



Dear parents and carers,

Welcome back, I hope you have all had a great holiday! I am so excited to be working alongside your wonderful children this year and I wanted to share the topics we will be exploring in The Owls this Autumn term. I will continue to use Kinteract as the method of recording observations of your child as they work towards their learning intentions.

Our topic this term will be: “Africa” and “A Whole New World- Magic Carpet Ride”

<p>Autumn Term 1</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Africa</u></p> <p>This half term our topic will be Africa and the story of “The Lion King”. We will be carrying out a weekly sensory story session exploring all the textures, smells and sights related to the Lion King. Our music and movement session will be linked to Africa and “The Lion King”, listening to new sounds and exploring different instruments. During our write dance sessions, the pupils will be given the opportunity to choose their preferred paint colour as well as develop their pre-writing skills. We will be adding different African related smells and textures to the paint so the pupils can explore through their senses. In our sensory cooking sessions, we will be creating simple recipes linked to Africa, exploring the taste, smell and texture of the ingredients as we go. In our messy play and topic sessions we will be exploring different textures, smells and tastes linked to the animals in “The Lion King” and Africa.</p>
<p>Autumn Term 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>A whole new world – a magic carpet ride</u></p> <p>After half term our topic will be “A Whole New World – a Magic Carpet Ride’, linking to the story of “Aladdin”. In this topic we will be using our magic carpet to visit a new country each week and exploring all the different, new and exciting cultures, sights, smells and textures. We will also be doing a weekly sensory story related to the different countries that we will be visiting. This gives the pupils the opportunity to engage in a story through a sensory and tactile way. During our music and movement sessions we will be exploring a variety of music linked to different countries, whilst engaging with a variety of instruments. In our write dance sessions, we will be adding different smells and textures to the paint that are related to the country of the week. In our sensory cooking sessions, we will be creating simple recipes linked to the different countries exploring the taste, smell and texture of ingredients as we go.</p> <p>During the last two weeks of Autumn term will be travelling on our magic carpet to Lapland! We will be exploring all things Christmas and really getting into the festive spirit! The pupils will have to opportunity to engage in messy play and try foods related to Lapland and Christmas, allowing them to explore a variety of different smells, textures and sights. More details around The Owls festive plans nearer the time!</p>

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 afterleaf 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, sensory stories, Tac-Pac, 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 our "Hello Senses" good morning session, sensory cooking, cause and effect games on the interactive whiteboard and in our immersive room. We also have a weekly number singing session where our pupils have the opportunity to explore number props and songs in a fun and interactive way.

My Movement

Movement is a key part of the curriculum in The Owls. Each pupil has a hydrotherapy programme and will access the hydro pool weekly. We will also be starting our weekly Rebound Therapy sessions for each pupil on our trampoline. Every Tuesday afternoon we have a P.E session in the hall with our PE teacher Connie, where we will work on pupil's individual targets. We also have our wiggle your scarves session where our pupils have the opportunity to move their bodies whilst involving themselves in a mini dancing session. During music and movement, the pupils will get the chance to listen to different music and exploring a variety of instruments whilst dancing! We will be creating opportunities to develop the pupil's fine motor skills, which can later lead on to early pre-writing skills. This will be accessed through a variety of activities like write dance, threading, puzzles and through the use of small tools.

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 we want to increase opportunities for 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 will be creating 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 each pupil understands 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 and beginning to use the toilet more independently.

We are also focusing on gaining more independence whilst dressing and putting on shoes and using a knife, fork and spoon during lunch time.

We will explore teeth brushing, talking about our families and friends and engaging in activities related to our body parts. The pupils will also have the opportunity to engage in 'The Owls Day Spa' where they can have a foot massage in our foot spas and explore lotions and creams in a peaceful and tranquil environment. We will again be focusing on consent during this session ensuring all pupils understand that they have a choice to involve themselves in these activities.

My Enrichment

This area includes lots of different motivating therapies and activities, many carried out by therapists, which help our pupils to develop in all of the other areas of the Engagement pathway curriculum. Some pupils will also have access to Music Therapy 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 have opportunities to visit our local community; this term we will be visiting the local town park and the county park. This will give the pupils the opportunity to build their independence and life skills whilst exploring the local area. After October half term, Bamboozle Theatre Company, who specialise in SEN sensory drama experiences will be visiting school giving The Owls the opportunity to get involved in some engaging sensory drama!

Birch Wood Area Special school
Class – The Owls
Autumn 2022
Curriculum Newsletter



Things you could do at home

My Communication: At home you could support your child's learning by encouraging to communicate using Makaton signs "hello", "more", "finished" and "please". If you are unsure of any of the signs please visit <https://makaton.org/>

My Thinking: To support your child with their number recognition you could use number songs through YouTube at home. Encouraging your child to experience different foods through smell, touch, and taste would also support them with their sensory cooking and create a positive relationship with food.

My Movement: Engage in threading activities or puzzles to support your child to practice fine motor skills

Myself: Encourage your child to be more independent with dressing and putting on/taking off shoes

If you have any questions, please do email me- harrisonk@birchwoodschoo.co.uk. I am always happy to help you with any questions you may have about your child.

Myself and the Owls team are really looking forward to working with your child and seeing all the amazing progress they will be making this term!

Kind regards,

Kate Harrison