



# THE BIRCHWOOD NEWS



FEBRUARY 2025

## WINTER PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

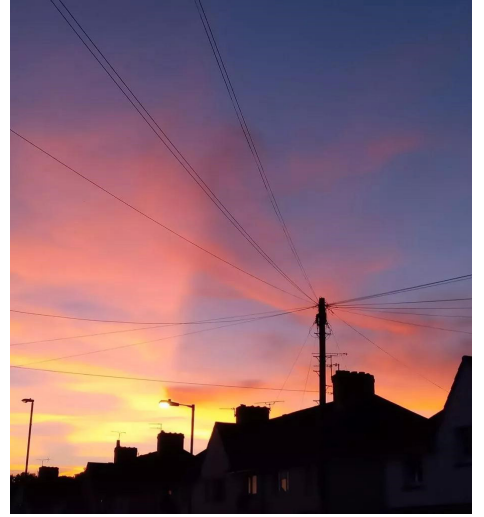
Congratulations to all the entrants of this year's Winter Photography Competition! The standard of entries was incredibly high, making it a tough decision to choose a winner. A huge well done to everyone who took part, and a special congratulations to Lucas for his winning photograph.



FIRST PLACE: Lucas Tilley

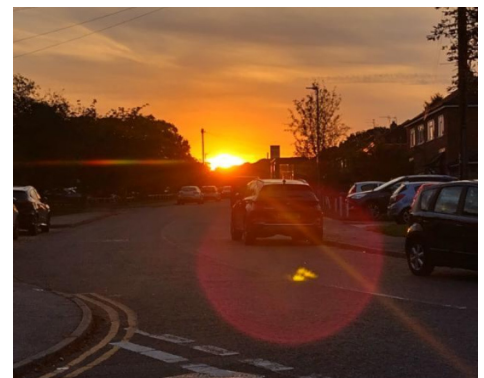
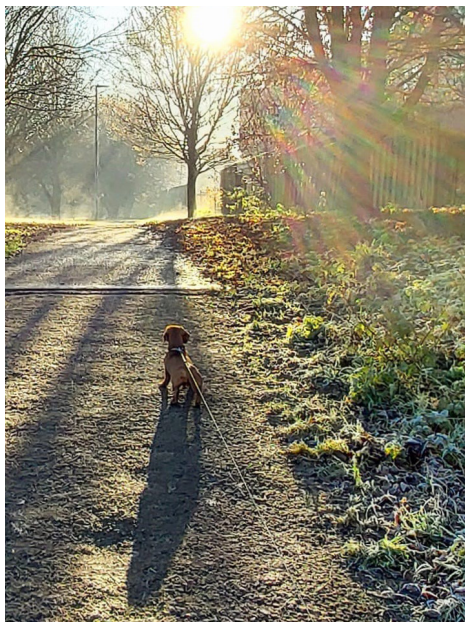


SECOND PLACE: Rowan Thorn



THIRD PLACE: Connor Winfield

Thank you to our other entries from: Poppy Caunter, Emilie Klumpler, Daniel Anderson and Lucy Levin



# House



HOUSE POINT TOTALS:  
Keep working hard to earn points for your house!

1st Place - Waytemore 23,572

3rd Place - Hadham 22,442

2nd Place - Dane 22,782

4th Place - Stort 21,059

## VALENTINE'S DAY CHARITY DAY



The House Team hosted a fantastic Valentine's Charity Day, packed with exciting activities to raise money for a great cause. Students took part in a Cupid and Heart Treasure Hunt, Guess How Many Sweets in the Jar, a Cake and Sweet Shop, a Crossbar Challenge, a Bake Off competition, and a Raffle.

Congratulations to Evie Rushton, who guessed the correct number of sweets in the jar, and Harriet Little, who won the chocolate raffle!

## OUR BAKE OFF WINNERS

This year's Valentine's Bake Off had a record number of entries, with students impressing the judges on both presentation and taste.

Annabelle Copping – 1st place for her outstanding raspberry and chocolate brownie

Sophie Billett – 2nd place for her heart-shaped cake pops

Georgia Scadding – 3rd place for her heart cake filled with sweets



This year our nominated charity is the ARC, a local animal rescue charity who provides a safe haven for neglected, unwanted, abandoned animals and wherever possible to treat and re-rehabilitate all animals, including wildlife based locally in Bishop's Stortford.

Thinking of volunteering? Search <https://www.animalrescuecharity.org.uk/vacancies/>

So far we have raised...

**£1967.14**

# STUDENT NEWS

At Birchwood, we love celebrating the successes of our students, both in and outside of school.

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## TOM FORBES' KARTING SUCCESS

We're proud to shine a spotlight on Year 11 student Tom Forbes and his incredible achievements in the world of karting. Tom, his dad and his older brother all do karting as a family and do their own maintenance and repairs. Since starting at just 7 years old, Tom has excelled in national championships, including:

- Winning the NatSKA Class 4 Cadet Championship by age 10
- 2nd place in the Retro Kart Junior TKM Championship, winning the 'E' plate at Clay Pigeon Raceway
- Champion in the Access Karting Championship



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## BIRCHWOOD STUDENTS SHINE ON THE WEST END STAGE

A huge congratulations to Josie Mills, Tilly Shortall, Annabelle Milton, and Freddie Cash, who recently performed Across the Line with the Pauline Quirke Academy at His Majesty's Theatre in the West End!

Josie took on the role of villain Jonny Toxic, delivering a stand-out solo of Britney Spears' Toxic. Tilly and Annabelle both played Parker, with Annabelle also performing as Charlie, while Freddie starred as Blade.





# FUSION CELEBRATE LGBTQ+ HISTORY MONTH

## What is LGBTQ+ history month?

LGBT+ history month is a month dedicated to remembering LGBTQ+ people throughout history.

People like Alan Turing and Marsha P. Johnson who paved the way for present day LGBTQ+ people to live without fear of homophobia and transphobia.

## Why do we celebrate it?

The Month is intended to bring queer history to light in education after this long period of school children growing up hearing nothing positive about LGBTQ+ people and our lives. We also celebrate LGBTQ+ history month to remember the lives lost during the Stonewall riots. A series of violent confrontations that began in the early hours of June 28, 1969, between police and gay rights activists outside the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in the Greenwich Village section of New York City. As the riots progressed, an international gay rights movement was born.

## What will Birchwood be doing to celebrate?

- Tuesday 11 February - Guest speaker (virtual), Sarah Coscriff from SchoolsOUT
- Thursday 13 February - Film event: Green Book
- Wednesday 26 February - Guest speaker (in person) Peter Tatchell , Human Rights & LGBTQ+ campaigner.
- Wednesday 19 March - Fusion trip to Bletchley Park.

If you would like anymore information on any upcoming Fusion events, please contact Mr J Harlow.

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## YEAR 11 DRAMA STUDENTS TRIP TO THE MOUSETRAP

Year 11 GCSE Drama students recently enjoyed a trip to see The Mousetrap at St Martin's Theatre. This experience was not only exciting but also invaluable for their GCSE exam preparation.

Watching Agatha Christie's famous murder mystery live allowed students to analyse key aspects of theatre-making, including acting, direction, staging, lighting, and sound design. They were fully engaged in the suspense, with plenty of discussion on the way home—especially about who had correctly guessed the 'Whodunnit'!

This trip was a fantastic opportunity to deepen their appreciation of live theatre and will help them write detailed performance reviews for their exam.



# PE NEWS



## FOOTBALL FOCUS



Year 8 Football 2-2 against Avanti



U12's win against Leventhorpe 2-1



U16 Football cup match against Robert Barclay we won 2-1.

## DISTRICT SWIMMING GALA

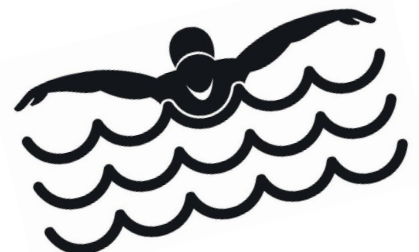
On Thursday 16 January, 12 students ranging from the Year 7-9 took part in a District Swimming Gala Competition held at Bishops Stortford College.

Year 7 girls team included Jorgie-Rose King, Harriet Little, Ava Higgs and Eliana Macavei. Year 8/9 combined girls included Tahlia Sunshine, Isabelle Earley, May Donnelly and Faye Slocombe. Year 7 boys team had one swimmer, Matthew Jarrett and the Year 8/9 combined team included Hughey S, Bobby Gowers and Toby Bromage.

All our swimmers were up against some really tough competition but didn't let that get in the way of swimming to their maximum effort. We performed some great races, with Isabelle, Matthew and Hughey coming 1st in their races (Breaststroke, Butterfly and Butterfly, respectively). Tahlia and May came 2nd in Butterfly and Backstroke. Harriet and Toby came 3rd in their Breaststroke races and Ava, Faye and Bobby came 3rd in their individual Freestyle races. Some of these races were photo finishes, adding to the excitement of the event!

This year we had enough swimmers to form relay teams for the year 7 girls and year 8/9 girls teams in the medley and freestyle relays. The standard of competition was so high and although they were very close (and fast!) races, we came a respectable 4th and 6th overall in the relays. The atmosphere around the pool was electric and all of Birchwood swimmers should come away proud with their heads held high. It was a pleasure taking you all and you represented your school with pride.

*Mrs Siczko, PE*



# NETBALL NEWS



Year 7 A Team 4-3 against Avanti, B team 8-4 against Avanti



Year 8 8-3 against Avanti



Year 8 Netball win



Year 9 A 30-20 against JFAN



Year 9 21-17 against Avanti

# BSP SPORTS LEADERS



BSP Sports Leaders have been busy supporting a range of primary school events, showcasing their leadership and teamwork skills. They played a key role in the Stortford Gymnastics Competition for Years 5 and 6, where Windhill21 took home the win. They also helped run the Primary School Athletics Competition, with Summercroft emerging as the winners. In addition, they led a Primary Dance Workshop, inspiring younger students to get moving and enjoy the world of dance. Well done to all involved!





**SOPHIEJUSTDANCE GMAIL.COM**

**KIDS AERIAL HOOP  
LESSONS**

**BIRCHWOOD HIGH SCHOOL**

**SOPHIE**

**07585115924**

**LIMITED SPACES BOOKING ESSENTIAL**

*What have our budding Birchwood journalists been researching this month?*

## **WHAT IS THE CES?**

The Consumer Electronics Show 2025 took place in Las Vegas, USA on the 7-10 January. It is a display of all the latest innovations in tech and possibilities for our technological future. All the companies that took part showcased their newest and most innovative technology, some of which will be seen and for purchase in the future. This year, the main theme was AI. Artificial intelligence could be found in most of the show. From TVs with AI enhanced picture quality, to self-driving vehicles and robots that could do odd jobs around the house. AI was the star of the show.

Some of the other technology included: solar powered vehicles, flagship gaming GPUs, the brightest OLED TVs, innovations in smart home tech and incredible robot vacuum cleaners that had an arm to pick up objects.

*Daniel Anderson, Year 9*

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## **LA WILDFIRES**

The Los Angeles wildfires of 2025, specifically, 7 January have overrun the city and its neighbourhoods causing many citizens to evacuate. Sometimes because of the high winds reaching over 70 mph blowing the fires to nearby houses putting many residents in danger.

As 180,000 people evacuate, the fires approach the classic Hollywood sign, covering almost the entire mountain. Also destroying several celebrities' homes such as Spencer Pratt, Paris Hilton and Billy Crystal. However it has then destroyed over 12,000 of the citizens' homes. Sadly, as so many people were leaving their homes, criminals chose to stay to rob their houses as they are gone.

In conclusion, the wildfires of Los Angeles have hit America hard but hopefully by the end of the year America will fight back and take control.

*Fletcher Fegan, Year 7*

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## **CHINESE NEW YEAR**

The snake is the sixth of the twelve-year old cycle of animals which appear in the Chinese zodiac related to the Chinese calendar. The year of the snake is associated with the earthly branch symbol. According to one legend there is a reason for the orders of the animals in the cycle. A race was held to cross a great river and the order of the animals in the cycle was based upon their order in the finishing race. In this story the snake compensated for not being the best swimmer by hitching a hidden ride on the Horse's hoof. When the horse was about to cross the finish line, the snake jumped out, scaring the horse, and thus edging it out for sixth place. The same twelve animals are also used to symbolize the cycle of hours in the day, each being associated with a two-hour time period. The hour of the snake is 9:00 to 11:00 am, the time when the Sun warms up the Earth, and snakes are said to slither out of their holes. The month of the snake is the 4th month of the Chinese lunar calendar and it usually falls within the months of May through June depending on the Chinese to Gregorian calendar conversion. The reason the animal signs are referred to as zodiacal is that one's personality is said to be influenced by the animal signs ruling the time of birth, together with elemental aspects of the animal signs within the sexagenary cycle. Similarly, the year governed by a particular animal sign is supposed to be characterized by it, with the effects particularly strong for people who were born in any year governed by the same animal sign.

*Sara Boje, Year 7*



# We need your old trainers...



## *BBC Reporters Supporting Mahinga Primary School in Kenya*

We're collecting pre-loved trainers and sportswear to support Mahinga Primary School in rural Kenya. Over the past few years, we've provided every child with a pair of trainers for school, and we hope to continue this effort.

Many of these children walk long distances to access education, so suitable footwear makes a big difference.

We're looking for donations of small sizes up to adult sizes. If you can help, please drop your donations at Students' Reception. Thank you for your support!



The BBC Young Reporter Online Festival offered an exciting lineup of events, providing valuable insights for sixth form students.

Business students heard from social media influencer KatyLee Bailey, who shared her experience of building an online brand, managing time, and handling digital scrutiny - all while balancing a "normal life" as a teenager.

English students gained a behind-the-scenes look at the BBC crime thriller Virdee, with AA Dhand, Amit, Eeshar Singh, and Simmi Ryatt offering insights into TV drama production. Amit Dhand's journey from pharmacist to author was particularly inspiring, and Eeshar Singh shared his experience shadowing the show's music producer.

*Mrs Barnard*

# SIXTH FORM NEWS

## SIXTH FORM HOUSE CAPTAINS RAISE FUNDS AT THE WINTER BALL



Congratulations to the House Captains who organised the Winter Ball and raised £993.00 split between MIND and the Herts Essex Air Ambulance.

## MATHS STUDENTS VISIT STORM AVIATION

A group of Year 12 A-Level Maths students from Birchwood High School recently visited Storm Aviation at Stansted Airport, gaining valuable insight into careers in engineering and the aviation industry.

Accompanied by Dr Allen, the students toured the company's facilities, including a maintenance hangar and teaching room, where they explored the real-world applications of mathematics in flight and aircraft maintenance.

A highlight of the visit was the aircraft maintenance quiz, where students performed exceptionally well. Engaged and inquisitive throughout the day, they asked insightful questions and left with a deeper understanding of the opportunities available in aviation.



## SPOTLIGHT ON: PEER MENTORING

The Peer Mentoring Scheme, led by Mr Harlow and Ms Willsmore, provides an invaluable opportunity for Sixth Form students to support younger peers at Birchwood. Having already navigated secondary school challenges themselves, Year 12 mentors offer guidance and a safe, consistent space for lower school students to discuss any concerns.

Before mentoring, students complete six hours of training, developing key skills in self-awareness, trust-building, and maintaining appropriate boundaries. Most mentors are paired with a single student, meeting every Friday lunchtime in the library, where games like darts, Jenga, and board games help foster connections. Others work with entire form groups, offering broader support.

This initiative plays a vital role in promoting wellbeing and strengthening the school community.



Meet a few of our current peer mentors: Emily Edwards, Matthew Reader, Harrison Pickard and Kieren Mok.

# SIXTH FORM ENGLISH STUDENT REVIEW THE LATEST TRIPS

## TWELFTH NIGHT

Sixth Form went to see 'Twelfth Night' performed in Stratford-upon-Avon. It is a vibrant and entertaining take on Shakespeare's beloved comedy. The production brings the play's mix of mistaken identities, love triangles, and witty dialogue to life with dynamic performances (such as Feste being suspended, singing in midair). Set in the fictional land of Illyria, the story follows the shipwrecked Viola, who disguises herself as a man, and her involvement in a complex love affair involving Duke Orsino, and Lady Olivia. This version stood out to me for its engaging modern staging, incorporating humour, emotional depth, and a modern twist on Shakespeare's language. The talented cast (featuring Doctor Who's Freema Agyeman) brings the play's themes of love, longing, and identity into sharp focus, while the beautiful Stratford-upon-Avon setting adds an extra layer of charm to this timeless and wonderful production of a traditional Shakespeare play. The Sixth Form were delighted with not only the play, but the delicious treats they purchased from the high street bakery. Overall, it was, a cold, but extremely useful day, as we were able to observe contemporary staging and real-life dynamics of a Shakespearean modernised performance.



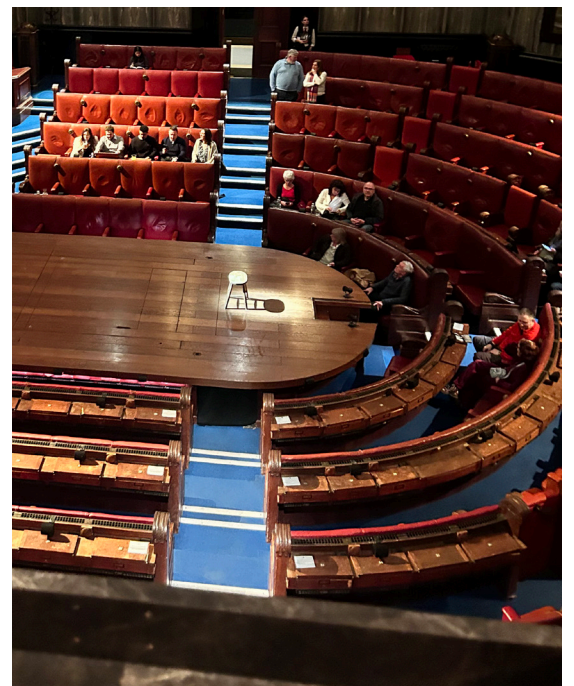
*Liv Donaldson, Year 13*

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## WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION

Agatha Christie's Witness for the Prosecution, currently playing in London's West End, is a gripping courtroom thriller that skilfully blends suspense, drama, and sharp twists. Directed by Lucy Bailey, the play transports the audience into a dramatic murder trial where Leonard Vole is accused of killing a wealthy widow. As the trial unfolds, layers of deception and unexpected revelations make the lines between truth and lies increasingly blurry.

The strong performances, especially from the lead actors, keep the tension palpable throughout. The staging itself is clever, with the courtroom set-up adding to the atmosphere of intrigue and suspense. Christie's signature ability to weave an unpredictable narrative is on full display, with a shocking and satisfying conclusion that leaves the audience questioning everything they thought they knew.



*Liv Donaldson, Year 13*

## BUSINESS STUDENTS VISIT DISNEY



Year 12 Business Studies students brought their learning to life at Disneyland Paris! From exploring the park's business operations to engaging in an interactive workshop, they gained real-world insights while experiencing the magic first-hand.

## SKY STUDIO'S TALK ABOUT CAREERS IN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

We kicked off National Apprenticeship Week with a careers talk to our Year 9, 12 and 13 students from Sky Studios, Elstree. They shared exciting insights into their early career programmes in the film and television industry. This is a growing industry in Hertfordshire and one that many of our students are targeting once they leave Birchwood.



# LIBRARY NEWS

My name is Miss Shackleton I am the new Librarian at Birchwood.

I am in the process of trying to locate missing and overdue Library books. If you think you might have any of these books at home, could they please be returned to the Library. They can be placed in the blue book return box or handed in to myself.

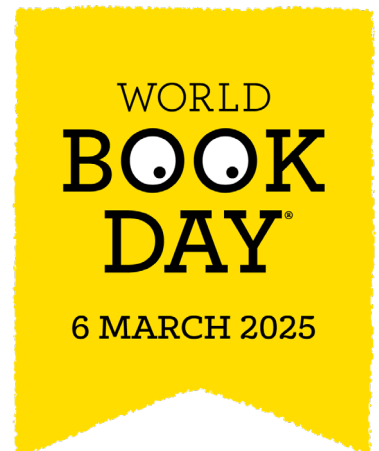
If you have any books that are in good condition and that your child no longer reads, any donations would be greatly appreciated. House points will be awarded for any books donated.

I am introducing our new Library Rewards Card. For each book that is read, five house points will be awarded and upon completion of your card, you will be entered into a half term draw and the winner will receive a prize.

Earn yourself extra house points by writing a review of your book on the reading cloud, submit via teams or email myself (Miss Shackleton).

Look out for upcoming events and competitions in the Library

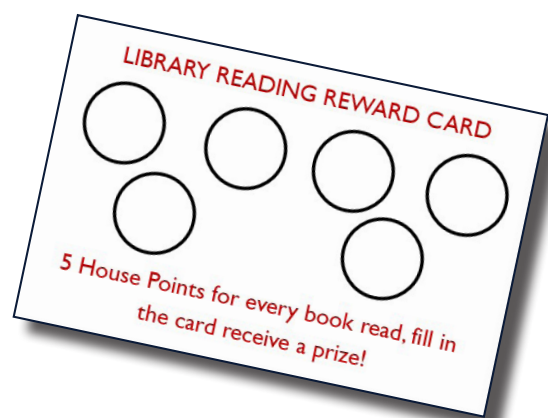
World Book Day 6 March 2025  
World Book Day Quiz Lunchtime in the Library.  
Sign up with Miss Shackleton.



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## INTRODUCING THE LIBRARY REWARDS CARDS

Library Reward Cards are now available to collect from the Library. Each time you finish a book, return it to the Library, get your card stamped and receive 5 House Points per book. When you have completed your reward card (six books), you will receive a prize.





# READING CLOUD

I would like to introduce you to the Reading Cloud. The Reading Cloud is the system we use within the Library to keep track of our books and resources. Using the system, you will be able to borrow and reserve books. The Reading Cloud also gives you the opportunity to write reviews on the books you have read and recommend them to your fellow students.

All reviews will be rewarded with House Points. You will all have your own individual login details. A unique barcode will be required to login for the first time, which will be provided by Miss Shackleton in the Library.



## READING CLOUD IS AVAILABLE HERE!

**Reading Cloud is the system we use to keep track of our library books and resources and make them available for you to borrow, reserve and review.**

**Each of you has your own individual login details.**

**To login go to:  
<https://u006973.mircolibrarian.net> and  
enter your unique barcode  
(this will be supplied by  
Miss Shackleton, Librarian the first time you need to login in).**



**You can also login via the library page on the school website  
or via one of the dedicated iPads in the Library.**



#### Why not follow us on Facebook?

We have a Facebook page where you can keep up to date with events and meetings. Please follow us at Birchwood Parents Staff and Friends Association (PSFA)

## PRELOVED UNIFORM

If you are replacing items of branded school uniform and the old items are still in good condition, please consider donating good condition items of preloved uniform to the PSFA. Please drop off washed clean items of uniform to Reception.

Help needed!

Do you have an hour a week to help with our pre-loved uniform?

This could be during the day (DBS check needed) or after school, helping with sorting and hanging up donations and dealing with enquiries (e.g. finding sizes and bagging up orders)

Please contact [birchwoodpsfa@gmail.com](mailto:birchwoodpsfa@gmail.com) if you can help.

## EASY FUNDRAISING

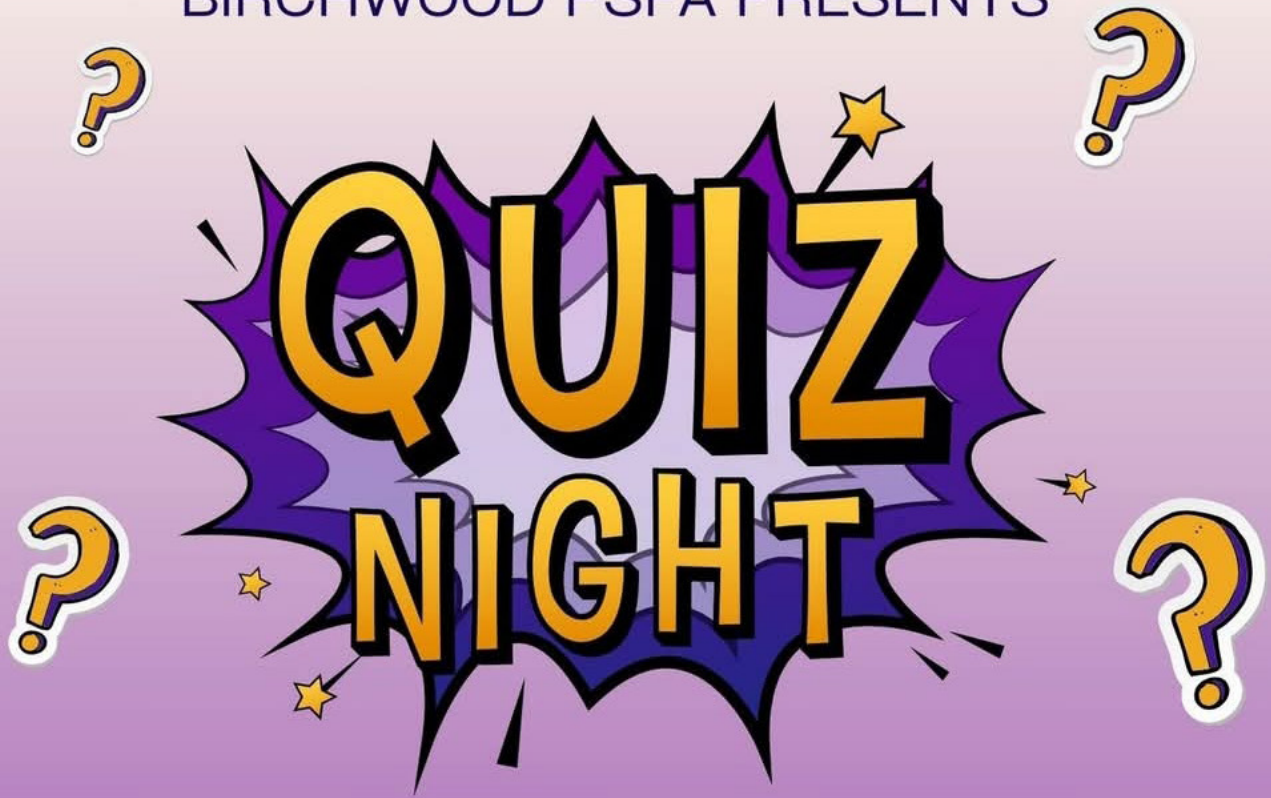
Did you know that whenever you buy anything online – from your weekly shop to your annual holiday – you could be raising free donations for Birchwood with easy fundraising? There are over 8,000 retailers on board ready to make a donation – including eBay, Argos, John Lewis & Partners, ASOS, Booking.com and M&S – and it won't cost you a penny extra to help us raise funds.

All you need to do is:

1. Go to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/birchwood-parents-staff-and-friends-association/> and join for free.
2. Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first to find the site you want and start shopping.
3. After you've checked out, the retailer will make a donation to Birchwood at no extra cost to you whatsoever! There are no catches or hidden charges and Birchwood will be really grateful for your donations.

Thank you for your support.

BIRCHWOOD PSFA PRESENTS

A central graphic for 'Quiz Night' featuring the words 'QUIZ NIGHT' in large, bold, yellow letters with black outlines, set against a purple, jagged, starburst background. The text is surrounded by several yellow question marks and small yellow stars, all with white outlines. The background of the entire poster is a gradient of purple and blue, with orange and purple decorative bars at the top and bottom.

# QUIZ NIGHT

**WITH SIMON & DAVE**

**BIRCHWOOD HIGH SCHOOL  
FRIDAY 21ST MARCH 2025**

7PM FOR 7:30PM START  
TABLES OF UP TO 8 PEOPLE  
£8 PER PERSON, BRING OWN DRINKS AND NIBBLES

**REGISTER YOUR TEAM TODAY!**  
TREASURERBWPSFA@GMAIL.COM

# 2025/26 TERM DATES

Birchwood High School Calendar

2025 - 2026

Sep 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Oct 2025						
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

Nov 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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Dec 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Jan 2026						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

Feb 2026						
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Mar 2026						
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30	31					

Apr 2026						
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May 2026						
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31						

Jun 2026						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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29	30					

Jul 2026						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

CPD Days – school closed to students
Student holidays & occasional days
Bank & public holidays
School Open to Yr 7 & 12 only
Open Evening
Year 6 Transition Day

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## UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

### MARCH

Tuesday 4 March: Year 10 Parents' Evening (school closing early at 13:30pm).

Tuesday 18 March: Year 9 Parent' Evening

### APRIL

Tuesday 29 March: Year 9 Options Evening

