



# Birches First School

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

January/February 2024

Issue: 5

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**British Value: Democracy**

**Birches Value: Success & Resilience**

Dear Parents...

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and I sincerely wish you a VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR! I am sure the Spring Term will see our fantastic children continue to progress, develop, grow, and as always make us proud. I warmly welcome our new Rising Three children to our Nursery. If there is anything we can do to help and support, please do not hesitate to speak to myself or Mrs Lloyd in the morning or alternatively call the office to answer any questions you may have.



We had such an amazing end to the term with the spectacular Christmas performances where every child was a true star, I am each year amazed how the children remember all the words, songs and moves! I know you were as proud of them as we all were!

The pantomime and parties were a great hit too, the laughter, fun and energy coming from the hall was a real pleasure to hear and see, I hope the children will remember the Christmas period at school with fondness. I thank the staff for all their hard work for making it truly magical for them!

Curriculum timetables will shortly be online providing detailed information of what will be happening in classes this half term. Knowledge Organisers for each class will also be uploaded. Please log on to MarevellousMe to keep updated. I will also be changing the notice boards as you enter the playground with any relevant class information you may need access to.

Here's to a great (fingers crossed) 2024!

Best wishes,

S Varricchione

Headteacher

## New Mini Adventure Playground

The School Council and I are delighted to announce that we have had approval from our CMAT Finance Committee to proceed with the installation of the new mini adventure located next to the mobile. The cost for the playground is £12,000 and we are busy fundraising so we can raise the full £12,000. Installation is due to start Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>, weather permitting. As it stands there will not be any disruption to the playground and the walk to collect Y1 children should still be accessible. I have a meeting arranged on the morning of installation and any changes will be communicated to the necessary parents.

We are very excited to have this addition and hopefully it will add a different challenge to the other adventure playground!

## Mid-Year Reports February 2024

Your child's mid-year report will be out on **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February**. We have organised it slightly differently again this year hoping that having your child's report before meetings will guide discussions with the reasoning of why comments and judgments have been made.

We are here to help and support-please let us know if there is anything further, we can do to support you and your child/ren at home.

## Mid-Year Parent Interviews

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> & Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February**

We are running two sessions for Parents Evening. Both days will be 3.30-6.00pm due to the demand of appointments in October for this specified time.

A survey will be sent for parents to select their 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> choice.

We hope to accommodate everyone at a time that is convenient for you.

Mrs Burkitt will send your appointment times by **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> February**.



## Multi Faith Celebrations Day

On Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February we will collectively celebrate the Chinese New Year 2024, Year of the Dragon at school.



Further details from Mrs Lloyd will follow.

## Tesco Grant

We are thrilled to announce that our application to the Tesco Stronger Starts has been successful! Our project

will be put forward to a customer vote in Tesco stores with voting commencing in stores from Mid-January 2024 until the end of March 2024. Please could I urge you to ask for the blue coins as they are not very forthcoming! I know I will be popping in more than usual to the Claregate shop and sending my friends and family the info below so we can hopefully receive the £1,500 top grant! Happy Shopping and thank you for your support!



Bushbury Express, Small unit, WV10 8PN

Dudley Stress Express, Small unit, WV1 3ER

Claregate Exp, Small unit, WV6 9ED – **Closest to Birches**

Wolverhampton, Large Unit, WV2 4NJ

Eastfield Express, Small unit, WV1 2HG

Penn Rd Wolverhampton Exp, Small unit, WV4 4DF

Wolverhampton Exp, Small unit, WV3 7BW

## School Council Fundraising-Unwanted Gift Sale 26<sup>th</sup> January

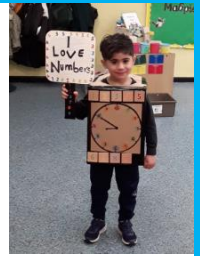
Please if you did receive any unwanted or 'grown out' items/gifts at Christmas that you may not need/want please could you donate it to our school! They will be happily received from **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January**. The School Council plan to have a gift sale on **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January** after school.

## Kingswood Meeting -Y4 Thursday 1st February 5.30pm

We will be hosting a Kingswood Meeting for all parents/children to attend before the upcoming residential 6/3/24 -8/3/24. We hope everyone attends this informal meeting to discuss and ask any questions you may have and hopefully alleviate any worries(parents and children) before this exciting adventure for our Year 4s!



## NSPCC Numbers Day Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February



We are very excited that the children at Birches First School are to take part in NSPCC Number Day again this year, a 'mega maths fundraising' day. All the children will be taking part in some fun maths activities during the day and Progressive Sports will be coming into school to deliver a Problem-Solving session with the children in their classes!

Number Day is a great way to make maths fun and bring about a positive, 'can-do' attitude towards it. We will be having a fun day of maths activities, and we will be taking part in **Dress up for Digits**. Children can wear an item of clothing with a number on it (football shirt, rugby shirt, stick numbers to clothing or any other creative ways). Or get even more creative by dressing in a maths or numbers theme.

To raise vital funds for the NSPCC, we are proposing that the children in each class bring in any loose change to make giant 'coin' pictures/mosaics.

Children should bring their coins in on the morning of February 2<sup>nd</sup>. So please get searching down the back of your sofas/ in the car for loose change! Every penny helps.



More information about the day can be found here:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/support-us/events-fundraising/social-special-events/number-day/>

## First School/Middle School Admissions 2024

### **REMINDER**

Please be aware that the School Admissions Application System opened on **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 **22<sup>nd</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 to help.



Children's Mental Health Week  
2024  
Monday 5<sup>th</sup> -Friday 9<sup>th</sup>  
February

**MY VOICE  
MATTERS**

The theme this year is 'My Voice Matters'.

**My Voice Matters** is about empowering children and young people by providing them with the tools they need to express themselves.

For Children's Mental Health Week 2024, at school we will be completing activities to encourage children to connect with others in healthy, rewarding, and meaningful ways. We will start the week with 'Dress to Express'. Children may choose to dress in their favourite colour or 'voice' how they're feeling. Either way, Monday is Dress to Express Day and your chance to express yourself!

A separate letter will follow outlining specific activities during the week.

### Safer Internet Day

On Tuesday 6th February we will be supporting **Safer Internet Day 2024**. This year we will be focusing our learning based around the theme...'**Inspiring change**'. By making a difference, managing influence, and navigating change online'. Safer Internet Day is celebrated globally in February each year to promote the safe and positive use of digital technology for children and young people and inspire a national conversation. Class teachers will be reinforcing the message of good internet practice and staying safe online.

Mr Jones, our Online Safety and Computing Leader, will be co-ordinating this day, generating awareness and knowledge at an age-appropriate level.

### School Council Fundraising Day- Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February

School Council have decided that they would like to host a

### **BREAK THE RULES DAY!**

The School Council will be writing to you shortly with rules to break and sponsor forms. I am sure this will be another very fun and memorable day for the children!

How I agreed to it for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year...the School Council have very good persuasive skills!!



## Inclement Weather

If it snows heavily this winter, school closures will be decided by myself and announced via text message and MarvellousMe. As a rule, I do my utmost to keep the school open, as I am aware most of our families work. However, the safety of the children/staff commuting to school, and Mr. Tomkinson's Health and Safety Risk Assessment will contribute to an overall, informed decision.

Please be reassured that should school remain open following heavy snowfall, 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. The path at the back of the school leading to Year 1 will also be gritted but, please take extra care when collecting children from Year 1 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 walk sensibly. Thank you.

## Clubs Spring 1

	Club	Finish Time	Staff	Year Group	Cost per week
Monday	Arts and Crafts	4pm	Mrs Burkitt	Year 1/2	£4.00
Tuesday	Forest School	4pm	Mrs Burkitt	Year 3/4	£4.00
Tuesday	Story Writers	4pm	Mrs Kandola	Year 1/2	£4.00
Wednesday	Forest School	4pm	Mrs Burkitt	Year 1/2	£4.00
Thursday	Music Club (Band)	4pm	Mr Hallmark	Year 3/4	£4.00
Friday	Gymnastics	4pm	Mrs Burkitt	Year 3/4	£4.00

Story Rangers is continuing for the Spring Term for Reception as communicated.

**Teachers will be delivering clubs and information will be shared directly with you from the relevant staff.**

Spring 2 Clubs will be organised and communicated as we break up for half term.

## January/February Dates for the Diary

8 <sup>th</sup> January	Back to School
26 <sup>th</sup> January	School Council Unwanted Gift Sale 3pm
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> February	Mid-Year Reports Issued to Parents Y4 Parents Kingswood Meeting 5.30pm
2 <sup>nd</sup> February	NSPCC Numbers Day
5 <sup>th</sup> - 9 <sup>th</sup> February	Children's Mental Health Week  <b>Dress to Express'</b> for Mental Health Week You may choose to dress in your favourite colour. You might choose a colour which expresses how you're feeling. Either way, Monday is Dress to Express Day and your chance to express yourself!
6 <sup>th</sup> February	Parent Interviews 3.30-6.00pm  Safer Internet Day
8 <sup>th</sup> February	Parent Interviews 3.30-6.00pm  Multi Faith/Celebrations -Chinese New Year
9 <sup>th</sup> February	School Council Fundraising Day- Break the Rules Day Letter to Follow Break Up – Happy Half Term
19 <sup>th</sup> February	<b>INSET DAY- School Closed for Children</b>
20 <sup>th</sup> February	Return to School

### Birches Values:

Belief Independence Resilience Curiosity Honesty Enthusiasm Success

Our Mission Statement:

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