



Dear parents and carers,

Welcome back!

It is lovely to welcome your young person back to Birch Wood School. Below is an outline of what we have planned for this term.

Our themes this term will be:

<p>Autumn term (first half)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>‘In this Material World’</b></p> <p>For our theme, ‘In This Material World,’ the Herons class will entail a ‘Three Little Pigs’ sensory story that explores materials by contrasting the properties of straw, sticks, and bricks. The pigs’ choices illustrate how different materials have varying strengths and weaknesses for construction. The pupils will have the opportunity to feel the materials that the little pigs use and make a judgment as to whether they think the material would make a strong house or a weak one.</p> <p>Additionally, Sensory Cooking this term will be based on the different textures of foods, and we will look at how foods can change in different environments. Pupils will be given the opportunity to explore different textures and will be able to make various items with these foods and textures. This will link into the pupils’ thinking and problem-solving skills.</p> <p>Furthermore, The Herons will also have Attention Autism sessions twice a week to further enhance this skill. Attention Autism is a fun, visually engaging, and motivating activity which helps our pupils to develop crucial communication and social skills. The session builds anticipation and engagement, which enhances their thinking skills. These sessions will also touch upon our Material World theme.</p> <p>Heron’s pupils will also be given opportunities to support their well-being (physical and emotional) with sessions such as Behaviour for Learning, Hydrotherapy and Rebound Therapy. Our Write Dance sessions this term will support our pupils in developing their fine motor skills, and will link into our ‘Three Little Pigs’ sensory story. Pupils will be presented with materials for this activity that represent key parts of the story. Tac-Pac will also create sensory alignment by matching tactile experiences with specific music, offering key benefits such as body awareness.</p> <p>Importantly, there will be plenty of play and leisure opportunities for pupils with water exploration, sand exploration, role play, construction, maths areas, writing areas, and Forest School sessions. Some of these activities link into our theme of ‘In this Material World’. This is a key part of our new Adventurers curriculum, in which a lot of our learning will be incorporated into play. This will allow our pupils to develop a wide range of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills. This will foster curiosity, imagination, and problem-solving abilities, allowing children to explore and understand the world and its materials in a natural and engaging way.</p>
<p>Autumn term (second half)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>‘The Show Must Go On’</b></p> <p>This term, our pupils will have the opportunity to take part in our ‘Greatest Showman’ sensory story. This will allow our pupils to live a popular musical in the form of a sensory story. This provides strong themes and narrative elements that can easily be translated into sensory experiences, such as the</p>

	<p>sounds of a circus, the visual spectacle of performances, and the feeling of the costumes and props, stimulating all senses for an engaging and immersive experience.</p> <p>Additionally, pupils will have opportunities to take part in music sessions on the theme of the Greatest Show. This is a fun, engaging way of supporting our pupils with their communication skills. The Herons will continue to have two attention autism sessions a week to build on their thinking and problem-solving skills. Additionally, their physical and mental well-being will be continuously supported by Behaviour for Learning sessions alongside their hydrotherapy sessions and rebound therapy opportunities.</p> <p>Play and leisure opportunities will persist, with lots of different play opportunities linking into our theme of the 'Greatest Showman'. Our class will also have Write Dance sessions with music from 'The Greatest Showman'. This will support our pupils with their fine motor skills for handwriting by combining music, rhythmic movement, and imagination linking into our theme. Tac-Pac will also continue this term to support sensory alignment furthermore.</p>
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Our class will be following the Adventurer Curriculum Pathway. This is a pupil-centred and play-based curriculum, focusing on five key areas; My Communication, My Thinking and Problem Solving, My Independence, My Well-being and My Play and Leisure. Learning within each area will centre around carefully crafted play opportunities and sessions, informed directly from your child's Engagement Profile. These profiles help us identify how your child likes to learn, what motivates and engages them and what this will look like for your child. There will be a coffee morning/drop-in evening to explain the Adventurer Pathway and the Engagement model in more detail, so we hope you can join us for that.

My Communication	
	<p>This area of the curriculum focuses on developing communication skills, enabling us to express our wants and needs and experience the joy of interacting with others. Our everyday practice will feed into this, with lots of communication and interaction opportunities embedded within our play. Our classroom is a total communication environment where we utilise Makaton signing, Intensive Interaction, photos, symbols, PECs (Picture Exchange Communication Systems) and other augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) methods, such as communication books or high-tech devices. There will also be specific sessions that help us develop these fundamental skills, such as sensory stories, story massage, Tac-Pac, Dance Massage and Write Dance.</p>
My Thinking and Problem Solving	
	<p>This area of the curriculum focuses on developing the Engagement Model areas of attention, realisation, anticipation, perseverance and initiation. Through carefully planned play activities, we will develop our awareness of cause and effect within our environment, whilst also promoting problem-solving and choice making skills. Daily sessions such as Attention Autism, sensory cooking, ICT and messy play, will focus directly on developing these skills.</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 during play, both in timetabled sessions and during personal and intimate care activities e.g. eating and drinking, using the toilet and washing. This area extends beyond independence whilst at school and looks at how we can become more independent within our communities through travel training and community visits.</p>
My Well-being	
	<p>This area focuses on both our emotional and physical well-being. Through our 'Myself' sessions we will focus on identifying and labelling our emotions so that we can link them to our Zones of Regulation. By doing this, pupils can start to identify how they are feeling and make their own self-regulation choices. When we are happy and regulated,</p>



we can access our play and learning, so this is crucial. With timetabled sessions such as Sensory Circuits, rebound therapy, hydrotherapy and PE, we can develop both our emotional and physical well-being.

#### My Play and Leisure

This area of the curriculum emphasises the importance of play, both for learning and social interaction. Our play activities are both continuous and enhanced, meaning that pupils have the reassurance that resources and activities will always be there, with extra activities that add layers of challenge and tasks linked directly to their learning intentions. Areas of play within the classroom will include the exploration of sand and water, construction, small world play, role-play, as well as writing, reading and maths. These activities will be structured with staff acting as facilitators and your child taking the lead. Through play, we can develop pupils' play profiles so that they become more social and cooperative as well as developing their play schema.

#### 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 and Problem Solving:** ICT cause and effect games, exploring different foods and textures with children.

**My Independence:** Opportunities for practising our self-help skills, especially during meal times and personal care routines.

**My Well-being:** Organising activities such as puzzles, building blocks etc...

**My Play and Leisure:** Water play, sand play, mark making, reading, fine motor activities such as play dough, role play, counting.

If you are unsure about anything in the Adventurer's Curriculum, please email [glovera@birchwoodschool.co.uk](mailto:glovera@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!

Alex Glover  
Class Teacher