



Birch Wood School – Grange Drive

We are very proud to share with you what has been happening at Grange Drive within the first half term of spring. Despite only being a short half-term, it has been full of many exciting activities and celebrations which we are privileged to share with you.

We celebrated our love of reading by participating in National Storytelling Week which was a wonderful opportunity for Birch Wood School to come together and share stories with each other and many young people accessed the community to further develop their communication and independence skills.

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.



Tom Bradley-Hewell

National Storytelling Week

Between 3rd and 7th of February, National Storytelling Week was celebrated across schools in the UK and is a period to celebrate the power of sharing stories. Stories play a pivotal role in our lives; they teach us about the world, enable us to step into someone else's shoes and feel empathy, help us relax and escape, and contribute to the development of essential literacy skills. The theme for this year was "Reimagine Your World".





Throughout the week, children had opportunities to participate in a variety of activities centred around storytelling. From imaginative writing exercises to collaborative storytelling sessions, we fostered a love for storytelling that will stay with your child for years to come. We also encouraged the students to explore Grange Drive through our “reimagine your world story hunt”! Students explored the corridors and classrooms where they could access different stories and activities. At the end of the week, we also had a whole site sensory story in the hall!

The highlight of the week was on Friday when the whole school was invited to participate in the ‘Reimagine your World Dress up Day’. Students were encouraged to let their imaginations run wild as they dressed up as characters or elements from the worlds they imagined. We loved seeing everyone dressed as their favourite story characters and sharing their favourite books in class. We will have more opportunities to celebrate our favourite characters after half term when it is World Book Day.

Outdoor Pursuits

Students from the Hummingbirds, Robins and Goldfinches have enjoyed a range of activities at the Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre. They have faced their fears, climbed, abseiled, completed the gladiator trial and had a go of archery, all while supporting and encouraging each other.





Grange Drive



Birch Wood
Vale School



Birch Wood
Ashton House

Changing Places Toilet Petition

There have been many exciting developments towards our Changing Places Toilet campaign this half term! Firstly, a newspaper article was published in the Melton Times about the Mayor of Melton visiting the Merlin's class at Christmas to collect the Changing Places petition. This was followed by ITV News visiting our Grange Drive site to interview parents and staff about the impact of access to fully accessible toileting facilities. Please follow this link to watch the news feature: <https://fb.watch/xGUNhG6aPl/>

On Thursday 6th February, Hannah O'Mara was invited to Melton Borough Council to formally present the Changing Places Toilet petition to the cabinet. We are excited to share that they are now planning to install a Changing Places Toilet in the new Stockyard development and are committed to making Melton Mowbray more accessible. To watch the cabinet meeting, please follow this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/2G1MLA4hcho?si=r9NalgilHSrFLeOn>

At Birch Wood School we are dedicated to making our society a more inclusive place for all of our young people and their families and campaigns such as the Merlin's Changing Places Toilet petition are a massive step towards social justice.

Education

School campaigns for more changing places for disabled youngsters

By Nick Rennie



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Mayor of Melton, Councillor Tim Webster, and county deputy leader, Councillor Margaret Glancy meet some of the pupils at Birch Wood Area Special School last month

Staff and parents at Melton's Birch Wood Area Special School are campaigning for more changing areas to be provided in the town for children and young people with disabilities.



STEPH HAYDEN
Parent



Speaker

Melton Borough Council

MBC - Council Chamber 1



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Forest School

The Forest School lunchtime club runs every Thursday and provides an opportunity for all students to develop holistically by experiencing a range of stations with different equipment. Last week students explored digging, mud kitchen, bubbles, hammering ice and natural painting or construction to name just a few. Students were fully driven by their interests and engaged in activities of their own choice. Fantastic exploration!



Attendance

In August 2024, the government introduced statutory guidance "**Working Together to Improve School Attendance**" and to comply with this, Birch Wood School's Attendance Policy was updated. It can be found on the school website.

Above
95%

85% -
95%

Below
85%

Excellent! Well done! This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school.

Average! Well done!
Try to build on this

Cause for Concern - It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting students learning.



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At Birch Wood School we fully understand that some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance and this can include pupils who have long-term physical or mental health conditions. We will always offer a "support first" approach to improving attendance, focusing on supportive measures. Each situation will be approached in a way that best supports the individual family and on a case by case means and reviewed regularly. We will ensure joined-up pastoral care is in place where needed.

The school's Senior Attendance Champion is Claire Wood.

Absence from school:

If your child is going to be absent from school, then the child's parent/carer must notify the school with the reason for absence by 7.30am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office on 01664 483340.

Leave of Absence Requests

A leave of absence is granted at the Executive Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. Please ask your child's teacher or the office staff for a Leave of Absence Form.

Key Dates

Monday 17 th to Friday 21 st February	Half Term
Thursday 6 th March	World Book Day
Wednesday 12 th March	BWV/AH Year 11 reports to parent
Thursday 13 th March	BWV and AH KS3 Parents Evening with Subject Teachers Including Year 9 Option Choices.
Friday 21 st March	World Down Syndrome Day
Monday 31 st March – Friday 4 th April	Autism Celebration Week
Sunday 6 th April	Bottesford Bike Easter Egg Run
Monday 14 th April – Friday 25 th April	Easter Holidays