

# Birchwood Avenue Primary School's News



Issue 2, October 2025



## Dates for your diary

10 <sup>th</sup> November	Odd Socks Day
11 <sup>th</sup> November	New YR 2026-2027 tour
14 <sup>th</sup> November	Children in Need
18 <sup>th</sup> November	New YR 2026-2027 tour
24 <sup>th</sup> November	Assessment Week
24 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 1 & Year 2 class trip
27 <sup>th</sup> November	Flu Immunisations
1 <sup>st</sup> December	Occasional day
9 <sup>th</sup> December	KS1 nativity @ 2:00pm
9 <sup>th</sup> December	KS1 nativity @ 5:30pm
10 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas jumper day
11 <sup>th</sup> December	YR Christmas sing-a-long
16 <sup>th</sup> December	Rocksteady concert @ 2:30pm
17 <sup>th</sup> December	KS2 Carol Concert Time tbc
19 <sup>th</sup> December	Term ends... School closes @1:30pm
<b>Dates for 2026</b>	
5 <sup>th</sup> January	Return to school
16 <sup>th</sup> - 20 <sup>th</sup> February	Half-term
16 <sup>th</sup> March	INSET Day

## Message from Miss Hall

Welcome back after what I hope has been a restful half-term. As always, your children have been very busy and have taken part in a range of learning and enrichment activities.

At Birchwood Avenue, we're excited to be introducing metacognition as a whole-school approach to support children's learning and personal development. Metacognition simply means "thinking about our thinking" — helping pupils to understand how they learn, plan their approach to tasks, monitor their progress, and reflect on what works well. By teaching these strategies explicitly across all year groups, we aim to build confident, independent learners who can tackle challenges with resilience and self-awareness. You'll hear more about this in upcoming newsletters and see it in action in classrooms and home learning.



Year 2 - We have been focusing on thinking out loud, this involves talking through thought processes and verbalising what we want to write before we put pencil to paper.

Year 6 - We have been really focussing on the purpose for our writing: what we want the reader to know and how we want them to feel.

Year 3 - We have been focusing on 'talk'. Learning our stories through actions and recall as well as ensuring we use sentence stems to verbalise our ideas in maths.

## Staffing Updates

We have a new teaching assistant in Reception Class. Miss Webster is replacing Mrs Cristia who left our school before half-term. I would like to thank Mrs Cristia for all her hard work and commitment to ensuring our youngest children have the best possible start to their school life.

Welcome to Birchwood, Miss Webster and we look forward to working with you.



27 <sup>th</sup> March	Term ends @ 1:30pm
13 <sup>th</sup> April	Children return to school
4 <sup>th</sup> May	Bank Holiday
25 <sup>th</sup> -29 <sup>th</sup> May	Half-term
21 <sup>st</sup> July	Term ends @1:30pm

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### 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.

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### Black History Month

During October, each class took part in activities celebrating black History Month.

Year 2 learnt about famous artwork, and replicated it using animals as their focus.



### Year 3 Swimming Lessons



The children did exceptionally well with their swimming lessons Hatfield Pool. Here's what they had to say:

Elanor - I liked learning how to swim the breaststroke and do dolphin kicks.

Ali - I really liked doing the rescue and learning how to stay safe in the pool.

Reggie - It was so much fun; I learnt how to swim backwards.

Patrick - We got to jump in the pool. That was amazing!

### Fire Engine Visit

Our reception class had a surprise visit from some of our local firefighters. They were incredibly excited when the fire engine came in to our grounds. All the children were able to sit inside and have a go with the hose. The children have been learning about 'people who help us'.





Year 3 - We looked at famous black people from history to modern day before focusing on calypso music. We listened to a range of songs before looking closely at the scores.

Year 6 learned about Paul Stephenson and the Bristol Bus Boycott. We then created our own poster or flag to represent what the theme 'Power and Pride' mean to us. Some of us used the colours red, black and green, which are often used to symbolise blood, people and land.



### Curriculum Focus- Writing

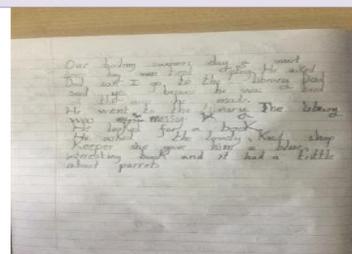
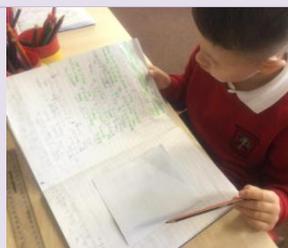
Here's a glimpse at what some of the year groups have been doing in their English lessons.

Reception Class have been developing their fine motor skills and having fun in their learning environment.



Year 2 have been learning about a boy who reads a book about butterflies.

'It's a really good story. The butterflies fly out of the magic book'.



Year 3 have been reading 'The King Who is Afraid of the Dark'. The children have performed the story, learning actions for each part to help with remembering the story sequence. We then had a go at creating our own versions of the story map before writing up our new stories.



Year 4 have been investigating the anglerfish in order to create and write non-chronological reports on the deep-sea creature. I'm sure they can impress you with some facts.

### Year 6

Warning! A range of deadly and mischievous creatures have been spotted at Birchwood Avenue Primary School!

Adriel - I really enjoyed all the drawing we got to do and how we described the different creatures in a lot of detail in our books.

## Sporting Events Update

### Boys' Football

Abu - Last time we lost 8-0 against Countess Anne but we managed to reduce that by 6. I think we should train together at lunch times to get to know each other better and how we work together. Communication is really important.

Luca - I think we did well because a lot of the year 5s knew how to play in a game because they had been watching our school matches since they were in year 4. Also I think that year 6 have started cooperating in sports games more since year 5.

### Girls' Football

Girls are looking to open their league with a tournament taking place on the 6<sup>th</sup> November at De Havilland Primary School.

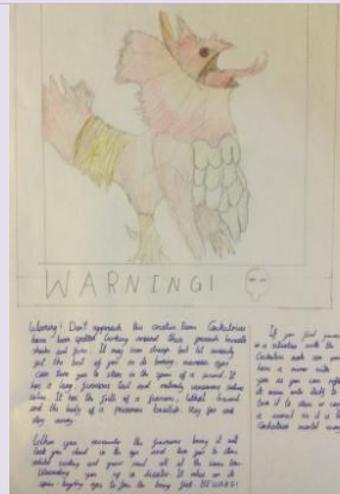
**S** Please follow the link below for a wealth of resources, websites etc.  
**E**  
**N** Miss James has created  
**D** this page of useful information.

## Support for Parents of Children with SEND

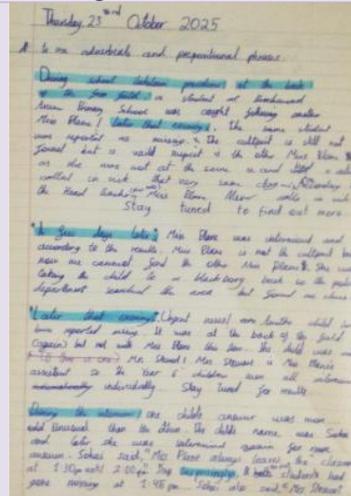
**MOMENTS MATTER, ATTENDANCE COUNTS.**

The data below shows attendance for this term so far. It's quite concerning

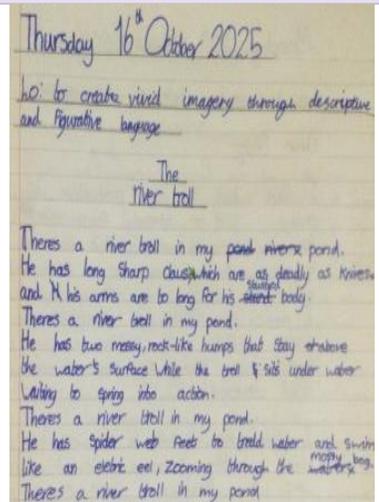
Lola - I like that we got to write freely and how we described the creature's actions and how they behaved.



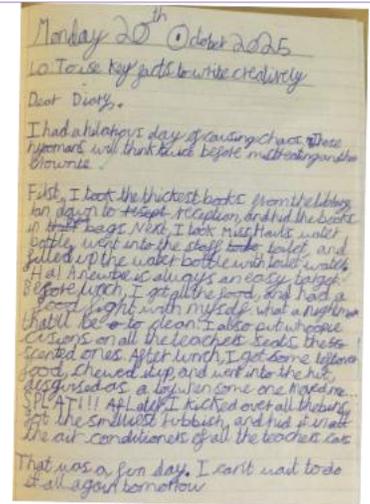
Lethal, Medusa-like cockatrice spotted on school grounds!



A radio report about a rogue trickster 'black phooka' spotted on school grounds.



A river troll poem.



A diary entry of a boggart, causing mischief in the classroom.

## 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 \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

really in some classes. Lots of learning is missed here.

	Year 3	96.65%
	Year 6	95.48%
	Year 5	93.72%
	Reception	93.36%
	Year 4	93.2%
	Year 2	90.67%
	Year 1	86.59%

Our whole school attendance figure for the term so far is at **92.5%**. This is still a concern and is below the national average to date which stands at **95.2%**. 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.

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## 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:

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”*

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## Safeguarding Focus- School Avoidance

**What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SCHOOL AVOIDANCE**

School avoidance refers to reduced attendance or non-attendance at school by a child or young person. In 2022-23, more than one in five children in England were found to be absent from school over 10% of the time. This guide focuses on school avoidance with an emotional basis, offering expert mental health advice. However, it's important to remember that school avoidance is a hugely subjective experience which requires a tailored, individual approach.

**UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL AVOIDANCE**

**REASONS FOR ABSENCE**  
School avoidance is sometimes underpinned by several factors rather than one single cause. This could include something going on for the child or young person within the family or at school. A child may have caring responsibilities at home, for instance, or a change in family dynamics; bullying and friendship difficulties at school; pressure to achieve in schoolwork and exams; or moving from primary school to secondary school.

**PATTERNS OF ABSENCE**  
You may notice patterns in regular absences or children regularly expressing that they don't want to attend school (particularly being reluctant to leave home on school days). If a child or young person is neurodiverse, there is some evidence to suggest there are more aspects of school life which can cause distress – such as changes in the environment, changes of routine and sensory stimuli.

**COMPLAINTS ABOUT PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS**  
There may be an increase in a child or young person's complaints about physical symptoms, particularly on school days or the evening before school. These could include tummy aches, headaches, or saying they feel ill when there doesn't appear to be a medical cause. Always check with the GP first to rule out medical causes or illness.

**IMPACT OF SCHOOL AVOIDANCE**

**LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**  
School refusal can negatively impact a young person's learning and development. Attending school on a regular basis not only supports academic attainment but is also important for the development of key life skills and the growth of children and young people as citizens.

**LONG-TERM OUTCOMES**  
The difficulties associated with school non-attendance can be far reaching and may have a negative impact on long-term outcomes. It may, for example, lead to reduced future aspirations, poor emotional regulation, mental health difficulties, limited academic progress and restricted employment opportunities.

**CYCLE OF ABSENCE**  
Consistent absences may contribute to sustained school avoidance over time. Further to this, the longer a pupil is out of education, the more likely it is that there is a rise in their ongoing need to avoid the activity making them anxious – increasing their desire to stay at home.

**Advice for Parents & Educators**

**WORK TOGETHER**  
If there's a concern about a child's absence and emotional wellbeing, it's important that there is clear communication and a consistent approach between the child's parents and the school, so you can take a child-centred approach together towards a plan of support or reintegration. This ensures a consistency of approach from both home and school, creating better outcomes for the child.

**MANAGE OVERWHELMING FEELINGS**  
Acknowledge the child's worries, listen and discuss coping strategies together to help them manage difficulties. These could include mindfulness, deep breathing or going for a walk. This helps them understand that you are working together towards a common goal, and that these strategies can be used when bigger feelings arise.

**FOLLOW REGULAR ROUTINES**  
Children can benefit from a regular and consistent routine. This could be a morning routine, from waking up and having breakfast through to getting dressed, packing their bag and leaving the house. A consistent evening routine which is calm and spent away from screens can also give children much needed predictability and familiarity. Schools can help create a timetabled routine for the child's school day, if required.

**RECOGNISE POSITIVE STEPS**  
Drawing attention to a child's successes – be they big or small – can help to give them some much-needed confidence and motivation. Celebrate these daily victories – such as getting out of bed on time or completing school work – and don't hesitate to let the child know when you're impressed or proud of them. Such an approach can go a long way.

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.

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

*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](mailto:admin@birchwoodavenue.herts.sch.uk)



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