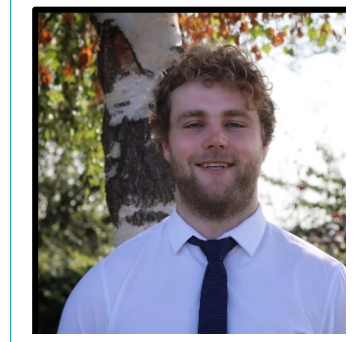




Spring 1 – Newsletter

Where a love of learning grows



We are very proud to share with you what has been happening at Ashton House within the first half term of spring. The time has flown by during this busy period, which has been filled with so many exciting activities and celebrations within our curriculum.

I hope you and the children have a lovely half term break. Please refer to the key dates within the newsletter to prepare yourself for what is coming after the half term break.

Joe Knowles
Assistant Head – Ashton House

Reading and Communication!

We view reading and communication as the foundation of our curriculum from which everything is built upon. We give reading and communication such high status as it helps our young people to communicate, strengthen relationships, deepen their knowledge of the world around them and also...have fun! This half term has been full of reading and communication opportunities for the Birch Wood community:

National Storytelling Week

From Monday 30th January until Friday 3rd February, students across the whole school took part in National Storytelling Week. Pupils from The Yard, 8ES, 7DP and 7LC attended a live YouTube event with storyteller Wendy Shearer. Pupils listened to her storytelling skills and were then given her top tips for telling their own stories.

We had two competitions running for our pupils which were reading and writing. In every lesson on the Wednesday pupils heard part of a story and then had to answer a quiz question about what they had heard. By the end of the day all pupils heard all of the story and then were able to hand in their completed quiz to be entered into the prize draw. Our reading winner was Harlow F.

During reading time pupils were also able to write their own story to be entered into a competition if they wanted too. We had so many entries it was hard to choose our winners for first, second and third place. A big thank you to all of the students for their entries and listed below are the winners.

First place - Aanya M (8ES) - 'The Girl with the Hidden Past'

Second Place - Bramroy BL (The Yard) - 'The Lonely Robot'

Third place - Raahi P (The Yard) - 'Mr Invisible and his Many Adventures'



To round our week off, we spent Friday afternoon listening to a couple of different stories told by our staff. It was lovely for pupils to hear staff members reading, outside of their usual contexts. Pupils and staff loved this experience and left with a smile on their faces. Thank you to everyone who has been involved in this week.

A big thank you to Emily Saxby and Catherine Mitchell for organising all of the exciting activities to stimulate students interests in reading

Twilight Academies (After School Revision)

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday Evenings, students studying GCSE English, Maths or Science who are in Year 11 or KS5 have been invited to join us for extra sessions to support them in their preparation for their exams in May and June.

Some students who have struggled to access these due to transport have joined us remotely using Microsoft Teams.

We have been so impressed to see so many of our students regularly joining us, and putting such a high level of effort into their studies. I know this will support them in their future success,

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Maths Revision 3.15-4.15pm Remote Maths Revision 4.35-5.15pm	English Revision 3.15-4.15pm	Remote English Revision 4.35-5.15pm	Science Revision 3.15-4.15pm

As this has been so successful this term. These sessions will continue to run next term.

The Yard

The young people within The Yard have had another busy half term filled with hard work, resilience and pride as they engage with their curriculum. Within Design and Technology, the class have been working on designing and building wooden toys, that involve using mechanical levers to function. During PE, we have been developing our floor and vaulting gymnastics. The young people have done wonderfully well, showing great extension and tension within their routines. We have seen more students using the larger playground this half term more regularly, and friendships are starting to further strengthen with other peers from Birch Wood Vale.



Pupil Voice

Madison C – “I’ve really enjoyed making my Cam toy in DT. I’ve loved doing the jumps in PE, using the trampette. My favourite jump has been the ‘straddle jump’.



Raahi P and Connor L during their Greek Theatre session in Drama.



Alfie B displaying a textbook tuck jump Great hang time!



Julia S-C using the milling machine during DT.



Madison C showing great power during her jumping session within Gymnastics.



The Den

The Den has had an amazing start to the new year. Some of our very talented students entered a writing competition and have had their fabulous poems published in a book, we're very proud of them all.

Our Year 10 students have worked incredibly hard to complete entry-level papers in Science, English and Maths, whilst the year 11 students completing their Mock GCSE papers. Our wonderful young people have truly shown their tenacious attitude during this challenging time. PE has again been a huge success, with all students excelling in their Gymnastics block.

We have several students that are very excited about the upcoming residential visit to Lea Green where they will be engaging in lots of fun outdoor activities, more about this once it's happened!

Pupil Voice

Karenza G – 'I have loved Gymnastics this year, jumping is my favourite. I have done so well, and I have made everyone in the Den very proud.'



The Den stretching off before their lesson begins.



Stuart T performing a Tuck Jump.



Dylan performing a Tuck Jump.



Kerenza G performing a Broad Jump.

The Sand Martins

This half term has been a success for everyone in The Sand Martins. They have continued working hard towards the ASDAN Maths, English and Personal Development Programme, and developing their confidence and independence in the community. This has included, visiting the local police station to discuss careers within the police force. This was led by PC Draper, and included examining CCTV footage, exploring a police car and examining the uniform. The Sand Martins also toured a local gym and are engaging in a swimming session as part of their Health and Fitness ASDAN. Congratulations to Charlie SN, who has successfully interviewed and acquired his first job, working at Dominoes. The staff team are very proud! Special mention to Kale R too, who has applied for College and will be attending taster sessions in the near future.

Pupil Voice

Charlie S-N – ‘I am really happy that I have managed to get my first job. We have been practising job applications and interviews during sessions and now I am looking forward to telling people that I have a job, and that I can earn some money. I’m also looking forward to spending more time at the College next year.’



The Sand Martins during their tour with PC Draper.



The Sand Martins excited for their tour of a local Gym.



Kale R – Looking right at home behind the wheel.



The Sand Martins ready to learn about careers in the Police Force.

The Swifts

Another successful half term for everyone in The Swifts. We have continued working hard towards the ASDAN Maths, English and Personal Development Programme, and this has included time within college, where student's confidence and independence continues to grow. Out in the community, we have had weekly trips to Leicester Outdoor Pursuit Centre to try various different sports including Archery, Abseiling, Bell Boating, Zip Lining and Bushcraft! The group have also had weekly group sessions with the schools Speech and Language Therapist Steph, and have now had fortnightly sessions with Jo Winterbourne, the careers advisor, who has worked with the group looking at their next steps into adulthood. The Swifts took part in a charity event to raise money for "Dogs Trust" as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award, raising a massive total of £233.73.



On a positive individual note, all students who will be moving onto new placements at the end of this academic year have made an application to a chosen college course, which is a positive first step towards their next adventures!

Pupil Voice

Ellie H – 'I've really enjoyed conquering new challenges such as the activities at the Outdoor Pursuit Centre. It was really scary, but I really enjoyed it. It was stressful baking cakes for our fundraiser but I am really glad we did it. I feel as a class, we have accomplished a lot this half term. I'm so glad that our independence has developed this year and we have more responsibility for ourselves



Joel T and Grace D using the climbing wall at the Outdoor Pursuits Centre.



Ellie H enjoying the zip line at the Outdoor Pursuits Centre.



Poppy H holding on tight, using the zip-line at the Outdoor Pursuits Centre.



Daniel P beginning his ascent to the top of the climbing wall.

Key Dates ahead

Monday 20 th – Friday 24 th February	HALF TERM
Thursday 2 nd March	World Book Day
Thursday 16 th March	KS3 Option Evening
Thursday 16 th March	GD Parents Evening
Friday 17 th March	Red Nose Day
Tuesday 21 st March	World Down Syndrome Day
Monday 27 th – 31 st March	Autism Acceptance Week
Sunday 26 th March	Bottesford Bike Easter Egg Run
Monday 3 rd – Friday 14 th April	EASTER HOLIDAYS

March 9th – Additional Year 11 & Post 16 Birch Wood College Information Evening