



Grange Drive

Birch Wood
Vale SchoolBirch Wood
Ashton HouseBirch Wood
College

Birch Wood Vale and Ashton House Newsletter Summer Term 2025

We are pleased to be able to share with you the activities that have been taking place at BWV and AH this term. It has certainly been a busy one with students involved in lots of different activities.

In amongst this, students have continued to develop their independence and physical abilities by showcasing their skills in the community through athletics events, Duke of Edinburgh, sports day, boccia, ten pin bowling and bikeability. We have also had students performing at the Curve, involved in STEM days, celebrating VE day, Pride Day and we had our first international residential visit to Paris. It is so nice to see the students accessing different clubs and to see them engaging in different sports and activities at break and lunch time with their peers.

I hope you all have a lovely summer break. Please refer to the key dates within the newsletter so you are aware of what is coming after the summer break.

Tom Smith

Head of School Birch Wood Vale

Sporting events

DofE Practice Expedition

Congratulations to our 5 students from BWC for completing their Practice expedition for Duke of Edinburgh. The students covered over 2km of walking over the 2 days practicing both their teamwork and navigational skills. We were so impressed with the progress students made in both the areas as they successfully navigated themselves around circular routes from school to Little and Great Dalby with both independence and confidence. The practice expedition was in preparation for their Silver expedition which happens in June where the group of students will take on 3 more days of walking combined with 2 overnight camping nights. Well done all and good luck for your qualifying expedition.





Horse-riding



Ruairi has had the opportunity to go horse riding to help work on his balance which has been an effective and positive learning opportunity for him as he's been able to develop bonds with the horses and gain more confidence in his own balance and movement.

KS3-KS5 Boccia Tournament

Well done to The Den who took part in a recent Boccia Tournament. The Den worked really hard, encouraged each other and showed good sportsmanship towards other teams at the tournament. The Den finished an impressive 5th place out of 10 competing schools.



Bikeability

Students had the privilege of riding a variety of bikes in the playground court where each and every student had nothing but positive things to say afterwards.





Saffron Lane Athletics

The annual trip to Saffron Lane did not disappoint! Each year we are lucky enough to be able to take female and male representatives from each of our year groups at BWV to compete in the County Outdoor Athletics finals. These events saw students compete in track events such as the 100, 200 and 400 metre runs and a variation of field events (Javelin, Shot Putt, Long Jump). Students compete against students in their age category from other schools all over the county. All of the students showed immense effort across all of their events and we are proud of the efforts each and every single one of them put into the day. We had some outstanding performances as listed below.



100m Sprint

Bronze - Ewan (Yr 11) and Hayden (Yr 7)
Silver - Aanya (Yr 10) and Stefan (Yr 7)



200m Sprint

Bronze - Aanya (Yr 10) and Stefan (Yr 7)
Gold - Jouard (Yr 9) and Ewan (Yr 11)



800m

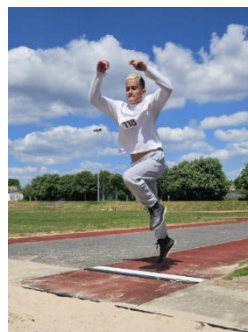
Bronze - Jasmine (Yr 8)

Shot Putt

Gold - Lily (Yr 8)

Long Jump

Silver - Jouard (Yr 9)
Bronze - Ewan (Yr 11)





Sports Day

Well done to all students that participated in Sports day from BWV, AH and BWC! The day saw us celebrating Women's Sport. Students spent the day engaging in a variety of activities which focused on the upcoming Women's Sporting events happening this year (rugby and cricket world cup and the euros), celebrating women's sporting successes as well as their own successes as they competed in various activities across the day such as the standing long jump, sprint race, shot putt and more. Each activity focused on an area of the PE Curriculum (Competence, Creativity and Communication) allowing students to demonstrate their skill set in each area as a celebration of their progress over this last academic year.

We had many awards to give at the end of the day from podium finishers, to spirit of the games and with much excitement we were able to award our first ever team success with the Red team taking home the win in the team competition! A very Special mention to Olivia in Year 9 who took home the "Sports Person of the Year" award in recognition for her dedication and enthusiasm to Sport and physical activity both in and outside lessons and school. Well done Olivia and all other students - you were exceptional!



Discovery E-Sports

On Saturday, three young people from BWV represented Birch Wood at an e-sports tournament organised by Discovery Trust. They battled against several other schools in the trust and got to the finals and finished an impressive 3rd place. Very well done to all 3 boys, you all worked brilliantly and showed great teamwork skills, strategic thinking, and creativity. Super proud 😊





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7DP trip to St Mary's Church

7DP visited St Mary's Church to see the poppy wall. They were very proud to see their work on display and as always, their behaviour was impeccable and they represented Birch Wood brilliantly.



VE Day Celebrations

Our young people across all sites have created poppies to contribute to the Poppy Wall that has been set up at St Mary's Church in Melton Mowbray as part of the celebrations of VE Day 80th Anniversary. The display looked incredible and we are proud to have been a part of this. In addition to this, students at Birch Wood Vale and Ashton House have had a wonderful week recognising and learning about VE Day. Our young people have been working extremely hard in their humanities lessons, involved in assemblies, decorating poppies and taking part in a 2-minute silence. They all showed great respect for the people that sacrificed their lives.





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Annual Special Schools Alliance performance at Curve Theatre

On Monday 12th May, a group of Year 9 students from BWV took part in the annual Special Schools Alliance performance at Curve Theatre in Leicester. This year, students worked very hard to devise their own abstract performance piece, exploring the element of fire through physical theatre, titled “**Blaze**”. They contributed their own ideas for the storyline and choreography and put in lots of extra rehearsal time to develop their performance skills. This resulted in their delivery of such a dramatic performance that wowed their audience. Well done to all students involved – we are so proud of you and how far you have come.

Kindness Award



Birch Wood School has been nominated for a 'Kindness Award'. We are extremely proud of this.

Thank you to everyone for all that you do - you make a positive difference on a daily basis.

Melton in Bloom Competition 2025

This year our KS3 pupils had a chance to take part in the local Melton In Bloom Competition. We joined 8 other schools across Melton to design and present a 'floral piece' to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VE day.

8MJ, 9BO & The DEN all contributed in creating banners, flags, bunting and wheel barrow designs to exhibit for the competition.

On 4th July Sue, Diana & Linda visited our school at Birchwood Vale to see the wonderful work the children had produced as part of their Food 4 Life Curriculum.

Sue, Diana & Linda will return in the Autumn term to do an assembly to present certificates and give us the results of the competition.





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Pride Celebration Day

This year we celebrated Pride Day on the 1st July and our theme was "Celebrating Differences – Everyone Can Sparkle!". Students and staff came wearing their brightest rainbow colours and sparkles and took part in a range of different activities.



Moving Together Showcase

On Tuesday 24th June, groups from across Birch Wood School came together to showcase their talents as part of a show directed, produced and presented by Paige Faulkner. Paige, alongside Moving Together teacher Emma, put together an incredible show, that was enjoyed by students and staff at Grange Drive. The theme of the show was "Exploring Earth" and groups from The Lodge, Birch Wood College, The British Sign Language Group and Paige (solo) performed in front of a packed hall. It was a truly fantastic show, thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended!





Paris

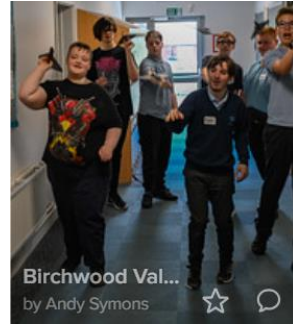
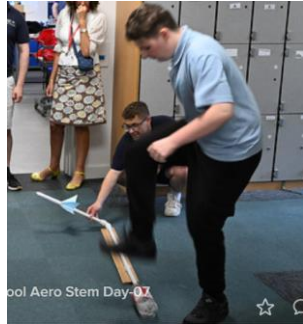
This half term 15 members of staff supported 26 of our wonderful young people on the school's first ever international residential. The trip was an enormous success and a real showcase of the school's ethos and culture in action. Students and staff had a fun-filled and action-packed week taking part in PGL activities, archery, visiting The Eiffel Tower, Cité des Sciences museum, The Louvre a scenic coach drive around the Arc de Triomphe and down the famous Champs-Élysées. The final day was an unforgettable day spent exploring Disneyland Paris and Walt Disney Studios. Students watched the iconic Disney parade, met their favourite characters and explored interactive attractions and rides.





Year 11 Careers Focus Days

Year 11 have completed some careers focus days this half term. They have spent time with adults from different industries, learnt about some key skills needed for the world of work and had a go at doing different aspects of the jobs themselves. They particularly enjoyed the days they spent learning about the catering industry (including making pizzas and designing their own packaging); working with volunteers from the BMFA (British Model Flying Association) learning about the aviation industry and learning how to use coding to create games. In English, we have also been looking at job adverts, creating CVs and filling in application forms to go alongside this. Hopefully these will be skills that will help them after school and college when they go into the world of work.





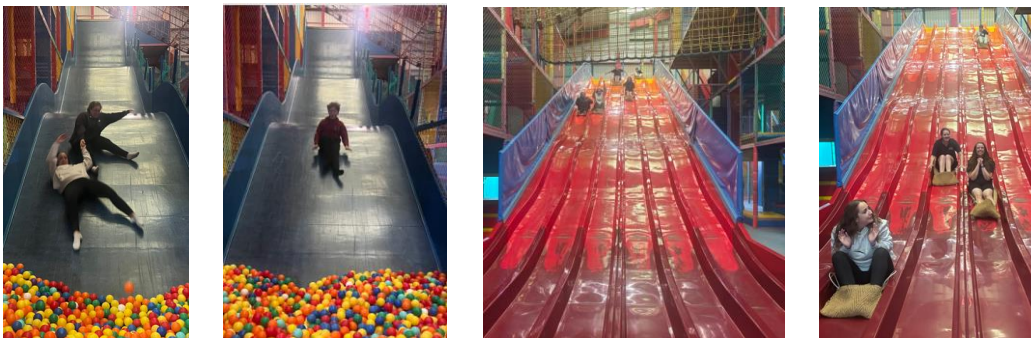
Treehouse visit to The Space Centre

For our end of year trip, The Treehouse went to the Space Centre on Charlie's recommendation after he made an amazing presentation to the class on why this should be the end of year trip. All our students engaged with each activity there, from commanding a shuttle to launch, launching bottle rockets, engaging with a retro cinema and so so so much more.



The Warren class trip to Twin Lakes

The Warren class enjoyed a fantastic day out to Twinlakes as part of their end-of-year trip. They experienced all the roller coasters, engaged in soft play, and have thoroughly exhausted both students and staff! It was a splendid day to witness the group interacting within the community, receiving compliments for their manners and effectively representing the school. A truly wonderful day.





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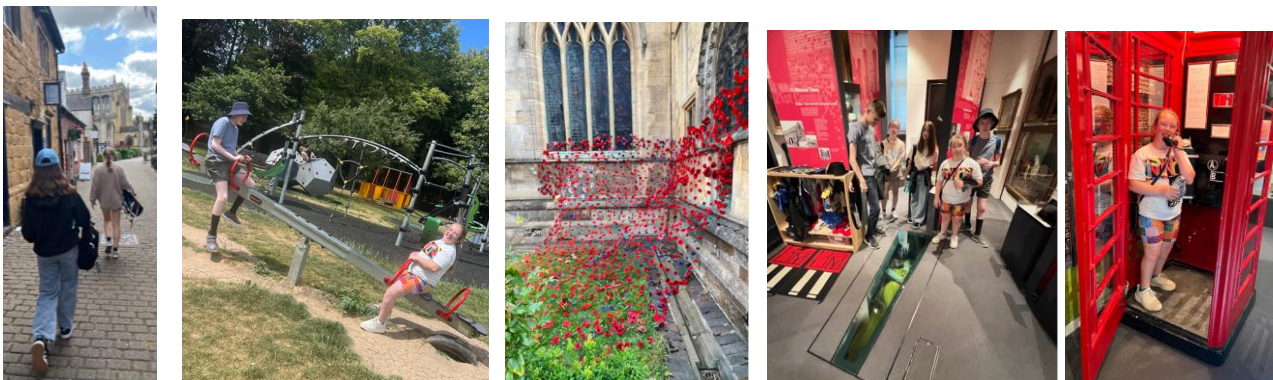
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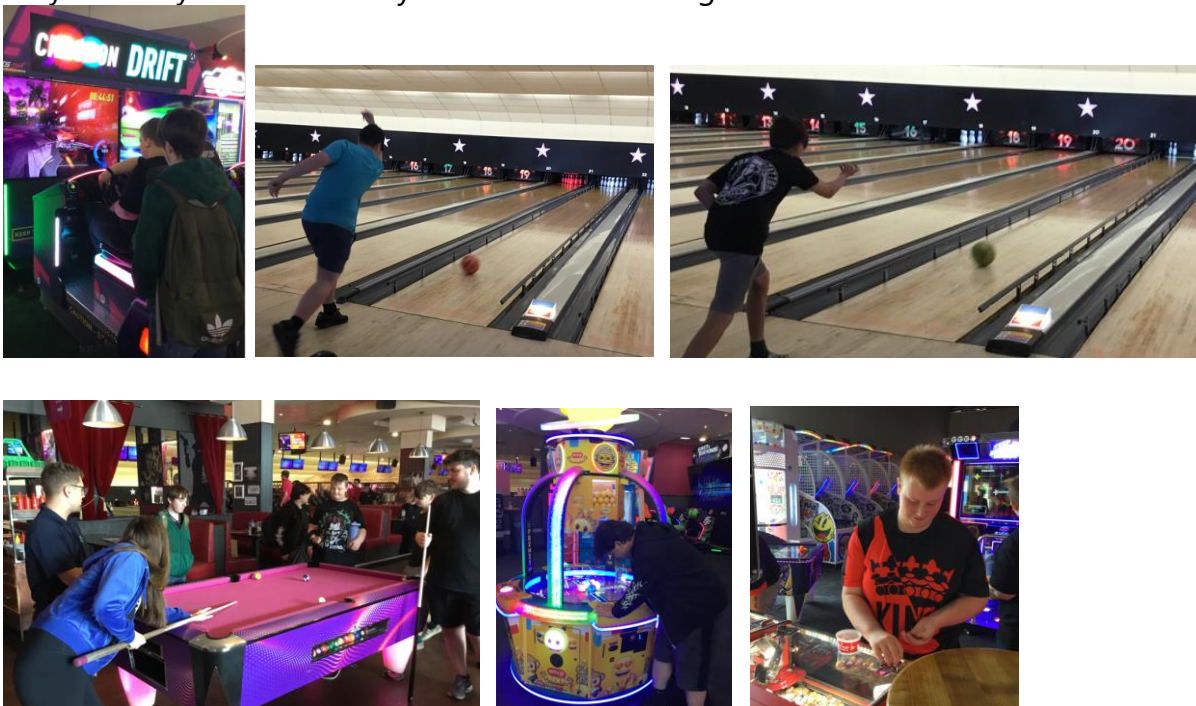
9BO class trip to Melton Town

Some of the students in 9BO went to Melton Town Centre for their end of term trip. They visited the Melton Carnegie museum - which displays the social and economic history of Melton and includes exhibitions on the town's world-renowned Stilton cheese and pork pie industries and the history of fox hunting. They enjoyed doing a bit of shopping around town centre, visiting Caffè Nero and had a lovely play and a picnic in the park. They thoroughly enjoyed their end of year trip whilst missing the other students who are also having a fab time on their residential in Paris.



11CM trip to Hollywood Bowl

Year 11 had a brilliant day out at Hollywood Bowl for their end-of-year trip. We played two full games, had lunch in the cafe, a few games of pool, and finally spent some time in the arcade. The class were all immaculately behaved, and we had a really fun day. After a year of such hard work, they certainly deserved a day to relax and have a great time!



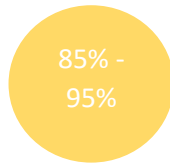


Attendance

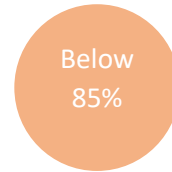
In August 2024, the government introduced statutory guidance “**Working Together to Improve School Attendance**” and to comply with this, Birch Wood School’s Attendance Policy was updated. It can be found on the school website.



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.

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 with a focus 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 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.



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Key Dates:

Wednesday 27 th August 2025	Autumn Term starts for students BWV, AH and Birch Wood College (This is now the same start date for all students!)
Monday 20 th Oct – Friday 24 th Oct 2025	Half Term
Friday 19 th December 2025	End of Term
Tuesday 6 th January 2026	Spring Term Starts for students BWV/AH/BWC

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.

More information on future residential visits will follow ...