

Central Primary School

Toucan Time



Parent's Guide

What is Toucan Time?

Toucan Time is a small class designed to cater for the needs of pupils with additional learning needs. The children are identified in consultation with the ALNCO and Toucan Class Lead and using a child's Individual Development Plan. We currently have a Toucan class, situated on our Broad street site, with over 30 pupils that access it throughout the week. The sessions run during the afternoon and are delivered under the supervision of our HLTA, Mrs. N James.

All staff have been highly trained to deliver sessions through a total communication approach. They have received training in Signalong, Intensive Interaction, POPAT, PECs and Sensory Circuits. The sessions have no more than 10 children, and staff focus on specific outcomes with each child.

Plans are created alongside speech therapists, Educational Psychologists and the ASD team and are then implemented by the Toucan Staff. The sessions are highly structured with a clear focus and offer interventions based at the child's level of development. The sessions cater for sensory skills, social communication and language skills, early play skills, gross and fine motor skills and independent skills. The staff make detailed observations and notes on a daily basis that feed in to future targets and outcomes for each child.



Toucan Time Routine

It is important that the children have a set routine as this enables them to feel safe and secure. They know what to expect. In each class there is also a visual timetable for the children to reference during the session.

Toucan Timetable

Time	Activity
1pm	Register 'Hello' song (sing and sign) What's in the box?
1:10pm	Independent and teacher led activities Children have access to outside
2:20pm	Wash hands
2:25pm	Snack time Helpwr y dydd to offer drinks Children to sign please and thank you Snack offered (communication boards and sign used where needed)
2:45pm	Parachute or singing time Goodbye song

Songs used during a Toucan Session

'Hello' Song

Hello everyone. Hello everyone.

Hello everyone

How are you today?

'Brushing' Song

This is the way we brush our hands,

Brush our hands, brush our hands.

This is the way we brush our hands

On a Monday.

'Parachute' Song

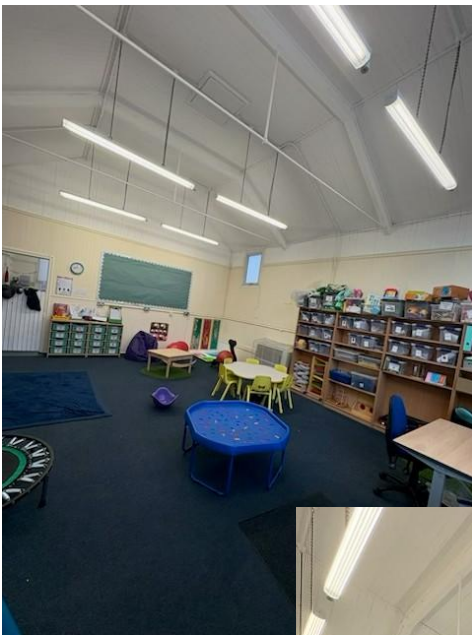
I hear thunder, I hear thunder,
Hark don't you, Hark don't you,
Pitter patter raindrops
Pitter, patter raindrops.
I'm wet through, so are you!

'Goodbye' Song

Goodbye everyone, Goodbye everyone,
Goodbye everyone.
It's time to say Goodbye
'Goodbye'

Toucan Rooms

Each room has been carefully planned and thought out to ensure the best learning environment for the children. We currently have an infant room, a junior room and a sensory room.



Total Communication

In each Toucan session, we use a total communication approach. This means, we use sign along in conjunction with verbal instructions.

We use specific phrases;

'It's time to.....' (paint, draw etc)

'Finished'

'Waiting'

'Stop'

Each of these phrases have a sign to go with them. By keeping instructions short, the children have less to process which is more manageable. Also, if a child becomes dysregulated they can't always hear what's being said but they can see the sign/visual.

Some of our children are pre speaking. We use communication buttons and communication boards to support the.,.

Word	Sign
Waiting (Flat hands in front of chest reversing backwards)	
Stop (flat, working hand up at working side)	

Word	Sign
Time (Working index finger tapping on watch on non working hand)	

Sensory



Sensory Integration is the process by which the brain receives, organises and processes all the information received from the senses. The senses include touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste, body position and movement (proprioception) and balance/position against gravity (vestibular). The information received from these senses help us to make sense of the world. Effective sensory integration and processing enables us to respond appropriately to different stimuli in our environment and informs our everyday functioning.

Sensory play is developed before other stages of play E.g. symbolic play, when a child will pretend to feed a teddy or pretend to be a doctor. A child is mostly interested in the way a toy tastes, looks, feels, sounds or smells. They may explore the toy by putting it in their mouth and/or spinning, rolling, flicking it etc for sensory enjoyment.

In toucan, we provide a sensory or 'messy' activity each week. With support from staff or independently, your child will explore the different textures on offer.

We sing the 'brushing song' whilst brushing your child's hand with a range of brushes. This allows your child to desensitise themselves before they explore. A child's tolerance to textures differ greatly but by using brushing it enables them to calm. It enables a child who might be nervous to build confidence, or a child who might be excited, calm.

In the infants, the children are heavily supported during sensory time.

However, by the time they get to the juniors, lots of our junior toucans can brush their hands independently before exploring.

Visuals

In Toucan, we use visuals as part of our total communication approach with all our toucan children. Using visual cards can be a supportive way to communicate for a child with speech and language communication needs. Visuals help to provide structure and routine whilst helping to build understanding and reduce anxiety.

Visual routine:

Using a simple visual routine allows a child to know what is happening and when. It can be used as a positive intervention to avoid frustrations whilst encouraging some independence. The visuals can be real objects, printed symbols and images.

We have a class visual time table and some of our children have individual timetables. We can use them daily or for a specific routine such as toileting or preparing for transitions or new experiences.

Now and next:

These are broken down visuals to help develop and understand a routine. They indicate with pictures what is happening 'now' and what will happen 'next'. When using now and next visuals, it is a good idea to use visual warning in the form of sand timers to countdown to the transition change.

We also use visual sand timers which support the children to know how long they have left of an activity or task.

Social stories:

Before children experience something new or somewhere new we prepare the children using a social story. The story breaks down the new experience/place in to simple sentences supported by visual pictures. The story is used over and over again leading up to a specific day.



Toucan Trips and Experiences



Due to the children's difficulties and needs it can be hard for them to go new places or experience new things. As a Toucan class, we like to offer the children these options in a controlled and safe way. They are prepared before using social stories and are then accompanied by toucan staff. We have taken the children to a swimming pool, local shop, McDonalds, an Indian restaurant and arranged for them to meet Father Christmas and have a Christmas party. We have given them the chance to meet a dog, tortoise and a goat, make milkshakes, pancakes and watch caterpillars turn into butterflies. The children all access these opportunities at their level. Staff are there to support and offer guidance and encouragement.

Your Child's Progress

Every session, staff write detailed notes against your child's targets. These notes are then used to write a weekly summary of how your child has been during the week. The report is then uploaded to your child's Dojo portfolio. Accompanying the report will be a selection of pictures so you can see how they have been for yourself.



Parental Reviews

What do parents think of Toucan coffee mornings?

'They are amazing as we get more information from you and all the parents have different experiences with thier children. I don't feel so alone knowing there are other parents going through the same and I get to learn new tips and strategies that other parents have tried to.'

Does your child benefit from attending Toucan time?

'Toucan is amazing, I've noticed so much change in him. He's starting to use words, he said cup today for the first time and I can see how happy he is most of the time due to the photos and updates. He's learning real life skills that will help him in real life situations. Also the experiences like swimming and McDonald's have made huge difference, he's always happy coming home and knowing what works for him like the dizzy whizzy and body sock, I was able to purchase them on advice from Mrs James has helped change things at home too for the better. The effort the staff put in is incredible.'

Does your child benefit from attending Toucan time?

'Yes we enjoy seeing the photos of him enjoying himself and completing activities with his friends. It is beneficial for us to read the update and see what challenges he has faced and how he has coped. It helps to open up a dialogue with our child when we read what he has done as we are able to ask him about it and he is able to tell us or look at the pictures with us. Without the updates we may not know what he has been doing as he is not always able to tell us as he often 'can't remember!'

Does your child benefit from the trips and experiences that Toucan offer?

'It was lovely for him to experience seeing santa in a familiar environment without the need to queue in an unfamiliar overwhelming place with crowds and noise. We are not able to visit santa normally as it is too much for him and his brothers to cope with so it is an experience he would have missed out on if not for the toucan party. He loved the bouncy castle and it was reassuring for us as parents that he was supported by the staff and other parents as he can often become disregulated and too boisterous on a bouncy castle which is difficult in public as it can lead to challenging behaviour which is hard to deal with

