



Birch Wood School Newsletter

February/March 2019



Is it too early to get excited about spring and warmer weather? As things warm up (if only temporarily) it is evident that Birch Wood is coming in to bloom in every sense? Our site developments and improvements continue to enhance the facilities at Birch Wood for the pupils now and in the future.

Fencing: One significant change the parents and carers who live locally may have noticed is the changes to the fencing at main site around the playground parameter. The metal spiked fencing has been replaced with a safer alternative after staff research showed there have been incidences of serious injury around the country when this spiked fencing is used in play areas. Although this has not been the case at Birch Wood so far, we felt compelled to take preventative action.

Landscaping: As mentioned overleaf major landscaping at Birch Wood Vale is underway to provide different age groups and cohorts with appropriate sensory and play areas, we are all looking forward to seeing the results.

SEND Provision: Many of you will also be aware of the development of more SEND provision across Leicestershire including the planned expansion of special schools. I want to reassure you that although Birch Wood will be increasing in number in some cohorts where we currently have space, the classes size limits in the varying provisions will stay the same. We also plan to develop resources at main site (Grange Drive) to allow further specialist facilities for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. As soon as the plans are finalised I will update you. I would like to reassure you that we aim to maintain the small school feel of Birch Wood across both sites and seek only to improve our offer for pupils with the most up to date facilities and staff expertise.

Birch Wood Social Media: I can see that many of you have been enjoying our social media and I thank you for your support and encouragement with this. Our use of social media is to champion how fantastic our school community is and develop better understanding of the SEND community through celebrating our diversity and inclusiveness.

Transport: There have been major changes to the way school transport will be allocated in the future, if you require any information or support about transport contact our Family School Link Worker Sarah Alldridge. Information is available now on the LA website where applications for next academic year are available



Congratulations to Joshua Whitfield who has been highly commended in the Disability Sportsperson category at the recent Melton Times Sports Awards 2019. Joshua regularly participates in external sporting events on behalf of Birch Wood. Thank you Josh keep up the good work!

We have recently hosted a workshop on behalf of the Local Authority giving people the opportunity to have their say about developing new provision for children and young people with SEND in Leicestershire. I appreciate that as parents/carers of young people in our school you may have questions about how this will affect you and your child. To answer any questions or concerns you may have I will be holding drop in events on Thursday 14th and Tuesday 19th March. Letters will be sent home with students to get an indication of numbers and details of times etc so please look out for that.

Rosalind Hopkins, Head teacher

Site Developments

We have been very fortunate in securing a pledge of £15,000 from two charitable trusts towards the cost of outdoor rebound therapy equipment. We are still raising funds to be able to complete the project, we will keep you posted! We have also received a donation from John Bartlett of £250 Birch Wood Vale is going through a landscaping process with additional outdoor equipment being fitted. We are not quite finished but here is a sample of what is happening....



The Curve

Students from BWV took part in the Special School Performance "The Classics" at Curve Theatre Leicester on Tuesday 26th February. Emily Saxby and Justine Norris have worked hard supporting the students to learn their choreographed dance, inspired by music from Swan Lake.



The students were absolutely fantastic, performing independently in front of a sell out audience. They showed their professionalism throughout and were just amazing!



Poppy Marriott, Robbie Hesketh, Lee Burrows and Dan Hudson recently ran the Leicester half marathon raising a huge £720 for school funds.

Thank you!



Food for Life Award – Our planters are in place and ready to be planted within the next few weeks. We are planting carrots, broad beans, peas and spring onions, we are also going to plant leeks and squash indoors and get our potatoes 'chitting'!! These are all positive steps towards students achieving their bronze award.



If anyone has any old /unwanted gardening tools especially rakes, hoes etc. could you please bring them to Reception at Birch Wood Vale.

Welcome: We have a number of new students who have joined us this term, a warm welcome to; Eliza Hamilton 2RH, Wiktor Puchacz 2EC, Jake Harris 2LC and Jessica Gillespie at Birch Wood Vale.

We would also like to welcome back Mo Geoghegan returning to us as an LSA in our EYFS/KS1 provision.

**Whole school attendance
91%-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. 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)*

