



Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas! It has been so nice this term for students to be able to return to lots of activities and opportunities they had done pre Covid. We are getting more external visitors coming in to school to support students in preparing for adulthood which is good news. There have been several opportunities for different age groups to attend different sporting events this half term which is great! The students and staff did an amazing job with their enterprise projects for the Rickshaw Challenge for Children in Need, showing such enthusiasm. We have been able to get involved with Christmas activities with some students running stalls at the Christmas Bazaar and others getting the opportunity to visit. There were a lot of class trips to the Christmas Tree Festival which was enjoyed by our students with so many different designs on show. It was great to have a Christmas production which was very enjoyable and a big thank you goes out to Dan Hudson, Matt Ormerod and Grace Bottrill for putting the show together. Thank you for all of your ongoing support and communication. I hope you all have a lovely Christmas break!

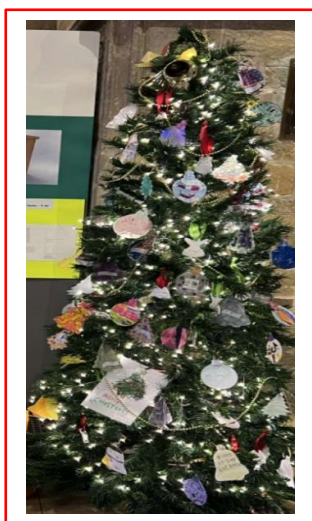
Tom Smith-Head of School Birch Wood Vale



### What has happened this term?

#### Christmas Tree Festival

Many of the students at Birch Wood Vale went to visit the Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's Church. Over 200 Christmas trees were on display including ours from Birch Wood. The theme this year was "Things that make me happy" and there were some wonderful comments that our young people had made. Our tree is the one on the left and the tree that was a big hit with the some students in 7LC was the one on the right. Just look at those grins!



#### Birch Wood Vale attendance - 91% – Well Done!

Good attendance plays a key part in supporting student progress and attainment. It also supports students in working towards their EHCP targets



## Christmas Newsletter

*Where a love of learning grows*

### Christmas Production 9<sup>th</sup> December

On 9<sup>th</sup> December we welcomed back a live performance of the Christmas production and it was great to see lots of families come along to support. Students and the class teams had been working extremely hard with our staff which included Dan Hudson, Matt Ormerod and Grace Bottrill putting together a production based around the school's ENABLES ethos.

Key Stage 4 and 5 Students took on the part of Narrators and back stage production crew.

JM performed The Nutcracker.

7LC performed The Christmas Dinner

7DP performed The Grinch

8ES performed The Elf Who Couldn't Read.

9CB performed Different - A Great Thing To Be!

Yard performed Christmas Chaos in the Yard

Swifts performed The Christmas Cheer.

It was great to see the amazing journeys our students have been on since they joined Birch Wood School. Also it was so nice to see their confidence in performing in front of large groups of people which gave everybody an opportunity to shine. The students' lovely clear voices, singing, dancing, humour, technical support and working as a team shone through. I was so very proud of all of the students. If you were able to come on the day thank you so much for your support it was greatly appreciated.

I would also like to say a massive thank you to Dan, Matt and Grace for organising and producing this lovely event!



As part of our celebration of National Poetry Day in October, some students across Birch Wood Vale and Ashton House participated in creating their own poems with the theme of identity. With this in mind some pupils were entered into the Young Writer's Power of Poetry Competition. We are delighted to announce that some pupils from 9CM, 10KJ, 5PW and The Den have been selected to be published in a book. If your child has been selected for publication you will receive a letter in due course.

Amazing news, well done to everyone who entered  
Emily Saxby English Teacher



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### Christmas Bazaar –

Expertly organised by teacher Charlotte Adu and Anita Lees, class teams showcased their entrepreneurial skills and got the opportunity to develop their creative and numeracy skills as we transformed the main hall into a bustling Christmas Bazaar. Again our raffle was very successful thanks to the amazing donations from the community – thank you! The students were very impressive this year as we had a variety of products that were sold, from sweets, Christmas stockings, to personalised baubles and wood craft. There are no limits to the talents of our young people and the wonderful staff they work with. Thanks to the parents, carers and members of the local community for supporting our wonderful yearly event, this year we raised £486.28

### June's Christmas Bus

This year saw June Massey (the bus driver on Bus 37) decorate her school minibus and bring it to BWV for a special light up ceremony. 7DP were the lucky class asked to switch on the lights and were absolutely fantastic. They thoroughly enjoyed this special event and there was a big cheer and huge smiles all round.



### Motorcycle Club

Thank you so much to the Bikers who joined the Nottingham Triumph Owners Motorcycle Club Toy Run! It was an incredible experience for all involved. The amazing toy donations were greatly appreciated and had been wrapped up by Santa's elves so that Santa could deliver them to our students during his special visit to school in the last week of term. Also, a huge thanks to all of our staff volunteers for organising refreshments for the bikers!







Students at Birch Wood Vale, Ashton House and in the provision at Grange Drive took part in the annual Rickshaw Enterprise Challenge event. Two weeks prior to Children in Need Day, students began to plan their stalls in their Maths lessons, coming up with numerous ideas and working as a team to choose an idea and put it into action.

On the day it was great to see our young people enjoying the day and practicing their money handling skills. All students had the opportunity to be a stall holder and go around the stalls as customers. There was a wide range of stalls across the school sites including nerf gun target practice, ping pong, ten pin bowling, sensory toy raffle and even a Karaoke and disco over.

Students raised over £400 from their stalls that morning to support Children in need. The non- uniform day added further funds. Well done to all involved!

### Lest we forget...Remembrance Day.

At 11 o'clock, of the 11th day, of the 11th month, we remember those people who have given their lives for the peace and freedom we enjoy today. On this day as a school we come together to silently reflect on the sacrifices made by our brave service men and women.

As an act of remembrance all of the students at Birch Wood Vale and Ashton House spent time with their tutor group creating personalised paper poppies that were then used to create a whole school Poppy wreath. This was presented and displayed in school and during our special assembly. During our assembly we had four volunteers from the class of 7DP who read out a beautiful poem to recognise the sacrifice made. A special thank you to Jouard G, William C, Olivia B and Scott C for having the confidence to do this.

Volunteers' views - *"we enjoyed taking part in the assembly"*





### Enterprise

On Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> November as part of their Enterprise Project, Birch Wood Vale Post 16 students (5PW) worked hard using recycled items to make gifts to sell on our local market in Melton Mowbray. We made bird houses /bug homes, bird feeders, bird seed, reindeer food and various homemade gifts using recycled goods such as wood, bottles, jars etc. The day was cold but fun, our bird feeders and seed were our best sellers, and students were amazing telling our customers how important it was to feed the birds.

Thank you to everyone who supported us and wished us well.



### Bake Off

5PW held their annual Bake Off on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November and the students worked exceptionally hard on the designs of their cakes. They were judged by our very own Claire Wood, Nicky ( Pru Leith) O'Dare, Amanda ( Mary Berry) Bell and the legend that is Phil ( Paul Hollywood) Worth  
Our star baker was Ken Cooper, receiving the star baker apron, 2<sup>nd</sup> Barnaby Hoare and 3<sup>rd</sup> Holly Curtis - Well Done All





### PE and Sport

BWV and Ashton House students have been busy over the last few weeks attending sporting fixtures and events representing team Birch Wood!



Students enjoyed another fantastic session from Leicester Wheels in school. The company provide a range of bikes for the students to have a go on and we are always impressed by the confidence students bring to these sessions. We are more so impressed each time by the number of our students finding success in riding a bike – something they thought they would never be able to do!



6 students from 7DP and the Yard attended Sporthall Athletics in November where they competed across a range of running, jumping and throwing events against a range of schools from the Leicestershire area. Students represented the school proudly finishing a respectable 8<sup>th</sup> and took the top spot for Melton and Belvoir Schools!



KS4 students in both 10KJ and 11AM attended the same event 1 week later finishing in fourth place, their outstanding performance also means they have qualified for the County finals – an amazing achievement. The success however did not finish there – our students were also awarded the Spirit of the Games award for their supporting efforts and encouragement that they showed for not only each other but for all the other schools there. Our students showed fantastic sportsmanship which we are incredibly proud of!

In addition we would also like to acknowledge the outstanding performances of 2 Year 10 students, Oliver Timms and Josh Annis, who both achieved their bronze level award for their individual scores!



7DP have also been busy with new Sporting endeavours! They attended the Wheelchair Roadshow at Brooksby College where they were coached by Commonwealth Games medallist Andy Craddock. Students got to engage in a Wheelchair basketball session which all students enjoyed even claiming it to be “the best day ever!” Andy was a relay baton carrier as well as Commonwealth medallist and he brought his baton memorabilia and

medals for the students to see. We are hoping we have inspired the next generation of Commonwealth Games Athletes!!



Finally a big thank you to Inspire2 who came in to deliver a Sportsability session for Year 8 and 9 students in PE. Student were able to get a head start on practising skills ready for a Sportsability competition which will be coming up soon, so watch this space!





### Employability Skills



## We Discover project delivers inspiring employability sessions in special schools

At Birch Wood School in Melton Mowbray last week, two volunteers – Leicestershire Cares CEO, Kieran Breen and Savings Manager, Melanie Aspden from Hinckley and Rugby Building Society - participated in a fun Guess my Job session. A group of ten students assisted by their teacher and support staff, asked questions to try and guess what the volunteers' jobs were. They guessed correctly after a few minutes and learnt a huge amount about charities and building societies.



“ A very happy hour at Birch Wood school. Where the young people had to guess my job, they got it after 15 minutes. A very diverse range of abilities amongst the young people but all were keen, friendly and appreciative, cannot recommend it enough. I am still glowing from the feel-good factor of such a positive and uplifting encounter.

*Kieran Breen, CEO Leicestershire Cares*

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### Key Dates next Term

Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> January	Staff Inset Day - School Closed
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> January	School reopens
Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> Jan – Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> of February	National Storytelling week
Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> February	Year 11 Parents evening