

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



January 2023

Dear parents and carers,

It's wonderful to welcome you back after the Christmas holidays and we wish you a Happy New Year. We are excited to share with you out 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. The children have all settled well into our new EYFS department and are learning the routines of the school well. We are looking forward to another exciting and busy half term.

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
Winter and Sounds	During this topic we will be exploring stories and activities to do with winter. This will include exploring winter clothing. We will be naming and finding winter clothing items and practicing our independence in putting on our outdoor wear. We will also explore the changes that occur during winter through sensory activities, stories and art and crafts. We will learn about animals that live in the arctic and experience a range sounds associated with winter. Cooking will be linked to our theme, making a range of soups and other winter recipes.

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. You will be sent a back with information about supporting your child with reading at their individual level.

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 a range of 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.

Shape and Space: Children will learn shapes and identify their features. They will problem solve with shapes in space and begin to differentiate 2D and 3D shapes. We will be learning to recognise and follow on simple patterns and to recognise significant differences in weight.

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 as team games, ball skills and personal targets. Pupils will be focusing on gymnastics skills including balancing and developing different ways of moving through a space.

Swimming: Hydro swimming for students who require swimming as part of their physio plan.

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 relationships, using co-regulation strategies that suit pupils' 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 focuses on Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) through the theme. This term, activities will include; dressing for winter, sounds and feelings, my favourite places, stories from home, my senses, colours and feelings, role playing home environments, animal babies and family celebrations at Easter.

SRE: Some children will take part in small group or paired activities looking at the areas of Self Awareness including; Things we are good at, kind and unkind behaviours, Playing and working together, People who are special to us, Getting on with others

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 Jungle Bugs, and visits linked to themes or for weekly swimming. Where possible, we arrange for community members to visit school and talk to us about theme related topics. 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. Throughout the year we will be providing opportunities for children to go out into the community or access visiting enrichment activities for example visiting the park and the farm.

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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 out doors. 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 and Kate