THERAPEUTIC CLASSROOMS

WHY DO WE NEED A THERAPEUTIC APPROACH?

- Increasing numbers of children in education are now struggling from adverse childhood experiences such as domestic violence, abuse, loss and being in care.
- Adverse childhood experiences come with long term consequences that cannot be ignored. Children can be affected by trauma and often develops maladaptive coping strategies in order to help and protect themselves during times of threat.
- This can cause parts of the brain that we need children to access at school, such as problem-solving, memory and reasoning to shut down when a child feels stress or fear as a protective mechanism to help them to cope, almost like a trigger.
- When a child is stressed or anxious, maladaptive coping mechanisms are triggered and as a result, teachers are dealing with more behavioural issues in class, struggling with the effects of trauma. If a child is not emotionally secure, then they are unable to learn.

WHAT WILL A THERAPEUTIC AREA LOOK LIKE?

A therapeutic approach offers a nurturing environment and allows children to be calm enough to learn.
The job of the therapeutic approach is to silently create the right atmosphere for learning to occur.
Therapeutic approaches include:

- **Natural, neutral tones** on the walls and in furniture.
  This will help minimise distractions in the room and allow the children to focus on their work.
- **Using lamps** to create a peaceful atmosphere within the classroom.
  This will allow children to focus on their work and elicit feelings of peacefulness rather than it being too bright and clinical.
- **Play calming music** which will have a positive effect on the brain and body.
  This will allow their body to begin to regulate and calm, reducing cortisol levels.
- **Re-create a home setting** within a classroom environment to allow the children to feel safe.
  Changes could include: add blankets, cushions and soft furnishings where at present, children are expected to sit for 6.5 hours per day on hard plastic, uncomfortable chairs. By adding plants and minimalistic wall art, we hope to reduce over stimulation and offer a calm, peaceful environment.

THIS CONCEPT IS ALREADY BEING SUCCESSFULLY USED IN OTHER SCHOOLS & NOW AT HCPS, IN YEARS 4, 5 & 6 ALONGSIDE A NUMBER OF OTHER AREAS ACROSS THE SCHOOL.

TRIAL AREAS – THE DEN & THE SNUG













TWO CLASSROOMS WHICH WERE DEVELOPED IN THE SUMMER OF 2023 – YEAR 5







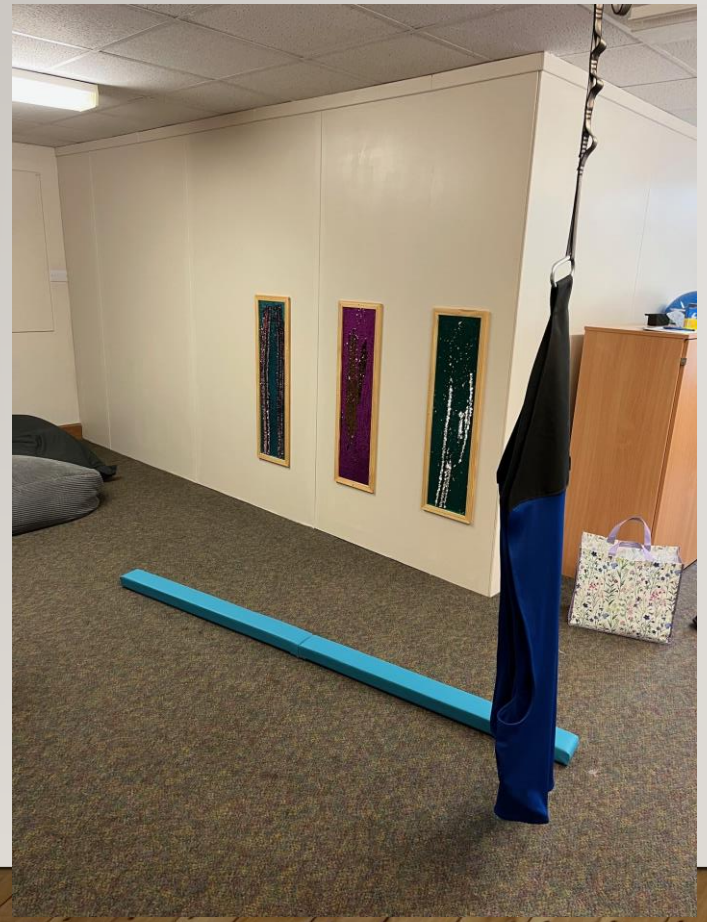
THREE CLASSROOMS WHICH WERE DEVELOPED IN THE SUMMER 2024 – YEAR 4 FOLLOWED BY YEAR 6 IN SUMMER 2025



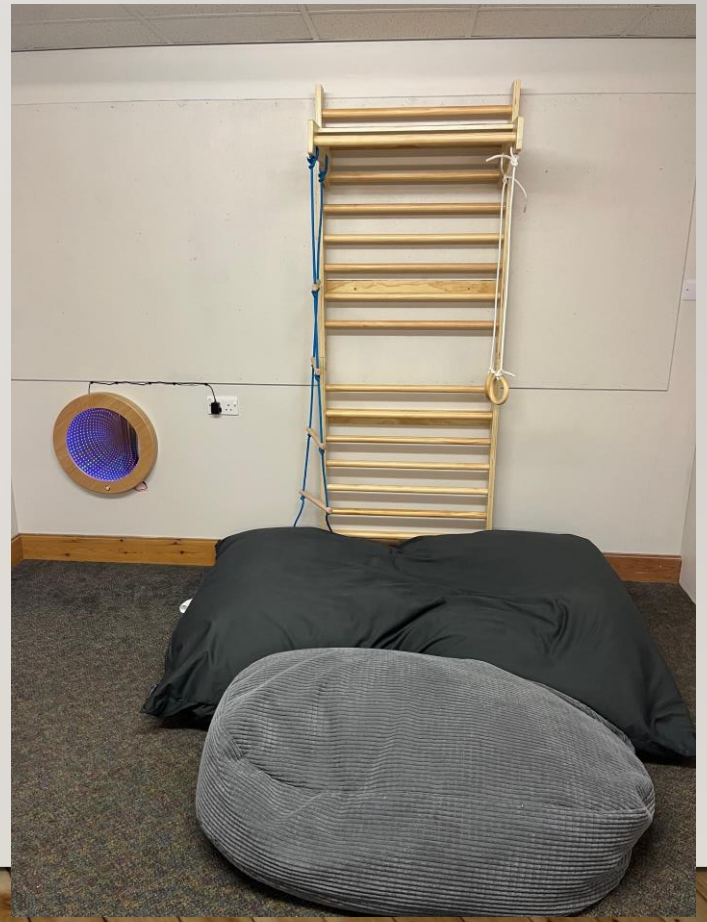




THE SENSORY CIRCUIT ROOM (THE WILLOW) WHICH WAS DEVELOPED IN THE SUMMER 2025







WHY NOW?

- Following the numerous lockdowns within the Covid:19 pandemic, we have seen a 80% in children accessing pastoral support.
- This includes a large proportion of children suffering from poor mental health, low self-esteem and increased anxiety.
- HCPS want to provide every child with a safe learning environment where they feel supported, listened to and valued.

THIS PROJECT CONTINUES TO BE PIVOTAL TO THE EDUCATIONAL OFFER FROM HCPS AS WE TRULY BELIEVE ONLY: '**H**APPY **C**HILDREN **P**ROGRESS & **S**UCCEED'