



Dear parents and carers,

I hope you have all had a wonderful Easter. I am so excited to be working alongside your wonderful children this coming term and I wanted to share the topics we will be exploring in The Herons this Summer 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: **'Shine'** and **'Around the World'**

<p><b>Summer Term 1</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Shine</u></b></p> <p>During this topic we will be learning all about light- linking to the story 'my pet star'. In this topic we will be learning all about light in all the different forms, from experimenting with light in 'around the world' to exploring a fun and interactive sensory story using various stimuli. During write dance we will continue to develop our pre-writing and writing skills whilst listening to different pieces to music. In cooking we will be creating simple recipes linked to our theme of 'shine'. In our music sessions we will be exploring different sounds, rhythm and instruments and developing our musical skills. During our PSHE sessions we will be learning about people who help us and what to do in an emergency situation. We will look at Police, Fire, Ambulance and lifeguard workers. During behaviour for learning our topic is 'my body sends a signal'. This will create opportunities for our young people to learn all about what our bodies are telling us and how we manage those feelings.</p>
<p><b>Summer Term 2</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Around the world</u></b></p> <p>During this topic will be visiting different countries around the world- linking to the story- around the world in 80 days. This will allow the pupils to learn about different countries in a fun and engaging way, whilst exploring a wide range of sensory stimuli. During write dance we will develop our writing skills and fine motor skills by exploring a variety of different sensory textures including, custard, cornflour, paint, cream and jelly. We will also be adding different smells linking to different countries to these sensory textures. In our music sessions we will be exploring sounds from different countries and learning music from other cultures. In our behaviour for learning topic this term, we will be learning all about having a positive mindset and preparing for the Summer holidays. We will explore resilience, self-belief and that making mistakes is okay. During our PSHE sessions we will be exploring the topic of Respect. This will consist of four parts- how we respect ourselves, our friends and family, animals and our environment. This will give our young people the opportunity to learn why and how we are respectful.</p>

Our class will be following the Independence Pathway. This curriculum is pupil centred and promotes independence throughout, focusing on six key areas.

The six key areas of the Independence Curriculum are "My Communication", "My Independence," "My Relationships," "My Wellbeing" "My Thinking and Problem Solving" 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, 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. Each day we will have a phonics session and this will give the pupils an opportunity to blend sounds of letters together to help them decode unknown words to help them sound them out. We start off by taking part in simple pre-phonics activities such as blowing bubbles, blowing raspberries and balloons to strengthen those all-important mouth muscles to help form the sounds, letters and words. We will then play 'what's that sound' alongside our peers. We will explore different phonics sounds fortnightly and take part in reading and writing activities. Our last 'my communication' session is sensory sounds and this will allow the pupils to learn about different environmental sounds, by listening to different pieces of music and exploring a variety of multi-sensory stimulus. It is a really engaging way to help and develop those all-important listening and attention skills.

### **My Thinking and Problem Solving**

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 good morning session, cooking, numeracy, ICT and exploration. In numeracy we will be focusing on numbers and in exploration we will be learning all about shapes and how-to problem solve through the use of puzzles, cause and effect toys and various sensory stimuli. During the world around me we will be engaging in sessions related to science and geography. During Summer 1 we will be partaking in science sessions and the pupils will have the opportunity to experiment and make predictions and get very messy! During Summer 2, geography will be our focus and we will be exploring the world through a sensory story themed lesson. The pupils will also have the opportunity to join in with Attention Autism and this session encourages engagement and focus on turn taking, sharing attention, being aware of others, listening, and attention, and of course getting very messy and having lots of fun!

### **My Relationships**

Developing positive and strong relationships is a key part of the Herons curriculum and each student is encouraged to positively share their space and interact with each other through a variety of fun and engaging sessions. My play gives the pupils the opportunity to join in with adult-led and structured games and help facilitate sharing, turn taking and building those all-important friendships. We will also be having three soft play sessions a week where the pupils will again be able to develop their relationships with their peers in a fun and exciting environment. Throughout all sessions in the Herons, the pupils will be encouraged to build positive and co-operative relationships with their peers.

### **My Wellbeing**

As a part of our PSHE 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. During our PSHE sensory story and behaviour for learning sessions we will be learning all about Respect and the different signals that our body sends us. P.E is another important part of our curriculum and our P.E teacher James will be helping the pupils work on developing their overall fundamental movement skills, such as running, jumping, throwing etc. As well as embedding rules, routines, and expectations for PE. The pupils are also developing their skills in team games, such as rules of the game, working/turn-taking with others, and applying physical skills learnt in PE to differing activities. Taking part in physical activities plays a crucial role in helping the pupils to boost their self-esteem whilst learning new skills and challenging themselves. During this term the Herons will also be engaging in themes associated with striking & fielding games, pupils will further develop their catching & throwing skills but also learn or develop upon further skills of striking a ball with an appropriate PE object such as rackets & bats.

### **My Independence**

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 hands. 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.

Throughout the year we have opportunities to visit our local community. This term we will be visiting 'Tesco' and 'Sainsbury's'. This will give the pupils the opportunity to build their independence and life skills whilst exploring the local area.

### **My Enrichment**

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 Independence curriculum.

In class, we will have sensory cooking and art activities as well as music and movement sessions. During Art the pupils will be given the opportunity to express themselves and create their own unique art work. Throughout each session the pupils will be exploring many different types of sensory stimuli related to each individual session. This will allow the pupils the opportunity to engage in a range of stimuli in order to develop an array of regulation aids and widen their knowledge and skills. We are also excited to be going on our first Herons day trip to Lea Green where the pupils will be given opportunities to join in with various challenging and exciting activities.

### **Things you could do at home**

**My Communication:** to encourage your child to engage in role play activities to develop their range of verbalisations and gestures.

**My Independence:** Encourage your child to explore different foods through, touch, taste and smell.

**My Relationships:** Encourage engagement in simple group activities – sharing with more than one person to develop shared attention and turn taking skills

**My Thinking and Problem Solving:** to play simple counting games in and around their environment.

If you have any questions, please do email me- [spicerk@birchwoodschool.co.uk](mailto:spicerk@birchwoodschool.co.uk) I am always happy to help you with any questions you may have about your child.

Myself and the Herons team are really looking forward to the final term of the year, and working with your child and seeing all the amazing progress they will continue to make!

Kind regards,

Kate Spicer