



Birches First School

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

December 2024

Issue: 4

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British Value: Rule of Law

Birches Value: Success & Independence

Dear Parents...

I did say that November was going to be busy and it certainly has been! The whole school have participated in some fantastic activities (and **Frog Day Tuesday** was such a fun day of awe and excitement for the children), and I am so proud of the achievements of all children, they are working hard and learning so much, they really are amazing!

EYFS- Together they enjoyed Nursery Rhyme Week. Nursery have written their letters ready to post their cards to Father Christmas, whilst Reception had a wonderful visit to the Church.



Year One visited Blists Hill to learn about changes in living memory and Thursday they are off to the church to enhance their RE unit 'Belonging' and how Christians welcome individuals to their faith by being Baptised, they will be looking at the font and candle and what they signify for the Christian Faith.



Year 2 visited the Shrewsbury Art Museum where they consolidated their learning unit 'The Great Fire of London'.



Year 3 have walked around the Local Area developing their Field Skills.



Year 4 visited the library to support their learning within their Geography Unit 'The Arctic'.



We were delighted to be awarded the '**Equal Access Award**' this award acknowledges and rightfully represents how we conduct ourselves at Birches First by always opening up sporting events equally to Boys and Girls. I am delighted that our school has been recognised for this amazing award!



I am also delighted to announce that Kavita has won the Purple Mash Christmas Card Competition! Out of 3,464 entries. The design will also be turned into an eCard on the Purple Mash website for other children to use.

In addition, Kavita will receive a goodie bag and £20 Amazon gift voucher, Cody plushie and 2Simple goody bag!

Well done Kavita we are immensely proud!

The Christmas Tree in the Hall looks magnificent, a **huge** thank you to all of you who helped the children to make such wonderful homemade decorations, as soon as you walk in you can't help but smile and say 'ahhh', it is beautiful and has certainly put us all in the Christmas Spirit. We are very much looking forward to welcoming many of you into school as part of our festive celebrations over the coming weeks.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank the children and all our parents as well as the extended school community for their support of the school this term, it has been an absolute pleasure to come to school every day, the children have been amazing and a real credit to you all.

May your heart and home be filled with all the joys the season brings.

MERRY CHRISTMAS and best wishes

Miss Varricchione



Carols Around the Tree Friday 6th December 7pm

After the huge success on Friday at Bilbrook Light Switch On, we get to do it all again this Friday! Our school has been invited to sing around the Christmas Tree at Codsall Village on the above date. This is an annual event that we have historically participated in, and I am delighted we can do it once again. The children will be singing two of their Christmas songs- ('**Merry Christmas**' and '**I want a Hippopotamus for Christmas**') it would be lovely to see as many of the Birches community there to support our children. See you there -meet at **6.55pm** by the tree!



Christmas Pantomime Wednesday 11th December

I am delighted to inform you that we have arranged for a production of Jack and the Beanstalk to be delivered at school for the WHOLE SCHOOL. The PFA have kindly contributed half of the cost (nearly £400) **THANK YOU!** We are asking families for a contribution of **£3.00** towards this enrichment opportunity. Please can this be sent into school by **Wednesday 4th December**. I am fully aware of the current financial climate and how parents are cutting back on some of the additional experience such as theatre visits etc. so I hope that the children enjoy this experience and remember it fondly.

The performance will take place in the School Hall.



Christmas Dinner/Jumper Day Thursday 19th December

We will be having our annual Christmas Dinner where the children can have their Christmas Dinner with their friends! Children are invited to wear their Christmas Jumpers/tops outfits on this day to get into the festive spirit.

Children are also warmly welcomed to wear their Christmas Jumpers on the last day of term Friday 20th December!



Christmas Performances

You will have recently received a letter regarding the Christmas performances.



Children returning to school for evening performances (Y1/2/3/4) will need to be in school at **5.30pm** to change and prepare for a **prompt 6.00pm** start. Any children in Birches Club at 5.30pm will go straight to their classrooms to get ready.

We will be dismissing the children by returning children to the Hall once they are dressed. Please be patient with staff whilst we return your child/ren to you.

Thank you.

**WITH ALL THE CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCES PLEASE PARK RESPECTFULLY
THANK YOU**

Christmas Parties Wednesday 18th December

We are very much looking forward to our Christmas Parties this year.



EYFS will have their party in the morning,

Year One and **Year Two** will have their party in the afternoon,

Year Three and **Four** After School- further information to be sent directly to parents

Children can come to school wearing their party/Christmas clothes on this day. Please ensure sensible footwear as children will be outside at play/lunchtimes. Thank you.

Attendance- Reminder

Further to last month's Newsletter parents will be notified if their child's attendance is below 90% at the end of the school term (December 20th) when we return in January.

If you received a letter regarding your child's attendance for the first half term (September-October) and this has not improved, Attend our EWO will be inviting you into school for a supportive meeting to discuss your child's attendance. I am fully aware that there have been an extraordinary number of colds/infections and genuine illnesses, but as a school we are required to monitor attendance much more carefully. The meeting is to talk through any issues and support parents if needed.

Further to this we have noticed an increased amount of lateness, please ensure your child is in school by 8.40am as this impacts their learning. Thank you.



Christmas Tree Festival

We are so delighted to be asked once again to decorate a Christmas Tree at St Nicholas's Church. We will be decorating the tree Thursday evening ready for the event over the weekend. Friday 6th 12-5pm, Saturday 7th December 12-5pm, Sunday 8th December 12-4pm. Cost £3 per adult, children are free.



First Aid at Work/Paediatric First Aid

At Birches we like to keep parents well informed about our high standards of care for the children. Currently I am the school's designated named First Aid at Work Lead. Mrs Burkitt, has both Paediatric First Aid and Outdoor First Aid.

This is additional to Mrs Banks, Mrs Buckley, Mr Hallmark, Mrs Wardlaw, Mrs Fear, Miss Seabridge and I as Paediatric First Aiders. Please remember, all other staff working at Birches have St John Emergency Basic First Aid Training to ensure anyone can administer First Aid immediately in any given situation.



Parent Pay- Reminder

Please could all parents check their Parent Pay accounts and pay the outstanding amounts. We have a substantial amount of 'Dinner Money' arrears from Loved One Lunches and

Children Lunches. This service will cease if payments are not made.

Mrs. Burkitt and Mrs. Lawley work incredibly hard in the office and it would be very much appreciated if parents could keep abreast of their accounts so that they can concentrate on their assigned roles. All accounts will need to be settled by the end of the term.

Thank you for your cooperation with this.

First School/Middle School Admissions 2025

REMINDER

Please be aware that the School Admissions Application System opened on **1st November 2024** for First and Middle Schools. 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 **14th 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 **7th 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 help.



Inclement Weather

We were lucky to see snow in November! If it snows heavily this winter, school closures will be communicated **directly from school**. **I always do my best to keep school open as long as it is safe to do so!** Please be assured that should school remain open following snow fall, 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.



Safeguarding

<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 Y4 TA</p> <p>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead</p>	



Protect and safeguard the welfare of all 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**

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/>

Dates for the Diary

2nd December	Boom Reader Drop-In, School Hall 8.30am
3rd December	Boom Reader Drop-In, Y2 Classroom 3.15-3.45pm
4th December	Boom Reader Drop-In, Y2 Classroom 3.15-3.45pm
5th December	Nursery Christmas Craft- Details to be sent out by Mrs Fear
6th December	Codsall Light Switch On- All Welcome (7pm Singing by the tree) Y3-Y4 Grandparents/Loved One Performance 9am
6th/7th/8th	Tree Festival St Nicholas Church 6 th and 7 th at 12-5pm , 8 th at 12-4pm
9th December	Year 3 and Year 4 Christmas Performance and Special Awards 6pm start, children at school for 5.30pm
10th December	Y1-Y2 Grandparents/Loved One Performance 9am 1.30pm Reception Christmas Performance and Special Awards
11th December	Visiting Pantomime Jack and the Beanstalk £3 cash to school please by Wednesday 4th December
12th December	1.30pm Nursery Christmas Performance and Special Awards Morning Nursery Children to arrive back at 1.15pm Year 1 and Year 2 Christmas Performance and Special Awards 6pm start, children at school for 5.30pm
13th December	Christmas Jumper Day Christmas Fayre 3pm- 4.30pm
17th December	Coding Workshop Year 3 and Year 4 by RAF Cosford
18th December	Christmas Parties-Details to follow
19th December	Christmas Dinner Day- Children can wear Christmas Jumpers/outfits
20th December	Break Up- 1.05pm...Happy Christmas! YN-1.05pm YR-1.10pm Y1/2-1.15pm Y3/4-1.20pm Children invited to wear Christmas Jumpers etc.
6th January	Return to School – Happy New Year!

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.