



Aiming High, Achieving Together

Policy: About our Childcare and Early Education



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ADOPTED FROM PRE-SCHOOL ALLIANCE

Welcome to Merton 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 education and care to help them to achieve their best.

This document aims to provide you with an introduction to Merton Pre-school, 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 our Childcare and Early Education Terms and Conditions for a full description of our services.

Our setting aims to:

- provide high quality care and education for children
- work in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop
- add to the life and well-being of the local community
- offer children and their parents a service that promotes equality and values diversity

Parents

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

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

Children's development and learning

We aim to ensure that each child:

- is in a safe and stimulating environment
- has a named key person who makes sure each child makes satisfying progress and is your link to our setting
- 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 her/his learning and development by being helped to build on what she/he already knows and can do
- is in a setting that sees parents as partners in helping each child to learn and develop
- is in a setting in which parents help to shape the service it offers

The Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for the development and learning of children from birth to five 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 2023):

- ***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 with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between educators, parents and/or carers.

- ***Learning and Development***

Children develop and learn 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 (SEND).

How we provide for learning and development

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

The Areas of Learning and Development 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 education.

We refer to non-statutory curriculum guidance to support our professional judgment as we assess each child's progress and level of development as they progress towards the Early Learning Goals. We have regard to these when we assess children and plan for their learning by creating a curriculum that is ambitious and meets every child's needs. Our educational programmes support children to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need for:

Personal, social and emotional development

- self-regulation
- managing self
- building relationships

Physical development

- gross motor skills
- fine motor skills

Communication and language

- listening, attention and understanding
- speaking

Literacy

- comprehension
- word reading
- writing

Mathematics

- number
- numerical patterns

Understanding the world

- past and present
- people, culture and communities
- the natural world

Expressive arts and design

- creating with materials
- being imaginative and expressive

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 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 educators.

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
- creating and thinking critically - thinking

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

Assessment

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them. We use information that we gain from observations of the children, to understand their progress and where this may be leading them. We believe that parents know their children best and we will ask you to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what your child likes to do at home and how you, as parents, are supporting development.

We may make periodic assessment summaries of children's achievement based on our on-going observations. These help us to build a picture of a child's progress during their time with us and form part of children's records of achievement. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals, as well as at 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 observations carried out as part of our everyday practice, taking account of the views and contributions of parents and other professionals.

Records of achievement/learning journeys

We keep a record of achievement for each child using a one stage profile form. Your child's record of achievement helps us to celebrate together her/his achievements and to work together to provide what your child needs for her/his well-being and to make progress.

Your child's key person will work in partnership with you to keep this record. To do this you and she/he will collect information about your child's needs, activities, interests and achievements. This information will enable the key person to identify your child's progress. Together, we will then decide on how to further support your child's learning and development.

Working together for your children

We maintain the ratio of adults to children in the setting that is set by the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements. We also have 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
- allow the children to explore and be adventurous in safety

The staff who work at our setting are:

Charmaine Chapman	Pre-school Manager, DSL and SENCO
Jamie Batten	Deputy manager, deputy DSL and Deputy SENCO
Kelly Leadbetter	Pre-school admin (works from home)
Paulina Figon	Practitioner
Samantha Ross	Practitioner

We are a term time pre-school, closed school holidays, with 5 planned INSET days. Our opening times are 9.00am – 3.00pm. Once your child/children join us at Merton Pre-school you will be given a “calendar of events letter, please keep this safe and refer to for any upcoming events, opening and closure dates (subject to change – please check Tapestry and our Cohort Facebook page for updates/changes/and support.

How parents take part in the setting

Our setting recognises parents as the first and most important educators of their children. All our staff see themselves as partners with parents in providing care and education for their children. There are many ways in which parents take part in making our setting a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents, 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 setting
- 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 setting, where appropriate
- taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by the setting
- joining in community activities, in which the setting takes part
- building friendships with other parents in the setting

Joining in

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

Parents can also offer to take part in a session by sharing their own interests and skills with the children. We welcome parents to drop into the setting to see it at work or to speak with the staff/me.

Key person and your child

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

Learning opportunities for adults

As well as gaining relevant 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 Early Years Alliance, through *Under 5* magazine and other publications produced by the Alliance. The current copy of *Under 5* is available for you to read. Occasionally, we hold learning events for parents. These usually look at how adults can help children to learn and develop in their early years.

The setting's timetable and routines

Our setting 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 setting are provided in ways that:

- help each child to feel that she/he is a valued member of the setting
- ensure the safety of each child
- help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group
- provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning

Our 6 key elements at Merton Pre-School

Our 6 key elements allow us to incorporate these into our daily life. We can celebrate our achievements, reflect, and learn from these experiences, building a positive sense of ourselves, as we look closely at each of our key elements.

- M – Motivation “being willing to try, fail and persevere”.
- E – Explorers “Being inquisitive and discovering the world around us”.
- R – Recognise individuality “understanding and positively expressing feelings”.
- T – Teamwork “building strong connections with our peers”.
- O - Opportunities “turning aspiration into achievement”.
- N – Nurture “building a healthy and strong sense of self”.

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 supported in self-selecting resources and returning the items when finished. 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 all areas of learning and development, including their health 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. The children are encouraged to take part in our intervention language support group ICAN sessions, Yoga and meditation classes for self-regulation opportunities, woodwork and woodland learning for outdoor learning.

Snacks and meals

We make snacks and meals a social time at which children and adults eat together. We plan the menus for snacks and meals so that they provide the children with healthy and nutritious food. Please tell us about your child's dietary needs, particularly any known allergies or food intolerance and we will plan accordingly.

Clothing

We provide protective clothing for the children when they play with messy activities. 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 on the Merton Infant School website – Pre-School tab

Our policies help us to make sure that the service we provide is of high quality and that being a member of the setting is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and her/his parents.

Our staff and parents work together to adopt the policies and they all have the opportunity to take part in the annual review of the policies. This review helps us to make sure that the policies are enabling our setting to provide a quality service for its members and the local community.

Information we hold about you and your child

We have procedures in place for the recording and sharing of information [data] about you and your child that is compliant with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) as follows:

The data is [I/we] collect is:

1. processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject [you and your family]
2. collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed for other purposes incompatible with those purposes
3. adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which data is processed
4. accurate and, where necessary, kept up-to-date
5. kept in a form that permits identification of data subjects [you and your family] for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data is processed
6. processed in a way that ensures appropriate security of the personal data including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures

When you register your child with us, we will provide you with a privacy notice that gives you further details of how we fulfil our obligations with regard to your data.

Safeguarding children

Our setting has a duty under the law to help safeguard children against suspected or actual 'significant harm'. Our employment practices ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role and help to protect children against the likelihood of abuse in our setting and we have a procedure for managing complaints or allegations against a member of staff.

Our way of working with children and their parents 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 educational needs

To make sure that our provision meets the needs of each individual child, we take account of any special educational 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).

Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is

Charmaine Chapman

Fees

The fees are £6.20 per hour for under 3years old, £5.80 per hour for 3 years and over. These are payable termly in advance. Fees must still be paid if children are absent without notice for a short period of time. If your child must be absent over a long period of time, talk to Charmaine Chapman or Kelly Leadbetter.

For your child to keep her/his place at our setting, you must pay the fees. We are in receipt of nursery education funding for two-, three- and four-year-olds; where funding is not received, then fees apply.

Please note we operate the following fees:

Administration fee of £15 which includes a coloured key group bag and to secure your child/children place at Merton Pre-School, this fee is refundable if we cannot offer your child/children the accommodation you have asked for and require to terminate their application for this reason only.

We have also introduced consumables charge for grant children over 3 years olds as the funding rate received from Hampshire County Council unfortunately does not cover all our running costs as a school maintained Pre-School. Please refer to our “Charges and Fees” letter to parents.

Starting at our setting

The first days

We want your child to feel happy and safe. 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 setting. Our policy on the role of the key person and Settling-in is available to read on the Merton Infant School website – Pre-School tab or placed in our porch area, please ask a staff member for help if required.

We hope that you and your child enjoy being members of our setting 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 to respond to any questions.