



Birches First School

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

October 2024

Issue: 2

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British Value: Democracy

Birches Value: Belief & Success

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 Cartwright/Mrs Fear/Mrs Richards) 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 to visit an author, Nursery have had a wonderful Play and Stay Session with their loved ones and even started their Forest Schools!

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 is with great excitement we are able to invite Grandparents into school this week for our annual Grandparent event, I hope they all enjoy themselves and the children too, such a wonderful and special day, one for the children and Grandparents to cherish!



Please note we return to school **Tuesday 5th November** as Monday 4th November 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

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 is 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.

Pattingham Sixes

I am delighted that our Sporting Events are well under way! Our annual Pattingham Sixes event for Y3 and Y4 will be held at St Chad's First School, Wednesday 9th October (Boys) & Thursday 10th October (Girls). A survey has been sent to the children who have been selected.

The children will be 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, some of them for the very first time!

Go Birches!



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 **Tuesday 1st October** to **Friday 11th October** for you to place any items you may wish to donate.

World Mental Health Day Thursday 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 Thursday 10th October to promote and support World Mental Health Day. Please show your support by wearing something **YELLOW!**

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 **£104.20** to support families and children with birth defects or incurable genetic diseases and **£59.50** for Macmillan to support families through very tough and upsetting times.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Disney Day



School Council Friday 25th October

During a School Council Meeting the council discussed different fundraising opportunity, the School Council were very keen to organise something different and that was a first to them and the school!

They have decided upon a 'Disney Day', on Friday 25th October, we are asking for a voluntary contribution of **£1** to allow students to come in non-uniform. Your child could dress as their favourite Disney character (including Marvel and Star Wars), they could dress in an outfit that resembles their favourite Disney character (Disney binding) or simply wear a Disney inspired t-shirt/bring a Disney teddy to school. Your child will also get the opportunity to take part in various Disney-inspired activities which may include artwork, writing and computing.

This voluntary contribution will go towards supporting our cost towards our Challenger Challenge equipment.

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 dress in any different costume.

We look forward to a fun filled day.

PFA Fundraising Meeting

We will be hosting our annual **AGM Meeting Tuesday 12th October at 5.30pm – 6.30pm** in the school staffroom.

As a small school we rely heavily on the support from the PFA and this year an amazing £2550.10 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 to the meeting!

Y1 Parents Phonic Workshop Wednesday 2nd October 2024

Parents have been invited via letter from Mrs Buckley to come to school on Wednesday 2nd 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 within Y1.

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.



Parents' Evening

You will shortly receive a survey link to book an appointment to meet with your child/ren class teachers. This is an opportunity for you to discuss in private your child's progress and settling into their new class! Time slots are 10 minutes-please keep to times. Your child's work will also be available for you to view in their tray. We ask that children are not present as we wish to have open and honest discussions, which when children are present is inappropriate.

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.

New two penalty notice limit in a three-year period

The three-year rolling period starts for parents when the first penalty notice is issued to them after the 19th August 2024.

First offence – the first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £80.00 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160.00 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

Second offence: (within 3 years) – the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160.00 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

Third offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) – the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500.00 per parent, per child.

Please see our Attendance Policy for further information.

<http://www.birches.staffs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Attendance-Policy-2024.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.

<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/ Y4)</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**

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/>

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** who meet collectively once a term.

Teaching and Learning LAB Committee Members	SEN Safeguarding and Wellbeing LAB Committee Members
Mrs K Lawley Mr K Goodrich Mrs. K. Graham Miss S Hulme Miss S Varricchione VACANCY	Mrs K Lawley Mr T Abbiss Mr. K Duffy Miss S Hulme Miss S Varricchione VACANY

If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a LAB member, then please contact Miss Varricchione at 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	
1 st October	National Poetry Day
2 nd October	Y1 Phonics Meeting 5.00pm- Invites sent
7-11 th October	Dyslexia Friendly Week Awareness
3 rd October	Grandparents' Day
8 th October	PFA Meeting 5.30pm-6.30pm
9 th October	Pattingham Sixes-Boys 9am-No spectators
10 th October	World Mental Health Day WEAR YELLOW Pattingham Sixes-Girls 9am-No spectators
11 th October	Y4 Stoke Potteries Visit
16 th October	Parent Interviews Nursery – Year Four 3.30pm – 6.00pm
17 th October	Parent Interviews Reception Year Four 3.30pm – 6.00pm Nursery 11.30 onwards
22 nd October	Cross Country Event
25 th October	School Council Fund Raising Day Disney Day- Bring a £1
25 th October	Break Up-Happy Half Term
4 th November	INSET School CLOSED to Children
5 th November	Return to school Y4 Library Visit
8 th November	Remembrance Day
15 th November	Children in Need Day Details to Follow
19 th November	YR-Y4 Flu Immunisation Details to Follow
29 th November	Bilbrook Light Switch 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.