



# Information for parents

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# Welcome

Welcome to Birches First School. We are very pleased to have this opportunity to tell you about the work and aspirations of our school.

We are fortunate to have a very experienced and dedicated staff who work hard to maintain a stimulating and industrious atmosphere in which each child's individual needs are recognised. The aims and ethos of the school reflect the value we place on each child's achievements, whilst at the same time teaching children to work together in a caring and co-operative way.

We believe children's success at school, not only depends on the quality of teaching we provide, but also on effective relationships between home and school. Parental involvement is actively encouraged in many aspects of school life. The Governors of Birches represent the parents, the teachers and the local community and are firmly committed to ensuring that the best possible education is available to all children at our school.

We hope you will become involved in school life as much as possible and help us to make the years your child spends at Birches happy and successful.

<b>Mrs. J. Willcox</b>	-	<b>Headteacher</b>
<b>Mrs. V. Eastup</b>	-	<b>Chair of Governors</b>

**"This is an outstanding school. Pupils and their parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive in their praise for the school" (OFSTED - Feb 2012)**

## Aims of the School

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff aim:

1. To create a safe, caring and stimulating environment where each individual child will feel valued, happy, secure and eager to learn.
2. To assure the quality of teaching and provide a broad and balanced curriculum which supports the emotional, spiritual, moral, intellectual, creative and physical development of the 'whole' child.
3. To fulfil the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and related matters.
4. To help children understand and follow the school's Golden Rules.
5. To foster a sense of community by working with parents to build effective relationships based on respect and trust.
6. To help children develop respect and tolerance for all cultures within our society so they begin to understand the world in which they live.
7. To encourage and celebrate the achievements of all our children so they become successful, confident, independent learners who are well prepared for Middle School.

### **‘Valued Individuals Working and Achieving Together’**



## General Information about the School

**Address** - Birches First School  
Birches Avenue  
Codsall  
Wolverhampton  
WV8 2JG

**Telephone** - 01902 434100

**E-mail** - [headteacher@birches.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@birches.staffs.sch.uk)

**Website** - [www.birches.staffs.sch.uk](http://www.birches.staffs.sch.uk)

Birches First is a co-educational community school administered by Staffordshire Local Authority. It provides full time statutory education for pupils between the ages of 4+ and 9 years. In addition, a 39 place part-time nursery offers pre-school education to children from the age of 3 years.

The school is situated on the southern edge of Codsall, a South Staffordshire village, close to the Wolverhampton conurbation. It serves mainly the South Codsall and Bilbrook areas. The buildings are in a pleasant location with an open rural aspect, playing fields and an environmental area.

The school opened in 1959 as an Infant School. The original building was extended in 1976 when it became a First School. The school was then threatened with closure in 1981, but survived a hard fought campaign to continue to provide quality education for local children and become the OUTSTANDING school it is today.

The majority of our children transfer to either Codsall or Bilbrook Middle Schools at the end of Year 4 to continue their education.



## Admissions

In order for your child to be admitted to school parents should complete a school application form and provide proof of their child's date of birth. A formal application for entry to primary school from Staffordshire County Council is then sent out in the autumn term of the school year before your child is five years-old. Your child is then admitted in September preceding his/her fifth birthday. Parents may apply for places at anytime after this date if vacancies exist.

It is intended that the Published Admission Number (PAN) of pupils to be admitted to this school at the normal age of entry will not exceed 30. Admissions are administered by Staffordshire County Council. If the number of applications for admission, including second and third preferences, exceeds the school's PAN, places will be allocated in accordance with the oversubscription criteria and the following order of priority will apply:

1. Relevant Looked After Children
2. Pupils living within the catchment area of the school
3. Pupils who have an elder sibling in attendance at the school and who will still be attending the school at the proposed admission date.
4. Pupils who satisfy both of the following tests:  
Test 1 - medical grounds  
Test 2 - they would suffer hardship if unable to attend



## Arrangements for Starting School

Parents who are considering sending their child to Birches should contact the Headteacher who will be pleased to explain admission arrangements. Parents are very welcome to talk to the Headteacher and look around the school before coming to a decision, and this can be arranged by telephoning the school office for an appointment.

The majority of children who start in Reception Class transfer from our Nursery. The two adjoining classrooms which create the Foundation Stage or Early Years Unit provide an integrated and appropriate environment for our youngest children.

For those children starting in Reception Class at Birches, a series of induction visits will be arranged in the term before they enter school to help them make a happy and confident start.

All parents of our new entrants will be invited to an evening meeting where they will receive further information and have the opportunity to talk with the Headteacher and staff.





## The School Day

Nursery	-	8.30am - 11.30am (morning session) 12.30pm - 3.30pm (afternoon session)
Wraparound Care	-	11.30am - 3.30pm (on request - charges apply)
Reception, Y1, Y2	-	8.50am - 12 noon 1.10pm - 3.15pm
Y3, Y4	-	8.50 am - 12.10pm 1.10pm - 3.15pm
Birches Club	-	7.30am - 8.50am (before school - charges apply) 3.15pm - 6.00pm (after school - charges apply)

The morning session includes a 15 minute break from 10.20 - 10.35am and the afternoon session includes a 10 minute break from 2.10 - 2.20pm.

In the morning children should wait in the playground until the bell rings shortly after 8.45am. All children should be in their classrooms by 8.50am to begin the school day.

Parents are encouraged to bring their child into school during the early days in Reception Class. However, children should be given the opportunity to come in independently as they develop the confidence to do so.





## School Organisation and Pastoral Care

All children are taught in mixed ability year group classes in the care of their own class teacher who has responsibility for their education and welfare. However, it is the responsibility of the whole staff to safeguard the welfare of all children and ensure they are happy and secure. It is also the responsibility of all adults to support the acquisition of basic skills by using whatever opportunities arise.

Lessons are organised as whole class teaching, group work, or individual teaching, as appropriate for the requirements of the lesson and the needs of the child. Sometimes members of staff with particular expertise may work with children from other classes. Music is always taught by a music specialist and outdoor games by trained coaches.

All classes receive additional support from qualified teaching assistants who work under the direction of the class teacher. The youngest and less able children are given priority for extra classroom support.

The school is a recognised training establishment for student teachers and nursery nurses. Training placements are arranged in different classes throughout the school.

For the purpose of curriculum planning and delivery of the Foundation Stage Six Areas of Learning and National Curriculum Programmes of Study, classes are organised into stages:

Foundation Stage	-	Nursery	(ages 3-4)
		Reception	(ages 4-5)
Key Stage One	-	Year 1	(ages 5-6)
		Year 2	(ages 6-7)
Key Stage Two	-	Year 3	(ages 7-8)
		Year 4	(ages 8-9)

Key Stage 2 is continued at the Middle Schools through Years 5 and 6.

**"Relationships are strong and trusting.... These features impact profoundly on pupils' attitudes and achievement.... The school is highly successful in ensuring that pupils' well-being is at the heart of its work". (OFSTED - Feb 2012)**

## The Curriculum

Through our curriculum delivery we aim to develop the knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes that combine to help each child fulfil his/her potential. Our curriculum planning is designed to cover the statutory requirements of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and National Curriculum through a thematic, cross-curricular approach.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum lays down the Early Learning Goals in the 6 six areas of learning, - Communication, Language & Literacy, Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy, Knowledge & Understanding of the World, Creative Development, Physical Development and Personal, Social & Emotional Development. These areas of learning are planned for and delivered in a structured 'play' environment appropriate for the youngest children. The aim of the Foundation Stage Curriculum is to prepare children for the expectations of the National Curriculum when they move into Key Stage 1.

The National Curriculum covers the range of subjects taught from Key Stage 1 onwards. The 'core' subjects are English, Mathematics, Science, ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and Religious Education. Other 'foundation' subjects include History, Geography, Music, Art, Design Technology, Physical Education and Modern Foreign Languages.

Each subject has a nationally laid down framework, called programmes of study, that describe the teaching and learning experiences to be undertaken at each Key Stage. We combine aspects of these subjects to form a unified study of a particular theme and these are referred to as cross-curricular 'topics'. Our 'creative curriculum' planning gives a rich and exciting learning experience for all pupils.

Parents receive a summary of the learning objectives for their child's class each half term. They are encouraged to use this information to support their child's learning at home.

**"The school makes sure every pupil receives an exciting and meaningful curriculum and outstanding teaching".  
(OFSTED - Feb 2012)**

The following is a very brief outline of work undertaken in each subject:

## **English**

All aspects of English - speaking, listening, reading, writing and spelling provide the foundations for progress in all other subjects. We recognise the importance of these skills and the need to teach children to become confident with all aspects of their spoken and written language. Skills are developed throughout the curriculum. The ability to read fluently is developed using carefully structured phonics and reading programmes, supplemented by a wide variety of reading resources. Through guided, group and individual reading we aim to present reading as an enjoyable and stimulating activity and so encourage a love of literature.

## **Mathematics**

The emphasis for mathematics teaching at Birches is on skills and understanding. We use the national frameworks, complemented by published resources and teacher designed activities. Mathematical experiences include practical, mental and investigative, using a variety of apparatus. We encourage children to appreciate that mathematical applications are not only useful, but also enjoyable and fun.

## **Science**

Science is about making sense of the world by exploring and investigating. At Birches the children are encouraged to find out by 'doing'. Children make practical observations, perform simple experiments and develop their skills to predict outcomes and draw conclusions. They are given opportunities to develop fascination and wonder of the world around them.

## **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

Children are taught the skills of ICT throughout all areas of the curriculum. Word processing, data handling, problem solving and information retrieval skills are developed in a systematic way from Nursery through to Year 4. All classes have at least two computers and in addition we have a network of 10 new computers in our ICT suite. All children learn to use the Internet and E-mail facilities. ICT is not just about computers. Other resources are used to develop information and communication skills, - digital imaging, audio equipment and programmable toys. All classes from Nursery to Year 4 are taught with the aid of interactive whiteboard facilities in each classroom.

## **Design and Technology**

This is essentially a practical subject in which children make products using a variety of materials including textiles, food, construction kits, wood, card, paper and recycled materials. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of tools and equipment. They design, make and evaluate items relevant to topic work.

## **History**

We aim to stimulate interest and curiosity about the past. Children begin to learn basic facts about local history, British history and world history by experiencing a range of historical sources, artefacts and visits that help to bring history alive.

## **Geography**

From their immediate school environment and local study to the study of countries of the world, children develop geographical skills. Maps and globes are used regularly to help children develop an understanding of scale and orientation. Pupils are encouraged to consider the relationships between people, places and climates, and to develop an awareness of environmental concerns.

## **Art and Design**

This provides children with an opportunity to develop their creative and imaginative skills. Children use a variety of media to explore their ideas in texture, form, shape and colour. Creativity is given high priority at Birches as many children develop confidence and are able to show their talents through creative expression. Children are also introduced to the work of famous artists and art from other cultures.

## **Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)**

Children in Key Stage 2 learn French as part of their curriculum entitlement. This is taught in specific MFL sessions through a variety of interactive activities. Also, all children are introduced to a range of languages through daily routines - eg. taking the register in Italian, German or Spanish; travelling the world in Arts Week; celebrating different languages within school. Children receive excellent preparation for future language work at middle school.



## **Music**

Music is always taught by a music specialist, who uses her skills and expertise to develop children's musical abilities. They are given opportunities to play, sing, perform and compose. At Birches music is an integral part of creative development and all children take part actively in musical experiences. Our school performances show the very high standards that children achieve. All children in Years 1-3 learn to play the recorder and school provides violin or cello tuition for all pupils in Year 4.

## **Physical Education**

All children participate in gymnastics, dance, games and athletic activities. Years 1-4 also learn to swim at Codsall Leisure Centre pool. Children develop co-ordination, control and confidence through P.E. activities as they improve their physical skills. Our annual Sports Day is an excellent display of team and individual skills. Outdoor games is taught by qualified coaches.

## **Religious Education and Collective Worship**

We strive to achieve a positive, caring atmosphere at Birches and this is closely reflected in our teaching of Religious Education. The subject is a compulsory part of the curriculum and our teaching is based on the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus. We have a daily act of Collective Worship that is broadly Christian in character and led by a member of staff or visiting clergy. We aim to develop attitudes of understanding and tolerance towards the beliefs and customs of others through our celebrations of different faiths and festivals.

**NB:** Any parent has the right to withdraw their child from RE or Worship, but it is hoped that parents would discuss this matter with the Headteacher before coming to a final decision. If a child is withdrawn from RE or Worship appropriate alternative arrangements would be made with another teacher or adult during this non-teaching time.



## Assessment, Record Keeping and Reports to Parents

Teaching staff monitor children's progress continually in all areas of the curriculum and detailed records are kept about the physical, emotional, social and academic progress of each child from Nursery to Year 4.

Medical records and any confidential matters disclosed by parents are kept by the Headteacher.

The Reception class teacher completes a Foundation Stage Profile assessment at the end of the reception year. This assessment begins in Nursery and is progressive throughout the Foundation Stage. The learning targets identified from these early assessments will be discussed at the first parent consultation evening in the autumn term.

From 2012 a Year 1 Phonics Check will be carried out in June. This can be repeated in Year 2 if a child has not met the required standard.

At the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2), Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) are carried out and children are assessed against national targets for attainment within the National Curriculum. The individual detailed results of these assessments are included with your child's annual report at the end of Year 2. School results for 2012 are as follows:

### KS1 results 2012 and comparative national results 2011:

(Level 1 = below average, Level 2 = average, Level 3 = above average)

Test/task	Comparison	Level 1(or below)	Level 2	Level 3
Speaking and Listening	School	3	34	63
	National	13	66	21
Reading	School	13	35	52
	National	15	60	25
Writing	School	17	48	35
	National	19	68	13
Mathematics	School	7	45	48
	National	11	69	20
Science	School	3	35	62
	National	12	68	20

In Year 4 a series of 'optional SATs' are carried out to assess the progress made in Years 3 and 4, before the children transfer to Middle School to complete their Key Stage 2 programmes of study. The Middle Schools use these assessment results to ensure continuity of learning and prepare children for their end of Key Stage 2 SATs in Year 6.

In addition to these formal assessments children in Years 2, 3 and 4 are screened for reading, calculation skills and competence in spelling.

However, some children do not perform to their best in test situations and we are aware of this when interpreting test results. Ongoing teacher assessments provide a clear picture of each child's needs and progress.

Parent Consultation Evenings are held each term when parents are able to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher. The Headteacher and teaching staff are always available to meet parents at other mutually agreed times, if the need arises. Parents are asked not to see teachers first thing in the morning unless the need is urgent or an appointment has been made.

Parents receive a brief mid-year report (February) to show how their child is progressing. This is followed by a full annual report in the summer term (July). We use a grading system to show how each child's progress compares with national averages for that particular age group.



## **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

Some children may need additional support for different reasons at different stages during their time at school. Some children may have specific or particular special needs, which require special provision. Birches policy of 'inclusion' for all children, whatever their need, seeks to identify and provide suitable support within the normal classroom situation whenever possible. We are a Dyslexia Friendly School and we routinely meet the needs of dyslexic pupils through multi-sensory classroom teaching. The Education Authority's Special Educational Needs Support Service (SENS) or Psychological Services may be called upon to assist with a pupil's special requirements. A full copy of the school SEN policy is available on request.

## **Able and Talented Pupils**

Children with particular talents or outstanding ability also have special needs and may require special provision. By extending the curriculum and providing additional challenges for very able pupils we aim to successfully meet the individual needs of all our children.

## **Equal Opportunities, Disability and Race Equality**

We treat each child as a valued individual and we want every child to achieve his/her full potential by becoming a confident active learner. The school operates an equal opportunities policy, based on mutual respect and co-operation, which encompasses all aspects of school life. All staff are aware of the content and implications of disability legislation (DDA and SENDA). The needs and interests of all pupils are promoted, irrespective of gender, race, disability or social background.

**"Teaching is outstanding and ensures that pupils make rapid progress. All teachers have an excellent understanding of pupils' needs and challenge them to do as well as they can. Teachers concentrate on ensuring that every pupil, including disabled pupils and those who have special education needs, makes at least good and often excellent progress"**

**(OFSTED - Feb 2012)**



## Homework

Homework is provided throughout the school, as and when required, to support learning. Tasks include shared reading each day, weekly spellings or tables to learn and occasional assignments for writing, mathematics, science or topic work. A more formal homework programme develops as a child moves through the school, especially in Years 3 & 4. It is hoped that parents will encourage and assist their child's progress by taking an interest in activities they may be asked to do at home. The curriculum plan, which parents receive each half term, aims to help parents extend work at home for any area of the curriculum.

Our homework policy follows government guidelines for each age group:

Reception	-	occasionally
Years 1 and 2	-	1 hour a week
Years 3 and 4	-	1.5 hours a week

Generally children benefit from 10 minutes shared reading each day. We also promote the use of board games and word-play activities to encourage thinking skills, but most of all homework should be fun!

## Sex Education, Health Education and Safeguarding

There is no formal sex education programme. Life cycles are part of the science curriculum and human reproduction may be included if the need arises, when it will be dealt with sensitively as an aspect of personal growth. If any incident or question required further explanation, parents would be consulted.

Many aspects of health education are developed within our topic and science programmes. We also use every opportunity to encourage a healthy lifestyle, healthy eating and physical fitness. We have a National Healthy School Award for this work.

All adults in school are responsible for safeguarding the welfare of children and are aware of the expectations of the Children Act 2004. All adults, including volunteers, have full CRB clearance.

Through school activities we hope to raise pupils' awareness and build confidence and self-esteem so that they have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own safety.

**NB:** In the event of any concerns that a child may be at risk from abuse, the Staffordshire Child Protection Procedures will be followed and a referral will be made without parental consent.

## Extra Curricular Activities and Special Events

We take every opportunity to enrich the curriculum with an extensive range of enjoyable and exciting activities for the children. These include visits to theatres, museums, galleries, nature areas; local historical and geographical walks; visiting artists and performers; theme days or focus weeks for arts, eco, literacy, health or multicultural work; a Year 2 visit to Aberystwyth and a Year 4 residential visit to the Kingswood Centre. The children take part in Harvest presentations, Christmas productions and regular class assemblies. Year 4 also perform at their own Leavers' Evening.

Children in Years 2, 3 and 4 are able to participate in lunchtime or after school clubs, which include sport, music, dance, drama and art activities. The Parents and Friends Association also organise regular after school events for all the children.

### School Fund:

In order to support these activities we ask for **50p per week per family**.



## Rules and Discipline

We aim to promote self-discipline by raising children's awareness of their own behaviour and the effect it may have on others. We endeavour to create a friendly but well-ordered and busy school life and unacceptable behaviour is rare.

The children are made aware of our 'Golden Rules':

1. We care for everything and everyone.
2. We walk around school.
3. We are polite.
4. We tell the truth.
5. We listen to others.
6. We try our best.
7. We work together.

If a child misbehaves persistently parents are invited in to discuss the problem with the class teacher or headteacher in order that the underlying cause and an effective solution may be found.

All children and parents sign a Home-School Agreement when their child enters Reception class, which supports the aims of the school and the Golden Rules.

**NB:** In accordance with the Education Act, 1986, corporal punishment will not be administered in county and voluntary controlled school maintained by Staffordshire County Council Education Committee.

## Rewards

The most important reward for a child is praise. To become an active, motivated learner children need to know that their efforts and achievements are recognised and valued. Merit stickers are used for rewarding good work, effort and behaviour. Particular achievements are celebrated during our weekly 'Merit' and termly 'Special Achievement' assemblies when certificates are awarded. 'Class of the Week' and 'Gold Star' pupils are nominated each week and 'School Superstars' each month. Children also record their achievements in an ongoing 'Record of Achievement', which they bring home at the end of Year 4.

## School Dress

Birches has a uniform which we encourage the children to wear.

We suggest a combination of red, grey and white:

- grey trousers or skirt
- white embroidered polo shirt
- red embroidered sweatshirt/cardigan
- sensible black shoes - not trainers or trainer style

To participate fully in P.E. activities the children will need:

- elasticated pumps
- white T-shirt
- red shorts
- outdoor games kit of warmer sports clothing and trainers once a week
- swimming trunks / costume and hat (Years 3 and 4).

In the interest of safety, jewellery is discouraged.

Sweatshirts/cardigans, polo shirts, P.E. T-shirts, shorts, P.E. bags, swim hats, book bags and fleece jackets are available from Bradsports at Bilbrook.

**All items of clothing should be clearly labelled with your child's name.**

## Attendance, Absence and Lateness

We ask for your co-operation to make sure your child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Parents are requested to notify the school by **9.30am** if a child is absent through illness or for any other reason. Failure to do so will result in us operating 'First Day Contact' safeguarding procedures. If your child has regular absence or lateness the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will become involved and ultimately has the authority to issue a **fixed penalty notice**. It is advisable to take family holidays during school closures to ensure your child benefits fully from their education. However, if a holiday is arranged in school time, a holiday form should be completed. Authorisation from the Headteacher is required for any planned absence.



## **Medical Arrangements**

We prefer not to administer medicines during the school day unless absolutely necessary. If medication is needed it should be recorded and signed for at the office. Children will only be given medicines prescribed by a doctor. Asthma sufferers have responsibility for their own inhalers and these are kept with the child in class.

A member of staff qualified in first aid will be aware of the medical needs of all children in school.

The school nurse or dentist may visit school occasionally to carry out health checks. You will be informed of these visits.

## **School Meals and Snacks**

Children may have school dinners, bring sandwiches or go home for lunch, (or a combination of these). School dinners are freshly prepared and cooked on the premises in our own 'Birches Bites' kitchen, with a good choice of menu available each week. Dinners and sandwiches are eaten in the school hall and supervised by experienced lunchtime assistants. Children are encouraged to show good table manners and use a knife and fork for school dinners. Lunch boxes should include a plastic cup for drinking water or milk, (no other drinks are allowed).

From September 2012 all dinner money payments will be administered through ParentMail+Pay secure online facility. This is very convenient and easy to use. The cost of a school meal is £2.00, (£10.00 per week).

All children receive a piece of fresh fruit as a mid-morning snack and are encouraged to drink plenty of water throughout the day.

Birthday and holiday sweets are not allowed.

## **School Sports**

All children take part in two P.E. lessons each week. We aim to promote physical fitness and a sound development of physical skills, which in turn raise children's confidence and self-esteem. Physical activity and sport is encouraged whenever possible for all children. Our annual Summer Sports afternoon involves all the children in a range of activities and races. We also offer after school sports clubs for Years 2, 3 and 4. Children in Years 3 and 4 also take part in local inter-school competitions.

## Home-School Agreement

The DfE require all state schools to draw up a written 'Home-School Agreement' which all parents and pupils are requested to sign. Our home-school agreement is based on the aims and values of the school. It sets out briefly the responsibilities of the school, your responsibilities and what the school expects of its pupils.

## Transfer to Middle School

Birches staff work closely with teachers from Bilbrook and Codsall Middle Schools to ensure progression and continuity of learning is maintained as children move from Year 4 to Year 5. Regular liaison meetings are held to discuss curriculum planning, individual attainment and special education needs.

During the autumn term of Year 4 you will receive transfer information from both middle schools and the Local Authority, before you apply to the **school of your choice**.

Transfer to either Middle School is smooth and straightforward.

## Health & Safety

It is the intention of the Governors and management that the school is a safe place and that employees are aware of the Health and Safety procedures within the school.

To ensure the safety of our children we ask that parents or carers remember our safety rules when bringing children to and from school:

1. Always walk along the pedestrian footpath - not the drive.
2. Do not turn your car in the school drive or drive onto the car park.
3. Do not allow children to climb on walls, trees or railings, or run between parked cars.

## Parking

Parking is an ongoing problem, due to the location of the school in Birches Avenue. If you drive to school you are requested to park legally and sensibly, and have due regard for the needs of local residents.

## **Complaints Procedure**

The Headteacher, Staff and Governors are always willing to discuss any concerns and will quickly arrange mutually convenient appointments. In the case of urgent matters the Headteacher or deputising teacher will always be available to help. Staffordshire LA has published a document of the procedures to follow if a complaint is not brought to a satisfactory conclusion by the school. A copy of this document is available from the office.

## **Charging and Remission Policy**

The Education Reform Act (1988) restricts schools charging for activities that take place during the school day. Educational visits and extra curricular opportunities are reliant on the goodwill and voluntary contributions of parents. If financial support was not available we would have to reconsider the viability of some activities.

Charges are made for exceptional activities such as residential visits. Parents may obtain remission from charges if they are in receipt of income support.

## **Inspection of Documents**

Documents, including school policies and procedures, are available for inspection in school. If you wish to see any of these please arrange an appointment with the Headteacher.

## **Parent Support**

The whole process of education at Birches is seen as a partnership between children, parents, teachers and governors. Your support at home and in school is encouraged and valued, in order to continually improve the educational achievements of our children.

Voluntary help in school is always appreciated. If you would like to help in school by supporting in the classroom or taking part in an occasional school visit, please contact the Headteacher or your child's class teacher. For safeguarding reasons, all adult helpers in school undergo a CRB check.

## PFA

When you become a parent of Birches First School you also become a member of our Parents and Friends Association (PFA), which works to raise funds for the school. Your support would be appreciated if you are able to become involved and offer help in any way.

## Out of School Childcare

Birches Club operates each day before (7.30 -8.45am) and after (3.15- 6.00pm) school. Parents may use the club at anytime once they have registered and if places are available. Please contact Alison Green (Club Manager) on 07805383109.

Full time wraparound care or lunchtime extensions are available for Nursery age children. Please contact Nursery staff.

## Attendance Data

**Figures for 2011/2012 (up to 31.5.12 - not including Reception)**

Number on roll for at least one session	117
Number of pupil sessions	37418
Number of Authorised Absences	1255
Number of Unauthorised Absences	49
Rate of Authorised Absence	3.4%
Rate of Unauthorised Absence	0.1%

## Awards and Ofsted

The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark for high standards in literacy and numeracy (x4), the Eco-school Green Flag for environmental work (x5), Artsmark Gold for exceptional arts education (x3), Activemark for sports education (x2), National Healthy School Status (x2), Dyslexia Friendly Full Status (x2) and Investors in People (x2).

Birches was inspected by Ofsted in February 2012 and was awarded Grade 1 in all five categories. This is an exceptional achievement. Please go to [www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/ELS/124077](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/ELS/124077) to read our OUTSTANDING report.



**Finally.....**

We are proud of our school and the achievements of our children. We look forward to having you and your child as part of the Birches family.

## Glowing report heaps praise on school



**Headteacher Jude Willcox, fellow staff members and school pupils celebrate their Ofsted result**

Staff and pupils at a South Staffordshire school are celebrating after being rated as outstanding by Ofsted.

Birches First School in Codsall was visited by a team of inspectors at the end of February and the glowing report has now been released.

The school in Birches Avenue, which has 188 pupils, was praised for its "highly effective headteacher", "outstanding teaching" and that pupils in all year groups make "rapid progress".

Headteacher Jude Willcox said today: "We are all extremely proud Ofsted has recognised the exceptional

**Report by Laura Blyth**

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quality of teaching and learning at Birches.

"The new inspection framework that came into operation in January makes it even more difficult to reach Grade 1 in any aspect of the inspection and Birches was awarded Grade 1 in all five categories.

"The children, staff and parents all deserve this wonderful affirmation of everything we do." Every aspect of the school was rated outstanding, includ-

ing overall effectiveness, achievement of pupils, quality of teaching, behaviour and safety of pupils, as well as leadership and management.

In the report by lead inspector Andrew Stafford, it states: "Pupils and their parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive in their praise for the school. Teaching is outstanding and ensures that pupils make rapid progress." He went on to write: "All teachers have an excellent understanding of pupils' needs and challenge them to do as well as they can."

## **School Holidays 2012-13**

### **Autumn Term 2012**

Training Day	-	Monday 3 September
School opens	-	Tuesday 4 September
Training Day	-	Friday 26 October
Half-Term	-	Monday 29 October to Friday 2 November (inclusive)
School Closes	-	Friday 21 December

### **Spring Term 2013**

School opens	-	Monday 7 January
Half-Term	-	Monday 18 February to Friday 22 February (inclusive)
School closes	-	Thursday 28 March
Training Day	-	Thursday 11 April
Training Day	-	Friday 12 April

### **Summer Term 2013**

School opens	-	Monday 15 April
Bank Holiday	-	Monday 6 May
Half-term	-	Monday 27 May to Friday 31 May (inclusive)
Training day	-	Monday 3 June
School closes	-	Friday 19 July

**NB** – school is closed for children on training days

## School Staff – 2012-13

### Teaching Staff:

Mrs. J. Willcox	-	Headteacher
Miss. J. Graham	-	Assistant Head/Year 4
Miss. S. Varricchione	-	Assistant Head/EYFS
Mrs. K. Cain	-	Year 1
Mrs. J. Smithson & Mrs. C. Pennington	-	Year 2
Miss. K. Wilson	-	Year 3
Miss. K. Gorman	-	Nursery
Mrs. J. Wilkes	-	Special Educational Needs – PT*

### Support Staff:

Mrs. J. Butler	-	Nursery Supervisor (maternity leave)
Mrs. J. Campbell	-	Nursery Assistant – PT*
Mrs. J. Latham	-	Wraparound/ Nursery Assistant – PT*
Miss. K. Jones	-	Teaching Assistant
Mrs. L. Birch	-	Teaching Assistant
Mrs. V. Mason	-	Teaching Assistant
Miss. M. Rayson	-	Teaching Assistant – PT*
Mrs. L. Wootton	-	Teaching Assistant – PT*
Mrs. R. Roberts	-	Teaching Assistant – PT*
Mrs. V. Buckley	-	Office Manager
Mrs. N. Bell	-	Administrative Assistant
Mrs. J. Blakeway	-	Catering Supervisor
Mrs. S. Mcleod	-	Catering Assistant
Mrs. M. Ash	-	Senior Lunchtime Supervisor/Senior Cleaner
Mrs. H. Harrold	-	Lunchtime Supervisor
Mrs. C. Saunders	-	Lunchtime Supervisor
Mrs. S. Causer	-	Lunchtime Supervisor
Mrs. L. Stokes	-	Lunchtime Supervisor
Mrs. C. Wardley	-	Cleaner
Mr. A. Blower	-	Site Supervisor
<b>Birches Club:</b>	-	Alison Green (Manager)
		Louise Cooper
		Sarah Causer
		Celia Banks
		Emma Thompson-Wiggin

## School Governors – 2012-13

Mrs. V. Eastup	-	Chair / Community Governor
Mr. P. Turner	-	Vice-Chair / Community Governor
Mr. S. Jennings	-	Community Governor
Miss. S. Aldridge	-	Parent Governor
Mr. G. Cresswell	-	Parent Governor
Mrs. S. Baumforth	-	Parent Governor
Mrs. A. Welsh	-	Parent Governor
Mr. T. Moran	-	Parent Governor
Mrs. H. Blunt	-	L.E.A. Governor
Mrs. D. Vernon	-	L.E.A. Governor
Mr. K. Manning	-	L.E.A. Governor
Mrs. J. Willcox	-	Headteacher
Miss. J. Graham	-	Teacher Governor
Mrs. L. Birch	-	Non-teaching Governor