

Welcome to Little Doves Christian Pre-School and thank you for registering your child with us. We know how important your child is and aim to deliver the highest quality of care and education to help them to achieve their best.

This guide aims to provide you with an introduction to our routines, our approach to supporting your child's learning and development and how we aim to work together with you to best meet your child's individual needs. This should be read alongside all the other information on our website (www.littledovescp.org.uk) for a full description of our pre-school.

Our pre-school aims to:

- provide high quality care and education for children below statutory school age;
- work in partnership with parents/carers to help children to learn and develop;
- add to the life and well-being of the local community, providing links with other activities at St Paul's Church and the benefice.
- offer children and their parents/carers a service that promotes equality and values diversity.

Parents/carers

You are regarded as members of our pre-school who have full participatory rights. These include a right to be:

- valued and respected;
- kept informed;
- consulted;
- involved; and
- included at all levels.

Children's development and learning

We aim to ensure that each child:

- is in a safe and stimulating environment;
- is given generous care and attention, because of our ratio of qualified staff to children, as well as volunteer helpers;
- has the chance to join in with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together;
- is helped to take forward their learning and development by being guided to build on what they already know and can do;
- has a key person who makes sure each child makes progress;
- is in a pre-school that sees parents/carers as partners in helping each child to learn and develop; and
- is in a pre-school in which parents/carers help to shape the service it offers.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for the development and learning of children from birth to 5 years is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage. Our provision reflects the four overarching principles of the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (DfE 2014):

- *A Unique Child*
Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- *Positive Relationships*
Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- *Enabling Environments*
Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers.
- *Learning and Development*
Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

How we provide for development and learning

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our pre-school helps children to continue to do this by providing all of the children with interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

The Areas of Development and Learning comprise:

- *Prime Areas*
 - Personal, social and emotional development.
 - Physical development.
 - Communication and language.
- *Specific Areas*
 - Literacy.
 - Mathematics.
 - Understanding the world.
 - Expressive arts and design.

For each area, the level of progress that children are expected to have attained by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is defined by the Early Learning Goals. These goals state what it is expected that children will know, and be able to do, by the end of the reception year of their school education.

The *Early Years Outcomes* (DfE 2013) guidance sets out the likely stages of progress a child makes along their progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Our pre-school has regard to these when we assess children and plan for their learning. Our programme supports children to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need for:

Personal, social and emotional development

- making relationships;
- self-confidence and self-awareness; and
- managing feelings and behaviour.

Physical development

- moving and handling; and
- health and self-care.

Communication and language

- listening and attention;
- understanding; and
- speaking.

Literacy

- reading; and
- writing

Mathematics

- numbers; and
- shape, space and measure.

Understanding the world

- people and communities;
- the world; and
- technology.

Expressive arts and design

- exploring and using media and materials; and
- being imaginative.

Our approach to learning and development and assessment

Learning through play

Being active and playing supports young children's learning and development through doing and talking. This is how children learn to think about and understand the world around them. We use the EYFS statutory guidance on education programmes to plan and provide opportunities which will help children to make progress in all areas of learning. This programme is made up of a mixture of activities that children plan and organise for themselves and activities planned and led by practitioners.

Characteristics of effective learning

We understand that all children engage with other people and their environment through the characteristics of effective learning that are described in the Early Years Foundation Stage as:

- playing and exploring - engagement;
- active learning - motivation; and
- creating and thinking critically - thinking.

We aim to provide for the characteristics of effective learning by observing how a child is learning and being clear about what we can do and provide in order to support each child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Assessment

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them frequently. We use information that we gain from observations, as well as from photographs or videos of the children, to document their progress and where this may be leading them. We believe that parents/carers know their children best and we will ask you to contribute to assessment by sharing information, through your contact books and WOW certificates, about what your child likes to do at home and how you, as parents/carers, are supporting development.

We make periodic assessment summaries of children's achievement based on our on-going development records. These form part of children's tracking sheets. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals, as well as times of transition, such as when a child moves into a different group or when they go on to school.

The progress check at age two

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires that we supply parents and carers with a short written summary of their child's development in the three prime areas of learning and development - personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language - when a child is aged between 24 - 36 months. Your child's key person is responsible for completing the check using information from on-going observational assessments carried out as part of our everyday practice, taking account of the views and contributions of parents/carers and other professionals.

Progress Checks

We keep a progress check for each child which helps us celebrate together their achievements and to work together to provide what your child needs for their well-being and to make progress, identifying areas for further development.

Your child's key person will work in partnership with you to keep this record. To do this you and she will collect information about your child's needs, activities, interests and achievements. This information will enable the key person to identify your child's stage of progress. Together, we will then decide on how to help your child to move on to the next stage.

On the last page of this booklet there is a flow chart (Developmental Progress Checks Explained) of how all the assessments we carry out fit together and play a part in your child's development and learning.

Working together for your children

We maintain the ratio of adults to children in the pre-school above the requirement that is set by the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements. We also encourage volunteer parent helpers, where possible, to complement these ratios. This helps us to:

- give time and attention to each child;
- talk with the children about their interests and activities;
- help children to experience and benefit from the activities we provide; and
- allow the children to explore and be adventurous in safety.

How you can help your child develop and learn at home

We will give you age appropriate 'How can you help me with my learning' sheets with ideas of how you can help your child develop in each of the 7 areas of development. You can also get more information on how you can help your child develop their communication skills on the Talk Listen Cuddle website (www.tlc-essex/info) issued by Essex County Council, Early Years and Childcare.

How parents/carers take part in the pre-school

Our pre-school recognises parents/carers as the first and most important educators of their children. All of our staff see themselves as partners with parents/carers in providing care and education for their children. There are many ways in which parents/carers take part in making our pre-school a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents/carers, such as:

- exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities, interests and progress with our staff;
- contributing to the progress check at age two;
- helping at sessions of the pre-school;
- sharing their own special interests with the children;
- helping to provide and look after the equipment and materials used in the children's play activities;
- being part of the management of the pre-school where appropriate;
- taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by the pre-school;

- joining in community activities, in which the pre-school takes part; and
- building friendships with other parents/carers in the pre-school.

The parents/carers' rota

Our pre-school has a dated rota which parents/carers can sign if they would like to help at a particular session or sessions of the pre-school. Helping at the session enables parents/carers to see what the day-to-day life of our pre-school is like and to join in helping the children to get the best out of their activities.

Joining in

Joining the rota is not the only means of taking part in the life of the pre-school. Parents/carers can offer to take part in a session by sharing their own interests and skills with the children.

We welcome you to visit the pre-school to see it at work or to speak with the staff. For safety reasons we ask you to arrange a time to visit. Quick conversations with staff can happen at drop off or pick up times but if a longer conversation is required then we ask you to make an appointment so that privacy can be arranged and staff to child ratios can be maintained.

Key person and your child

Our pre-school uses a key person approach. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom they are particularly responsible. Your child's key person will be the person who works with you to make sure that the childcare that we provide is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts at the pre-school, they will help your child to settle and throughout your child's time at the pre-school, they will help your child to benefit from our activities.

Learning opportunities for adults

As well as gaining childcare qualifications, our staff take part in further training to help them to keep up-to date with thinking about early years care and education. We also keep up-to-date with best practice, as a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance, through *Under 5* magazine and other publications produced by the Alliance. The current copy of *Under 5* can be emailed to you upon request.

The pre-school's timetable and routines

Our pre-school believes that care and education are equally important in the experience which we offer children. The routines and activities that make up the day in our pre-school are provided in ways that:

- help each child to feel that they are a valued member of the pre-school;
- ensure the safety of each child;
- help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group; and
- provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning.

The session

We organise our sessions so that the children can choose from, and work at, a range of activities and, in doing so, build up their ability to select and work through a task to its completion. The children are also helped and encouraged to take part in adult-led small and large group activities, which introduce them to new experiences and help them to gain new skills, as well as helping them to learn to work with others. Outdoor activities contribute to children's health, their physical development and their knowledge of the world around them. The children have the opportunity, and are encouraged, to take part in outdoor child-chosen and adult-led activities, as well as those provided in the indoor playroom. We strongly recommend that your child attends regularly as this helps them settle in quickly and get the most out of their pre-school education.

Snacks and meals

We make snacks and meals a social time at which children and adults eat together. We have a free flow style buffet snack where children can choose when they would like something to eat and can choose what they would like to eat. We plan the menus for snacks so that they provide the children with healthy and nutritious food. Please tell us about your child's dietary needs and we will plan accordingly. At lunchtime the staff and children all sit together and eat their packed lunches.

Clothing

We provide aprons for the children when they play with messy activities. We have a 'uniform' in the form of t-shirts, sweatshirts and fleeces which can be purchased and helps prevent spoiling best clothes. We encourage children to gain the skills that help them to be independent and look after themselves. These include taking themselves to the toilet and taking off, and putting on, outdoor clothes. Clothing that is easy for them to manage will help them to do this.

Policies

Our staff can explain our policies and procedures to you. Copies of which are available to read in the Policies and Procedures File at the pre-school.

Our policies help us to make sure that the service provided by our pre-school is a high quality one and that being a member of the pre-school is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and their parents/carers.

Our staff work together to adopt the policies and they all have the opportunity to review and update if necessary the policies at our regular staff meetings. This review helps us to make sure that the policies are enabling our pre-school to provide a quality service for its members and the local community.

Safeguarding children

Our pre-school has a duty under the law to help safeguard children against suspected or actual 'significant harm'. Our employment practices safeguard children against the likelihood of abuse in our pre-school and we have a procedure for managing complaints or allegations against a member of staff. Please see our Safeguarding Children Policy on our website (Info - Safeguarding Policy).

Our way of working with children and their parents/carers ensures that we are aware of any problems that may emerge and can offer support, including referral to appropriate agencies when necessary, to help families in difficulty.

Special needs

To make sure that our provision meets the needs of each individual child, we take account of any special needs a child may have. We work to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015).

Please see our SEND Local Offer on our website (About - SEND).

The management of our pre-school

Our pre-school is a limited company with charity status and is managed by a team of trustees, two of which are appointed by St Paul's Church Council and one is a previous parent of a child at the pre-school.

The trustees include the registered person with Ofsted (the manager) and are responsible for:

- managing our finances;
- employing and managing our staff;
- making sure that we have, and work to, policies that help us to provide a high quality service; and
- making sure that we work in partnership with parents/carers.

The Annual General Meeting is open to the parents/carers of all of the children who attend our pre-school. It is our shared forum for looking back over the previous year's activities and shaping the coming year's plan and takes place in the summer term.

Our pre-school has a 'Friends of Little Doves' closed Facebook page which acts as a parent support group. This group is made up of past and present parents/carers of the children who have attended/attend the pre-school. The group shares information/news/ activities happening at the pre-school and posts requests for helps with fundraising events and any maintenance needs parents/carers might be able to help with. The administrator of Facebook page is a trustee.

Fees

The fees are available to view on the website (Info – Sessions & Fees). Details of when and how they can be paid are in the Parent Contract which each parent is asked to read and sign before their child starts at the pre-school. This can be found on the website (Info – Parent Contract)

For your child to keep their place at our pre-school, you must pay the fees. We are in receipt of Free Early Education Entitlement funding for two, three and four year olds; where funding is not received, then fees apply. For more information on Free Early Education Entitlement funding please visit Essex County Council website: <http://dnn.essex.gov.uk/eycp/FUNDING/FEEE34.aspx>

Starting at our pre-school

The first days

We want your child to feel happy and safe with us. To make sure that this is the case, our staff will work with you to decide on how to help your child to settle into the pre-school. Our policy on the Role of the Key Person and Settling-in is available to read in the Policy and Procedures File at the pre-school.

Please also read our 'Top Tips for new starters' on our website (Info – Top Tips for new starts).

We hope that you and your child enjoy being members of our pre-school and that you both find taking part in our activities interesting and stimulating. Our staff are always ready and willing to talk with you about your ideas, views or questions.

Developmental Progress Checks Explained next page

Developmental Progress Checks Explained

