

Birchwood Avenue Primary School's News



Issue 1, September 2025



Dates for your diary

29 th Sept- 10 th Oct	Year 3 swimming lessons
3 rd October	INSET day- school closed
8 th October	Harvest Festival @ 9:00 all welcome
9 th October	Year 5- St Ethelreda's Church. Hatfield house music festival
9 th , 16 th , 23 rd October	Year 6 'Positive Minds' workshops
10 th October	Year 3- Amwell Nature Reserve
16 th October	Y6- height & weight checks, school nursing service
17 th October	Y3- Quarry visit to school
20 th October	Parent Consultations
21 st October	Parent Consultations
27 th October- 31 st October Half-term	
5 th November	Flu Immunisations
11 th November	New YR 2026-2027 tour
18 th November	New YR 2026-2027 tour
24 th November	Assessment Week
27 th November	Flu Immunisations
1 st December	Occasional day

Message from Miss Hall

Welcome to our first newsletter of this academic year.

It was so lovely to welcome everyone back after the summer break, which is already a distant memory! Your children have returned to school with a spring in their steps and a smile on their faces. It has been a calm and happy start to the term.

Our youngest children have settled into 'big school' and are enjoying the outside play area and all the activities which Mrs Dyos, Mrs Chalk and Mrs Cristia are planning for them. I'd like to extend a very warm welcome to all our new families and I'm sure you'll feel part of our Birchwood community very quickly.



Welcome to our new starters higher up in the school. You've all settled in beautifully and have made friends already. We are very fortunate to have only 6 spaces to fill in our school. Many schools are struggling again this academic year with pupil numbers.

I hope all our Year 6 (and some Year 5) families have been enjoying visiting the local secondary schools with their children. Just a gentle reminder that the deadline for applying for a secondary school place is 31st October 2025.

Here's to a happy and healthy (as there are generally lots of coughs and colds) autumn term. Please do not hesitate to speak to me, or another member of SLT, on the gate in the morning. If you wish to discuss something of a more confidential nature, please contact the school office and the admin team will book an appointment for you.

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](#)

9 th December	KS1 nativity @ 2:00pm
9 th December	KS1 nativity @ 5:30pm
10 th December	Christmas jumper day
11 th December	YR Christmas sing-a-long
16 th December	Rocksteady concert @ 2:30pm
17 th December	KS2 Carol Concert Time tbc
19 th December	Term ends... School closes @1:30pm
Dates for 2026	
5 th January	Return to school
16 th - 20 th February	Half-term
16 th March	INSET Day
27 th March	Term ends @ 1:30pm
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

Uniform



In school, there is already 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.

Staffing Updates



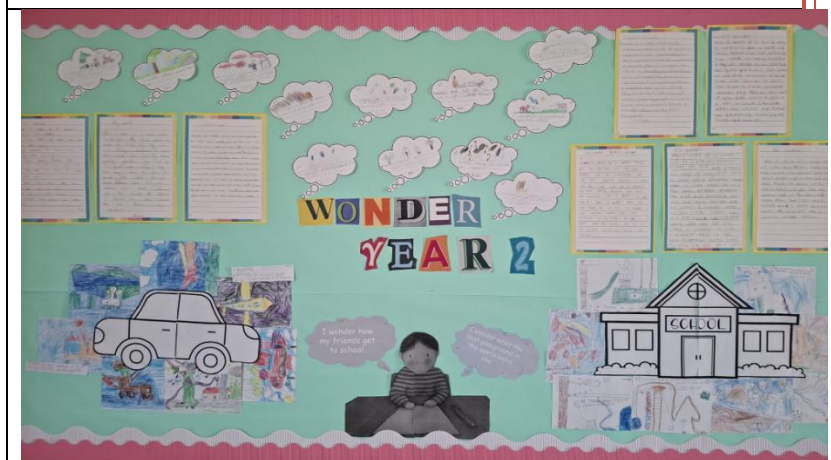
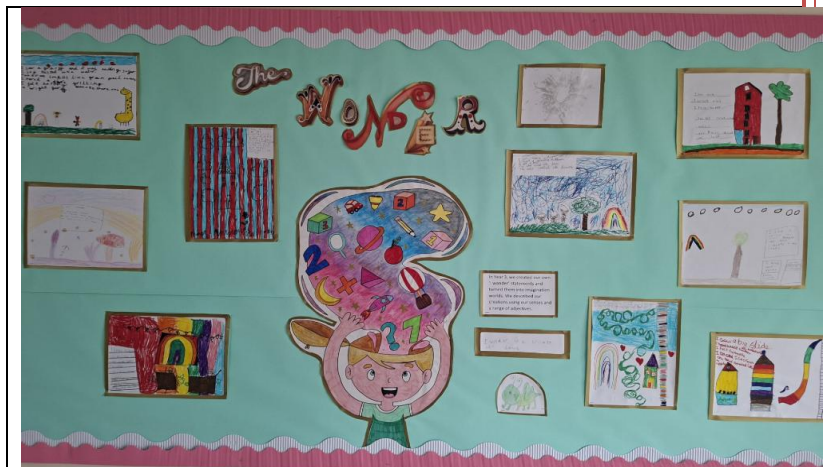
I would like to publicly welcome some new members of staff to our school.

Welcome to Mrs Rexhaj, Miss Hoy and Miss Eason to our support staff team. You play an invaluable role in our school supporting both the children and other members of staff.

Welcome to Miss Atherton, our new Year 5 teacher. It feels as though you've been with us for much longer than a few weeks! I see this as a good thing.

Our hall displays!

Each class was given a copy of the book 'The Wonder' by Faye Hanson to explore, enjoy and creatively respond to. You can see how the different year groups engaged with this text and developed their art and/or creative writing skills. These displays are in the hall if you would like to see them.



Eco-council Representatives



Congratulations to the following children who are our newly elected eco-council class representatives.

- Year 1- Matteo
- Year 2- Kristina
- Year 3- Isla
- Year 4- Kit
- Year 5- Jaiden
- Year 6- Atal

Eco-council will be completing the environmental review to identify future goals for the school environment.

We identified recycling as a focus point from last year. We will be hosting an art week using recyclables.

School Council Representatives

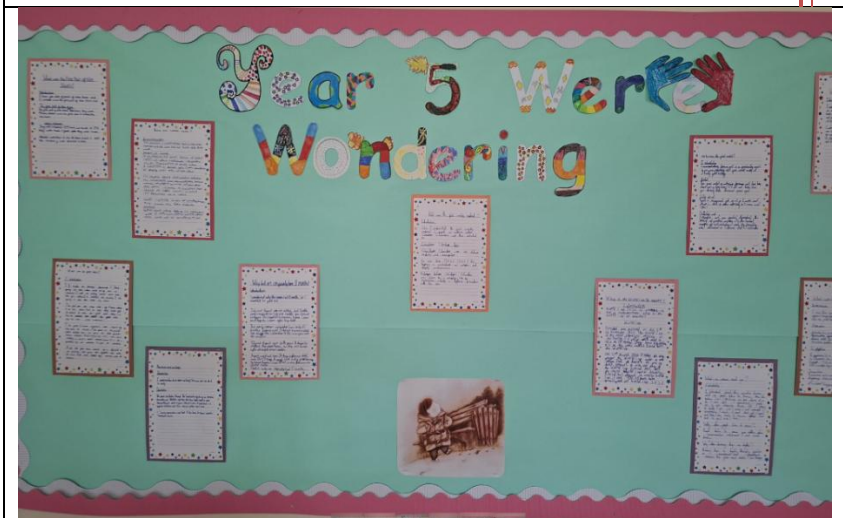


Congratulations to the following children who have been elected by their class to be their School Council Rep.

- Year 1- Alara
- Year 2- Gunveer
- Year 3- Belles
- Year 4- Arya
- Year 5- Theo
- Year 6- Denis

I'm sure you will represent the views of your classmates in a responsible and enthusiastic manner.

We will be doing a survey asking the children what they like about school and any changes they would like this year/want to introduce this year. Parliament week is also in November so we will be doing activities based around that.



5 stars- woo hoo!!!!!!

Our HCL kitchen team have done it again! Congratulations ladies and thank you for keeping our children safely and hygienically fed!





Are you able to support us please?

The theme for Black History Month UK 2025 is "Standing Firm in Power and Pride" a powerful tribute to the resilience, strength, and unwavering commitment to progress that defines the Black community across the globe. This year, the theme highlights the profound contributions made by Black people be they leaders, activists, or pioneers who have shaped history, while also looking towards a future of continued empowerment, unity, and growth.

If you have any books that would help us celebrate and promote this theme, please bring them into the office so that they can be shared with your child's class.

STEM Science Assembly

At Birchwood, we recognise the many career opportunities which link to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and mathematics). We try to incorporate these areas in the curriculum and also provide enrichment opportunities to raise aspirations and awareness of such professions. Marie Chivers, a CEO for a pharmaceutical company, visited the school last week and delivered an assembly and then a Q & A session with our older children.



'A scientist came to visit! We learnt about how she makes medicine and what she likes about being a scientist. She told us about all the different types of careers we can do if we like science.'

'I liked watching the chemistry explosion using different toothpastes. I made me want to do more science.'



Policy Update

Please be informed that there are some policies which have been updated, ratified and published on our website. These include:

First Aid Policy
Child Protection Policy
Complaints Policy and Procedures.

Link here for our policy page on the school's website.
[Birchwood Avenue Primary School - Policies](#)

There are also updated GDPR Privacy Notices for your reference.

[Birchwood Avenue Primary School - GDPR Privacy Notices](#)

Governor Corner

Governors



As the new school year begins, the Governing Board would like to warmly welcome all our families, both familiar faces and those joining us for the first time. It's always exciting to see the school buzzing with energy again, and we know the staff have been working hard to get everything ready for a great start.

We're looking forward to another fun and successful year. Whether your child is just starting out or heading into their final year, we know they'll have lots of opportunities to learn, grow, and shine.

As governors, we're here to support the school community and help make sure your children get the very best education and care. We're proud of our school and everything it stands for, and we're excited about what the year ahead will bring.

Here's to a happy, exciting, and successful year ahead.

Year 3- CEMEX Quarry Trip

This is a yearly event. The children thoroughly enjoy this, and the visits to school, from CEMEX.

Isla - "It was really good. I liked finding out about all the different textures and rocks."





Oscar - "It was fun. There were so many places to explore."

Sophia - "I liked when we saw the digger lift up all the sand."



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	96.18%
	Year 3	95.15%

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"

	Year 5	93.63%
	Year 4	91.65%
	Year 2	90.53%
	YR	87.23%
	Year 1	85.91%

Our whole school attendance figure for the term so far is at **91.5%**. This is very concerning and is well below the national average to date which stands at **95.5%**. Thank you to those of you for ensuring your child attends school daily and is punctual. There have already been 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 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

Safeguarding Focus- Snapchat



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
Snapchat's use of artificial intelligence (AI) includes features like the 'My AI' chatbot and AI-powered filters, offering interactive experiences that can be fun but also pose risks. These tools may share unfiltered or inaccurate responses, promote unrealistic beauty standards, and collect personal data. Advanced filters and disguise-style lenses can distort reality, potentially leading to manipulation, impersonation, or inappropriate content.

SCREEN ADDICTION
Snapchat boosts user engagement and daily use with features like streaks (daily Snapchat exchanges between you and a friend). When a streak's been going for a few days, users will see a 📧 emoji. The number alongside it shows the number of days, but if users miss a day and break the streak, the only way to restore it is to pay. This encourages daily use habits, and frequent notifications can keep users returning to the app even more often.

SEXTORTION
Because Snapchat's disappearing messages feature may foster a sense of safety, users may become targets of sextortion. For example, a predator may pressure someone into sending nude images, then somehow capture those images to threaten and intimidate the victim. This might involve claiming they will share the images with friends or family unless money is paid.

SNAPCHAT+
Snapchat+ is the platform's premium subscription service, offering early access to exclusive features. In June 2025, Snapchat introduced a new tier called Lane+, giving subscribers hundreds of lenses and AR experiences for creating and sharing snaps. These posts may encourage young users to spend money to exclusive content, increasing the risk of sex or feeling pressured to make in-app purchases.

ACCESSIBILITY
Snapchat is now accessible from a web browser, meaning children can use it on a laptop or without downloading the app. This can make it harder to monitor, reduce the effectiveness of parental controls, and increase the risk of unwanted communication or exposure to inappropriate content.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT
Some content on Snapchat isn't suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so even an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's direct messages feature also makes it easy for users to share explicit images on impulse – so it continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.

ACCESS THE SNAPCHAT FAMILY SAFETY HUB
Created with guidance from Common Sense Media, Snapchat has developed a family safety hub that explains how the app works and how to use its in-app protections for teens. It's recommended that you review this guidance before allowing a child to download Snapchat. Remember, the app is only intended for children aged 13 and over.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSIONS
Snapchat's risks can be easier to handle if you nurture an open dialogue. Talk about scams and blocklists before letting children sign up. If they're lined up to encourage them to tell you immediately. Talk openly and non-judgmentally about sexting, emphasising its inherent risks. Furthermore, explain how popular the platform can have harmful consequences.

BLOCK AND REPORT
If a stranger connects with a child on Snapchat and makes them feel uncomfortable by pressuring them to send or receive unwanted or inappropriate images, the child can tap the three dots on that person's profile to report or block them. There are options to advise only they're reporting that user, with a tailored reporting section under the 'Harassment and Sexual Content' category. In this category, there's the option to report somebody for threatening to leak sexually explicit images, or 'stole'.

USE PRIVACY SETTINGS TOGETHER
Sit down with the children in your care and explore Snapchat's privacy section as a shared activity. You can help them adjust who can contact them, view their stories, or see their location on Snap Map. It's a good opportunity to explain privacy settings are safer than others, reinforcing their understanding of online boundaries. Encourage them to regularly review these settings, especially after app updates or changes in their friendship groups.

If you specifically have a safeguarding concern, please contact Miss Hall, Miss James or Ms Swash.

Alternatively, you can still contact Children's Services directly on 0300 123 4043.

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.

Contact us...

admin@birchwoodavenue.herts.sch.uk

on their records. Please provide the office with a second contact if necessary.

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

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



01707 262503



[@birchwoodavesch](#)

