

Birch Church of England (VA) Primary School

WB 19th January 2026

Edition 18



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Dear All,

This week has seen a very determined group of Y3 and 4 children participate in a cross country competition where Mr Turnbull says they were brilliant and showed great spirit. It was, of course, very wet for their running event but they managed the difficult conditions like champions! Well done Poppy E, Poppy S and Lennie particularly for some very good top 25 places.

Also this week, KS1 have continued their journey into traditional tales with class 1 exploring The Three Little Pigs and Class 2 looking at versions of Red Riding Hood. KS2 have continued their Talk for Writing unit, learning to tell the story of Aladdin story, before they begin to change the tale and create their own version.

Thank you everyone for making sure children have their coats this week. Please just keep on with this – it looks like it may be a wet Spring Term this year.

NEXT WEEK:

TUESDAY: There are still places at Gym Club after school if anyone is interested

WEDNESDAY: PARENT WORKSHOPS – generally these are maths workshops and SATS in Y6

COMING UP:

STEM leaders in Y5 and 6 will be starting their club with KS1 towards the end of this half term

MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS will be planning some activities for children in Children's Mental Health week (wb 9th February)

ECOBUBBLES will be sending out a pre-order form as soon as possible – they would appreciate any donations of clean 1000ml or 500ml plastic bottles with lids. Please drop them off in the office or with me.

SPRING TERM SCHOOL COUNCIL will be talking to the children about their favourite school meals to help us make some menu changes after half term – new menus will be available WB 9th February.

FOREST SCHOOL TASTERS FOR Y3,4, 5: I am planning a couple of taster sessions for these year groups. Y3/4 would be this term and Y5 potentially in the summer term. Please look out for an email with dates and details Y3/4 parents.

DIGITAL LEADERS: We are looking forward to welcoming Thurstable's team of pupil DIGITAL LEADERS into school on Wednesday 11th February. They will be working with Y5 and 6 on safety and parents are invited into the hall at 3pm to see what Y5 and 6 have been up to and for parents to have a chance to meet and chat to the Digital Leaders about aspects of online safety.

Finally, I just wanted to highlight this change in our Educational visits policy.

Use of tracking Devices on school trips:

I have recently completed my update training as Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC). Much of this has not changed, but new guidance has been shared with regard to parents using trackers on school trips. As a result, a new line in our Educational Visits Policy has been added and approved by the Governing Body:

'The school follows the National Guidance (oepng) for Group Management (see Appendix 2) and requests that parents do not use tracking devices on school trips'

This is the section in the National Guidance which relates to trackers:

Electronic trackers, including some phone apps, can be used for tracking the location of participants. While these might be appropriate in certain circumstances, such as some remote unaccompanied expeditions, they have significant disadvantages including:

- Unreliability – electronic devices can fail, batteries can go flat, and signal coverage can be lost;
- A false sense of security;
- False alarms;
- Accidental or deliberate misuse;
- Safeguarding concerns, e.g., if an unauthorised person is able to track a child;
- A reduction in participants’ real or perceived independence, the development of which may be an aim of the visit.

Sometimes parents consider providing their child with a tracker, with or without the child’s or establishment’s knowledge. This should be discouraged, not only because of the above disadvantages, but also because it can introduce mistrust between parents and leaders, and tensions between parents who choose to use trackers and those who don’t.

Please feel free to talk to me about this if you have queries. Many thanks.

Linked to this, I am attaching the ‘Wake up Wednesday’ information on trackers as well as one on Roblox this week.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Rebekah May
(Headteacher)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

WEEK BEGINNING	DAY	EVENTS
WB 26 th January	Monday	
	Tuesday	
	Wednesday	Maths calculation workshop after school for parents
	Thursday	
	Friday	
WB 2 nd February	Monday	
	Tuesday	PROVISIONAL Y3 FOREST SCHOOL TASTER (information to be shared asap)
	Wednesday	
	Thursday	Y5/6 Sportshall Athletics – letter to come home next week
	Friday	Y6 FOREST SCHOOL AT LAYER BRETON HEATH PROVISIONAL PAFA MOVIE NIGHT
WB 9 th February	Monday	PROVISIONAL Y3/4 football tournament
	Tuesday	Safer Internet Day 2026 PROVISIONAL Y4 FOREST SCHOOL TASTER (information to be shared asap)
	Wednesday	
	Thursday	
	Friday	PAFA ‘Break the Rules’ Day
HALF TERM		
WB 23 rd February	Monday	NON PUPIL DAY
	Tuesday	PROVISIONAL Y3 FOREST SCHOOL TASTER
	Wednesday	
	Thursday	

	Friday	
WB 2 nd March	Monday	
	Tuesday	PROVISIONAL Y4 FOREST SCHOOL TASTER
	Wednesday	
	Thursday	WORLD BOOK DAY: FANCY DRESS!!
	Friday	Reports Coming Home PROVISIONAL : PAFA BINGO NIGHT
Key dates to note for Spring/ Summer Term		<u>Spring 1: 5th January – 13th February</u> Monday 23 rd Feb Non-Pupil Day RIVERS WALKS FOR CLASSES 3,4 and 5 are now planned for SPRING 2 <u>Spring 2: 24th Feb- 27th March</u> <u>Summer 1: 13th April – 22nd May</u> <u>Summer 2: 1st June- 17th July</u> Monday 20 th July: non-pupil day SPORTS DAY FRIDAY 19 th June WB 22 nd JUNE Y6 SECONDARY SCHOOL VISIT DAYS (25 th JUNE for many schools) PROVISIONAL KS2 SHOW: afternoon Monday 6 th July, Evening Tuesday 7 th July PROVISIONAL Reception 2026 home visits Tuesday 7 th July, Wednesday 8 th July THURSDAY 16 th JULY: LEAVERS TEA FOR Y6 and FAMILIES

PHOTOS: CRICKET FROM LAST WEEK, FRENCH IN CLASS 5, CROSS COUNTRY BEFORE AND AFTER!



