



Dear parents and carers,

Happy new year and welcome back! I hope you have all had a great Christmas break with your families.

I am very much looking forward to be working alongside your amazing children this coming year and I wanted to share the topics we will be exploring in The Owls this Spring term. I will continue to use Kinteract as the method of recording observations of your child as they work towards their learning intentions.

Our topics this term will be: ‘Watching your garden grow’ and ‘I like to move it.’

<p>Spring Term 1</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Watching your garden grow</u></p> <p>This half term our topic will be all about gardens and how things grow and we will be exploring the story of ‘Jack in the beanstalk.’ We will be doing a twice weekly sensory story session exploring all the textures, smells and sights related to ‘Jack in the beanstalk’. We will be doing a music and movement session linked to gardens and the sounds you may find in your garden and exploring different instruments. During our write dance session, 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 garden related smells and textures to the paint so the pupils can explore through their senses. In our sensory tuff trays, we will be exploring the taste, smell and texture of ingredients that you may find in your garden. During our Attention Autism sessions, some weeks will be linked to the theme of gardens, plants and flowers, bugs– engaging your child in a fun and interactive way!</p> <p>At the end of this first half term we will be having our very own garden party to celebrate the half term!</p>
<p>Spring Term 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>I like to move it</u></p> <p>After half term our topic will be ‘I like to move it’ relating to all different methods of transport. We will be doing a weekly sensory story session related to transport and exploring lots of different sensory stimulus. During our music and movement sessions we will be exploring different transport related songs engaging with a variety of instruments. In our write dance sessions, we will continue to explore different textures using our fine motor skills. In our sensory tuff trays, we will be exploring different modes of transport through a variety of sensory materials. During our Attention Autism sessions, we will incorporate different modes of transport into the different stages, to engage your child in such a fun way! During our ICT sessions we will be engaging in lots of different cause and effect activities linked to transport- the remote control car I’m sure will be a firm favourite!</p> <p>We will then celebrate our topics with an end of term party!</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 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, 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 tuff trays, 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 Thursday afternoon we have a P.E session in the hall with our new PE teacher James, 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 pupils 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

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This area includes 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 also have access to Music Therapy in accordance with their EHCPs.

In class, we will have sensory food exploration tuff trays 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, social and life skills whilst exploring the local area.

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". 'Singing hands' is a fun, engaging and interactive, singing YouTube channel that will help develop these signs.

If you are unsure of any of the signs please visit

<https://makaton.org/> <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSgfgkristwvJft3BNN-NYQ>

My Thinking: Encouraging your child to experience different foods through smell, touch, and taste would also support them with their sensory food exploration and create a positive relationship with food.

My Movement: To help your child to develop their gross motor skills by encouraging them to participate in ball games and a trim trail at the local park.

Myself: Encourage your child to help with teeth brushing and exploring the brushes and toothpaste. In our 'Myself' sessions – we use this song before our teeth brushing session and it's fun and engaging-

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCio_xVlgQQ

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 wonderful progress they will making during this fun and exciting new term.

Kind regards,

Kate Harrison