



Birtenshaw School

NEWSLETTER

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Issue number 8

Ofsted

The letter began, "Following my telephone call today, I am writing on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm that your school will be inspected from 12 to 13 November 2009"

We had undertaken a lot of development work in a very short time – probably a year's work within the first term – thankfully this was positively viewed in an Inspection that was thorough, rigorous, fair and accurate in its resultant report.

The online Self Evaluation judgements of the school were agreed on by the Inspector in the vast majority of key areas, and recommendations for further improvement were already identified within the school's own draft Improvement Plan. Eight key areas were judged as good, with Care and

Guidance and Support judged as almost outstanding!

Our aim is to provide supporting evidence over the next 12 months to be able to confidently state we are a good school that has sustained its improvements over time; then work towards an overall judgement of 'Outstanding' by Ofsted when we are next inspected within the new build.

- "Students feel safe in the school, develop positive relationships and attend well."
- "Enthusiastic teaching, combined with intensive and skilled support"
- "The curriculum is... carefully planned in small steps to meet the students' individual needs."
- "Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good."

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Eco Market

Westhoughton High School kindly invited Birtenshaw School to take part in their Eco Market. We accepted the invite and everyone rose to the occasion.

Every class took part in the preparation. The first job was to agree what each class would be making and then to make a list of all the ingredients needed. The shopping trip was more difficult than usual since all the ingredients were organic and for Fair Trade.



Once back at school the real work, the baking, got underway. The finished products: Fruit Scones, Flap Jacks and Crispy Cakes were delicious and they sold really well.

James from Kestrels Class and Nathaniel from Owls Class helped out on the stall and both had a really enjoyable and memorable day. Well done everyone!

The Big Tidy Up

Birtenshaw School was a hive of activity at lunch time on Thursday, 26 November 2009. We had registered for "lose litter in your lunch hour" with The Big Tidy Up campaign. Everyone was advised to "dress for the weather" and this was sound advice! Lose litter in your lunch hour is a national initiative and anyone can participate.



The Big Tidy Up asked that we kept records of how many took part, how long they spent litter

collecting and what they did. Here are our figures: 8 people (including 2 young people, Abdul and Aaron) took part. Two hours altogether (15 minutes each person) were spent collecting litter between 12.00 noon and 2.00 pm. We collected a large bag full of rubbish, including cigarette packets, plastic bottles (which we were able to recycle), car wheel hubs and cans. The school grounds are always well-kept and litter free, so we collected litter from the lane leading to the school.



This will be a regular event. We'll let you know when the next event will be and perhaps you could come and join us? You are very welcome!

Cath Stones
On behalf of Eco-Action Team

Save The Children and Anti Bullying

On Friday, 20 November Birtenshaw School did their bit for both Children in Need and Anti Bullying Week. Everyone was asked to wear blue, the chosen colour for Anti Bullying week, for this privilege everyone donated £1. Kestrels class baked Gingerbread Pudsey

Bears and these were given to everyone who participated. The money raised was added to the proceeds from the Eco Market and the grand total of £30.10 was donated to 'Children In Need'. Thanks to everyone who took part.



Banner story

Kelsey and Matthew from Kestrels class along with Aaron from Ospreys visited the local Birtenshaw Methodist Church for the Christmas Banner Exhibition on Friday, 4 December.

The display was brilliant - very colourful and festive and a lot of time and effort had obviously been given to make the exhibition a success.

An added bonus was that the young people unexpectedly met Father Christmas on their way to the exhibition and they listened to music and also got to have a chat with him in the bargain.





Birtenshaw and Smithills Brass Band Christmas Carol Concert

The conductor, Chris Wormald, and the band were brilliant and they led the singers in a selection of traditional and well loved carols. There were old favourites such as 'Silent Night' and 'Ding Dong Merrily on High' and to end 'We Wish You a Merry Christmas'.



On Tuesday, 8 December Smithills Brass Band led the way with Birtenshaw's annual Christmas Carol concert.

All classes Goshawks, Ospreys, Owls and Kestrels attended along with invited guests and a merry time was had by all. The hall was aglow with the twinkling of fairy lights and a wonderful 'Twelve days of Christmas' display.

Home made mince pies and coffee were served afterwards to round off a truly enjoyable occasion.

Welcome

Everyone at Birtenshaw School would like to say a big Hello and Welcome to new young people: Ahmed who joins Ospreys' class full time in the new year and also

to Liam who joins Goshawks. We hope you both settle in quickly and enjoy your time at Birtenshaw School.



New School

James Grice roving reporter (Kestrels) interviews David Reid (Birtenshaw's Chief Executive)

How many pupils will be in our new school? The new school could provide education for up to 40 pupils along with 30 staff.

How old will the pupils be? It's hard to say, it depends on the Local Authorities but it will cater for all Key Stages and will also be registered for young people up to 18 years old.

Will the new school have a swimming pool? Yes! A bigger pool than we have now, about twice the size actually.

Will the new school have any special features or resources? Well everything will be brand new, chairs, desks, interactive whiteboards, computers, computerised systems to operate automatic doors etc. Tracking systems for moving smart wheelchairs will be built in.

When is the new school expected to open?

Hopefully in September 2011. It's going to be very close to this school and it's going to have lots of special features on the outside. The roof will be sedum – things grow on it. The school design will make it easy for everyone to move around. The gardens will be landscaped with lots of special equipment including sensory equipment. Also the outside will be very colourful with different types of wood, coloured glass and metal.

It all sounds very exciting. Thank you very much for sharing this information with us.



Time Travel – Owls travel back in time for a ‘brew’

On a damp and chilly Friday afternoon in December a class from Birtenshaw school set off in their yellow minibus on a short drive that would take them back 590 years in time. Their destination was Turton Tower, a dark defensive tower house built around 1420 when Henry V was King. They approached the small fortified Pele tower on a narrow driveway that curved its path beneath a canopy of trees that had lost many of their leaves which lay dead, brown and twisted along both sides of the road. This was the ‘Owls’ first visit and everyone was excited to see what lay within the Tudor and early Stuart edifice. Built at a time when raids by marauding Scots were common in the area, Turton Tower had survived a violent and turbulent history especially during the English Civil War but still stood today in December 2009, strong and a little imposing in its pleasant gardens and woodlands.



We wondered if Oliver Cromwell and his New Model Army had ever stayed here in their fight with Charles I. The class slowly emerged from their transport and as they advanced on foot through large iron gates towards the tea room some workmen were setting up a seasonal display in front of the main building. They glanced in our direction and gave a welcoming smile which was returned by some of our group. The class pushed on until the tea shop entrance was in sight. The teacher pushed an old creaky oak door which gradually gave way and opened, revealing the room inside. As the group disappeared into the building, the door quickly closed behind them. Inside was a small room with dark wood beams in the walls and ceiling and a large fireplace. Five or six tables were placed very close to each other surrounded by chairs. A solid wood serving counter was covered with freshly baked cakes and biscuits which accounted for the aroma that welcomed us as we walked in and closed the door behind us. The space was very compact and warm. ‘Owls’ were coping very well in this new setting. Even as the room filled up with more members of the public Harry and Alex behaved brilliantly and they were both very calm. Harry sat at a table with one member of staff and had a



cup of apple juice whilst Alex sat at another table with her drink. Alex, with guidance from Cara, managed to pay for the drinks at the counter. She was able to hand over the money and receive the till receipt and change from the cashier. We finished our drinks and walked back to bus which looked very bright under the shadow of the trees and darkness of the winter afternoon. We climbed back into the bus, its engine burst into life and we watched the historical tower get smaller and smaller as we left its grounds. The road ahead seemed brighter as we gradually emerged from the tower’s canopy of trees and headed back to school and swimming on December 4th 2009.

Owls Class



Seasons Greetings

Everyone in Birtenshaw School would like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers “A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year”. We hope you all have a relaxing and joyous time over this festive season, enjoy the break and use your time wisely to relax and recharge your energy ready for the coming year.

We will be back in school on *Tuesday, 5 January 2010*, when the Spring term begins.

Please feel free to visit our website:
www.birtenshaw.org.uk



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