

Birch Wood Area Special school  
**Class Kingfishers & Nightingales**  
**(EYFS)**  
 Autumn 2023  
 Curriculum Newsletter



Dear parents and carers,

Welcome back after the summer holiday, we hope you had a wonderful break. We are excited to welcome our new families and children to EYFS and to share our new topics and units of work for the coming term, so that you can talk to your children about their lessons and support them with activities.

Our afternoon themes this term will be:

Themes are set up to reflect areas of learning including Expressive Arts, Understanding of The World (Including technology, humanities and scientific enquiry), Personal Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development as well as Communication and Thinking skills. Each learning station focusses on a different skill within those areas and includes sensory and tactile resources to explore.

Theme	Brief synopsis
Belonging	During this theme we explore themes of belonging. We will look at our own families, our school community and our wider community. We will explore diversity and difference and how we all fit together in our own way! The afternoons will involve arts activities exploring physical and visual differences as well as games and activities that everyone can be included in.
Picnics	Continuing the theme of belonging we will celebrate food shared through Teddy Bear picnics and picnics with our friends. We will explore healthy choices, food colour, hygiene and packaging. Children will have opportunities to prepare and pack food for their picnics!
Autumn and Harvest	As the seasons change, we will draw attention to the outside world and notice changing colours and patterns through observation, information books and stories such as The Leaf Man. We will explore our outside areas around school and collect items that we can use to make our own leaf people. Harvest is a good time to engage with our community and we will be hearing about the work of Storehouse Melton. We will look at where food comes from and try some autumn recipes!
Festivals	During this term we have the opportunity to enjoy different festivals including Halloween, Diwali, Bonfire Night and Christmas. This topic lends itself really well to engaging with our senses, exploring foods, colour, smell and music related to the festivals and the cultures around them.

### My Communication – Reading, Literacy and Phonics

**Communication** We encourage children to communicate through their preferred means which could include gestures, facial expression pictures, communication devices, spoken sounds and words and Makaton. We use a 'Total Communication' approach which means that all communication attempts are valued and recognised. Children are given opportunities to make choices and express preferences frequently. All children will take part in small group or individual communication sessions as indicated in their health care plans.

**Early Reading and Phonics** All children engage with phonics at the appropriate phase. We use Read Write Inc Phonics and activities will be differentiated to each student's needs. The activities may include listening to sounds, making sounds, differentiating sounds, learning phase one letter sounds and some children are beginning to blend and segment, whilst reading books with specific sounds linked to their phase.

Some children are beginning to differentiate between sounds and pictures and beginning to link sounds and pictures. We continue to consolidate these skills alongside specific phonics work.

**Comprehension** Once a week our literacy will focus on developing understanding of stories, key events and vocabulary. We will develop play linked to stories and some children will sequence and talk about stories that we have read. We encourage reading for pleasure and always have a range of books on offer, sometimes linked to our afternoon theme. Storytelling is built into the day, linked with theme, or used to engage all of the senses and imagination.

**Mark Making and Writing** We'll be exploring mark making with hands and tools using sensory materials and early writing in response to pictures, songs and stories. Children will have opportunities to develop the motor skills needed to make marks and to write. At least once a term we will do Write Dance which includes large gross motor movements to music. Some children will work on letter formation, spelling and grammar in 1:1 or paired sessions.

### My Thinking - Maths and Science

For some of our learners, maths will be incorporated into our daily routine, sensory stories, music and songs and other areas of the curriculum. Others will begin to develop maths skills in focused sessions.

**The EYFS** environment provides opportunities for children to problem solve, compare, sort and explore mathematical skills such as number, shape, space and measure. These are facilitated throughout the week through a combination of pupil led play, small groups and 1:1 sessions led by an adult.

**Number** includes counting and early calculations. We'll work on recognition of numbers up to 10 but extending where we need to, as well as experiencing quantity and the concepts of 'more' and 'less' in a tactile way.

**Measure:** Children with experience objects of different sizes, weights and lengths, They will learn to make simple comparisons and identify heavy, light, big small and long and short. Some children may begin to order items in terms of lengths or size and measure independently. This will be further explored through cooking once per week.

### My Movement - PE

**Daily Provision:** By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, we support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility.

Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. In our daily set up we offer repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools.

**PE:** sessions take place weekly and include all of the above as well team games, ball skills and personal targets. Pupils will be focusing on athletics skills including developing different ways of moving through a space.

**Swimming** Hydro swimming for students who require swimming as part of their physio plan and/or sensory needs. Some children will also access movement sessions such as Sherborne developmental movement, dance massage and rebound therapy.

### Myself - PSHE

**Daily Provision:** Self -regulation is an ongoing focus. We facilitate this through daily interactions and building positive relationship, using co-regulation strategies that suit pupil's needs, providing sensory diets for pupils based on their initial sensory assessment and encouraging pupils to engage with sensory or chosen activities that help them to self-regulate. We encourage emotional literacy through emotion cards and Chirpy Board.

**Themes:** In the afternoons there is always one activity that focusses on Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) through the theme.

**Lessons: PSHE lessons this term will be based on;** Unique, similar and different, Likes and dislikes, Making choices, our families and where we live.

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### My Enrichment

Throughout the curriculum, we want to promote resilience, kindness and creativity. This could be through stories and themes, assembly, engagement with community groups as well as taking part in larger fundraising and charity events. Pupils develop a sense of belonging through visits and events within the wider school as well as community trips, including our outing to the park, and visits linked to themes such as visits from local emergency services or for weekly swimming. We use arts to encourage self-expression and appreciation of the world around us. Visiting theatre groups such as Bamboozle provide valuable enriching experiences and memories. We will be taking part in music day exploring genres of music from around the world.

### Things you could do at home

**My Communication:** Ask questions using prompts; why, where, which, who, when how? Play games such as I spy to help build vocabulary. Engage children in songs and rhymes and establish shared attention.

**My Thinking:** Encourage problem solving through everyday activities, count everyday objects while playing, look for shapes around the house, compare big and small objects. Encourage children to help with everyday jobs and tasks such as making simple food, exploring weight, pouring and putting things 'in.

**Independence:** wherever possible allow children time to put on clothes, coats and shoes. Help to prepare food, make choices and engage with own care routines such as brushing teeth and washing.

**Sensory learners:** Engage with sounds and textures in your home environment both inside and outdoors. We will provide sensory activities such as Tac Pac or dance massage periodically for you to engage with at home.

If you are unsure about anything, please email us

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We are always happy to help you with any questions you may have about your child.

We are very much looking forward to working with you this term and look forward to seeing the progress all of our children make.

Kind regards,

Becky, Kate and Natalie