



As the Summer Half Term ends, it has been wonderful to see all the young people making the most of the warmer weather. Social games and activities are in abundance during break and lunch and greater interaction between Ashton House students and Birch Wood Vale student is clear to see. Its such a pleasure to see our young people widen their social circles and this reflects the growth in the social skills and confidence.

I would also like to congratulate all those young people that have begun to undertake their GCSE's exams. This is a difficult period for anyone, but all have coped amazingly well so far, demonstrating all the hard work they have put into their curriculum. We are very proud.

Please enjoy reading what our wonderful young people have been experiencing and achieving, this half term.

I hope that you and your family have had a lovely half term break.

Joe Knowles



### What has been happening this half term?

**PMLD Awareness Day** – On Friday 5th May it was PMLD awareness day. PMLD is an abbreviation which stands for Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities, and PMLD awareness day was a wonderful opportunity for us to come together as a school community and celebrate our inspirational individuals who have profound and multiple learning differences. People with PMLD may have additional sensory or physical needs, complex health needs or mental health needs, what they certainly do have is a wonderful resilience, determination and personality! Our theme this year was 'Light it Up!' and we did just that! Below are the highlights of all the wonderful immersive, multi-sensory sessions and experiences the day had to offer. Please have a look and enjoy:

<https://youtu.be/6iqfEYWMhew>

**Undiagnosed Children's Day** – On Friday the 28th of April we supported the Undiagnosed Children's Day. The day is aimed at raising awareness of undiagnosed genetic conditions present in children. Each year, approximately 6,000 children in the United Kingdom are born with a syndrome without a name or a genetic disorder so uncommon that it is likely to go misdiagnosed. To raise awareness, we took part in a Pinkathon! We encouraged everyone to come to school wearing something pink and to take part in pink themed activities! Staff and students alike, also brought in a voluntary contribution for the charity SWAN UK (Syndromes Without a Name).



We also helped raise awareness by releasing our second "The Parent Voice" podcast. Hannah O'Mara, Grange Drive Assistant Head Teacher, interviewed Steph and Rob Hayden about their experiences raising a child with an undiagnosed condition. A huge thank you to Steph and Rob who provided really valuable insights to their son Max's journey which has been hugely beneficial and enlightening to staff at school and I am sure will be beneficial to parents as well. If you would like to listen to the podcast, you can find it here:

<https://www.veed.io/view/7f1bddf8-1db4-4c94-83db-dfe1c8391143?panel=share>

**King Charles's Coronation** – To celebrate the coronation of King Charles, on the 5<sup>th</sup> May we joined in with The Big Help Out, which had been organised by charities as part of a national volunteering initiative. At Ashton House, to commemorate this historical occasion, supported the school and the local community by volunteering to complete a range of activities which included some of the following:

- a litter pick around the site (and surrounding area)
- gardening in the sensory areas or in the school allotment area
- creating a community piece of art to go in the Hydrotherapy pool entrance
- create a commemorative piece of art

The objective of the afternoon was for students to understand and experience volunteering their time.

**Running for Birch Wood:** On May 20th, Tom Bradley-Hewell, Head of School at Birch Wood Grange Drive, and David Grimes, Network Manager and Jordan Meads, BWV Nurture Teacher, ran a marathon at the peak district to raise money towards purchasing new outdoor equipment for Birch Wood School! Thank you to the many of you who have contributed to the fundraiser, we have now raised over £1500! If you would like to contribute, please feel to click on the below link:



[https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/birchwoodschool?utm\\_term=gYwYXAebd](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/birchwoodschool?utm_term=gYwYXAebd)



### The Yard

The Yard have had a fantastic Summer Term 1, where they have continued to academically challenge themselves within their lessons, and enjoyed a range of new and exciting experiences. We are really proud to see so many personal milestones achieved this term as the students continue to work towards their own EHCP targets. Some of the highlights of Summer term 1 have been the opportunity for them to once again participate within the 'Bikeability' session, and a huge success has been Janice's gardening sessions, which has had a massive impact on our outside space. We celebrated the Kings Coronation with a classroom picnic which brought us all together to enjoy some food and conversation as a team. We have also re-instated the community visit trip now the weather has improved, and had a lot of fun walking into Melton all together and playing in the park with an ice-cream. We'll end the term by enjoying our tidier outside space with some music and food and all coming together to socialise and show gratitude for everything this wonderful term.

### Pupil Voice

Urban T – "I think that the community visit was brilliant, I tried out the zipline in the park which was really fun, and played on a 4-seated see-saw with my friends (ouch!). The Bikeability was a good morning, the bikes were super-fast and I enjoyed sharing a bike with Connor. What a great half term!"



Raahi P, Madison C and Urban T, hanging out at the park!



Joshua B, Sosthenes D, Maddison C and Julia S-C, gardening in the Yard outdoor area.



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Where a love of learning grows



The Yard during their Coronation Picnic.



Madison C, Raahi P and Connor L at the Park.

### The Den

Along with The Den engaging in their curriculum and making progress both academically within their EHCP targets, our students have taken part in activities such as Bikeability and 'The Big Help Out'. As part of the Kings Coronation, The Den were a part of 'The Big Help Out' at school. Our students cleaned the inside and outside of classroom windows. Not only was it beautiful to observe true team spirit, it was lovely to see our young people using their social communication skills appropriately by asking staff members if they would like their windows being cleaned.

It is exam season for The Den. We have two amazing individuals that are coping with the exams stress really well and are doing their utmost best, which is all we can ask for. Also, a thank you to the other students in the Den that are being supportive and respectful of their peers that are taking the exam.

### Pupil Voice

Stuart T – *'Overall this term has been a bit stressed because of the preparation of the exams and doing the exams, but I am really proud of myself for being able to complete each one. I also really enjoyed receiving my certificate for my positive behaviour this half term.'*



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The Den making sure the Staff Room windows are clean too!



Stuart T making sure those reflections in the windows are clear!



Dylan ensuring the doors to BWV Atrium, sparkle.



Kerenza G cleaning up the DT building.

### The Sand Martins

The Sand Martins have begun their travel training; researching online for a bus to visit the local Garden Centre. Once they accessed the bus stop, they paid for their own ticket and told their bus driver where they wanted to go which is a big step in them gaining confidence in talking to unfamiliar people. The young people found their own space to sit and rode the bus to the Grange Garden centre in Asfordby. Once there, they learnt the history of the Grange and searched for specific items, and price compared, as part of their ASDAN program. They all stopped for a well-earned piece of cake before heading back on the 5A bus to college with their return tickets they purchased at the start of their journey.



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Each member of The Sand Martins took part in Leicester wheels Bikeability. They all had a turn riding the bikes and some were even chauffeured by their class peers. They had a really great time and we're talking about it all afternoon.

The Sand Martins are working on their entrepreneur skills this half term by organising PRIDE day activities at Birch Wood for all the young people to enjoy. They have each chosen an individual activity to work on and have ordered various items to complement each activity. There will be rainbow kebabs, sand art and many more fun activities.

Lastly, a special mention for WG, who has passed his car theory test which he has worked so hard on. He is so very proud of himself and we are hugely proud of his courage and determination. Well done W, what an achievement!

### Pupil Voice

TR - *'We went around Melton on the bus, it was very bumpy. I was nervous interacting with the bus driver. I feel more confident now, being more independent in the community. I have applied for my provisional licence which I am excited about, as I can begin to learn how to drive.'*



The Sand Martins about to embark on their journey.



Luke C enjoying his bus journey.



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Kale R – Thrilled with the snack break!



Charlie S-N interacting with bus driver.

### The Swifts

The Swifts have had a positive half term which has seen the group work extremely hard in all aspects over this half term. The four young people who will be leaving us at the end of this academic year have now held their college interviews and received their acceptance to their chosen college courses, we are really proud of each one of them and congratulate them on this huge achievement on their journeys!

During this half term, the group have continued to build on their ASDAN qualifications, whilst also being able to use local facilities whilst at college to enjoy some social leisure time within Melton Town. As a group they participated in positive sessions discussing mental health and anxiety as part of Mental Health Awareness Week 2023. The group have also continued working with our Speech and Language Therapist, and also begun making End of Year Books in their social communication sessions with Aimee. The group are set to complete their Duke of Edinburgh expedition next half term, and so they have been walking in preparation for this on Friday's. Also, as a group, they spent time together deciding a location to celebrate their achievement this year for the Birch Wood College end of year trip

### Pupil Voice

Daniel P – *"I do enjoy going on the walks and I have liked learning all about first aid whilst doing my DofE sessions. The map reading has been difficult but I think I have definitely got better at it, each week. I still love going to College on a Monday and Thursday, and I occasional go out for lunch in Melton Town"*



## Summer 1 – Newsletter

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Daniel P on the march, during his DofE preparation.



Joel T and peers, learning to read maps, accurately.



Ellie H, leading the way on her DofE walk.



Poppy H, helping a peer to use her compass.





### Key Dates

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Exam period continues   | End June 28 <sup>th</sup> for all students              |
| Sandmartins – Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> June<br>The Swifts and 5PW – Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> June | Duke of Edinburgh Practice Expedition                   |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup> June.   | 'Qualifying Expedition'- Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award |
| Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> June  | Birch Wood Whole School LGBTQ+ Pride Celebration        |
| Birch Wood Vale: Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> July<br>Grange Drive: Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> July   | Sports Days   |
| Thursday July 6 <sup>th</sup>   | BWV moving up day to their new class                    |
| Wednesday July 12 <sup>th</sup>   | School Prom for Key Stage 4 and 5                       |
| Thursday July 13 <sup>th</sup>  | School closes for the summer                            |
| Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup> August   | School reopens to students                              |