



Grange Drive



Birch Wood
Vale School



Birch Wood
Ashton House



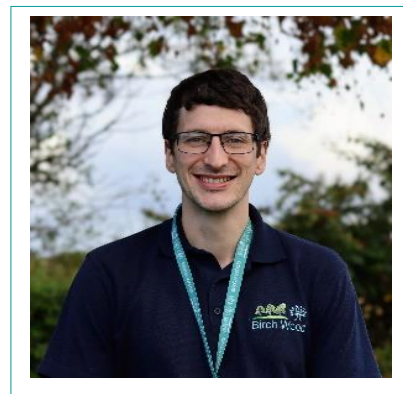
Birch Wood Grange Drive

Summer Term 1 Newsletter 2024

We are pleased to be able to share with you the activities that have been taking place at Birch Wood Grange Drive this half term. It has been an action-packed half term as always with the young people taking part in petitioning on behalf of Changing Places (Please sign our petition and share), whilst other pupils have also been raising awareness for Undiagnosed Children's Day! This is not to mention a visit from Ofsted and glowing letter about what they saw and thought about our school.

After half term we will be giving you more information about students transition for next academic year We are keen to proactively help support our students to manage these changes and new opportunities in a positive way.

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 break.



Tom Bradley-Hewell – Head of School Grange Drive



PMLD Awareness Day

On Friday 3rd May it was PMLD Awareness Day. PMLD is an abbreviation which stands for Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities. As a school community, we continually celebrate our inspirational learners who have profound and multiple learning differences, so this year we decided to use this special day to promote awareness on a much larger scale. Our theme this year was 'Shine a Light on Accessibility!', specifically focusing on Changing Places. A Changing Place is a specialist changing area, large enough for wheelchair access with a full-sized changing bed and a hoist. On PMLD Awareness Day, our young people launched a campaign, asking for Changing Place facilities to be installed in Melton town centre, so that anyone with complex physical additional needs can access their community fully. Pupils from all sites have been collecting signatures and at the time of writing this newsletter, we currently have a whopping **1,058!**



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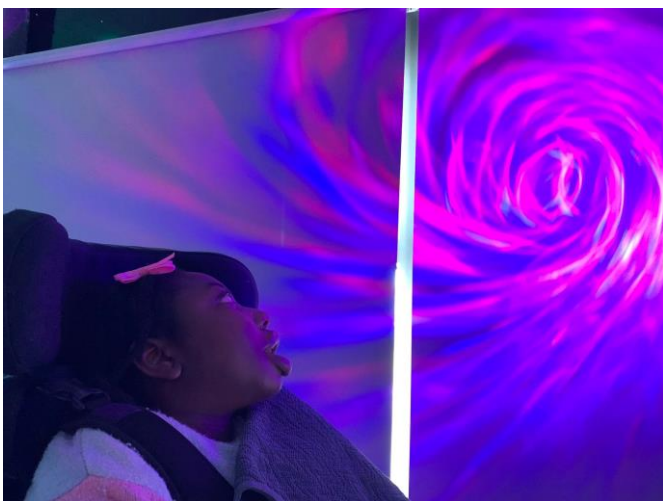
Many thanks to Melton Borough Council for their support. We look forward to the Mayor visiting the Merlin's provision in the next few weeks to collect the petitions. If you haven't signed the petition yet, please do follow this link: <https://chnng.it/LkbKYsBFBC>. For videos our young people celebrating PMLD Awareness Day and shining a light on accessibility, please follow these links to our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/BirchWoodSpecialSchool/videos/7119687368143162>
<https://www.facebook.com/BirchWoodSpecialSchool/videos/967578005373114>

Undiagnosed Children's Day

On Friday the 26th of April we supported Undiagnosed Children's Day. To raise awareness, we took part in the annual 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).

It has now been a year since Hannah interviewed Rob and Steph Hayden for Undiagnosed Children's Day, but their honest and insightful story still resonates for many of our families. Please take the time to listen to and share the below podcast, to raise awareness for the incredible charity SWAN UK.

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



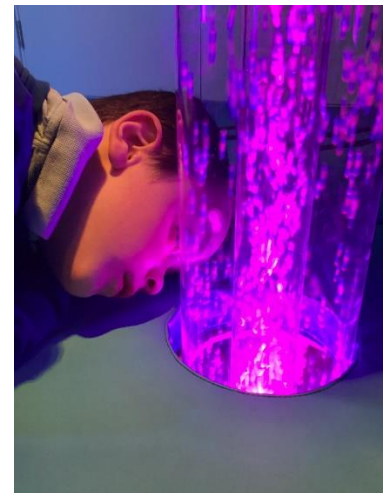
Key Stage Two SATS

A huge congratulations to Charlie Carr from the Treehouse, Oliver Alexander from the Yard and McKenna-Rae Chamberlain from TDH who completed their KS2 SATS exams this half term. The SATS exams show the fantastic progress that the young people have made over time within English and Maths and can only put the students in excellent stead for the future.



Soft Play

Specialist sensory lighting and sound system equipment has been installed within for our soft play. Our young people have loved exploring the new waterless rainbow and hurricane bubble tubes, vibrating plinth and multi-coloured fibre optic strands, all of which can be controlled with accessible switches. We have mood lighting for the whole of soft play, which changes the colour of the ball pit. We have seen increased visual attention, curiosity, persistence and cause and effect being developed. The soft play facility is an incredibly engaging, stimulating and fun environment.



Leicester Wheels for All

We had a visit from the amazing Leicester Wheels for All. Despite the rainy weather, our Grange Drive students had lots of fun exploring all of the different accessible bikes. Many thanks to Leicester Wheels for All, for another fabulous experience!





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National Autistic Society

At Birch Wood School we are really passionate about sharing best practice. This half term we were joined by school leaders from the Renad School in Qatar, who wanted to learn about how we support our young people with Autism as part of their journey towards getting their National Autistic Society (NAS) accreditation. Renad School will be first of its kind in Qatar and are working closely with us and the NAS to do their very best for pupils in Doha at Renad. It's fantastic to know we are helping to make a positive difference internationally in partnership with the NAS. Birch Wood School received their advanced accreditation from the NAS in 2022 and we are currently applying for our Beacon status.



PE at Grange Drive

Grange Drive has demonstrated its athletic ability this half term. The Goldfinches competed at the 2024 Parallel Athletics Championship at Saffron Lane where students participated in 60m sprint races, howler throws, standing long jumps and some students even ran the 300m race. Some of the Lodge students attended the 2024 Para-Fest as Loughborough University where students competed at kin-ball, table-cricket & wheelchair-basketball. The Lodge have also begun weekly tennis sessions at Melton Tennis Club.





Ofsted

This half term saw a long-awaited visit from Ofsted. The brilliance of our young people and staff shone through and the inspectors couldn't help but see that! All parents/carers have now been sent the final report and I'm sure you will agree it is a very positive reflection of everyone's hard work. Crucially, the report tells us that **'the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out'**. We are immensely proud of our school and this achievement. A massive thank you to all parents and carers for your support and wonderful feedback in the parent view questionnaires. Please follow the link to the article in the Melton Times: <https://www.meltonimes.co.uk/education/birch-wood-pupils-and-staff-praised-in-glowing-ofsted-report-4633841>

Grange Drive Assemblies

Associate Assistant Head Teacher Poppy Marriott led a wonderful assembly back in the hall. The assembly was about worries. Poppy told us about the different ways in which we can let people know if we have a worry or a concern and then led a sensory story about the different things we can do when we feel worried. The students enjoyed taking part in the sensory story with all classes from Grange Drive.





'Leics Create' Project

During the spring term, four of our classes (Penguins, Robins, Owls and Treehouse) have been taking part in a Leicestershire wide project called 'Leics Create'. This project saw schools and ensembles from across the county perform together at De Montfort Hall in Leicester. Our pupils at Birch Wood contributed a stunning video performance where they showcased their wonderful creativity, enthusiasm and musical talent through singing, improvising and playing along with the song for this years' project 'Leicester leaps Out' composed by Jazz musician and performer Pete Latanka. Pete came to Birchwood for four weeks along with musicians from Leicestershire Music and Sinfonia Viva to work with our pupils on this project. Our pupils fully engaged in music making and performing, learning to play instruments, sing parts of the song and improvise to an accompaniment. We are extremely proud of our amazing young people, and the wonderful video they have helped to produce, which received huge applause at the performance at De Montfort Hall. Please check out the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hcacl6eVm0>





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BIRCH WOOD FESTIVAL

SATURDAY 31ST AUGUST



Save the date
to celebrate
our 20th
birthday!





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Key Dates

Monday 27 th May – Friday 31 st May	Half Term Break
Monday 3 rd June	School re-opens
Monday 3 rd June – Monday 17 th June	GCSE Exams taking place
Wednesday 10 th July	KS4 and P16 PROM at Grange Drive Site 7-9pm
Thursday 11 th July	End of Term
SATURDAY 31ST AUGUST 2024 BIRCH WOOD-STOCK FESTIVAL – CELEBRATING OUR 20TH BIRTHDAY!	

Residential Visits

Residential visits promote personal growth, life skills, and resilience among our students. Below is a list of residential visits that will take place for students across Birch Wood School. We continually assess our trips and visits to ensure that they are safe and this may mean that closer to the time, plans need to be changed or cancelled based on the needs of the group or changes to the accommodation.

Residential	Date	Class
Lea Green Outdoor Adventure Centre	3 rd – 4 th June 2024	The Owls
Glamping at Lea Green Outdoor Adventure Centre	24 th – 26 th June 2024	BW College
Beaumanor Hall	1 st – 2 nd July 2024	7DP
Beaumanor Hall	2 nd – 3 rd July 2024	9ES
Lea Green Outdoor Adventure Centre	8 th – 10 th July 2024	The Goldfinches
Bendrigg Trust, Lake District	7 th – 11 th October 2024	The Merlins
PGL Chateau de Grande Romaine, Paris	30 th June – 4 th July 2025	8BO, 9ES, 10CM, The Den, The Nook