



As the summer warms up it has been wonderful to see the children playing and learning together outside and making the most of the wonderful weather. The school has continued to develop and we are excited to announce that our soft play and multi-sensory room has been opened! The children (and staff!) have been very excited by the new facility.

We are very pleased to be able to share with you the different activities and initiatives that have been happening this term!

I hope that you and your family have had a lovely half term break, we are looking forward to a new half term, please see key dates at the end of the newsletter- we have so much to look forward to! More detailed information about any further end of year activities will be sent out shortly in the new half term.

Tom Bradley-Hewell- Head of School



What has been happening this half term?

Fire Service Visit! – At the beginning of the school term we had a visit from the local fire service. Many students enjoyed seeing a fire engine and meeting the local fire service team. Students learnt about fire safety and how to prevent a home fire. The students were able to look around the fire engine and the fire service team shared how they use the equipment to help the local community.





Sing and Sign Assembly – The students have enjoyed taking part in Sing and Sign assemblies! The assemblies have taken place in the hall where all students and staff have been welcome to join together and socialise whilst singing, signing and dancing to their favourite songs. The students thoroughly enjoy the community atmosphere and enjoy music as a group. The students are able to join in with the music through using their own percussion instruments.



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 fun 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 and on our FB page:

<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 5th May we joined in with The Big Help Out, which had been organised by charities as part of a national volunteering initiative. At Grange Drive, 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. We also had lots of fun, as can be seen below:



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Soft Play and Multi-Sensory Room!

The long awaited opening to our new soft play and multi-sensory room has finally arrived! As you can see below, it is a fantastic new facility and the students have thoroughly enjoyed playing and learning within it. The soft play facility is fantastic for giving our young people a safe opportunity to develop their gross and fine motor skills. It can help develop coordination, communication, balance and problem solving skills. Overall though, the students are having so much fun! In the final summer term we will be fitting the space out with further sensory lighting equipment to provide another space for multi-sensory exploration and development. The new space adjacent to the Hydro pool at Grange Drive site has been designed to allow as much accessibility as possible, with the latest hoist equipment, which will allow all our students access to the new ball pit. The local authority has supported the school with this new facility as part of a re-design of our interior at Grange Drive site in July-August 2022, which was to provide further EYFS spaces for local children who required a special school place. It is reassuring to know that we have not only been able to provide more local children with a much needed special school place but have also been able to improve facilities for all students at Birch Wood due to partnership with the LA and hard-working site staff.



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Student Voice at Grange Drive

As always the Student Voice has been action packed at Grange Drive. During the summer half term they have been crucial in supporting the school in designing the library and in planning new equipment and areas for the main playground.

The student voice have been working with class teams to gain feedback from their class friends who have stated that they feel safe and happy at school, and are particularly excited about the new soft play.

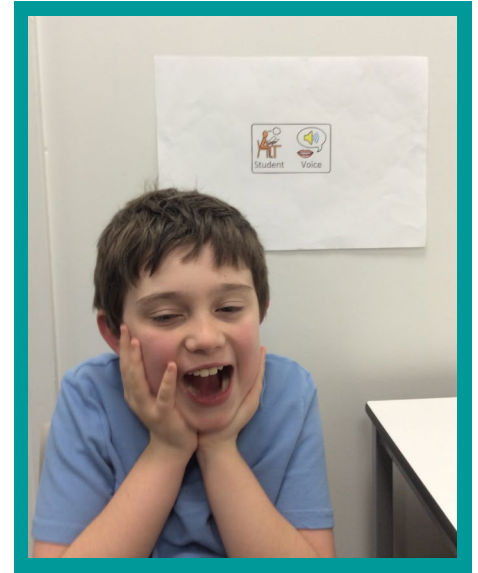
The student voice have been focusing on what makes a good student voice. So far, the students have stated that they need to be friendly, kind and help others. The Student Voice continues to ensure that it supports students positively at Grange Drive. Some comments from the student voice:

"I liked the slide in soft play!" - Corwin

"I feel safe at school and that teachers listen to me" - Charlie

"I would like there to be more food tasting sessions!" - Ruben

"I enjoy learning about how to care for my teeth." - Harley





Key Dates

7 th - 9 th June	Robins and Goldfinches Residential to Beaumanor Hall
Friday 29 th June	Birch Wood Whole School LGBTQ+ Pride Celebration
3 rd July	Owls Extended Day Trip to Lea Green, Derbyshire
5 th - 6 th July	Humingbirds Residential to Beaumanor Hall
Birch Wood Vale: Tuesday 4 th July Grange Drive: Wednesday 5 th July	Sports Days
6 th - 7 th July	EYFS Residential to Beaumanor Hall
Wednesday July 12 th	School Prom for Key Stage 4 and 5
Thursday July 13 th	School closes for the summer
Tuesday 29 th August	School reopens to students



Running for Birch Wood:

On May 20th, Tom Bradley-Hewell, Head of School at Birch Wood Grange Drive, 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/birchwoodschoo?utm_term=gYwYXAebd



Trips and Visits

This academic year we have had a huge focus on enhancing the curriculum intent through providing students with a bigger range of opportunities through trips, visits and residential stays. Like last half term this half term has seen this come into action with various activities. The Penguins and Merlins both brought their pirate curriculum learning to life with water based excursions. The Penguins visited Rutland Water for a day on The Rutland Belle, and whilst there they also got the opportunity to play some mini golf and work on their independence and maths skills through buying their own snacks. The Merlins had an immersive experience enjoying their pirate day on a barge trip supported through the Peter Le Marchant Trust. Fantastic photos of both trips can be found on our FB page.

The Eagles class rounded off this half term with a residential trip to Lea Green in Derbyshire, it is fair to say the students had an amazing experience, which you can follow through some wonderful videos and photos on FB. Thank you to all the staff who put in the extra hours to make this happen. We are also now busy planning residential trips for classes who have not gone this term- they will be first in line for the academic year 2023-24- it is just around the corner!