

Birch Wood Area Special School
The Hummingbirds
 Spring 2024
 Curriculum Newsletter



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the spring term in The Hummingbirds Class! We hope you have all enjoyed the Christmas break and that you are just as excited as us to be back at Birch Wood for a new term.

As we continue the academic year we will be following a combination of the Engagement and Independence pathways. 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 specific teaching in areas such as literacy, maths and science.

We will continue to use Kinteract as our primary method of observations of your child’s progress as they work towards their EHCP outcomes and other curriculum opportunities.

Our themes this term will be:

	During these themes’ pupils will;
Spring Term 1	<p>Ch, Ch, Changes</p> <p>During the first Spring term we will be exploring the book ‘Little Bears Spring’ by Eli Woolard. We will be immersing ourselves in the exploration of seasons, changing of the weather and concepts of time with our new topic ‘Ch, Ch, Changes’. We will explore the changing weather and the signs of Spring and how to spot them.</p>
Spring Term 2	<p>True Colours</p> <p>During the second Spring term we will be exploring the book ‘The Day the Crayons Quit’ by Drew Daywalk. We will be exploring colours throughout our curriculum and linking how these colours can make us feel. Using our chirpy boards to help as a tool of regulation and how to recognise how we are feeling.</p>

My Communication – Reading, Literacy and Phonics

Communication: At every opportunity we encourage our students to communicate through their preferred means, which could include 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. Students are given opportunities to make choices and express preferences frequently. All students will take part in small group or individual communication sessions as indicated in their health care plans. We encourage students to partake in our 'good morning' and 'good afternoon' sessions where we model and encourage students to communicate with both staff and peers. We also encourage communication at snack time, where the students are encouraged to use their snack boards to choose their snack.

Reading and Phonics: All students engage with phonics at the appropriate phase. Activities include listening to sounds, making sounds, differentiating sounds, learning phase one letter sounds and some students are beginning to blend and segment, whilst reading books with specific sounds linked to their phase. When ready students will begin to read and write CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant) words with sounds learnt previously. Reading is incorporated in to lots of sessions including cooking, sensory story and theme through the use of symbols and objects to support pupils to read their environment as well as words. This term our theme-based book include; Little Bear's Spring by Eli Woodward and We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen.

Literacy: This term in Literacy we will be looking at the story 'Perfect Square' by Michael Hall. A story about how we can be shaped, moulded and changed into anything we would like to be. That there is no 'perfect' but we are all perfect in our own way.

My Thinking - Maths

Fractions and Time: We will be looking at fractions and telling the time. We will be using concepts such as now and next, progressing to today and tomorrow, days of the week and months of the year. Something we have introduced daily into our 'good morning' routine.

My Movement - PE

Daily Provision: By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, we support students to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility.

PE: For Spring 1, we will be focussing on their development of gymnastics skills. This will be derived from the Core Skills of the RISE Gymnastics format. Over Spring 1 pupils will develop their fundamental movements and negotiating space.

While in Spring 2, we will begin learning, participating and developing skills for Net Games, this could include games that resemble tennis and sitting volleyball. We will also look to further embed routines and rules of play.

Swimming: All students have the opportunities to have therapeutic hydrotherapy sessions in the Hydrotherapy pool here at school or they will have swimming lessons at Water field Leisure Centre in Melton Mowbray where students work towards their Otter swimming badges and this is something we are hoping to start as soon as possible.

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Rebound Therapy: This term some of our learners will be starting rebound therapy with a trained rebound therapist. They will be given the opportunity weekly and will work towards the Winstrada trampolining scheme of work.

Myself –RSE

Daily Provision: We focus on tools for regulation every day in Hummingbird's. We facilitate this through daily interactions and through building positive relationships, using co-regulation strategies that suit pupil's 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. We encourage the students to engage in Tac-Pac or yoga after lunch to regulate and prepare themselves for learning.

RSE: Some students will take part in small group or paired activities looking at employment and exploring different jobs we know people do and may like to do ourselves.

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 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.

Art and Design: In Art we will exploring thematic linked projects. We will be making our own sensory rain shakers, clay hedgehogs and tissue paper daffodils.

Things you could do at home

My Communication: Give choices at every opportunity to encourage communication, particularly during a motivating activity such as snack time or leisure activities.

Number: Model sharing at home to help teaching fractions. Sharing a pizza between two children? Oh, we have half! Sharing a birthday cake between a family of four? Oh, we have a quarter! Any vocabulary that will help teach fractions. I'm sure we will be using cake in class too.

Reading: Display behaviours for reading, model turning the page, pointing to the words, describing the pictures and encourage your children to do it too. Spread a love of reading and reading for pleasure in your home.

If you are unsure about anything, please email me at wright@birchwoodschool.co.uk
I will happily answer any question that you may have, so please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,
Holly Wright (Class Teacher)