



# Birches First School

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

November 2024

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 of the fun activities that this time of year brings! **Nursery Road Safety Lesson!**

We really did have an actioned packed first half-term and am delighted with all the learning and experiences the children have had. I have been amazed by the quality and quantity of work the children have completed, they really needed a rest! I am sure you all are very proud also after seeing their work during Parents' Evening.



## **A visit from the Dentist to the Whole 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 I personally cannot wait to hear the Christmas songs being rehearsed this week in school!

## **Grandparents' Day**

### **Y4 Stoke Pottery Museum and Art Gallery linked to their Anglo-Saxon unit.**



We have been invited to perform at **BOTH** Bilbrook and Codsall Light switch-on again 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!

### **Y2 Making Porridge!**

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 classes are busy out and about enhancing their learning opportunities on school trips....and we thought last half term was busy! I look forward to showcasing all these wonderful experience and opportunities with you all.



Thank you for all your support over last half term, its much appreciated.

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, Teddy, Neave and Lexi all came in first which means all Y4 Girls have qualified, a Group of Y4 Boys and Lexi from Y3 as she won the race overall! They will be competing in the District Final at Cheslyn Hay. Good Luck to them all!

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 overlooked and we should celebrate as such!

**Amazing Birches-I am so proud of you!**

### **Pattingham Sixes**

Year 3 and Year 4 Girls and Boys participated in a tournament at St Chads Pattingham. 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 Banks, Mrs Bell and Miss Hulme who have volunteered to spend their time to assist, 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. 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 5<sup>th</sup> November** **School Council** will be selling Poppy Appeal items in class...this year there is a choice of:

**A Zip Pull** 50p

**Wrist Band** £1.50

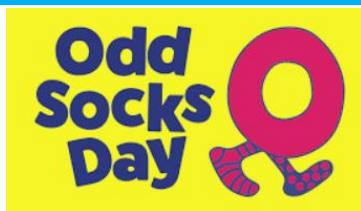
**Reflector** 50p

**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 2024 is coordinated in England and Wales by the Anti-Bullying Alliance.



This year it will take place from 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and has the theme 'Choose Respect'. At Birches we will host our **Odd Socks Day** on **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> 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.



## 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 2025**

Please be aware that the School Admissions Application System will be opened on **1st November 2024** for First and Middle Schools. Staffordshire Nursery parents should have received an Admission Letter for Main School 2025, Y4 parents applications will be available from 1<sup>st</sup> November from here <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Admissions-primary/Apply/Application-forms-for-admission-to-school.aspx#PrimaryormiddleapplicationsSeptember2022entry>

(I am not sure why the link says 2022-BUT it is the correct one!)

You should only use this system if your child lives in **Staffordshire**. The closing date is **15th January 2025**. **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 2025/26. 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 2025/2026**

Applications opened **1st September 2024** until **14<sup>th</sup> March 2025**. All applications should be delivered to **Birches First School Office** marked **Nursery Admissions 2025**. Offer letters will be posted to parent/carers on **7<sup>th</sup> April 2025**. 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 2024/2025**

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 (some charges apply) offering a 'Rising 3' provision (funded from 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.



## Maths Workshops

Last year Miss Hulme's Maths Workshops were incredibly insightful and really aided parents to understand current mathematical methods and Maths practice to support children at home. Our Ofsted inspectors were very impressed with the information given to parents! We will be hosting the workshops again this month for Y2/3/4 parents to attend.

A separate letter will be communicated out to parents.

## PFA

### Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November- Own Clothes for Bring a Bottle

Children are invited to come to school in their own clothes in exchange for a **bottle**. Please could we ask that all bottles are in date! Last year unfortunately many items were disposed of as they were beyond their dates! We welcome all bottles-that are full and still sealed naturally! Please bring bottles on **Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>** so we can mark off children coming in own clothes on Friday. Thank you.

### Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December- Christmas Fayre (School Community Adult/Children Event)

This year we will be hosting a Christmas Fayre in school for all to enjoy-children and adults.



We will open the doors from **3pm – 4.30pm**, where the School Hall will be decorated with twinkling lights, minced pies, hot dogs, samosas to name a few will be available to buy! In addition, we will have a Santa's Grotto where children can see Father Christmas and plenty of games to play and small trinkets to purchase. We hope you can come to this after school event to kick-start the Christmas festive season!

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Emma Morgans and Anna Saunders for their efforts and hard work over the years as Chair/Co-Chair, both have stepped down this year due to personal commitments, but we cannot thank them enough for their time, effort and hard work...raising HUGE amounts for our children **THANK YOU!**





## 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 months' 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 enable you to make arrangements that on the Nursery/Reception and Y1/2, Y3/4 performances **babies** and **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 **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December** for Year 1 and Year 2, then Year 3 and Year 4.



## 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 do get in touch.

## RAF Involvement

Y4 have worked with RAF to specifically looking at the RAF SEN offer and to produce resources to put in place for families and educational groups.

Y4 created some Picture Exchange Communication System (PECs) / emotion cards that would be of use when people are on site.



Look at how wonderful they are!





## 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: -

- **£80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.**
- In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of **£160**.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

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


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.

### [Safeguarding Policy](#)



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




**Codsall**  
Multi-Academy Trust

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

### 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>4<sup>th</sup> November</b>	INSET- <b>SCHOOL CLOSED</b> for Children
<b>5<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Welcome Children Back to School
<b>7<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Diwali Celebrations-Letter communicated to parents
<b>11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Anti-Bullying Week-Details to follow from Mrs Kandola Nursery Rhyme Week for EYFS (Nursery/Reception) <b>Details to Follow</b>
<b>12<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>ODD SOCKS DAY</b>
<b>14<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Y4 Library Visit
<b>15<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Y1 Trip Blists Hill/Children in Need
<b>18<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Y2 Trip- Shrewsbury Art Museum
<b>19<sup>th</sup> November</b>	YR-Y4 Flu Immunisation
<b>25<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Christmas Decorations to be brought into school
<b>26<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Height and Weight Check Reception
<b>29<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Bilbrook Light Switch on-All Welcome (Timing TBC) Non-Uniform Day-Bring a Bottle to school <b>Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Nursery Christmas Craft- Details to be sent out by Mrs Fear
<b>6<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Codsall Light Switch On- All Welcome (Timing TBC) Y1-Y4 Grandparents Performance/Dress Rehearsal
<b>9<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Year 3 and Year 4 Christmas Performance and Special Awards 6pm start, <b>children at school for 5.30pm</b>
<b>10<sup>th</sup> December</b>	1.30pm Reception Christmas Performance and Special Awards
<b>11<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Visiting Pantomime <b>Jack and the Beanstalk</b>
<b>12<sup>th</sup> December</b>	1.30pm Nursery Christmas Performance and Special Awards <b>Morning Nursery Children to arrive back at 1.15pm</b>  Year 1 and Year 2 Christmas Performance and Special Awards 6pm start, <b>children at school for 5.30pm</b>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Christmas Jumper Day <b>Christmas Fayre 3pm- 4.30pm</b>
<b>18<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Christmas Parties-Details to follow
<b>19<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Christmas Dinner Day- Children can wear Christmas Jumpers
<b>20<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Break Up- 1.05pm...Happy Christmas!</b> YN-1.05pm YR-1.10pm Y1/2-1.15pm Y3/4-1.20pm Children invited to wear Christmas Jumpers etc.
<b>6<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Return to School</b>

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