



Dear parents and carers,

Happy New Year! We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas break and are looking forward to a new term full of more fun and adventure. We are excited to share with you the topics and the therapies your child will be accessing in The Owls this spring term. We will continue to use Kinteract as our method of recording observations of your child as they work towards their learning intentions. If you are having any difficulties accessing Kinteract, please let us know and we will pass this onto our IT support.

Our topics this term will be:

<p>Spring term (first half)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">‘Ch... Ch... Changes’</p> <p>We will start this half term with our topic of ‘Ch...Ch...Changes.’ We will explore the theme of change taking a multi-sensory approach to all our sessions. This term’s sensory story will find us following the story of the Town Mouse and the Country Mouse. We will be experiencing the journey the two mice take as we explore the differences between town and country and the changes they encounter along the way. Write dance this half term will involve mark making in various paints as we experience mixing different colours together and exploring the changes we can make. We will be continuing our development of cause and effect skills and our ability to create ‘change’ during our ICT session. We will continue to build on our work on ‘targeting’ skills, activating games and music on the interactive whiteboard’s touchscreen.</p> <p>This term in RSE we will focus our work on our interception and exploring the different signals our body sends continuing our ongoing work around giving and withdrawing consent. This is something which underlies all our work throughout every school day and is acknowledged in every session. We place a high value on our students developing their own ways to communicate whether they consent to an activity or withdraw it.</p> <p>Our music sessions will explore ways in which we can make changes to how music sounds; explore loud and quiet, fast and slow and high and low sounds through song and instrument exploration. This term The Owls will have the opportunity to take part in 2 weekly community visits to Sainsbury’s and Melton Country park.</p>
<p>Spring term (second half)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">‘True Colours’</p> <p>Our ‘True Colours’ topic will take us on a magical rainbow journey! Our write dance sessions will incorporate a variety of music as we use our hands and feet to make marks using textured and scented paint, resulting in a rainbow display. Students will go on a magical journey during our Sensory Story sessions, exploring different tastes, sounds, textures and visuals.</p> <p>Our music sessions will continue explore ways in which we can make changes to how music sounds; explore loud and quiet, fast and slow and high and low sounds through song and instrument exploration.</p> <p>We will also continue to work on our ICT targets, using colourful cause and effect games. Our RSE theme this term is How my body changes, so we will be looking at growth and changes we experience through multisensory approach.</p> <p>This term The Owls will have the opportunity to take part in 2 weekly community visits to Aldi and an indoor activity centre.</p>

Our class will continue to follow the Engagement Pathway. This is an extremely pupil centred and individualised curriculum focusing on five key areas, incorporating essential therapies. Much of our curriculum is delivered through sensory exploration. 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
<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 or reference, communication switches and photos/symbols to help make choices. 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>
My Thinking
<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), exploration, cause and effect games on the interactive whiteboard and in our immersive room.</p>
Myself
<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. 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>
My Enrichment
<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 curriculum. 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 topics as well as visiting theatre groups such as Bamboozle Theatre Company, who specialise in SLD sensory drama experiences.</p>



Things you could do at home

My Communication: Intensive Interaction <https://www.intensiveinteraction.org/>, Tac-Pac sessions <https://youtu.be/ON9FS6B31yo>, story massage, dance massage and sensory stories (see Birch Wood YouTube channel).

My Thinking: Cause and effect activities <https://www.ianbean.co.uk/senict-members-resource-portal/>, iPad cause and effect videos and songs <https://www.priorywoods.middlesbrough.sch.uk/page/?title=Switch+%2F+Touch+Screen+Videos&pid=231>, stacking and puzzle toys, multi-sensory light up toys and sensory exploration.

Myself: Opportunities for practising our self-help skills, especially during meal times and personal care routines. Giving your child opportunities to consent to all touch based activities and using hand under hand, rather than hand over hand.

My Movement: Exploring different play equipment at the park.

My Enrichment: Exploring musical instruments, singing favourite songs, listening to different genres of music and noting preferences, exploring paints and other mark making or messy play stimulus together.

If you are unsure about anything in the Engagement Curriculum, please email me marriottp@birchwoodschool.co.uk
I am always happy to help you with any questions you may have about your child.

Many thanks and we all look forward to an exciting term!

Poppy Marriott
The Owls Class Teacher