



Birchwood
Community High School

**ASPIRATION
KNOWLEDGE
KINDNESS
WE ACHIEVE
TOGETHER**

Coeducational Secondary School for Girls and Boys aged 11-16

Birchwood High School

A group of four students in school uniforms are sitting on stone steps. In the foreground, a boy with short blonde hair and a boy with dark hair are sitting on the lowest step. Behind them, two girls with long hair are sitting on the next step up. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred green field. The school crest is visible on the students' uniforms.

**WELCOME TO
BIRCHWOOD
COMMUNITY
HIGH SCHOOL**

**“The best things about
Birchwood Community High
School is it’s easy to make new
friends and the lessons are fun’.**

Year 7 Student



THE HEADTEACHER

I am absolutely delighted and privileged to be the Headteacher of Birchwood Community High School. As a school, we understand young people only get one chance to experience school-life and our aim is very simple: to support them to grow into confident and independent young people with high aspirations, secure knowledge and kind hearts.

Our school is a very special community that we are incredibly proud of: it is made up of 900 students (11-16), supportive parents, forward-thinking governors, as well as an inspirational and talented body of staff who are fully committed to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum for all. Our school is a safe, caring and happy place for our students and they enjoy attending lessons. We take every opportunity to praise and celebrate their successes with them. As well as having every student's full academic potential and high standards of learning at the forefront of our practice, we also recognise the importance of encouraging our students to pursue all of their interests. They are given many opportunities to develop their leadership skills (subject leaders, school council, sports leaders, anti-bullying ambassadors) and we are lucky that our staff are very dedicated, giving up their own time to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities before and after school.

Our caring and supportive ethos enables our students to move forward as confident, caring and respectful young people who are ready for their next stage in life. Quite simply, we ensure that they are the very best that they can be.

Ms E Mills



THE CURRICULUM

At Birchwood, we believe every student deserves engaging, purposeful, and enjoyable lessons across all subjects. This is why we follow a 'knowledge-rich' curriculum, where each lesson is carefully designed to include essential, high-value information. Lessons build on one another, forming a cohesive sequence that allows students to deepen their understanding of key concepts year after year. By the time they leave Birchwood, students will have encountered a wide range of enriching and inspirational material, equipping them with the confidence and integrity to face their future.

Alongside academic growth, our curriculum also provides opportunities for personal enrichment. We believe a truly excellent education not only imparts knowledge but also fosters kindness and responsibility. By structuring our curriculum in this way, we aim to empower students to grow as scholars and individuals, preparing them to thrive in both their personal and academic lives.

'Before I came to Birchwood I felt excited but worried because I didn't know what it would be like. Now I feel like I've always been at this school.'

Year 7 Student





MATHS
ENGLISH
LANGUAGES
DRAMA
ENGINEERING
HISTORY
SCIENCE
ART
DANCE
GEOGRAPHY
COMPUTING
WE ACHIEVE
TOGETHER

Key Stage 3 (years 7, 8 and 9)

Our Foundation Stage equips students with the essential skills for academic success and personal growth, preparing them to thrive at Key Stage 4 and beyond. From Year 7, students follow a broad and ambitious curriculum, including core subjects like English, maths, science, modern foreign languages, history, and geography. They also explore creative and practical subjects such as engineering, food technology, computer science, PE, art, textiles, music, and drama.

Additionally, students take part in personal development and reading lessons every fortnight. From Year 8, music, drama, and art are combined into our 'Design, Create, Perform' curriculum, fostering creativity and collaboration for well-rounded development.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11)

From Year 10, students will follow the subjects that they have chosen in the latter half of year 9. All pupils study GCSEs in English Language, English Literature, maths, science and either history, geography, French, Spanish or computer science. Students choose 3 subjects from a range of GCSE and BTEC qualifications with support and guidance from school and home.

We have an extensive careers programme in school and our own dedicated careers advisor to support our students in thinking ahead and to plan for their future. We also hold an options day and a taster week for all year 9 students before they decide on their choices.





Learning for Life

The Learning for Life curriculum is delivered by form tutors during form time, and also includes 3 drop-down days spread across the school calendar that are mainly delivered by outside agencies/speakers. It prepares students for life as a responsible young adult and is made up of:

1. PSHE - emotional and physical health; citizenship, awareness and understanding; sex and relationships; and careers.
2. Reading for pleasure – two texts per year that are carefully chosen to address gaps in cultural capital and to reinforce themes and issues from other parts of the LfL curriculum, (one fiction and one non-fiction apart from year 11 who read two fiction).
3. Allusions – studying allusions that allow students to gain cultural capital to access further knowledge and understanding (e.g. Big Brother, Achilles' Heel, Cane and Abel).
4. Read, review and respond – a study of current affairs articles using key vocabulary.

Our pastoral curriculum is meticulously planned to tie in with the academic curriculum, ensuring important themes and issues are revisited and applied in such a way that their importance is understood by all. Each of the four parts are delivered daily in chunks of time (between 4 and 6 weeks) so that learning and understanding is built and consolidated for each area.

THE HOUSES

Our pastoral system is made up of four Houses: Fides, Libertas, Veneratio and Dedicatio – the Latin names of our core values of belief, independence, respect and commitment.

We firmly believe that no knowledge is elitist which is why our Houses are named using a language that is traditionally seen as elitist.

Each House is made up of forms from across all five year groups to form a pastoral family. They have termly assemblies together and compete in the regular House competitions to strive to be awarded the accolade of House of the Year in the summer term and win the House Cup.

Students are placed in mixed ability form groups with a dedicated form tutor who will usually be with them for their five years in school. Form names are based on inspirational people and they form eight of the year group assemblies that happen twice a half term. Form names change every year so that students learn about a wide range of significant figures during their five years with us. The forms are:

Year 7 – Albert Einstein, Marie Curie, Rosalind Franklin, Isaac Newton, Stephen Hawking, Charles Darwin, Nikola Tesla and Mae Jemison.

Year 8 - Pythagoras, Hypatia, Alan Turing, Ada Lovelace, Archimedes, Sophie Germain, Katherine Johnson and Mary Cartwright.

Year 9 – Malala Yousafzai, Nelson Mandela, Indira Ghandi, Emmeline Pankhurst, Karl Marx, Shirin Ebadi, Martin Luther King and the Dalai Lama.

Year 10 - Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir, Hannah Arendt, Confucius and Voltaire.

Year 11 - Virginia Woolf, George Orwell, Maya Angelou, Jane Austen, Chinua Achebe, Haruki Murakami, Oscar Wilde and Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche.

Heads of year oversee their own House and each house has a House Captain who encourages students to participate in weekly competitions.





THE ENRICHMENT

Students are encouraged and, most importantly, enabled to take advantage of the wide-range of opportunities that we provide them with, both academically and beyond the classroom to fulfil their aspirations. Whether through STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) activities, sport, the performing arts or through developing their citizenship and leadership skills, Birchwood students are always extending their learning.

Staff provide a full extracurricular programme before and after school. A morning Breakfast Club is available to give our students the best possible start to the day, and a Homework Club which runs before and after school for those who want to be organised! A wide range of trips are organised to enrich the curriculum for all students, including: fieldtrips, art gallery outings, museum visits, regular theatre-going, seeing places of worship plus visits to companies and careers fairs.

‘Parents say their children feel happy and safe and are progressing well.’

OFSTED

We Achieve Together



‘Since being at Birchwood I feel really confident. I know Birchwood is a great school and I’m happy here.’

Year 8 student

**BADMINTON
TENNIS
CHESS
NETBALL
PERFORMANCE
FOOTBALL
JAVELIN
CHOIR
X-COUNTRY
DANCE
BASKETBALL
WE ACHIEVE
TOGETHER**

We Achieve Together



THE FACILITIES

At Birchwood, each department has their own dedicated building or area on the site for them to make their own. We are very proud of our facilities and the subject specific art work on the walls to inspire our students. We are also very proud that in design and technology we have two state of the art food technology rooms which are just fabulous – our students love their food lessons and all of the extra-curricular experiences that are offered. Our dedicated art building with a purpose-built art room for our students to enjoy and get creative is also a massive asset to the school. We fully recognise how lucky we are to have the space and facilities that we do.

We have a brand-new ICT hub which is dedicated to computing, business, media and health and social care subjects and is comprised of five specialist rooms. We have Wi-Fi throughout the site plus students benefit from the use of hundreds of laptops and tablets.

The purpose- built Performing Arts Centre is a real highlight of the school, it includes a theatre with tiered seating and professional sound and lighting systems (which can be divided to provide two separate drama teaching spaces). There is also a dance studio with a fully sprung floor to accommodate our many budding dancers. Upstairs, we are very lucky to have a number of purpose- built music teaching rooms, practice rooms and our very own recording facility. We really are very lucky to have such amazing resources.

Sport is an integral part of life at Birchwood, we are lucky to enjoy world class facilities including extensive playing fields, 3G pitch, gym, basketball court and sports hall. Students have the opportunity to develop their skills and take part in a wide range of different sports, with many teams and individuals enjoying success. We are particularly proud of our girls' sports offer with rugby, football and netball teams all competing regularly.



‘Team Birchwood believe in the power of aspiration, knowledge and kindness. We know that we achieve our best when we work together.’



THE SUPPORT

At Birchwood High School, we are committed to providing exceptional pastoral care and support, ensuring that every student feels safe, valued, and supported throughout their educational journey.

Our dedicated pastoral team, which includes Heads of Year, Assistant Heads of Year, a Pastoral Manager and Deputy Pastoral Managers, work closely with students to promote wellbeing, safeguard their welfare and provide the guidance they need to thrive. Central to our approach is The Polaris Centre—our pastoral hub—where students can access tailored support, helping them navigate any challenges they may face and excel in their studies.

In addition to our pastoral care, we offer comprehensive support for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The Ancora Centre, led by our experienced SENDCo, provides individualised support for students with a wide range of needs, including those with Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans. Supported by a skilled team of teaching assistants and support staff, the Ancora Centre ensures that every child's unique requirements are met, empowering them to achieve their full potential.

We are also proud to offer two specialist provisions to further support our students. The Meliora Centre is a resourced provision specifically designed for students with autism, offering tailored interventions to meet their unique learning needs. For students who require additional emotional, social, or mental health support beyond the mainstream classroom, The Auxilium Centre provides a nurturing environment where they can access the help they need to succeed.

At Birchwood High School, supporting our students' personal, emotional, and academic development is at the heart of everything we do. We ensure that every student has access to the right support at the right time, creating a safe and inclusive community where every individual can flourish.

We Achieve Together





THE TRANSITION

We understand that year 7 is a vital time for students and their parents/carers. We work hard to ensure that students have a smooth transition to us from their primary schools, and that they feel happy and confident about starting their secondary school years.

We have regular contact with all our primary schools, offering clubs and activities from year 5 onwards, our clubs are extremely popular and have previously included: Little Languages club, Whizz Bang science club, Junior Journalist English club, Coding for Kids club and Terrific Afternoon Tea club.

We also invite all of our local primaries to events in school such as our specially performed matinee shows of our big productions. Our teachers work closely with primary staff to smooth the transition to high school.

Students join us from many different primary schools and we make every effort to ensure that they have the opportunity to become familiar with their new environment and make some friends before they start school.

We do this through two induction days in the summer term, when all year 6 students visit us, meet their form tutor and learn some of our routines. We also invite parents and carers to an evening event to get to know some key staff and so that we can answer any queries.

Additional transition days are arranged for children who need a little extra support.



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