



'BIRCHANGER BUZZ'

'Learn to Love, Love to Learn'

Friday 16th December

This week we celebrated the Christmas season with our nativity performances by Ladybirds and Hedgehogs children, our Christingle service in church and making Christmas decorations in house groups. It was lovely to see lots of parents, grandparents and friends join the school for these events. On Thursday the whole school - pupils, staff and governors, sat down together to eat a delicious Christmas lunch.

Class Assemblies

Parents are welcome to join us in our Friday assembly each week at 2.50pm when we celebrate the achievements of the children.

Dates for Spring Term class assemblies will be arranged in January.

PTA Christmas

Our school PTA are busy preparing for our Christmas celebration after school, 3.30 – 5.30pm on Tuesday 20th December. There will be cakes, crafts, carols and of course Father Christmas in the grotto!

Pantomime

On Monday we will be taking all the children to the pantomime at the Rhodes Centre in Bishops Stortford. We leave school at 12.30 after an early lunch and will return to school at approximately 4pm. Please collect children from the classrooms as usual - we will take children into school from the coaches so everyone can be handed over to parents safely.

Parties

On Wednesday afternoon children in Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 will have their Christmas parties to celebrate the end of term. Teachers organise party games, quizzes and disco for each age group and the PTA kindly provide a party tea for the children. Children should come into school in uniform as usual and bring party clothes to change into after lunch.

Attendance

I was pleased to present 31 children with certificates for 100% attendance this term. Overall our school attendance is 96.62% which is in line with national figures. The number of pupils taking unauthorised absence has reduced and I would like to thank parents for supporting the school with this.

Regular attendance is very important to pupils' academic progress when so much learning is covered in classes each day. Where a pupil's attendance is causing concern, for example is at risk of falling below 90%, I will contact parents directly to discuss how the school can support an improvement in attendance.

Residential Visit - Autumn 2017

The Year 5 /6 residential (for pupils currently in Year 4 and 5) is being arranged for Monday 9 October to Friday 13 October 2017. Details will be given to parents in January as we need to confirm numbers and collect initial deposits by February.

Lunch booking

The current system for booking and paying for lunches online has not been effective and has caused additional work for office staff and frustration for parents. Following our complaints, our catering company TCS has decided to use a new IT company for this - 'sQuid.'

In January parents will be sent details of how to create an account with sQuid so that meals can be booked and paid for online. We want to be sure that this system is set up and working properly before we ask parents to use it so for the first two weeks of term we will be returning to a paper booking system and ask parents to pay cash direct to the school. Menu forms have been sent out today for you to return to school next week.

Emergency School Closures

Although it seems unlikely with this mild weather we do need to be prepared in case of wintry weather in the coming weeks. In the event of a school closure due to bad weather or other emergency, School closures will be published on the Essex County Council website – [essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk) The direct link is:

<http://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Dates/Pages/Emergency-School-Closures.aspx>

In the event of severe weather or other circumstances, parents should also check the school website where information regarding school closure will be updated.

Swimming

Year 2 children had their last swimming session for the year on Wednesday. After Christmas children in Year 3 will go swimming and Year 1 children will swim in the Summer Term.

Forest School

Year 1 children enjoyed hot chocolate and cooking marshmallows over a fire at their last forest school session on Wednesday. After Christmas Year 2 children will be going to the woods on Wednesday mornings. Children in Reception will continue with weekly forest school all year.

Packed Lunch Boxes

Please make sure packed lunch boxes are collected from the trolley. We will have to dispose of any still left after the weekend.

Diary Dates

- School Visit to the pantomime – Monday 19th December at 1pm
- PTA Christmas Fair – Tuesday 20th December 3.30 – 5.30pm
- Christmas Parties – Wednesday 21st December

Term Dates

Autumn term on Wednesday 21st December at 3.15pm

Spring Term starts on Thursday 5th January at 8.45am

Full term dates for this year are below.

Term dates for 2017-18 can be found at

<http://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Dates/Pages/Term-Times-Holidays.aspx>

Have a lovely weekend

Helen Coop

Essex County Council School Term and Holiday Dates for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

Academic Year 2016 - 17

September 2016							October 2016							November 2016							December 2016						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30				26	27	28	29	30	31		
							31																				

January 2017							February 2017							March 2017							April 2017						
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28					27	28	29	30	31		24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
30	31																										

May 2017							June 2017							July 2017							August 2017						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4						1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30	31			
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= Schooldays / Weekends



= School holidays



= Bank holidays



INSET days