



Dear parents and carers,

Welcome back! We hope you all had a wonderful Easter break. We can't quite believe that it's already time for us to share what we have planned for the summer term of 2025! With the summer weather arriving can we ask that you ensure your child has sunscreen and a sunhat in their bags at all times so that we can support them in keeping safe when outside?

Below is an outline of what we have planned for this 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 themes this term will be:

	'Shine'
<p>Summer term (first half)</p>	<p>This half term our theme will be 'Shine'. As always, we will explore the theme taking a multi-sensory approach to all our sessions. Our sensory story will follow a camping theme; enjoying sunrise and sunset; exploring the dark with torches and searching for stars by the moonlight. This term our Sensory Exploration sessions will be held outside unless weather prevents us. We intend to explore sounds, colours and textures whilst making sure we have time to enjoy the outdoor equipment.</p> <p>During our sensory cooking sessions, we will be using the latch switch to mix smoothies which we can taste or smell. Our smoothies will all have a 'Shiny' inspiration, e.g. lightening, sunshine or Tamatoa's shiny treasure cave!</p> <p>We will be further developing our cause and effect skills during our ICT session. Some pupils will work on their 'targeting' skills, activating games and music on the interactive whiteboard's touchscreen as well as class iPads and communication devices. We will be using switch arms to help position switches in a personalised way so that each pupil will be able to access switch operated resources with decreased support from staff. Other pupils will use big mack control switches to engage with an adult in 1:1 play, e.g. requesting silly hats, sharing in favourite songs and shared toys like bubbles or balloons. We will continue to use switches to operate devices such as bubble machines and foot spas, using a latch switch box and where appropriate students will be using eye gaze to make changes to activate musical and visual rewards on the screen. During our story and dance massage sessions, we will explore different poems, rhymes and stories and various genres of music with a bright, light, shiny theme, whilst developing our body awareness and proprioception. Our RSE theme this term is all about our personal hygiene as we take a story approach to preparing ourselves for a party.</p> <p>During this term some of us will have opportunity to explore Forest school sessions alongside another class within our school grounds. In the week before May half term we intend to have a whole class Forest school day where we can incorporate our camping story with a real camp fire!</p>
	'Around the World'
<p>Summer term (second half)</p>	<p>Our 'Around the World' Sensory story will see us exploring the world of Phileas Fogg; taking to the canals, having adventures and exploring many countries along the way. Our Dance and Story massage sessions will focus on songs, poems and stories from different countries. During these sessions all pupils are invited to communicate preference for favourite songs, poems and stories.</p>

	<p>Our Sensory cooking sessions will continue to focus on the exploration of different foods incorporating less familiar foods from different cultures. We will be experiencing a variety of texture, taste and smell and be encouraged to communicate our preferences. We will use latch switches to mix and blend our foods so that we can continue to develop our understanding of cause and effect.</p> <p>We will also continue to work on our ICT targets, using themed cause and effect games as well as switch toys, touch screen activities, ipad and Eye Gaze technology where appropriate.</p> <p>Towards the end of this term we plan to revisit Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre for more boating adventures. More information to follow nearer the date.</p>
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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
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.
My Thinking
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), Eye Gaze technology, sensory cooking, resonance board work, switch toy work, latch switch control sessions, cause and effect games on the interactive whiteboard and in our immersive room.
My Movement
Movement is a huge part of the curriculum in Merlins class. On a daily basis we follow our pupil’s physiotherapy and positioning programmes, incorporating these into daily activities. Each child has a hydrotherapy programme and will access the hydro pool. We also enjoy individual Rebound Therapy sessions on our trampoline with a trained therapist. Every Friday morning we have a session in the hall and in class, where we will work on pupil’s MATP (motor activity training programme) targets. These targets focus on developing pupil’s movement needs.
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
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 and Rebound Therapy 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 PMLD sensory drama experiences. This term we have the opportunity to explore Forest School and our river trip.



Things you could do at home

My Communication: Intensive Interaction <https://www.intensiveinteraction.org/>, Tac-Pac sessions <https://youtu.be/0N9FS6B31yo>, story massage, dance massage and sensory stories (see Birch Wood YouTube channel). We also have home/school switches which you can record short messages on and then send into school to share, and vice versa.

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>, switch toys and 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: Following physio and positional programmes, practising skills such as head control, hand control, supported and independent sitting, crawling, standing for table top activities etc.

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

If you are unsure about anything in the Engagement Curriculum, please email us on omarah@birchwoodschoo.co.uk or curranb@birchwoodschoo.co.uk We are 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!

Hannah O'Mara and Becky Curran
Merlins Class Teachers