

Birch Wood Newsletter

Summer 2019



Welcome! The last term has been an incredibly busy period full of great experiences for our pupils. Reflecting back to last half term it was wonderful to see pupils enjoy another residential to Center Parcs and I'm equally excited for our new Key Stage 3 residential to Beaumanor Hall in the coming weeks. The care and teamwork which goes in to these experiences really highlights the dedication of our staff.

Exam Period A small group of pupils in Key Stage 2 were entered for their SATS this year illustrating the schools commitment to ensuring we are both aspirational and nurturing in our approach to enable pupils to have every opportunity to achieve their personal best. We are proud of how the pupils involved approached their tests and know they all tried their very best. Key Stage 4 Birch Wood Vale pupils



have also been working hard through the GCSE exam period. This year every pupil had access to our Wellness Coach every Friday where they have been supported with mindfulness and yoga strategies to manage this more challenging period. I'm confident that pupils have applied themselves with an excellent mind set and will achieve their own personal bests with the results they receive!

Transition The next 6 weeks is a period of transition across the school as we prepare many pupils for the next stage in their education at Birch Wood and beyond. Information letters have already gone out to parents at Birch Wood Vale outlining the options pupils will be embarking on in Key Stage 4 and 5 next term. Over the next couple of weeks we will be writing to you detailing information about your child's class teachers and form tutors for next year (where this is changing) and giving you the opportunity to come in and meet new staff. Pupils will also have the opportunity to have some time in their new classes and will get a letter appropriately communicating information about their new class.

School Growth and New Faces This year we have record number of 11 pupils in Year 6 transitioning to Birch Wood Vale, this has put a great deal of pressure on the demand for space in our MLD provision and our capacity to meet the demand within the locality. As a result we have developed a second MLD teaching group at Birch Wood Vale to accommodate new intake from the surrounding primary mainstream schools. This new group will be taught predominately by Deena Patel, who is a fantastic secondary trained teacher with a specialism in ICT. We are also delighted to announce that Lauren Carroll will be joining our extended leadership team and will have responsibility for managing Key Stage 2 to 3 transition to Birch Wood Vale and will oversee our KS2 and Year 6 & 7 MLD Provision. Many of you will know Lauren as the 2LC class teacher at our Grange Drive site.

We are excited to inform you that Lauren will be replaced by Maria Zakrzewska an experienced SEND teacher who will join our Key Stage 2 team at our Grange Drive site. We are sorry to say that Emma Coley our other KS2 teacher will not be with us next year. Emma is embarking on an exciting sabbatical and plans to stay in touch and continue her wonderful media projects that we have all been enjoying on Instagram and Facebook. Emma will be handing over to the safe hands of Hannah O'Mara and Pia Delucchi who many of you know from EYFS/KS1. Natalie Stathakis, Becky Spence, Jen Neehuis and Angie Orchard will continue to provide our outstanding EYFS/KS1 provision.

Our Autism Provision continues to grow in popularity with a constant demand for specialist autism places. From next term we will create a further Key stage 1 ASC specific class and as a result welcome teacher Joe Knowles Lorriman. Joe is an outstanding candidate with SEND experience who will join Amy's team to welcome a new cohort of 5 pupils.

Curriculum and site development overleaf...

Our continued investment in developing an exciting and meaningful **curriculum which ENABLES** our pupils is highlighted in our continuing investment in Arts and PE. Over the last 2 years we have seen the introduction of Moving Together and Performing Arts in to the curriculum. Next term, our new PE teacher Emerald Ladjimi will also be joining us to promote PE along with existing PE teacher Alison Nix. Emerald is aiming to provide more specialist MATP experiences for our pupils. In addition Jeanette Boyd and Metesh Mistry are both outstanding Art and Photography teachers who will be joining the Birch Wood Vale staff team. Metesh will also be co-teaching some KS3 Food for Life sessions with Di Alexander. Therefore with every new development at Birch Wood we have enhanced our teaching staff team with some fantastic and talented new teachers.

Site Development. We also know at Birch Wood how important it is to keep ensuring that the physical environment continues to provide high quality facilities to meet the needs of all our pupils. As part of the LA million pound investment in to SEND in Leicestershire we have been successful in securing agreement to extend our building by 1 classroom to create a bespoke specially equipped PMLD/SLD Sixth Form classroom at our Grange Drive site. The classroom will be fitted with appropriate hoists, sensory area and low level cooking area to promote independence. The pupils will enjoy a separate entrance and social area to promote their social development. Building work will start in October with a planned completion date for February 2020. Pupils will be well prepared for the move to their new Post 16 space and we will ensure families are given an opportunity to see the new facility when it is completed.

In addition to this we are also working with county hall to establish a new modular food technology room at our Burton Drive site. The building is planned to be located next to our new vegetable garden to enhance our Food For Life Award curriculum. Pupils have already been growing things which they are using to cook with in school. All this hard work with our gardens has been paying off because **Melton in Bloom** have chosen Birch Wood to represent Melton for their East Midlands in Bloom campaign. It was recognised that our garden was designed to meet the needs of the children in the school! We are so grateful for all the support we have had with donations of plants, trees and equipment, we've really felt that the wider community is behind us on this project.

Local Lead of Education Last term I was designated as a 'Local Lead of Education' (LLE) through the Paragon Teaching School Alliance of which we are a member. This recognises all the work which Birch Wood has been doing to support schools in Leicestershire. Our plan is that this will be the beginning of us extending our role as a school to further support SEND pupils in the locality.

Donations

A tremendous £2088.65 has been raised towards the purchase of an Acheeva Learning



Station. Thank you to all those who have donated or supported staff fundraising events.

School Garden

The school vegetable garden is flourishing, all the plants are looking well and growing rapidly and both the beans and peas have flowers showing! We have already used chard, lettuce and radishes in our cookery sessions. Year 8 have been working hard renovating an old rusty wheelbarrow to enter Melton in Bloom's Vegetable wheelbarrow competition, judging is June 21st so fingers crossed! Melton in Bloom has nominated our school gardens as one of two schools to represent the area in Midlands in Bloom best school gardens competition, thank you to all who have supported us - a fantastic result considering we only started this earlier this year.

Whole school attendance

92.5 %-well done!

Good attendance is important because it can have a huge impact on students in both academic and social development. Good attendance helps students to fully engage in all that school life has to offer, such as making new friends, learning and enjoying new experiences, developing skills needed in later life, feeling safe and listened to.

Transition Careful consideration has been given to managing change with pupils so they are fully prepared. Below is an outline of what we have planned:

By end of May BWV: Year 9 and P16 option subjects in home school diaries and explained to pupils in tutor time. **Wk.**

beginning Mon June 10th BWV: Assembly about changes 'Why change can be good.'

By Mon 10th June Main Site: Letter to parents introducing new teachers and staff teams & separate Makaton letter for pupils with signs and photos. BWV: Pupils get their new timetable. Tutor/support staff explain & discuss. Copy home for parents.

Throughout June & July Main Site: Pupils to spend afternoon in new classes at Grange Drive Site and parental drop in to meet new class teacher/form tutor & STA. across both schools.

Thursday 4th & Friday 5th July BWV Moving Up Days at BWV.

Any questions about transition please contact our Home School Link Work- Sarah Alltridge