

### Distinctive Characteristics

1. Birch Meadow's talented teaching and support staff prizes teaming and cooperative planning. Extremely student centered in philosophy, the staff enjoys a well deserved reputation for doing whatever is needed to help students succeed.
2. We are also fortunate to have an extremely high level of parent involvement in the classroom and throughout the school. We take great pride in recognizing the many varied contributions that parents make to their school every day of the year. A visitor to our school would likely find parents helping in the classroom, volunteering in the library, working with children on a computer, listening to children read, sharing a favorite story, describing a hobby or career, or meeting and planning with teachers and/or the principal.
3. We encourage and recognize the importance of a very active Student Council. The Council has established its own school store, organizes an annual senior citizen luncheon, runs a winter movie festival, and has made numerous recommendations for school improvement.
4. We also believe in the importance of recognizing individual students for the many positive decisions they make daily regarding their academic and social responsibilities. Our teachers regularly reinforce these positive choices through individual and collective recognition programs.
5. We emphasize the school-wide use of class meetings to encourage problem solving, conflict resolution, positive decision making, and to enhance social interaction skills.
6. Our technological resources are as sophisticated as almost any found at the elementary level, including direct access to the Internet. The teaching staff have been extremely enthusiastic about expanding their own computer skills and integrating technology into the curriculum.

### Special Events

- Spooky Fun Fair
- Young Author Days
- Cross Graded Reading Partners
- Student Council Sponsored Activities
  - Senior Citizen Luncheon
  - Winter Movie Festival



### You Can Quote Us!

"Our class made friends with another first grade class in Japan on the Internet. It was neat!"

—Grade 1 student

"Birch Meadow is a great place to learn. The teachers teach us things in fun ways."

—Grade 2 student

"I'm glad we have a good library because when we do research we always need to look up our subject."

—Grade 3 student

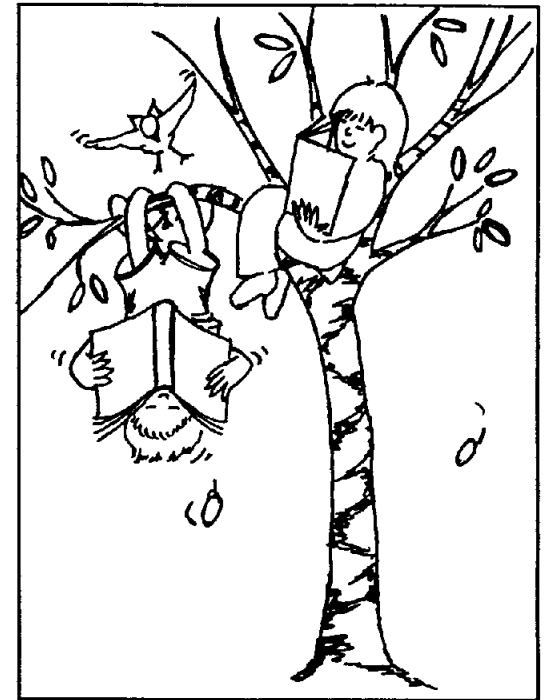
"I think the Spooky Fun Fair is the best day of the year."

—Grade 4 student

"I've enjoyed going to Birch Meadow for many years. I've enjoyed it because there are always nice people here and we're always having fun while learning. I will be sad to leave."

—Grade 5 student

# Birch Meadow School



### Informational Profile

27 Arthur B. Lord Drive  
Reading, MA 01867

(617) 944-2335

Richard Davidson  
Principal



## Educational Philosophy

It is the Reading Public Schools' philosophy to encourage students to understand themselves as individuals, to appreciate their worth as people, and to attain their fullest potential. It is our responsibility to develop programs and curricula that meet the dynamic academic and social needs and capabilities of each child.

## Guiding Vision



*We believe* that all children are unique, capable of learning, and should have equal access to resources.

*We believe* that a staff commitment to continuous learning and training is essential.



*We believe* that the necessary financial resources must be committed to complete this vision.

## Class Size and Expected Growth

Birch Meadow School is one of four elementary schools in Reading. We currently have an enrollment of 604 students, which includes kindergarten through grade five. Our average class size is 23 students.

In 1995, Birch Meadow added five new classrooms and underwent major renovations to the library media center, administration areas, and specialist areas. Two portable classrooms are currently being used to support our increased enrollments.



## Programs and Services

We are proud of the level and types of services and programs we offer to students. Some of these include:

- Our outstanding faculty is augmented by a complete support services staff including a Speech/Language Pathologist, Reading Specialist, School Psychologist, Special Education Resource Teacher, Library/Media Specialist and Nurse.
- A driving force behind curriculum design and implementation is our focus on lifelong learning and relevant, meaningful, hands-on experiences. The result is an emphasis on thematic and integrated teaching and learning.
- Our math program centers around the use of manipulatives to increase the understanding of math concepts as well as the application and use of math in "everyday life situations." Students are encouraged to develop cooperative problem solving strategies and skills, and are given many opportunities to apply them.
- We provide a reading program that emphasizes literature across all grades. Students are very involved in the writing process and from their first day of school are encouraged to read, think, and write like authors.
- Curriculum experiences and direct instruction are provided to students on a regular basis by specialists in the areas of Art, Music, and Physical Education.
- Students use a "flexible schedule" approach to access the many resources in our recently expanded library media center. On any given day, a visitor will find children of all grade levels working on research projects, using curriculum based software, selecting books, working at theme connected centers, or enjoying a special lesson, presented by the media specialist, as a follow-up to a thematic unit currently being studied in the classroom.
- The Understanding Disabilities program, established and completely supported by parent volunteers, is offered to third and fourth graders. Its goals are to provide students with in-depth understanding and increased sensitivity around such important real life issues as blindness, deafness, physical disabilities, and invisible disabilities.

## Parent Teacher Organization



We are fortunate to have a very devoted and involved parent group. Many enrichment programs and field trips, our initial technology development, and much curriculum enhancement, particularly at the primary level, would not have happened without daily parental involvement in and out of the classroom. Over the last few years, the PTO has raised an average of \$40,000. Whatever the need, PTO members are always there to help. Some examples:

### **Technology:**

Initially through a huge joint staff and parent effort, and most recently through the town's support, technology has been a major focus at our school for the last seven years. As a school, we have adopted the IBM platform and currently have supervised direct Internet access in each classroom and in our library media center. All classrooms are slated to be networked within a year.

### **Enrichment:**

During the year, the PTO Enrichment Committee works closely with staff to identify and present an array of visitors and programs that complement curriculum, enriching and stretching the students' young lives. Offerings range from symphonic level musicians, to plays, to jump rope demonstrations.

### **Playground:**

Over the past five years the PTO has not only underwritten over \$23,000 in new playground equipment, but has organized and actually built the structures that provide important motor development and social opportunities for all children at Birch Meadow.

### **Publishing House:**

Now in its 7th year, our publishing house reflects our commitment to the writing process. Sustained by the leadership of teachers and the extraordinary support of parents, the publishing house has published more than 7,000 books for our student authors.

October 2002.

## READING ELEMENTARY ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS REPORT SUMMARY

### SCHOOL DEPARTMENT NUMBERS

School Yr.	ACTUAL	DRA 2/97	NESDEC 11/97	ERF 10/99	NESDEC 1/01	MISER 3/01	NESDEC 12/01	NESDEC 5/02	MISER 9/02
97/98	2097	2068							
98/99	2047	2027	2072						
99/00	2006	2019	2093	2006					
00/01	2037	2031	2195	2081	2037	2037			
01/02	1995	2003	2204	2104	2023	2044	1995	1995	2007
02/03	1986	1982	2228	2153	2062	2072	2038	2038	2010
03/04		1989	2259	2215	2090	2106	2067	2067	1956
04/05		2015	2319	2312	2161	2176	2130	2130	1938
05/06		2004	2339	2415	2248	2250	2209	2162	1890
06/07		2004	2306	2419	2252	2243	2225	2157	1862
07/08*		2004	2321	2440	2290	2257	2261	2170	1872

#### \*Peak Year

The 5/02 NESDEC study predicts 2094 elementary students in 2011/2012.

The 9/02 MISER study predicts 1943 elementary students in 2010/2011. This is the low growth model.

There is a statistical concept the "predictive power" of a method. There are many assumptions behind these numbers. Some correct, some incorrect but all contributing to the accuracy of the predictions. If we calculate the % error by comparing the actual population of elementary school children versus the predicted population using the 1997 NESDEC study predictions versus the year 2002-03 enrollments we find the following.

NESDEC 1997 predicted 2228 students for this year.

ACTUAL 2002-03 enrollment was 1986.

DIFFERENCE was 242 students overestimated.

$242/1986 =$  an overestimated rate of 12.2% only 5 years into the future

**THEREFORE IF THE METHOD HAS NOT CHANGED THEN NESDEC DATA PRESENTED IS PROBABLY OVERESTIMATING ENROLLMENTS BY 12.2%**

Furthermore, the new school was sold to the public based upon the ERF 1999 predictions which inflated enrollments even higher (2440 students for 2007/2008)!