

Birch Wood Area Special school  
**Class 2MH**  
 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 areas of learning and possible therapies your child will be accessing in 2MH this first autumn term. Initially we will be focusing on our pupil's well-being and re-adjustment back into school with some new peers and staff. We will be settling pupils gently back into school life starting our curriculum more slowly in the first couple of weeks and focusing on establishing new relationships and routines. Our topic this half term will be Space.

Autumn term 1	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“Space”</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Our theme for this half term is Space and will shape many of our sessions. Through designing and making our own personalised rockets and aliens in our ‘Topic’ sessions we will be learning the various elements about space suits and our solar system. Our theme will also be incorporated into our literacy and phonics sessions, along with lots of shiny and futuristic sensory exploration and play.</p>
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Our class will be following both the Engagement and Independent Curriculums, with our students placed on either pathway, whilst still benefiting from the overlaps of both. The Engagement Curriculum covers five areas of learning which are: ‘My Communication’, ‘My Thinking’, ‘My Movement’, ‘Myself’ and ‘My Enrichment’, all of which incorporates essential therapies and sensory exploration. The Independent Curriculum follows the mastery system and more discrete subject teaching such as Literacy, Maths and Science.

Below is a table with some more details of how our bespoke curriculum will be taught in 2MH this half term:

<b>My Communication, Literacy, Phonics, Attention Autism and Tac Pac</b>
<p>This area of the curriculum focuses on developing the ability of our students 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, objects of reference and photos/symbols to support make choices and expressing our opinions. Our literacy learning will primarily be through Colourful Semantics, with the focus being on the book ‘The Dinosaur Who Pooped A Planet’ (Written by Tom Fletcher and Dougie Poynter, illustrated by Garry Parsons). During phonics sessions, sets 1 and 2 will be taking the shape of experiencing the objects that demonstrates a phonic sound, mark making/ writing and playing Orchard Games. 2MH will have weekly Attention Autism session, with the aim of developing listening and attention building skills through novel play with a focused object. Short communication games will also be played on a daily basis.</p>
<b>My Thinking, Maths and Science</b>
<p>This area of the curriculum focuses on developing our students’ attention and anticipation skills and awareness of cause and effect in their environment, alongside their subject knowledge of numeracy and the world around them. It also promotes independent problem solving skills and making choices. During our weekly discrete science sessions, students will be examining magnets and magnetism. This will involve experimenting with ‘magic’ cars and animals in a range of different mixtures in tuff trays using the words</p>

'magnets', push' and 'pull'. Some pupils will move onto discussing 'attract' and 'repel', finally linking this back to space and magnetic poles, whilst recording their 'data' onto a table.

2MH will experience weekly cooking session, in the form of following Colourful Semantic set-by-set instructions to make healthier option snacks as independently as possible, for example tuna, sweetcorn wraps, potato salad, with a 'WOW' treat week before half term. Exploring all ingredients through touch, taste and smell will be encouraged and incorporated into all sessions alongside the messy play of these same ingredients. Students will also be experiencing the immersive room throughout the week.

### **My Movement and P.E**

Movement is embedded throughout the curriculum in 2MH. With daily fun action songs as part of our Good Morning session and in our other session signifier songs. Every Friday afternoon we will have a session in the hall with our PE teacher Joe developing student's gross movement needs, such as balance, throwing and catching. 2MH will also have timetabled Soft Play slots for students at different points in the week to further develop our fine and gross motor skills.

Other movement sessions include dough disco session, and fine motor movement carousels, with activities personalised to pupils' learning intentions linked to their EHCP. We will also be enjoying space themed Dough Disco, playdough challenges 'Can you make the best alien?' and Write Dance.

On Wednesdays, some students will have the opportunity to follow their hydrotherapy programme onsite. Whilst others will have the opportunity later in the year to go down to Waterfield Swimming Pool. Personalised therapy plans will be followed which may consist of rebound therapy sessions on our trampoline and Occupational Therapy.

### **Myself and PSHE**

This area of the curriculum focuses on empowering our students, giving them every opportunity to make progress towards fulfilment and independent living skills. We incorporate opportunities to work on independence skills throughout the school day in areas such as eating, drinking, dressing, personal care needs and self-regulation.

Part of this area of the curriculum will focus on students having a greater awareness of their own bodies and the space around them. PSHE sessions will discuss naming and locating body parts as well as discussing private and not private.

Contributing thoughts and feelings during class discussions in a variety of ways will be encouraged through the whole day in 2MH with the intention of growing confidence and giving students the opportunity to practice engaging with peers. Our class 'Safe Choices'

- Good Looking
- Good Listening
- Kind Words
- Safe hands and safe feet

are spoken about regularly through the day to support this. Social game session with also further underpin supported friends.

### **My Enrichment and Topic**

Our Space topic will give students this half term the opportunity to be creative in making rockets, racing astronauts on balloons down strings, designing and making personalised aliens and enjoying the excitement of adding Mentos to fizzy drinks. Write Dance sessions in a variety of different messy textures to music will enable all students to enjoy the sensory experience of possible alien goo!

If you are unsure about anything in the Engagement and Independent curriculums please email Joanna (Mon-Tues-Wed) [mckayj@birchwoodschool.co.uk](mailto:mckayj@birchwoodschool.co.uk) and or Helen (Thurs- Fri) [humphreysH@birchwoodschool.co.uk](mailto:humphreysH@birchwoodschool.co.uk). We are 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!

Joanna M<sup>c</sup>Kay and Helen Humphreys