

Birch Wood Area Special school

Class: The Eagles

Autumn 2023

Curriculum Newsletter



Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to welcome you the new school year. Please find below a summary of the topics and units we will be working on during the autumn term. At the bottom of this letter, there are ideas that you could share with your child at home. The Eagles' class team and I are looking forward to working with your child and to an exciting term together.

Our themes this term will be: 'Adventures Big and Small' & 'Food Glorious Food'

Autumn Term 1	<p style="text-align: center;">'Adventures Big and Small'</p> <p>We will explore the themes of travel, adventure, friendship and kindness through our literacy book: 'The Snail and the Whale'. Through a sensory story pupils will learn about beaches, the coast and geographical locations illustrated in the book. We will develop our knowledge & understanding of the world in our Groups and Differences Science topic including non-fiction fun facts about mini-beasts and mammals. We will learn in a multi-sensory way using art, crafts, music, cookery, drama and movement related to our theme. In PSHE our safety theme includes being safe online, personal safety and being safe in different environments. We will also develop our number skills, social interaction and communication skills.</p>
Autumn Term 2	<p style="text-align: center;">'Food Glorious Food'</p> <p>After half term we will read a child friendly abridged version of Oliver Twist and take part in a sensory story about Oliver Twist. This will include a musical exploration of the story. The themes of belonging, empathy and the power of love link well with our PSHE topic on values and choices. Woven into our Humanities topic will be children in Victorian times and the people that made a difference to their lives. Our theme will incorporate art, crafts, music, movement and drama activities connected to our main story. Our musical theme will extend to Science with an exploration of sound. Christmas related activities will have a Victorian twist alongside an exploration of Advent and Christmas around the world.</p>

Our class are following a combination of Engagement and Independence pathways. The engagement pathway is an extremely pupil centred and individualised curriculum focusing on five key areas, incorporating essential therapies. The five key areas of the Engagement Curriculum are "My Communication", "My Thinking", "My Movement", "Myself" and "My Enrichment". The Independence Curriculum offers a similar level of personalisation but includes more discrete subject teaching in areas such as literacy, maths and science.

My Communication – Reading, Literacy and Phonics

This area of the curriculum focuses on developing the ability of our pupils to be able to communicate, interact and to make their needs known. Our classroom is a total communication environment where we use Makaton signing, body signing, and personalised objects of reference, communication switches and photos/symbols to help make choices. We carry out communication sessions on a daily basis such as intensive interaction, story massage, sensory stories, sensory drama, Tac-Pac, Dance Massage, Write Dance and communication games. Pupils on the independence pathway will experience a multi-sensory approach to literacy including the use of movement, music, songs and drama. Pupils will work on letter recognition and formation, cursive writing (where appropriate), alphabet skills, spelling, reading, grammar, speaking and listening skills according to their ability and SEN. Pupils will continue to develop their sentence and early story writing skills.

My Thinking - Maths and Science

This area of the curriculum focuses on developing our pupils' attention and anticipation skills and awareness of cause and effect in their environment. It also promotes problem solving skills and making choices. For pupils on the engagement pathway, sessions within class include Sensology (Hello Senses), sensory cooking, switch toy work, control device sessions, cause and effect games on the interactive whiteboard and in our immersive room. In Maths we will be working on number recognition, number formation, counting, number sequences, addition and subtraction. Our Science topics will involve looking at our similarities and differences along with sorting and grouping plants and animals. In Autumn 2 we will find out about the ear and hearing during our sound topic.

My Movement - PE

Movement is a huge part of our curriculum. On a daily basis we follow our pupil's physiotherapy and movement programmes, incorporating these into daily activities. Some children have a hydrotherapy programme and will access the hydro pool. Every Tuesday afternoon we have a session in the hall with our PE instructor where we will work on our pupils' MATP (motor activity training programme) targets. These targets focus on developing pupil's movement.

Myself – PSHE, RSE & RE

This area of the curriculum focuses on empowering our pupils, giving them every opportunity to make progress towards fulfilment and independence. We incorporate opportunities to work on independence skills throughout the school day in areas such as eating and drinking, dressing and personal care needs. This will look different for each pupil, but the goal is to give every opportunity to increase independence and to make choices about their daily routines. Part of this curriculum focuses on pupils exploring their own preferences and having a greater awareness of their own bodies and the space around them. We also seek to give pupils greater independence with their personal care, from pupils choosing who carries out their personal care to independent toileting.

My Enrichment

This area encompasses lots of different motivating therapies, for example rebound therapy, music therapy, hydrotherapy (EHCP dependent) and activities. We will take part in enrichment activities including rehearsing for assemblies, mini enterprise, cooking and gardening. We hope to go on community visits including a visit to Manor Farm; more information to follow regarding horse riding sessions and swimming on alternate weeks in the Spring term.

Things you could do at home

My Communication:

- Enjoy sharing a wide range of books and reading material with your child
- Provide opportunities to practice mark making, letter formation, letter sounds and spellings.
- Encourage your child to communicate as fully as possible e.g. in line with their SALT targets if applicable.

My thinking:

- Explore numbers in the environment
- Go on mini-beast hunts, make 'bug house', identify mini-beasts.
- Notice sounds at home and when out and about. Make sounds with instruments, listen to a wide range of music together.

If you are unsure about anything, please email me on dajej@birchwoodschool.co.uk I am happy to help you with any questions you may have about your child. I am excited to work in partnership with you to ensure your child can achieve their best potential.

Janet Daye
The Eagles Class Teacher

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