**Spring Newsletter 2018-19**

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back and we hope you enjoyed the Easter break. It’s lovely to see the students all looking forward to engaging in this terms topic and seeing the progress they make over the summer term.

Our class team is Carol Rawlinson as class teacher on Mondays and Tuesdays and Michelle Waugh as class teacher Wednesday to Friday who will work together collaboratively to ensure consistency for students throughout the week. Our therapists remain as Emily Searle our Speech and Language Therapist and Gemma Cooke our Occupational Therapist.

We are very excited about this terms topic ‘The Smartest Giant in Town’ and exploring the works of Julia Donaldson. Within communication sessions students will engage in an interactive sensory story and use colourful semantics and shape coding to comment on characters and events as well as story sequencing and following instructions to make characters and props. This will enable students to develop individual communication skills in their use of PECS, Communication boards, Voice Output Communication Aids and verbal language skills in requesting items and communicating choices and ideas. Within numeracy students will focus on the area of measurement using ‘The Smartest Giant in Town’ as a stimulus. Students will develop skills in measuring using standard and non-standard units and comparing and ordering objects.

We will continue with weekly visits to the café and supermarket to enable students to generalise skills across settings and apply within functional contexts. As part of our community access we will be visiting different venues throughout the local area linked to the settings of Julia Donaldson stories, identifying key features of the environment and recording using images and symbols as well as providing opportunities to develop social interaction with peers.

In speech and language therapy sessions we will continue to develop each pupil’s communication skills (verbal, sign, PECS, VOCA and gesture), social skills and emotional regulation in a variety of motivating group sessions and individual 1:1 sessions throughout the week. This will include group narrative therapy and the use of communication ‘busy boxes’ targeting individual skills and individual approaches including SmILE programme.

In occupational therapy sessions this term students will focus on social communication and interaction skills through directed play, developing their ability to share activities, take turns and interact appropriately. Our occupational therapist will also lead a weekly ‘hand gym’ session to develop fine motor skills and bilateral coordination with students taking part in a range of motivating tasks to target individual needs. 1:1 occupational therapy sessions will focus on each pupil’s individual targets and students will also engage in any relevant sensory programmes to enable self-regulation.

Please don’t hesitate to contact us on m.waugh@percyhedley.org.uk (teacher), c.rawlinson@percyhedley.org.uk (teacher) g.cooke@percyhedley.org.uk (Occupational therapist) emily.searle@percyhedley.org.uk (Speech and Language therapist)

Best wishes

Michelle, Carol and the team