions 2024**. Offer letters will be posted to parent/carers on **10<sup>th</sup> April 2024**. An application form can be found on our website, or the link below:-

<http://www.birches.staffs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Application-for-Admission-to-Birches-First-School-Nursery.pdf>

### **Current Nursery 2023/2024**

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) offering a '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.



### **Maths Workshops**

Thank you to the parents who attended Miss Hulme's Maths workshops, I hope you found them useful-I know Maths has significantly evolved since I started teaching and it was interesting to hear your comments and discussions. Thank you so much for supporting your children with their learning. If anyone couldn't attend and would

like more information, please do contact school.  
Reception and Nursery's will be running Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November and Year 1  
Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November as communicated out to parents.



### 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 all the staff, PFA and

addition, Carys (Y1), Harley (Y4), Albie's (YN) mum and Freddie's (Y4) 'Mama that helped during and after the event. It was SO lovely to have you all in helping THANK YOU, we really appreciate it!

### Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December- Christmas Fare (Adults Only)

After the resounding success of last year, we will, once again, be hosting a Christmas Fare in school for all adults to enjoy.



The School Hall will have twinkling lights, minced pies, mulled wine, hot pulled pork baps, samosas to name a few with 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!

For you to make plans I have included 'December' in this month's

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 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 also be hosting a Grandparents **Dress Rehearsal** on Tuesday for Year 1 and Year 2, then Year 3 and Year 4.



## Attendance Matters

As you are aware we are continuing to monitor 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.




### Phonic Live Lessons Reception/Year 1

Thank you to the parents who attended Mrs Buckley and Mr Jones's live phonic sessions. Y1 will be hosting 1 last session on **8<sup>th</sup> November** if you wish to attend contact the school office. We hope that this insight into how our strategic synthetic phonic sessions are taught was a helpful experience. Our aim is to help parents to support their children at home we hope this live lesson supported the information given at the Phonic Workshop. If there is anything else we can do to support or help please get please do get in touch.

## 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.



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




**SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY**

- **Do you have concerns?**
- **Has someone made a disclosure?**
- **Who can you talk to?**

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 are worried.

**PLEASE LOG ANY CONCERNS ON CPOMS**

<p><b>Miss S Varricchione</b></p> <p>Headteacher</p> <p>Designated Safeguarding Lead</p>		<p><b>Miss S Hulme</b></p> <p>Assistant Headteacher</p> <p>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Year 2)</p>	
<p><b>Mrs E Buckley</b></p> <p>EYFS Leader/Reception</p> <p>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead</p>		<p><b>Mrs C Banks</b></p> <p>Club Manager (Club/Y3)</p> <p>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead</p>	



Protect and safeguard the welfare of all our children.

←

Working together to help safeguard our children

→

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**

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/>

### **Our Mission Statement:**

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



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.

<b>Dates for the Diary</b>	
<b>6<sup>th</sup> November</b>	INSET- <b>SCHOOL CLOSED</b> for Children
<b>7<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Welcome Children Back to School
<b>8<sup>th</sup> November</b>	YN/R Maths Workshops 11am/3.30pm
<b>10<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Remembrance Day in School Y4 Trip- Wolseley Centre
<b>13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> November</b> <b>14<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Anti-Bullying Week-Details to follow from Mrs Hill Nursery Rhyme Week for EYFS (Nursery/Reception) <b>ODD SOCKS DAY</b>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Diwali Multi-Faith Day-Details to follow from Mrs Lloyd
<b>16<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Y2-Jackfield Tile Museum Trip
<b>17<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Children in Need Day- Details to follow
<b>24<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Enrichment Day-Details to follow from Miss Hulme
<b>24<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Billbrook Light Switch on-All Welcome 6pm
<b>27<sup>st</sup> November</b>	Christmas Decorations to be brought into school
<b>30<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Y1 Blists Hill Trip
<b>1<sup>st</sup> December</b>	Codsall Light Switch On- All Welcome
<b>5<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Y1-Y4 Grandparents Performance
<b>7<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Year 3 and Year 4 Christmas Performance and Special Awards 6pm start, children at school for 5.30pm
<b>10<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Y1 Maths Workshop 3.30pm
<b>8<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Birches First School Christmas Fayre
<b>12<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Visiting Pantomime <b>Cinderella</b>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Reception- Height and Weight Check-Details to follow
<b>13<sup>th</sup> December</b>	1.30pm Reception Christmas Performance and Special Awards
<b>14<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Christmas Dinner and Jumper Day Year 1 and Year 2 Christmas Performance and Special Awards 6pm start, children at school for 5.30pm
<b>15<sup>th</sup> December</b>	1.30pm Nursery Christmas Performance and Special Awards <b>Morning Nursery Children to arrive back at 1.15pm</b>
<b>21<sup>st</sup> December</b>	Christmas Parties-Details to follow
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> December</b>	<b>Break Up- 1.30pm</b> YN-1.30pm YR-1.35pm Y1/2-1.40pm Y3/4-1.45pm Children invited to wear Christmas Jumpers etc.

**Birches Values: Belief Independence Resilience Curiosity Honesty  
Enthusiasm Success**