

Birch Wood Area Special school
Class 2HOM
 Autumn (2021)
 Curriculum Information



Dear parents and carers,

It is wonderful to welcome you all back to school! We are excited to share with you the topics we will be exploring and the therapies your child will be accessing in 2HOM this autumn term. In the first few weeks we will be focusing on our pupil's well-being and re-adjustment back into school. We will be settling pupils gently back into school life, helping them to make the transition into a new classroom, with new friends and some new staff. This term we will start using Kinteract, an app that securely shares pupils' achievements with parents as well as charting their progress towards targets. We will also be communicating with parents via Kinteract, instead of emails. We look forward to you all posting your "Wow!" moments from home and family moments to Kinteract too. Please let us know if you need any assistance with the app.

Our topics this term will be:

<p>25th August – 3rd September</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">"This is Me!"</p> <p>This settling in mini-topic focuses on everyone getting to know each other again, welcoming the new pupils and staff in 2HOM, learning about each other and exploring our likes and dislikes through our senses. We will also be looking at our self-help and personal care skills through our "Party Time" sensory story, where we explore the smells, tastes, textures and objects we need to get ready for a party. This will include activities such as smelling different bubble baths and choosing our favourites to make soapy water, tasting different toothpastes, feeling sponges and body scrunchies and activating hair dryers with a latch switch!</p>
<p>Autumn term (first half)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">"Rocket Man – Space and beyond!"</p> <p>We're going on a sensory adventure into space! We will be sharing sensory stories exploring the different sounds, smells, textures and temperatures associated with space travel and all of the different planets. We will have weekly write dance sessions where we paint and explore the colours of the different planets as well as weekly dance massage sessions where we move our bodies and develop our body awareness to space themed music. Cause and effect work will incorporate the theme using BIGMack switches and latch switch controlled activities e.g. pressing a switch to activate blast off! We will also be immersing ourselves in a multi-sensory space experience, utilising our fabulous Immersive room. At the end of term, we will have a special Star Wars themed week, more info to follow soon!</p>

“Under the Sea”	
Autumn term (second half)	<p>In the second half of the Autumn term we will be exploring the world under the sea! Our sensory stories will draw inspiration from tales such as “The Little Mermaid”, “Finding Nemo” and “20000 Leagues Under The Sea”, where we will immerse ourselves in life under the sea using all of our senses. We will have weekly themed sessions such as write dance, where we will explore the colours of the ocean and all the creatures that live below the waves, story massage sessions, which will focus on the mysterious under-water world, and dance massage sessions where we explore our body awareness and proprioception to sea themed music.</p> <p>As we approach Christmas we will be exploring all of the sensory elements of this magical time of year. With the success of last years’ virtual whole school Christmas production, we are very keen to join once again to create something very special. It is likely that this years’ production will once again be a virtual event, so we will work towards our class’s contribution through sessions in class as we did last year. More details to follow nearer the time!</p>

Our class will be following the Engagement Curriculum. 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; as such, I’d like to reassure you that all pupils will have their own packs of sensory resources which will be used only by them and will be washed or cleaned with antibacterial spray/wipes after each use. 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 2HOM. 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 our trained therapist Di. Every Thursday afternoon we have a session in the hall with our PE teacher Joe, where we will work on pupil’s MATP (motor activity training programme) targets. These targets focus on developing pupil’s movement needs.

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At the end of last term, I attended MOVE Programme training with two other colleagues. The MOVE Programme is an activity-based practice that enables young people with physical additional needs to gain independent movement. It uses the combined approach of education, therapy and family knowledge to teach the skills of sitting, standing, walking and transitioning between. The aim of the MOVE Programme is to offer these movement opportunities to young people with complex physical additional needs, opening up and transforming the world around them, creating an accessible, interesting and educational world full of opportunity and choice.

We will be gradually rolling out this programme with pupils who will find this programme beneficial over the autumn/ spring term and will contact you to arrange a meeting to set targets for your child.

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.

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, Pet Therapy and Horse Riding 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 will obviously be dependent on COVID-19 restrictions and the safety of our CEV pupils.

If you are unsure about anything in the Engagement Curriculum, please email me on omarah@birchwoodschool.co.uk I am always pleased 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