



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to everyone. I hope you all had a lovely rest over the Summer Holidays and got to enjoy some of the earlier sunny weather together. I also hope that students are refreshed and ready to embrace the new term as we have some exciting learning opportunities to experience!

This term, we will be settling in a new cohort of students, which is so exciting; watching all of our young people grow and develop new skills whilst being cheerleaders and supporting each other.

I have put this curriculum newsletter together to share with you the topics and units of work that are being covered by The Lodge (Post 16) this term. This will give you the additional information needed to talk to your young person about their lessons. We are looking forward to an exciting and busy term and we hope that the students will enjoy it.

Our [topics/themes] this term will be:

Autumn Term 1	Gothic Literature: We are going on a sensory adventure, exploring the story of Dracula. Our sensory story will incorporate the sounds, smells, textures and tastes within this exciting tale. We will also be using switch technology to make choices, alongside E-Tran frames for clear eye pointing work. We will also be immersing ourselves in a multi-sensory experiences, utilising our Immersive room.
Autumn Term 2	Winter Stories: We will be exploring the story of the Nutcracker. We will share this through the medium of a sensory story using our switches, E-Tran frame, AACs, use of visuals, signing, intensive interaction and body signing.

I will update Kinteract with observation relating to our learning intentions - and so that you can see how much fun we have in school! Leave me a comment when you can, I would love to know what you think of our school work.

Our class will be following the Engagement Curriculum. This 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". See the table below for more details on each area.

My Communication
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. Whilst everything we do on a daily basis feeds into this, there are specific therapies and sessions which help us to develop these key communication skills. Our classroom is a total communication environment where we use Makaton signing, body signing, personalised objects or 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.
My Thinking
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. Daily sessions within class include Sensology (Hello Senses), Eye Gaze technology, sensory cooking, switch toy work, latch switch control sessions, cause and effect games on the interactive whiteboard and in our immersive room.
My Movement

Movement is a huge part of the curriculum in The Lodge. On a daily basis we follow our pupil's physiotherapy and positioning programmes, incorporating these into daily activities. Each child has a hydrotherapy programme and will access the hydro pool. We also have weekly Rebound Therapy sessions for each child on our trampoline with our trained therapist. Every week we have MATP sessions in class, where we will work on pupil's MATP (motor activity training programme) targets. These targets focus on developing pupil's movement needs.

Myself

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 e.g. toileting and washing. 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 also focuses on pupils exploring their own preferences and having a greater awareness of their own bodies and the space around them.

As a part of our RSE curriculum, we use sensory sessions based on the themes of personal care, friendships and relationships and body awareness. We will also have an overarching focus on consent, ensuring that our young people understand that they always have a choice to opt in or out of touch-based activities. We also seek to give pupils greater independence with their personal care, from pupils choosing who carries out their personal care to independent toileting.

In PSHE this term we will be sharing a sensory story all about Personal Hygiene called Dallips deodorant. This is a fun interactive story all about smells that are our bodies create and how and why it is important to keep clean when our bodies are changing through puberty. If you would like any support about issues surrounding your young person at home surrounding Puberty, please drop me and email and we can have a chat.

My Enrichment

This area encompasses lots of different motivating therapies and activities, many carried out by therapist, which help our pupils to develop in all of the other areas of the Engagement curriculum. Some pupils will have access to Music Therapy, Pet Therapy and Horse Riding in accordance with their EHCPs. In class, we will have sensory cooking and art activities as well as music and movement sessions. Throughout the year we usually have educational trips linked to our class topics as well as visiting theatre groups such as Bamboozle Theatre Company, who specialise in PMLD sensory drama experiences.

Things you could do at home

My Communication: Take photos when you are out and about or of familiar people at home. Share these with your young person and make sensory sacks using familiar objects to remember the place or person.

My Thinking: Have a go at cooking together, smelling, touching, listening to sounds and where possible tasting the foods, do not worry about the outcome it is the process of making and exploring that really counts.

My Enrichment: Explore an activity, or an area of interest, whether that is shopping and cooking dinner, or tap dancing with FTM dance. Try to include your young person in all aspects of their life where possible.

In The Lodge we aim for your young person to have new and exciting opportunities, gaining readiness for their next learning journey, beyond Birch Wood School. If you are unsure about anything in the Engagement curriculum on offer then please email me on aduc@birchwoodschool.co.uk

I am always pleased to help you with any questions you may have about your child. Many thanks and we all look forward to an exciting term.

Charlotte Adu
Post 16 Class Teacher
Associate Assistant Head