

Birchwood Avenue Primary School's News



Issue 5, January 2026



Dates for your diary

Spring Term 2026	
Wb 26 th January	Bikeability UKS2
30 th January	Gymnastics workshops
4 th February	Y5 visit new M&S store
Wb 9 th February	Mental Health Week
6 th , 13 th , 27 th Feb	Year 5 at Onslow
16 th -20 th February	Half-term
26 th Feb	Y4 PE at Onslow
5 th March	World Book Day
5 th , 12 th , 19 th March	Y4 PE at Onslow
Wb 9 th March	Assessment Week
8 th -11 th March	Year 6 residential
16 th March	INSET day
26 th March	Pupil reports sent home
27 th March	Term ends @1:30pm
Summer Term 2026	
13 th April	Children return to school
4 th May	Bank Holiday
25 th -29 th May	Half-term
21 st July	Term ends @1:30pm

Please check the school diary on our website for updates for school events. This calendar can be synced to your phone.

[Calendar | Birchwood Avenue Primary School](#)

Message from Miss Hall

I am delighted to share an update on the enriching experiences our pupils have been enjoying over recent weeks. Our school continues to provide diverse and stimulating opportunities that support both academic learning and personal development.

Our pupils have been fortunate to participate in a range of engaging activities that extend beyond traditional classroom learning. The recent pantomime brought joy and excitement, offering a delightful theatrical experience that sparks imagination and creativity. This cultural exposure is crucial in developing pupils' broader understanding of performing arts.

Year 6 pupils have been deeply immersed in historical learning through an interactive World War II workshop. This session provided a connection to significant historical events, enabling pupils to develop a nuanced understanding of our national heritage. Such experiential learning approaches are instrumental in making history come alive for our pupils.

We are committed to raising pupil aspirations, as evidenced by the 'Dare to Aspire' workshops. These targeted sessions are designed to broaden pupils' horizons, encouraging them to dream big and understand the potential pathways available to them in their future educational and professional journeys.

We have also been investing in our school environment, with new flooring recently installed in the Key Stage 1 area. This enhancement not only brightens the learning spaces but also demonstrates our ongoing commitment to providing a stimulating and welcoming educational setting for our youngest pupils.

Physical education and active learning continue to be priorities, as demonstrated by our recent whole-school gymnastics workshops and the Tottenham Next Gen football sessions that have been running for the past three weeks. These activities promote physical fitness, teamwork, and skill development across all year groups.

These diverse experiences reflect our holistic approach to education, ensuring that our pupils receive a well-rounded and enriching learning journey.

Uniform



In school, there is a growing collection of uniform with no names on. Please write your child's name or initials on the label of their uniform. This is costly and 'lost' uniform can be avoided.



I am also seeing too many children wearing white or brightly coloured trainers. Please be reminded that black shoes or black trainers are the expectation for school footwear.

S Please follow the link below for
E a wealth of resources, websites
N etc. Miss James has created this
D page of useful information.

[Support for Parents of Children with SEND](#)

Hatfield Foodbank

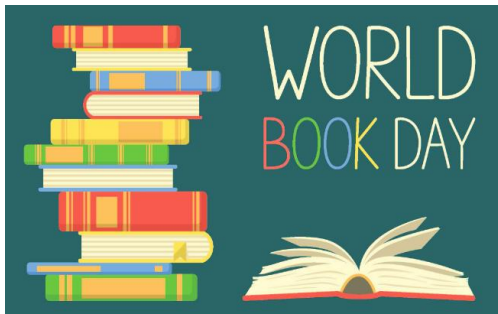
If you are experiencing difficulties, please speak to Miss Hall or Miss James and we will support you with getting a code to access the Foodbank.

Panto Time

We started the term off with a whole school panto, 'Beauty and the Beast'. Lots of noise, laughter, dancing and interaction from the children and the staff.



World Book Day 2026 Thursday 5th March



We will be celebrating this in school. There will be some information sent home in the next week or so.

Do you need to update your contact details?



If you have changed any of your contact details recently, please could you update the office with your new contact details. These may include:
Mobile number
Home address
Email address
Emergency contact details

There are some pupils who only have one emergency phone contact on their records. Please provide the office with a second contact if necessary.

Year 6 History WW2 Workshop

We took part in some role play handling artefacts from the home front to explain how they were used, explored an evacuee suitcase, learned how to 'milk a cow', and put out a fire using a stirrup pump.



Children's Mental Health Week Celebration

We will be marking this week from 9th to 13th February in school, featuring comprehensive workshops and a special assembly. This event is critically important as it addresses the growing mental health challenges faced by pupils, focusing on creating a supportive environment where every young person feels valued and understood.

The theme, "This is My Place," will explore the profound impact of belonging on mental well-being. Research consistently shows that pupils who feel connected to their school community are more resilient, have better academic outcomes, and are less likely to experience anxiety and depression.

The workshops will provide pupils with essential coping strategies, emotional intelligence skills, and opportunities to discuss mental health openly. By involving parents, we aim to create a holistic support network that extends beyond the school walls.

Parents are cordially invited to participate in this significant event. Detailed information will be shared with you in an email.



MOMENTS MATTER, ATTENDANCE COUNTS.

The data below shows attendance for this term so far. It's quite concerning really in some classes. Lots of learning is missed here.

	Year 6	95.99%
	Year 3	95.07%
	Year 2	93.16%
	Year 1	92.58%
	Year 4	92.56%
	Reception	92.43%
	Year 5	91.61%

Our whole school attendance figure for the term so far is at 92.2%. This is becoming more of a concern and is significantly below the national average to date which stands at 94.6%. Thank you to those of you for ensuring your child attends school daily and is punctual. There have already been

Attendance

Attendance is still a concern across the country. It is part of the government's national agenda to improve pupil attendance in educational settings.

This document was released last year; it includes a summary table of the roles and responsibilities of parents, schools and the local authority.

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

Please speak to Miss James or Miss Hall if we can support you by helping you to ensure your child is in school.

From the first day of term to the last, the small moments in a school day make a real difference to your child. #AttendanceCounts"

Safeguarding Focus

'Talking About Mental Health'

Talking to children about mental health hard sometimes: even to the point that adults can put off raising the topic, not wanting to unearth problems or discuss overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. Rather than keeping children in the dark, however, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so that youngsters feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.

In the guide below, you'll find tips on talking about mental health naturally, being open and honest and asking twice.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH 10 Conversation Starters for Parents

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.

NOS National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday



Educating Hearts and Minds

many unauthorised holidays or long weekends.

Term Time Holidays

Families are reminded that Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations, which came into effect on 1st September 2013, removed all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Contact us...

admin@birchwoodavenue.herts.sch.uk

01707 262503

[@birchwoodavesch](https://www.birchwoodavenue.herts.sch.uk)



1 LISTEN
This sounds obvious, but it is not something we are always great at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgements and shows interest in what is being said. If your child feels listened to in the 'smallest of problems' they will become confident that you will listen when the 'biggest of problems' arise.

2 ASK TWICE
The campaign from time to change is great. <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/support-ask-twice-campaign>. Be tenacious about your child's wellbeing. Children instinctively know when your questions and support come from a place of wanting to help and care.

3 THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION
This advice also relates to the first point. If your child can ask you any questions about the smallest of things and you listen and answer without shaming or belittling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.

4 BE OPEN AND HONEST
Children appreciate honesty, particularly if you are having to share information or talk about a difficult subject. For example, you may be talking about death or loss; 'It's very sad that Nana has died' or 'I feel sad that Nana has died'. How you talk about a subject will differ depending on their age and developmental maturity. Talking about death to a younger child for example will be different to that of an older teen, as their experience and understanding of death is different.

5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP
Assess the severity of the mental health difficulty you are noticing. Is the difficulty making it hard for your child to function regularly throughout everyday life? How frequently is your child affected, how long does it last and how persistent is it? Are they having problems controlling the difficulty? Talk to your child about your concerns and that it is likely they will need further support beyond family and friends.

6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY
Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about our feelings and those of others is normalised. If the usual 'are you ok?' is not creating an opportunity for dialogue then say something like 'I know when something like that has happened to me I felt like this... is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something else?'

7 EMPATHISE
'It makes sense that you would feel this way, it is understandable'. Children often worry about things that we, as adults, might see as trivial or silly. However, for them at their age and stage it is a big concern and they need our kindness and care when they show their vulnerability and share their worries.

8 HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE
Teens particularly feel that by talking about their worries or concerns that this will make things worse. Reassure your child that you will discuss a plan of action together and what may or may not need to happen next. If they are a younger child, it is likely you will need to lead the conversation and explain next steps.

9 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE
Be mindful of the language you use at home to describe and talk about mental health. Stigma often arises from misconceptions and a choice of language which is harmful. Using the word 'mental', 'man-up' or other such words in a derogatory way won't encourage your child to talk about their mental health for fear of being belittled.

10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'
Adults do not have all the answers but often children think they do. It is ok to acknowledge that what your child is experiencing is not something you have come across before or know anything about, but that you will work it out together and seek help together.

