

# Birch Church of England (VA) Primary School

WB 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Edition 16



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Dear All,

Firstly everyone, I hope you all had a great Christmas break and came back ready for the new term. Can I thank everyone for their kind gifts, cards and thoughtful messages to staff – even Buddy had a few Christmas cards!

This week, the children have been getting used to the new term – the week by week plan through the term will be on the website in Class Pages by the end of the week. Key stage 1 have a new Topic of ‘Once upon a Time’ -and KS2 are starting this term with a geography focus on ‘Global Citizens’.

Also, this term, Y4,5 and 6 are starting their journey to be ‘Agents of Change’. The focus for the half term will be ‘Be Yourself’. To collect the ‘Be Yourself’ certificate by the end of the half term, they are asked to complete some activities around knowing and celebrating themselves and their uniqueness; helping others be confident in themselves or simply some self-care and self-reflection activities. They are asked to complete 3 activities by the end of the half term and their Agents of Change posters (which they brought home last half term) can help guide their ideas. In Spring 2, the focus will change to activities for the ‘Shout Out Loud’ certificate.

This week also saw Buddy have his day of training to start building up his role as a School Dog Mentor. As he is still very young, this role will build gradually. Much of the day was really about training myself and Mrs Christopherson to be handlers and training us to teach both the dog and the children. We also learnt a lot about how to look after the welfare of Buddy as he works in school. It was a really interesting day where the neuro-science of the effect pets on people’s well-being was explained. Class 4 were the first class to have a brief visit from Buddy The School Dog Mentor and were great. They learnt about how to be ‘Buddy Ready’ – a phrase that I anticipate becoming more widespread over the coming months. I have included some photos of Buddy engaged in his training and wearing his smart new work outfit – he passed his assessment with flying colours!

**TOYS ON BAGS:** toys from home have never been allowed in school – they just cause problems. As I explained last term, they now need to disappear altogether from school bags as Buddy begins his official duties. Many thanks.

**SPORTING SUCCESS:** I would like to end the news for this week by saying a huge well-done to our very own Mrs Daniel who not only cooks lunches for everyone each day but is also an expert horse rider. She has qualified to compete in Dressage at the Hickstead– an international Dressage Festival. Knowing very little about horses and competitive events with horses, I had to look this up! AI tells me that Hickstead is a ‘premier equestrian venue with unique courses’ and ‘one of the world’s leading equestrian venues hosting top national and international events’. We are very proud of Mrs Daniels’ sporting success!

## **NEXT WEEK:**

All tuition groups have now started again.

**MONDAY:** Football club starts – but only until 4:00pm due to the light

**TUESDAY:**

9:30: School Tours for Reception 26 – please share with people in your networks who are looking for school places next year.

Y3/4 archery competition – the children involved have had a letter so please check that we have had responses

**FRIDAY:**

Classes 1 and 2 Forests schools – second group. Please make sure the children are wearing/ have brought appropriate clothing for the weather. Gloves, hats, long trousers, waterproofs and appropriate shoes or boots are really part of the PPE for Forest Schools

Please find attached, a Wake-Up Wednesday leaflet on the subject of AI toys. I encourage you to have a look at this important information. Also attached, is information about the Winter Reading challenge organised by your local library. Please get involved!

Best wishes,  
Rebekah May  
(Headteacher)

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:**

| WEEK BEGINNING                            | DAY       | EVENTS  |
|---|-----------|---|
| WB 12 <sup>th</sup><br>January            | Monday    | Football Club starts again – until 4:00 pm until further notice   |
|   | Tuesday   | 9:30 School Tour for Reception September 2026<br>Y3/4 archery – letter for specific children sent   |
|   | Wednesday |   |
|   | Thursday  | Y1/2 cricket event – letter for specific children sent<br>Last day for admissions for September 2026 via ECC admissions   |
|   | Friday    |   |
|   | SATURDAY  | <b>POND TASK/ GROUNDS DAY: CANCELLED</b> – looking for an alternative date which we will share ASAP   |
| WB 19 <sup>th</sup><br>January            | Monday    |   |
|   | Tuesday   |   |
|   | Wednesday | Y3/4 Cross Country – team will receive a letter   |
|   | Thursday  |   |
|   | Friday    |   |
| WB 26 <sup>th</sup><br>January            | Monday    |   |
|   | Tuesday   |   |
|   | Wednesday | Maths calculation workshop after school for parents   |
|   | Thursday  |   |
|   | Friday    |   |
| WB 2 <sup>nd</sup><br>February            | Monday    |   |
|   | Tuesday   |   |
|   | Wednesday |   |
|   | Thursday  | Y5/6 Sportshall Athletics   |
|   | Friday    | PROVISIONAL Y6 FOREST SCHOOL AT LAYER BRETON HEATH<br>PROVISIONAL PAFA MOVIE NIGHT  |
| WB 9 <sup>th</sup><br>February            | Monday    | PROVISIONAL Y3/4 football tournament  |
|   | Tuesday   | Safer Internet Day 2026   |
|   | Wednesday |   |
|   | Thursday  |   |
|   | Friday    | PAFA ‘Break the Rules’ Day  |
| Key dates to note for Spring/ Summer Term |           | <u>Spring 1: 5<sup>th</sup> January – 13<sup>th</sup> February</u><br>Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> Feb Non-Pupil Day<br>RIVERS WALKS FOR CLASSES 3,4 and 5 are now planned for SPRING 2<br>Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> January – Maths Calculations Workshop<br><u>Spring 2: 24<sup>th</sup> Feb- 27<sup>th</sup> March</u><br><u>Summer 1: 13<sup>th</sup> April – 22<sup>nd</sup> May</u><br><u>Summer 2: 1<sup>st</sup> June- 17<sup>th</sup> July</u><br>Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> July: non-pupil day<br>SPORTS DAY FRIDAY 19 <sup>th</sup> June |

WB 22<sup>nd</sup> JUNE Y6 SECONDARY SCHOOL VISIT DAYS (25<sup>th</sup> JUNE for many schools)  
PROVISIONAL KS 2 SHOW: afternoon Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July, Evening Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July  
PROVISIONAL Reception 2026 home visits Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July, Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July  
THURSDAY 16<sup>th</sup> JULY: LEAVERS TEA FOR Y6 and FAMILIES

PHOTOS FROM THIS WEEK: SCHOOL DOG MENTOR TRAINING, SNOW PICTURES!





