



Dear parents and carers,

Happy New Year! It is wonderful to welcome you all back to school after our Christmas break! Hopefully we are all raring to go on our new topics for the term. We will spend the first half week settling back into school life ensuring all young people are happy as we get back into a good routine. Please do contact us if you want to discuss any areas of concern or any “Wow” moments you may wish to share with us. And remember we will be sharing photographs and evidence of learning through your child’s Kinteract so do take time to look on there to find out more about what goes on in Goldfinches.

Our themes this term will be:

<p><b>Spring Term 1</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I like to move it!</b></p> <p>Our theme this term is all about Health and Fitness. During this theme we will explore aspects of how to increase our fitness levels through exploration of movement and exercise. Our Sensory Story this term is called ‘Strictly Come dancing!’ During this we will explore different music and types of dance whilst trying to score the perfect 10 – who will get to lift the glitter ball trophy? Our Write Dance, Dance Massage and Story massages will also take on music and stories linked to our theme. For those young people following the Independence Curriculum this theme is linked to our accredited AIM award scheme – working towards the AIM module in Health and Fitness at Entry Level 1. During our AIM specific sessions these young people will develop awareness and skills relating to different forms of exercise and their benefits. We will be looking at appropriate clothing and footwear for our activities and with this in mind can we ask that you ensure your child has sports wear and trainers available to them in school every day?</p>
<p><b>Spring Term 2</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wash your face!</b></p> <p>Our theme this term is all about Personal care and Hygiene. During this theme we will explore ways in which we meet our own care needs to keep clean and stay healthy. We will explore aspects of self-care including washing, hair care, use of deodorant, the need for clean clothes and oral hygiene. We will incorporate our theme into our Sensory Stories, Write Dance, Dance Massage and Story massages. For those young people following the Independence Curriculum this theme is linked to our accredited AIM award scheme – working towards the AIM module in Personal Care and Hygiene at Entry Level 1. During our AIM specific sessions these young people will develop awareness and skills in understanding the need for regular personal hygiene routines, ie washing, bathing, teeth cleaning and will be encouraged to recognise and use toiletry products appropriately. With this in mind we will be introducing a greater focus on daily hygiene and will be in contact to find out in greater detail what products and hygiene equipment supports your child best. In this way we will be able to support and reinforce independence in self care that you will already be working towards at home.</p>

Our class will be following a combination of the Engagement Curriculum and of the Independence Curriculum. We will be focusing on an extremely pupil centred and individualised curriculum focusing on five key areas. 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. For our young people following the Independence pathway there is also opportunity to work towards the accredited AIM Award scheme. See the table below for more details on each area.

<b>My Communication – Reading, Literacy</b>
<p>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 of reference, communication switches and photos/symbols to help make choices and develop intentional communication. 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.</p> <p>For those young people following the Independence curriculum we will also be developing reading and writing skills taking a personalised approach, ie reading texts together, extracting meaning from what we have read, creating sentences through writing and colourful semantics (symbols).</p>
<b>My Thinking - Maths</b>
<p>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. Where appropriate our young people will be presented with personalised learning tasks relating to their own understanding of number, money, time, shape, space and measures to further their own understanding of problem solving within a learning for life context.</p>
<b>My Movement - PE</b>
<p>Movement is an important part of the curriculum in Goldfinches. On a daily basis we follow our young people's physiotherapy and positioning programmes, incorporating these into daily activities. Where appropriate each young person has a hydrotherapy programme and will access the hydro pool. Every Monday afternoon we have a session in the hall with our PE teacher, where we will work on pupil's MATP (motor activity training programme) targets. These targets focus on developing pupil's movement needs. Young people following the independence curriculum will also work on physical skills such as co-ordination, agility or balance during a range of social games and activities by playing Boccia and other team games.</p>
<b>Myself - PSHE</b>
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 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.</p>
<b>My Enrichment</b>
<p>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 and Independence curricula. 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 themes as well as visiting theatre groups such as Bamboozle Theatre Company, who specialise in sensory drama experiences.</p>

Birch Wood Area Special school  
**Class Goldfinches**  
Spring 2023  
Curriculum Newsletter



### Things you could do at home

**My Communication:** When your child is feeling happy, secure and relaxed take the opportunity to engage in intense interaction. This means mirroring the vocalisations, movements, and actions of each other. These interactions don't need to last long but can be a fun way to feel fully connected with each other in the moment.

**Myself:** Encourage independence and supported self-care in personal care and hygiene tasks. Create opportunities for your child to make choices and demonstrate preferences within these, eg trying different soaps or shampoos, a comb or brush.

**My Movement:** Find opportunities to move together; this might be playing music and dancing together; taking a walk outside; swimming or water play; rolling, throwing or kicking a ball.

If you are unsure about anything, please email us on [curranb@birchwoodschoo.co.uk](mailto:curranb@birchwoodschoo.co.uk) or [humphreysh@birchwoodschoo.co.uk](mailto:humphreysh@birchwoodschoo.co.uk) We are always happy to help you with any questions you may have about your child or any aspects of our school day.

Many thanks and we all look forward to an exciting term ahead.

Helen, Becky and the Goldfinches Team