

# Birch Wood Newsletter

## Christmas 2019 edition



**A**nother year is closing to an end and in 2019 I have even more **Christmas cards** to write as the Birch Wood school pupil population keeps growing! We now have 180 pupils on roll across both sites and every single family will have received a card designed uniquely by our Art and Photography students at Birch Wood Vale. Five designs were selected to be sent out to every home, I would like to congratulate Josh Kennedy - Robin painting, Amy Wenham - Post box painting, Mackenzey Weston - beads in the shape of a Christmas tree photography, Harley Alner - baubles in hand photography and Josh Coultas - standing by the fireplace photography. Whichever one you receive I am sure you will be impressed with their skill and creativity.

The Christmas cards this year were very symbolic to me, not just because I had so many more to write, but also because they highlight how our **curriculum** is constantly being enriched to provide new opportunities for our pupils- like Photography lessons. In addition to this I'm delighted to see pupil's gaining greater work experience and life skills opportunities within the curriculum. This term our KS4 & 5 pupils have been serving refreshments at St Mary's, run their first community café and their own market stall, to name but a few activities. I am very impressed with all the new skills I have seen in action and how many of our young people are clearly making the steps towards adulthood.

Alongside these developments the long awaited **building programs** that have taken months and years of planning are now out of the ground. The post 16 classroom at Grange Drive now has the basic structure in place and is on track for completion by March 17<sup>th</sup> 2020. The planning and permission stage of the new food modular build at Birch Wood Vale is also coming to completion with installation planned for this spring. In addition we've been immensely lucky to be awarded a full grant from the Melton HSBC branch to install an **immersion room** at Grange Drive, which will provide a 4D sensory experience for our pupils (see overleaf for more details)

The wonderful festive activities we have at Birch Wood at this time of the year really highlight the love and commitment staff have towards their jobs. Both **Christmas performances** from Hannah O'Mara (Primary Production ) and Matt Omerod (BWV) show what an inclusive and talented school we have. They were, as always a complete joy for all who came to see.

Again this year we transformed the gym into a bustling **Christmas Bazaar**. Thank you to all the families who supported by coming along. The door raffle was very successful thanks to the amazing donations from the community. In total we raised £1018 which will be used for class based enrichment opportunities next term.

We've had exceptional support from the biker community this year, which meant when Santa came to visit our Grange Drive site pupils received some really fabulous gifts all donated through the Triumph Owners Annual Toy Run in November. In addition over £687.80 was collected in donations on the day with a further £1000 donated from the Leicester Motorcycles Owners. All this means we can finally buy the Acheeva work station (£5000) which staff members in 3JD have been hoping for to support our pupils with the most complex physical needs.

Being part of Birch Wood is truly a privilege for me; we have such dedicated staff, governors, families and community supporting our pupils. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all the best for 2020!

**Rosalind Hopkins**– Headteacher



Rose receiving her gift from Father Christmas as donated through the Triumph Owners Annual Toy Run.



4TP spent a fantastic morning Carol Singing at Egerton Lodge in Melton Mowbray.

**Autism Accreditation** We are delighted to announce that we have recently been awarded the National Autistic Society (NAS) Autism Accreditation Status. Over the last three years we have used the NAS recognised standards as the basis for a school-wide transformation. It is with great pride that we reflect on the changes and improvements that have already been made here at Birch Wood School and with great excitement, enthusiasm and commitment that we look forward to the future. Please take time to read our report which can be found on our website. Amy Dunstan



**Immersion Room** We are delighted to announce that we have secured a funding grant of £25,795 from HSBC to convert the multi sensory room in to a fully immersive room which gives children a 4D sensory learning experience. The grant has been possible by an application to the HSBC internal charity organisation submitted on our behalf by Kirstie Faulds who works in the Melton Mowbray branch. The work should be complete in the February half term and we can re-use some of the sensory items that are in the current multi-sensory room. Please click the link below to see how fabulous these rooms are and what impact they will have for our students. I hope that you are all as excited about this project as I am. <http://www.integrex.co.uk/immersive>

**Post 16** has been supporting the local food bank, we have received 12 boxes of food from our families, carers and supporters of Birch Wood school. We will be donating this to the Storehouse Food Bank in Melton this Christmas in support of the reverse advent calendar. Thank you so much for all your donations.

Work experience has gone well this term. 4 students have gone to a range of places such as Melton Library, Cafe and Dove Cottage Charity shop. New students will be attending next term. Our student's got fantastic evaluations from all of their managers. Thank you to the local community.



KS3 Student Skye used her Computing skills to research a Science magazine for students. She also helped our Finance Officer to order the 'Eco Kids' magazine. In her review Skye said "It's interesting and tells you all about insects."

**Transition** Starting in January 2020 P16 will be starting their transition visits to various local colleges to help our students to make informed choices towards where they would like to study after Birch Wood.

**Father Christmas** made another surprise appearance at Birch Wood Grange Drive last week, all the pupils received a small gift and were very happy to meet the main man!

**Donations:**

We have received so many donations this year, both big and small, but all of them are hugely appreciated here at Birch Wood. Every little extra makes such a big difference by allowing us to do even more for our pupils. We would like to thank everyone involved from the bottom of our hearts, we couldn't do what we do without your support.

**School Twitter, Facebook and Instagram Page:** Check out our brilliant social media sites for up to date information, photos and stories for what is going on around school.

**Additional Health and Wellbeing Officer at BWV.**

We'd like to welcome **Rebecca Grey** to our Health and Wellbeing Team. Rebecca will be based at BWV and will support the work Alison and Jacqui do with student health care and wellbeing.

**Whole school attendance 92% – Well Done!**  
Good attendance is important because...

All evidence suggests that students who have low attendance won't progress as well as those who don't. (pupils with very complex medical conditions are not included in this, as their circumstances are very different)