

Birch Wood Area Special School
The Owls
 Summer 2025
 Curriculum Newsletter



Dear parents and carers,

We hope you all had a wonderful Easter 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 Summer 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:

Summer Term 1	<p style="text-align: center;">Shine</p> <p>We will start this half term with our topic of Shine exploring this theme throughout our curriculum using a multi-sensory approach to all our sessions.</p> <p>This term's Sensory Story we will explore the smells, tastes, textures, sights and sounds in our story Camping under the stars.</p> <p>Write dance this half term will involve mark making in various scented and textured paints as we experience mixing different colours together and exploring different smells, colours and textures related to space.</p> <p>Our Sensory Cooking sessions we will be making Campfire S'mores, providing students with the opportunity to explore different tastes, textures and smells.</p> <p>Story Massage will take us on a journey with through Space following the story through different massage strokes.</p> <p>We will be taking a journey through space exploring the different tastes, sights and smells in our World Around me session.</p> <p>In our Music sessions we will be exploring different instruments and vocalisations, playing along to our campfire songs.</p>
Summer Term 2	<p style="text-align: center;">Around the world</p> <p>After half term our topic will be around the world where we will be learning about different countries through the use of multi-sensory stimuli and interactive and engaging sessions.</p> <p>During our sensory story this half term we will join Philleas Fogg on an adventure Around the world in 80 days, exploring different smells, tastes, textures, sights and sounds as our adventure unfolds.</p> <p>During our sensory cooking sessions we will exploring different foods from around the world.</p> <p>Our World around me sessions will provide us with the opportunity to learn about different cultures around the world.</p> <p>Story Massage will take us on a journey with Supertato, following the story through different massage strokes.</p> <p>In Music we will be exploring different instruments and music from around the world.</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
<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, 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, Story Massage, Phonics, Write Dance and communication games. Each day we will have a phonics session and this will give the pupils an opportunity to develop pre-phonics skills and formal phonics developing our understanding of set 1 sounds. We will have weekly sensory sounds sessions allowing the pupils to learn about different environmental sounds, by listening to different pieces of music and exploring a variety of multi-sensory stimulus.</p>
My Thinking and Problem Solving
<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 our good morning session, sensory 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 early geography, science, R.E and history skills. This term we will be focusing on early Geography and Science skills. We will also have weekly Attention Autism sessions which enable students to develop their attention and focus whilst turn taking and communicating preferences.</p>
My Relationships
<p>Developing positive and strong relationships is a key part of The Owls 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 develop their friendships and play with peers during structured games and free flow play activities. My Play also facilitates sharing, turn taking and building those all-important friendships. We will also have weekly soft play sessions 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 Owls, the pupils will be encouraged to build positive and co-operative relationships with their peers.</p>
My Wellbeing
<p>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 kindness and friendship. 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.</p>
My Independence
<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 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.</p> <p>In our self – care sessions we will explore teeth brushing, personal hygiene, dressing and undressing and engaging in activities related to our bodies. We will again be focusing on consent during this session ensuring all pupils understand that they have a choice to involve themselves or opt out of these activities.</p> <p>Throughout the year we have opportunities to visit our local community. This will give the pupils the opportunity to build their independence and life skills whilst exploring the local area. We will visit different areas of the community ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to explore new places and gain new experiences. This term we will be visiting Melton Town Park.</p>



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.

Things you could do at home

My Communication: to encourage and develop communication using PECs and Makaton.

My Independence: encourage your child to help with dressing and putting on/taking off shoes and/or independently brushing teeth.

My Relationships: Encourage engagement in simple turn taking games

My Thinking and Problem Solving: engage in threading activities or puzzles to support your child to independently begin to problem solve.

If you are unsure about anything in the Independence Pathway, please email me - marriottp@birchwoodschool.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!

Poppy Marriott
The Owls Class Teacher