

Dear parents and carers,

Welcome back to Kites for our new academic year! We hope you all had a wonderful Summer Holiday. We are excited to be back for the new term and share with you the topics we will be exploring and the therapies your child will be accessing. As we move to a new system for sharing the wonderful achievements your young person makes in school we will temporarily be sharing photos, videos and information regarding progress via email.

Our topics this term will be:

<p>Spring term (first half)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">“My Material World”</p> <p>This term our session will all exploring a range of materials. We will be using all of our senses to explore the properties of materials including touch to explore textures. Our sensory story will be ‘The Three Little Pigs’, a tradition tale exploring materials as well as learning to anticipate repetitive phrases and exploring sounds and smells. During our write dance, dance massage and tac-pac sessions we will learn to explore and anticipate a range of textures, showing our preference and developing our motor skills and independence.</p> <p>In our sensory cooking sessions, we will be operating a latch switch to mix ingredients for a range of smoothies using ingredients with crunchy, smooth, lumpy and fluffy textures. In Music lessons we will be exploring the sounds we can make with a range of instruments and found objects made of a range of materials including wood and metal. We will listen to music played on wooden and metal tuned percussion and participate in creative responses to create our own music.</p>
<p>Spring term (second half)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">“The Show Must Go On”</p> <p>During this topic our sensory story will be about a trip to the theatre. We will recreate our theatrical experience through smells, textures, sounds, vibrations music, movements and taste. Our Dance massage sessions will follow this theme as well, using the musical soundtracks, and our Story massages will include songs, poems and stories based on the theme.</p> <p>Our sensory cooking sessions will include recipes relating to some well-known musicals. We will also continue to work on our ICT targets, using themed cause and effect games as well as switch toys, touch screen activities and Eye Gaze technology where appropriate. In Music we will be listening to the music from Sister Act as we link our theme to our Gospel topic for music. We will use microphones and interaction to explore our voices in response to Gospel inspired songs.</p>

In line with whole school changes to our curriculum pathways, our learners are now following the explorer’s 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 overleaf 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, Music, Sounds of intent, 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 Kites 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 have weekly Rebound Therapy sessions for each child on our trampoline with a trained therapist. Pupils will continue to engage in our MATP (motor activity training programme) targets both through specific sessions and throughout the curriculum. This term we are building in addition opportunities for inclusion in PE for those able to access more active sessions. For some pupils we will introduce Sherbourne, a developmental movement programme designed specifically for learners with complex physical needs.

Myself

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.

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. There will be a coffee morning this term to discuss RSE and how it will be delivered to your child. More details to follow soon.

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, Rebound Therapy and Horse Riding in accordance with their EHCPs. In class, we will have sensory cooking and art activities as well as music lessons and sounds of intent. 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 and Carrot productions, who combine storytelling and drama with live musical performances.



Things you could do at home

My Communication: Please continue to send in your news switches with the activities you've been getting up to over the weekend. 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).

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 under hand.

My Movement: Following physio and positional programmes, practising skills such as head 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 other mark making or messy play stimulus together.

If you are unsure about anything in the Explorers Curriculum, please email me on hallamjk@birchwoodschoool.co.uk. I am 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!

Kate Hallam-Jones
Kites Class Teacher