



Happy New Year!

Welcome back. We hope you and your families had a wonderful break.

Our Topic this half term will focus on the Anglo-Saxons and the Scots. We will be learning about who the Anglo-Saxons and Scots were and when and why they invaded England. We will also be exploring some key features of life in Anglo-Saxon Britain.

If you have any questions about your child's learning or any other aspect of Birch Class life, please do not hesitate to contact me via Class Dojos or by email. Thank you for your continued support and co-operation.

Swimming for Years 3 and 4 will commence this half term.

Please note that on Wednesdays Birch class will continue to be taught by Mr Long.

Thank you for your support and co-operation.

Regards, Ms McGowan and Mr Long

**Class Teacher:** Ms McGowan/Mr Long (Wednesdays)

**Spring 1 2026 - This half term Year 4 will be learning about the following topics:**

<b>English</b>	<p>Our first focus text will be '<b>The Iron Man</b>' written by Ted Hughes and illustrated by Laura Carlin in which we will explore the devices of mystery and suspense. We will write a range of different texts-types including letters, a news article and a poem with the extended written outcome being a published narrative.</p> <p>Next, we will focus on '<b>The Selfish Giant by Oscar Wilde</b>' in which children will explore the text through a range of immersion and engagement activities and will write a range of texts, including diaries, letters, posters, reports, and their own versions.</p> <p>In Reading, we are Reading '<b>Tamarind and the Star of Ishta</b>' by Jasbinder Bilan.</p>
<b>Spelling Scheme</b>	<p>We are working very hard in school to strengthen basic skills, but we need your help to boost spellings. We have created a spelling challenge to make this fun and engaging and we are offering a whole host of rewards to motivate and encourage the children to get on board!</p> <p>All that we ask is that you help your children learn to spell the words on their challenge card. Every time they have secured a section (bronze, silver or gold), staff will check that they have indeed secured the bronze, silver or gold block and the children will receive a certificate and they can begin learning the next set of spellings.</p> <p>We are hopeful that this will be more meaningful than testing spellings weekly and by basing it on high frequency words and words commonly used in their writing, it will be more purposeful as it is being embedded not only in Literacy but across the whole curriculum.</p> <p>The children's next spelling test will take place on <b>Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026</b>.</p>
<b>Reading Records</b>	<p>The children will bring home a book from the class book corner or the school library every week, with additional opportunities to swap their book if they finish early. Please read and discuss the book with your child and support them with recording a comment about their reading in their reading record. Your child will also be able to read a range of newspapers on First News.</p>
<b>Maths</b>	<p>In Maths the children will begin the term by building on their mental arithmetic knowledge using multiplication and division. The children will have an opportunity to learn about factors, common factors, multiplying and dividing whole numbers. They will continue to apply their knowledge and skills within problem-solving contexts. Each child will learn how to count fractions and find equivalent fractions.</p> <p><b>Year 4</b></p> <p><b>Please ensure that your child knows their number bonds to one hundred. Your child must also learn all times tables and related division facts (x2, x3, x4, x5, x6, x7, x8, x9, x10, x11 and x12) — it is vital that children know these in order to progress in numeracy.</b></p>

	<p>Please encourage the daily use of <b>TTRS</b> and <b>Maths frame</b> at home. <a href="https://ttrackstars.com/">https://ttrackstars.com/</a> <a href="https://mathsframe.co.uk/">https://mathsframe.co.uk/</a></p> <p><b>Times Tables – This year the year 4 children will sit the times tables test in June 2026.</b> Please ensure that you are supporting and practicing all times tables with your child/children.</p>
<b>Science</b>	<p>Our topic this half term is Sound. We will undertake a range of investigations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify how sounds are made, associating some of them with something vibrating</li> <li>• Recognise that vibrations from a sound travel through a medium to the ear.</li> <li>• Find patterns between the pitch of a sound and features of the object that produced it</li> </ul>
<b>History/ Geography</b>	<p>Our Topic this half term will focus on the Anglo-Saxons and the Scots. The children will have the opportunity to learn how the Anglo-Saxons influenced the English language, with an emphasis on the origins of some English place names, and they will also examine and analyse artefacts from the period and draw their own conclusions about what they can teach us about life in Anglo-Saxon Britain. In addition to this they will also learn what life was like in a typical Anglo-Saxon village, what jobs people did and what the houses were like.</p>
<b>Art/Design &amp; Technology</b>	<p>This term our DT Topic will be <b>Structures: Pavilions</b>. We will be exploring pavilion structures. The children will learn about what they are used for and investigate how to create strong and stable structures before designing and creating their own pavilions, complete with cladding.</p>
<b>P.E.</b>	<p>Birch will have PE on Mondays. Your child/children will need to wear their PE kit and school jumper to school on these days. Please ensure your child/children are wearing the following kit for PE: <b>plain black tracksuit bottoms, a white t-shirt and black trainers or plimsolls</b>. PE will be taught by <b>Coach Fab</b>.</p>
<b>Swimming</b>	<p>In addition to a weekly PE lesson, as part of the PE curriculum, children in Birch class will have weekly swimming lessons at St Thomas the Apostle School SE15.</p> <p>The lessons will start from <b>Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026</b> and continue every Friday. All lessons will be taught by a professional swimming instructor and supported by a member of our school's staff.</p> <p><b>Your child will need to bring a one-piece swimming costume (for girls), a pair of swimming trunks (for boys), a towel and a swimming hat. The costume and trunks should be green, blue or black only.</b></p> <p><b>Please note that these swimming lessons are compulsory, not optional.</b></p> <p>If you have any questions or concerns about these swimming lessons, please speak to me.</p>
<b>Music</b>	<p>LKS2 will continue to have weekly ukulele lessons delivered by our peripatetic teacher Mr Thorpe.</p>
<b>Computing</b>	<p>Our topic this half term is: <b>We are musicians</b>. We will be by creating a piece of music in GarageBand.</p> <p>In this unit, pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• play music using virtual instruments</li> <li>• compose or edit tunes using the piano roll (pitch and duration) tool</li> <li>• perform electronic music using pre-recorded loops, and create their own loops</li> <li>• create a multi-track composition or performance using multiple instruments</li> <li>• give feedback to others on their compositions and performances.</li> </ul>
<b>Spanish</b>	<p>Spanish will continue to be taught every week. In this unit, the pupils will learn to develop their conversational skills via some new topics: Shopping and the Wider World.</p>
<b>R.E.</b>	<p>This term our topic will be <b>What makes me the person I am?</b> All religions and world views. We will explore: Who influences our life? 1. Who influences our life? Who or what influenced the life of St Francis? What objects are special to people in my community? What things do I care about in my community? What can I do to help improve my community?</p>
<b>P.S.H.E. &amp; Citizenship</b>	<p>Our focus this half term will be '<b>Dreams and Goals.</b>' We will also continue to develop our awareness and understanding of the school's core values: relationships, resilience, respect and responsibility.</p>
<b>Homework</b>	<p>We view homework as an integral part of the school experience. Active and successful pupil participation in homework supports our belief in how children learn best. Homework benefits pupils not only by promoting academic success, but also by providing valuable opportunities for parents and carers to become involved in their child's learning. Through regular homework, children develop responsibility, perseverance, self-discipline and time management. Most</p>

	<p>importantly, pupils build independence by completing school-related tasks with minimal direct help.</p> <p>Homework for <b>KS1 and KS2</b> will continue to be completed in homework books.</p> <p><b>Reading Homework</b></p> <p>Parents and carers are expected to record and sign their child's reading log each evening.</p> <p><b>Spelling Homework</b></p> <p>Children will be given spellings to learn based on the spelling challenges and these will be tested every three weeks. Scores will be recorded and tracked using the tracking grid and the number of spellings that are tested will vary based on children's individual needs.</p> <p><b>Homework Projects</b></p> <p>Homework projects are set half-termly and will often link with whole-school curriculum focus events.</p> <p><b>Year 4 Homework:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Spelling</li> <li>• Times tables</li> </ul> <p>Whole-school and class-based home learning projects</p>
<b>Additional information</b>	<p>Please ensure that your child attends school with <b>a bag, fresh water bottle, reading record, reading book and coat</b> every day. They should also wear the correct school uniform. Our uniform encourages a sense of belonging and is compulsory for all children from Reception Class to Year 6.</p>
<b>Key Dates</b>	<p><b>January</b></p> <p><b>Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026 – INSET Day</b></p> <p><b>Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children return to school at 8:55am</li> <li>• Extended school provision (breakfast and after school clubs) to resume</li> </ul> <p><b>Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026 – Enrichment clubs to resume</b></p> <p><b>Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026 – Year 4 Multiplication Check meeting for Parents and Carers, in Birch Class at 3:40pm.</b></p> <p><b>Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading together and reading buddies begins.</li> <li>• Swimming for Years 3 and 4 begins</li> </ul> <p><b>Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026 – Year 4 Birch Class Assembly!</b></p> <p><b>February</b></p> <p><b>Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026 – Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026 – Maths Week</b></p> <p><b>Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026 – Times table challenge</b></p> <p><b>Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSPCC Number Day (Fundraising) All pupils and staff to wear an item with mathematical symbols. Pupils to bring £1 donation to school.</li> <li>• Science workshop 9.20 – 10.00 (Ms Hopkins)</li> </ul> <p><b>Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026 – Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026 – Children's Mental Health Week</b></p> <p><b>Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026 – Poetry recital assembly</b></p> <p><b>Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026 – Last day of half term</b></p>