



Dear Parents and Carers,

We are excited to welcome your child back to school this spring. We want to share with you the topics and activities your child may be involved in over this term. Please see our topic outline and themes below.

Our topics this term are: **'Winter' and the 'Earth and Beyond'**

Spring Term 1	Winter In the first half of the Spring term we will be using our five senses and movement to find out about winter. We will be experiencing and exploring 'winter' through story massage, sensory stories, messy play, sensory walks, dance massage, body awareness and songs.
Spring Term 2	The Earth and Beyond We will be experiencing and exploring the Earth and Beyond through story massage, sensory stories, dance massage, body awareness and songs. We will also use music, art, drama and objects to bring the topic to life. We will be finding out about things that are in the sky compared with things on the earth. We will create a display to illustrate our learning.

Your child will be following the Engagement Curriculum. This is an extremely pupil centred and individualised curriculum focusing on five key areas, incorporating essential therapies. 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
<p>Within this curriculum area, we work on developing your child's communication and interaction skills. We encourage a total communication environment throughout the school day, using the methods most appropriate to the pupils. These include speech, Makaton, body signing, eye pointing, Eye Gaze, Picture Exchange Communication, use of symbols, Colourful Semantics, AAC devices (e.g. Talkers and switches) Songs of reference, Objects of Reference and smells of the day.</p> <p>Our communication targets are focused on each of the student's individual SALT and EHCP targets (with additional targets for any other conditions e.g. Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment and ASD). These are worked on through the vehicle of our variety of topics that change each term. Other activities linked to the topics include art, role play, music, and singing, Story Massage, Intensive Interaction, Tac- Pac and Write Dance. Our literacy topics (winter and space) and the books 'Aliens love underpants and 'Treasure Planet' are explored through sensory stories with props, smells and music and movement to engage and stimulate the children. Pupils work in small groups on their communication targets and on a one to one basis on their individual targets.</p>
My Thinking
<p>These sessions are delivered through activities that help to develop your child's engagement and thinking skills. The sessions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensology - these activities are designed to awaken the senses and to help the young people to make choices and decisions. The young people are encouraged to develop a preference and begin to gain an understanding of the world around them. - Immersive room cause and effect activities - Using equipment such as the colour-changing cube, winter and space themed interactive floor mat and walls. - The Fun with Food Programme and messy play to promote tolerating a wider range of foods and textures (where appropriate).

- Augmentative and Alternative Communication - Eye Gaze, switch toy work, cause and effect games on the interactive whiteboard and programmable Beebots.
Some pupils will work in small groups to carry out activities related to number, space, shape and measure along with one to one work. These involve number songs, sensory and interactive activities designed to engage and motivate your child.

My Movement

Pupils have weekly sessions of MATP (Motor Activity Training Programme) during PE along with Hydrotherapy and Rebound therapy sessions. These are based on individual targets designed to build on your child's physical development skills. We also include sensori-motor activities throughout the curriculum on various themes, this term it will be about 'winter'. These activities encourage sensory integration.

Students have regular breaks outside throughout the day according to their needs and benefit from fresh air, moving around, using playground equipment including the swings, roundabout, trampoline and trim track circuits (if appropriate).

Pupils who have a physiotherapy programme will work on these targets as outlined in their programme. We will follow the physiotherapy activities and postural management programmes as prescribed by physiotherapists and occupational therapists. Music and movement is also used across the curriculum including songs of reference and topic related songs. The hydrotherapy pool is used twice weekly for movement, enjoyment and communication activities.

Myself

We use any available opportunity to encourage independence skills according to each child's ability. Where appropriate some students with ASD are taught using the TEACCH programme, this is a visual and structured teaching approach to learning. These students have work stations, which encourage independence, choice making and communications skills. Some students also use PECS to make requests, communicate choices and respond to questions. Students have communication folders and use symbols or words to build sentences.

They are encouraged to request the toilet when it is needed and to cooperate with their personal care routine including working towards being toilet trained where appropriate. Some students are able to request and select their own snack and to tidy things away afterwards. Pupils are regularly involved in different personal care activities such as teeth brushing, getting dressed, brushing our hair or washing our hands. Students with physical difficulties are encouraged and supported to cooperate with their routine and to make choices.

My Enrichment

We use a range of enrichment activities such as music and movement, the immersive room, rebound therapy and hydrotherapy to encourage consistent responses. Music Therapy is also available to selected pupils. Some pupils will also access sessions of horse riding (numbers and restrictions permitting). Outdoor activities include sensory walks and exploring our developing sensory raised garden beds.

Birch Wood Area Special school
Class 3JD
Spring 2022
Curriculum Newsletter



Things you could do at home

Encourage signing perhaps beginning with 'hello', 'goodbye', 'more', 'finish' and 'thank you'. If you are unsure of any signs please visit the Makaton website address below. Use cause and effect games on an iPad or tablet such as Switcher (see below). Intensive interaction sessions are great at promoting enjoyment of interaction and communication (please ask if you are interested and we can signpost you to resources). Play games and sing songs that encourage your child to anticipate and share attention with you. Use a wide variety of materials to make marks with hands or tools, e.g. with water, paint, sand, foam, play dough or marks in flour. Encourage your child to notice changes in the environment e.g. light and shadow, sounds and the textures of different materials. Enjoy themed arts and crafts e.g. making animal puppets, face masks, musical shakers etc... Switcher programme
www.ianbean.co.uk
www.makaton.org www.helpkidzlearn.com, www.cbeebies.co.uk, www.bbc.co.uk/schools,
www.senictsoftware.com. www.priorywoods.middlesbrough.sch.uk/page/?title=resources&pid=3

If you are unsure about anything in the Engagement Curriculum, please email me on: DayeJ@birchwoodschool.co.uk and I'll do my best to help you with any questions you may have about your child.

We hope your child will enjoy being enriched by all of the activities we have planned for them this term and we look forward to working with them.

Kind regards

Janet Daye
Class Teacher

Sharon Caldwell-Jones
Senior Teaching Assistant