



Dear parents and carers,

Happy New Year! - To all my students, parents/ carers and extended Birch Wood school family. Along with a warm welcome back to school from all the staff team in Post 16. I would like to warmly welcome Courtney Glover back into class, following her maternity leave. Courtney will be supporting the class as a Senior Teaching Assistant alongside Janice Bull on a part-time basis. I hope you all have been able to do some of the things you love over the holidays and feel duly rested, ready for the new spring term ahead.

I have put this curriculum newsletter together, to share with you the topics and units of work that are being covered by Post 16 (Class 5CA) this term. This will give you the additional information needed to talk to your young person about their lessons. We are looking forward to an exciting and busy term and we hope that the students will enjoy it.

Our topics and themes this term will be:

<p>Spring Term 1</p>	<p>Celebrating Cultures in the UK. We're going on a sensory adventure listening to a diverse selection of poetry. We will be sharing sensory stories exploring the sounds, smells, textures and tastes of chosen poems. We are starting with the Poem by Michael Rosen called 'Chocolate Cake'. We will also be having weekly sensory drama sessions for RHSE, based on Consent and Personal Hygiene. We will also be immersing ourselves in a multi-sensory experience, utilising our brand new Immersive room.</p>
<p>Spring Term 2</p>	<p>Celebrating our differences. We will be exploring how it is good to be me. We will be making up a family box and sharing this using our switches, E-Tran board, Talkers, use of visuals, signing, body signing and by eye gazing. I will send home the list of items that you can share from home when it is your turn to have the family box.</p>

Your young person 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.

<p>My Communication</p>
<p>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, and sensory stories, Tac-Pac, Dance Massage, Attention Autism and Write Dance.</p>
<p>My Thinking</p>
<p>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, and work on the interactive whiteboard and in our immersive room.</p>

My Movement

Movement is a huge part of the curriculum in 5CA. 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 student signed off by their physiotherapist. Every week we also 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.

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 RHSE 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. This will obviously be dependent on COVID-19 restrictions and the safety of our CEV pupils. This term 5CA will continue to join in with the online sessions of Electric Umbrella. These music and movement sessions are co-run by adults with a range of learning differences and celebrated as active participants within the weekly group. The online group actively allows schools from around the country with similar needs to connect and celebrate each other. If you would like your young person to appear on the screen and you have not already given your consent then please drop me an email. If you would like to find out more about Electric Umbrella then click the link. <https://www.electricumbrella.co.uk>

We are also hoping to have an artist in school for a half term (if restrictions permit this) to work on a series of sessions for the students to explore using their senses. The topics will be around sustainability, and self-expression. I will update you when this will take place in school.

Things you could do at home

My Communication: Take photos when you are out and about or of familiar people at home. Share these with your young person and make sensory sacks using familiar objects to remember the place or person.

My Thinking: Have a go at cooking together, smelling, touching, listening to sounds and where possible tasting the foods, don't worry about the outcome it's the process of making and exploring that really counts.

My Enrichment: Explore an activity, or an area of interest, whether that is shopping and cooking dinner, or tap dancing with FTM dance. Try and include your young person in all aspects of their life where possible.

Birch Wood Area Special school
Class The Lodge - 5CA
Spring 2022
Curriculum Newsletter



In Post 16, we aim for your young person to have new and exciting opportunities, gaining readiness for their next learning journey, beyond Birch Wood School. If you are unsure about anything in the Engagement curriculum on offer then please email me on aduc@birchwoodschoo.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.

Charlotte Adu – Post 16 Class Teacher