

Birch Wood Area Special school
Class: Goldfinches
 Summer 2023
 Curriculum Newsletter



Dear parents and carers,

I hope you have had a restful Easter holiday, and we are looking forward to welcoming your child back into school for Summer Term 1. Our staff team consists of myself as the Class Teacher, Helen Humphreys, our Senior Teaching Assistant, Carley Scarborough and Laura Iron as Learning Support Assistants, and Caroline O'Reilly as our Personal Care Assistant. We are really excited to be working with your child in this coming term, and supporting them to make progress across their relevant curriculum areas, where students will be following a new and more personalised timetable for their corresponding pathway.

Our wider curriculum themes this term will be:

<p>Summer Term 1</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mr Blue Sky</p> <p>Our wider theme this half term is titled 'Mr Blue Sky'. In this topic, students will explore songs, stories and areas of their subjects, that link to the outdoors. Our AIM module this half-term is Outdoor Pursuits, in which students will practically take part in, and learn about, the outdoor pursuits of cycling, hiking and orienteering, both in the Leicester Wheels session, and in a community trip this half-term.</p>
<p>Summer Term 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Dedicated Follower of Fashion</p> <p>The theme for Summer 2, which will close the academic year, is titled 'Dedicated Follower of Fashion'. Students will learn about the clothes that they wear, and continue to practise how to wash and care for them in their life skills learning. We will explore different fabrics and materials in our sensory sessions.</p>

Our class are following a combination of the Engagement and Independence pathways. The overlap in pathways enables us to personalise the learning for the pupils in our class. The engagement pathway 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". The Independence Curriculum offers a similar level of personalisation but includes more discrete subject teaching in areas such as English, Maths, Science, PSHE and Art. The Independence pathway will be continuing their AIM Awards learning, alongside some sensory sessions such as Dance Massage and Tac Pac, to provide a balanced and aspirational curriculum offer.

My Communication – Reading, Literacy and Phonics

Students following the Independence pathway will have three sessions of English a week. One of these sessions will continue to build on students Bridge learning intentions, linked to their EHCP targets. This session will cover the target areas linked to reading, colourful semantics, sharing stories and fine motor skills, personalised to your child, and their pace of learning and building these skills over time.

In the other two English sessions, students will be learning about The News. In this session, students will build their comprehension skills by picking out key words heard in a news article, and answering comprehension questions on its content. Students will also create their own news article on an area of their choice, which will be written or filmed.

My Thinking - Maths and Science

Students will continue to work on their individual Bridge targets in Maths, building coin recognition and addition skills. Students will work on these targets in morning 1:1 sessions.

In their group Maths lessons, this term will focus on Time. This will consist of learning the order of the days of the week, months of the year, key timings and routines within their day, with scope to build on prior knowledge of reading analogue and digital time. This topic will scaffold and secure key life skills of understanding the concept of time in relation to their

This term, the addition of Science on to the Independence pathway curriculum, will enable students to build comprehension of real-life concepts, become more aware of their outdoor environment, and build understanding of themselves and the world around them. This term we are focussing on evolution; firstly understanding the difference between humans, animals and plants, and how they changed to suit their environment. The topic will then shift towards inheritance, where students will be learning about features and traits they may have inherited from their family members.

My Movement - PE

PE will be continued once a week by PE teacher, James Collington. Sessions will focus on various activities to support the learning and development of each student's gross motor skills. Students will continue to work on their individual hydrotherapy targets in school.

Myself - PSHE

This term, students will be focussing on learning about different emotions and changing moods. Students will learn about how everyday situations can make them feel different emotions and affect their mood, and coping strategies for days when they may feel anxious or overwhelmed. This unit will also lightly cover friendships and the understanding of consent. Students will take part in PSHE by keeping a diary of their moods, using a feelings chart, and group discussions.

Self-regulation opportunities are built into the sensory aspects of the curriculum, where students will access Dance Massage and Tac Pac sessions each week.

My Enrichment

Enrichment is an important area of the curriculum in Goldfinches. Students have begun to access Art sessions, in which they are learning to recreate different qualities of marks shown and described to them, in pencil or a tactile material such as paint. Students are learning to create different shapes, curves and straight lines, to create different pictures. There is also the opportunity to learn and appreciate different forms of artwork within these sessions, and discuss which of these are our favourite and why.

Students will continue to access weekly music sessions, using instruments, voice and clapping to build their repertoire of familiar songs and anticipation. Students choose a song from two that they would like to hear. Every three weeks, a singing assembly takes place in the hall, where students get the opportunity to come together with all classes to engage in shared singing.

Students are working on their life skills and fine motor skills in Cooking. Each week, they practise chopping different fruits and vegetables as independently as possible to secure this life skill, in preparation for Post-16, where they will take part in Cooking for Life. Some students also follow a communication strip or recipe, or are instructed verbally, to find each cooking utensil or equipment item themselves, to further encourage independence.

Students also have opportunities within their individual therapies to access different enrichment opportunities, such as horse riding or art therapy.

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Things you could do at home

My Communication: You could ask your child to read simple stories or parts of a text to you, and ask them questions, such as 'What is the story/text about?' to build comprehension. The same can be done when watching TV- asking students 'who', 'what', 'where', 'when' and 'why' questions will help to build their understanding of the world around them.

My Thinking: You could ask your child to count some objects for you e.g. spoonfuls of an ingredient when cooking. You could take them to the local shop, and help them to count out the change in coins, or take them to the supermarket and do the same at the self-checkouts, asking them to count and place the money in the slot.

My Movement: Develop your child's gross motor skills by walking on different surfaces and gradients when out and about. Encourage your child to go on different equipment at the park, and help them to navigate and understand how to get on and off. Or on a rainy day, play some Just Dance videos on YouTube and encourage your child to dance with you and create their own dance moves.

Myself (PSHE): Ask your child each day how they are feeling, and what has made them feel that way. Road safety and community awareness- Take your child out for a walk in the community, and help them to navigate crossings as independently as possible. Use language such as 'we need to wait for the green man' or 'wait for the beeping noise'.

My Enrichment: Encourage your child to choose and find their favourite song to play, or you could get them to do some drawing or painting at home, to work on their fine motor skills. You could also take them to the Museum to look at the exhibits, or listen to the interactive elements- a great cross-curricular opportunity to link to their Science learning.

Encourage your child to help you with the family cooking, finding the equipment and chopping safely.

It has been truly wonderful getting to know your young person at Birch Wood School, and how they interact and learn. I am excited to continue to work with them and yourselves, to provide many opportunities for them to make meaningful progress, and build their independence and life skills for their future. I am always happy to help you with any questions you may have about your child, please email me on bottrillg@birchwoodschoo.co.uk

Grace Bottrill, Class Teacher