

Birch Wood Area Special School
The Hummingbirds
Summer 2025
Curriculum Newsletter



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the summer term in The Hummingbirds Class! We hope you have all enjoyed the Easter break and that you are just as excited as us to be back at Birch Wood for our final term of the school year.

As we progress towards the end of the academic year we will be continuing to follow the Independence pathway. This pathway aims to maximise opportunities to build on student independence through a semi-formal and highly personalised curriculum. All learning opportunities will still be closely linked towards EHCP outcomes to cultivate independent, happy and safe young learners. The Independence Curriculum offers discrete subject specific learning in key areas such as literacy/communication and numeracy that is personalised to student's strengths and needs.

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;
Summer Term 1	Shine Welcome to our exciting new topic 'Shine'! The Hummingbirds class will be embarking on an immersive and inspiring journey of discovery! This term we will explore what it means to shine, from the dazzling wonders of the natural world to the inner brilliance that each of our students holds. Through hands-on activities, engaging stories, and creative challenges, we aim to foster confidence and encourage everyone to let their unique light shine bright!
Summer Term 2	Around the World For our Summer 2 Theme we will be exploring 'Around the World'. The Hummingbirds class will be exploring the different wonders of our exciting planet! This term, we will travel across continents, discovering the beauty and uniqueness of different countries, traditions, and landmarks. Through hands-on activities, engaging stories, and creative projects, our goal is to ignite curiosity of the world around us. Get ready for an adventure that will take us from the mountains to the oceans all while learning about the amazing people and places that make our world so special!

Reading, Literacy and Phonics

Communication: At every opportunity students are encouraged to communicate through their preferred means, which often includes pictures, communication devices, spoken sounds and words and Makaton. A 'total communication' approach ensures that all communication attempts are both valued and recognised so that students are consistently given opportunities to express their preferences and to make independent choices. All students will have access to small group and individual communication sessions as indicated in their health care plans. Students are always encouraged to take part in our 'good morning' and 'good afternoon' sessions where staff model and encourage students to communicate with both staff and peers. In the good afternoon sessions pupils are encouraged to communicate how they are feeling through an adapted version of the zones of regulation. Communication is also strongly encouraged during snack time and lunch times where pupils are given the opportunity to express their preferences through the use of snack boards.

Reading and Phonics: All students are given the opportunity to engage with phonics at the appropriate phase. The Hummingbirds currently explore both pre-phonics and formal phonics to build on their phonetic knowledge. Within phonics we explore listening to sounds, making sounds, differentiating sounds, learning phase one letter sounds and some students are beginning to blend and segment sounds linked to their phase. When ready, students will begin to read and write CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant) and CVVC (consonant, vowel, vowel, consonant) words with sounds learnt previously. We run a series of different phonics sessions based around pupils needs, these include but are not limited to sensory sound sessions, 'what's in the box' and oral blending of CVC or CVVC words. Both reading and phonics are consistently incorporated into lots of different sessions across The Independence Curriculum. Symbols and objects are often used to support pupils with reading their environment and to add meaning to words. This term our theme-based books include 'Whatever Next' and 'The Train Ride'.

Literacy: During Summer 1 we will be exploring the book 'Whatever Next'; where a baby Bear finds a rocket, makes friends with an owl and has a picnic on the moon! This beautiful story of innocence and imagination provides plenty of opportunity for pupils to be immersed in engaging, exciting activities. We will be focusing on using pictures to retell different parts of the story as well as lots of role play and imaginative tasks. As we move into Summer 2 we will be reading the story 'The Train Ride'; where a little girl and her mother board the train in town and set off on a journey through the countryside. As they travel, the girl looks out of the window and asks "What shall I see?". This story will allow learners to explore and identify exciting animals and landscapes across the country.

Maths

Geometry & Measure: In maths we will be looking at different shapes and measure. Pupils will explore filling and emptying different spaces and whether this makes our objects heavy or light before progressing on to recognising different sizes. Pupils will also be engaged in identifying different shapes and relating these to the different shapes we see every day.

PE

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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 Summer 1, the Hummingbirds will be engaging in themes associated with striking & fielding games, pupils will further develop their catching & throwing skills. Pupils will also develop their striking ability with their feet on kicking a variety of differing balls.

There will also be opportunities for pupils to engage in variations of striking & fielding games, such as Danish long ball.

PSHE

Daily Provision: We focus on tools for regulation every day in the Hummingbirds. We facilitate this through daily interactions and through building positive relationships, using co-regulation strategies that support 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 an adapted version of the zones of regulation. We encourage students to engage in relaxation sessions throughout the day to help regulate and prepare themselves for learning.

PSHE: This term in PSHE, we will be learning about how to look after our bodies and the importance of personal hygiene. The children will explore how daily routines such as washing hands, brushing teeth, bathing regularly, and wearing clean clothes help to keep us healthy and prevent the spread of germs. Through engaging hands-on activities pupils will practice how good hygiene and self-care can make us feel better. Lessons will aim to support the start of lifelong healthy habits.

The World Around Me

Shine: In relation to our shine topic, we will explore how light is used as a symbol in a variety of religious festivals. Using this theme as inspiration, we will explore the significance of light in celebrations such as Diwali, Christmas and Eid. We will look at how different faiths use light to represent hope and joy through lots of messy crafting.

Around the world: We will be exploring the different modes of transport that help us travel across the globe. The children will learn about a variety of vehicles—from airplanes and trains to boats and bicycles—and how each one plays a role in connecting people, places, and cultures. Through lots of role play and imaginative play we will be able to experience different modes of transport.

Music

Music: We will be using music as a way to tell stories and express ideas. We will explore how different sounds, rhythms, and patterns can create moods, represent characters, and bring stories to life. We will have fun listening and responding to a variety of music, using movement and instruments to show what they hear and feel. By engaging with simple patterns and sounds, we will begin to understand how music can be used to communicate and connect with others in creative and imaginative ways.

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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. We do lots of singing in the Hummingbirds class which all children engage with beautifully. Nursery rhymes or songs with actions like 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes' can support understanding of language and support with building vocabulary in a fun way.

Number: During play is a great time to support your children with recognising shapes. During independent play with toys or during bath time you can point out different shapes such as squares, circles and triangles. Another great activity is cutting snacks into different shapes and modelling naming these.

Reading: Display behaviours for reading, model turning the page, pointing to the words and describing the pictures. Your children will pick up on this and hopefully start displaying these actions too! Share a love for reading in your home. Bed times are particularly a nice time to look at a book together even if you're enjoying the pictures, this is fantastic!

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

Kind regards,
Eve Roberts (Class Teacher)