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Charity Number: 1027574
Ofsted Number: 2505980

An Introduction to our Pre-School

At Downton Community Pre-School, we welcome children from 2 years until school age and strive to offer a caring, safe and stimulating environment in which your child may grow and learn through play. Established in 1980, Downton Community Pre-School is a thriving group catering for pre-school children in Downton, Wiltshire. We are situated in The Memorial Centre on The Borough which is a central location very close to the Primary School. The pre-school is a non-profit making charity run by a parent management committee and we aim to be responsive to the needs of our local community.



The pre-school has close links with Downton Primary school, with frequent visits to the school being made by the children throughout the year. The foundation stage teacher also visits the pre-school which is especially important for the older children.

We are affiliated with the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA) and registered with Ofsted with a current rating of GOOD.

We offer children the opportunity to learn through play in a stimulating, nurturing and safe environment. We believe that education is an ongoing process which starts at birth and continues through pre-school, formal schooling and into adult life.

In their early years, children develop more quickly than at any other time. The safe, stimulating and educationally enriching environment of our pre-school encourages that development and at the same time helps parents to understand and meet their children's needs.

We hope that Downton Community Pre-School and its parents can work together to provide experiences that help our children develop their thinking, skills and understanding in language, literacy, maths and science. By being involved in their child's learning from the beginning, parents can support them as they move from stage to stage.

Our 'mission statement' is:

"to provide high quality, affordable and accessible childcare to pre-school age children, in a safe and supportive environment, and to work in partnership with parents in the provision of this childcare."

To achieve this we offer your child:

- A curriculum based on The Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Individual care and attention made possible by a high ratio of adults to children.
- Fun and friendship with children and other adults.
- The support of a personal key person.
- Opportunities for you and your family to be directly involved in the activities of the group and in your own child's progress.

We follow the Bristol Standard, a self-evaluation framework for early years which is designed to help nurseries, pre-schools, reception classes and childminders to reflect on, assess and improve their practice.

The Curriculum

Within the setting, all children are supported in developing their potential at their own pace. Our key person system enables us to ensure a curriculum tailored to the needs of each individual child, based on The Foundation Stage which prepares children to progress with confidence to Key Stage One. A typical session at pre-school will include many creative activities such as painting, sand or water play, bricks and constructional toys, puzzles, imaginative and family play, the book corner, movement and music, discussions, rhymes and stories. There are seven areas of development covered in the Foundation Stage:

The three prime areas are:-

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- To make the step of leaving parents or carers a gradual and happy experience,
- To be able to make their needs known, and to have the confidence that an unfamiliar adult will be able to help them,
- To be able to recognise their own clothes, shoes etc.
- To be able to dress and undress independently,
- To share toys and play in groups.

Within a nurturing environment, children are individually supported in developing confidence, autonomy and self respect. They are encouraged to work and concentrate independently and also take part in the life of the group, sharing and co-operating with other children and adults. Through activities, conversation and practical example, they can learn acceptable ways to express their own feelings and have respect for the feelings of others. All children are given the opportunity, as appropriate, to take responsibility for themselves and also for the group, its members and property.

2. Communication & Language

- To be able to sit quietly for a while and listen appropriately
- To enjoy talking and build a wider vocabulary,
- To express themselves effectively developing narratives & explanations

In both small and large groups, children are encouraged to extend their vocabulary and fluency by talking, listening to, and responding to stories, songs and rhymes. Staff support language development by using open questions, modelling and visual and verbal cues.



3. Physical Development:

- To develop hand / eye co-ordination and physical ability, with proper control of both small and large muscles

A range of equipment and opportunities, both indoors and out, will allow children to develop confidence and enjoyment in the use and development of their own body skills.



A very high level of adult supervision enables the children to safely create and meet physical challenges, developing increasing skill and control in moving, climbing and balancing. At the same time, children are supported in the development of fine motor skills required to use tools, including pens and pencils and to handle small objects with increasing control and precision.

There are a further four specific areas of learning

1. Literacy

- Building a firm foundation for the development of reading and writing.
- Children are helped to understand that written symbols carry meaning, to be aware of the purposes of writing and when they are ready, to use drawn and written symbols for themselves. A well stocked book corner gives every child the opportunity and encouragement to become familiar with books, able to handle them and be aware of their uses, both for reference and as a source of stories and pictures.

2. Maths

- An introduction to early mathematical skills and language, including recognising numbers up to 10 and counting to 20.
- To recognise and name basic shapes and colours.

By means of adult supported practical experience, children become familiar with sorting, matching, ordering, sequencing and counting activities which form the basis of early mathematics. As they use their developing mathematical understanding to solve practical problems, children are assisted to learn and use the vocabulary of mathematics, identifying objects by shape, position, size, volume and number. Songs, games and picture books help children become aware of number sequences and, when they are ready use simple mathematical operations such as adding.

3. Understanding the World

- To explore as many aspects of sensory play as possible
- To be introduced to the wider world through themed activities

A safe and stimulating environment allows children to explore and experiment with a range of natural and manufactured materials. They learn to observe the features of objects and substances, recognising differences, patterns and similarities and to share and communicate their findings.

Children are assisted in exploring and understanding their environment, both within the group and in the wider community. A range of safe and well maintained equipment enables children to extend their technological understanding, using simple tools and techniques appropriate to achieve their intentions and to solve problems.

4. Expressive Arts & Design

- To experiment with a wide range of creative materials,
- To gain the necessary skills to use a variety of equipment e.g. Scissors, paint brushes etc,
- To express their feelings.



Children are encouraged to use a wide range of resources in order to express their own ideas and feelings and to construct their individual response to experience in two and three dimensions.

Art equipment, including paint, glue, crayons and pencils as well as natural and discarded resources, provides for open-ended exploration of colour, shape and texture and the development of skills in painting, drawing and collage. Children join in with and respond to music and stories, and there are many opportunities for imaginative role play, both individually and as part of a group.



Our teaching practice, environment & resources also aim to promote and support the characteristics of Effective Learning. These are:

Playing & Exploring – engagement

- finding out & exploring
- playing with what they know
- being willing to “have a go”

Active Learning – motivation

- being involved & concentrating
- keeping trying
- enjoying & achieving what they set out to do

Creating & Thinking critically – thinking

- having their own ideas
- making links
- choosing ways to do things

Staff

Our staff are trained, experienced and committed to supporting, encouraging and inspiring all the children in our care. Individual care and attention is made possible by a high ratio of highly trained staff and adults to children.



All our teaching staff hold a minimum level qualification of NVQ2 in Early Years Childcare, the Deputy Pre-school leader holds a CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education and both our Pre-school Leader and Deputy hold a BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Studies and Early Years Professional Status. In addition all our staff hold an appropriate First Aid Certificate and we have a named person for Special Educational Needs and Safeguarding.

Key Person System

The children work with all the staff but a key person will be allocated to each child. This member of staff has special responsibility for a small group of children and works with parents to ensure the particular needs of their children are catered for. They are also responsible for keeping the Learning Journeys of their key children up to date and completing summative assessments and school transition sheets with parents. Please feel free to ask your child's key person for feedback on your child's progress or to inform them of any information which you feel may affect them at pre-school (e.g. birth of a sibling, family upset etc.)

Training / Support

We have access to a range of formal and informal training courses run by professional groups such as; Wiltshire Continuing Professional Development, The Pre-School Learning Alliance and others. These courses are offered to staff and parents where appropriate. We also have access to a range of professional publications which offer practical advice and up-to-date information. The Wiltshire Early Years Team has Childcare Officers who are available to offer support and advice to both teaching staff and the management committee.



Sessions

We offer morning, lunch and afternoon sessions throughout the week. The sessions incorporate the foundation stage curriculum and consist of indoor and outdoor play on a free flow basis with a range of resources and activities that ensures that wherever the children choose to play there is always equipment that covers all areas of learning.



Each term is carefully planned for so that the needs of every child are catered for. The way in which this is done allows the majority of the play to be child initiated with staff supporting and extending play as appropriate. This ensures that the children are motivated and engaged because the activities are those that inspire them. Staff support and follow up the children's own ideas, promoting confidence in their own abilities and belief in themselves as learners.

Each day there are also opportunities for short periods where an activity is adult led where specific ideas may be covered such as Foundation Stage Letters and Sounds work or a focus on an area suggested by a child's key person.

Opening times

- Mornings start at 8, 8.30 or 9am – 11.30 am
- Lunch Club: 11.30am – 12.30pm
- Afternoons: 12.30pm – finishing options 3, 4, 5 or 5.30 pm

All sessions are available term time Monday to Friday. Ad-hoc sessions can be booked where spaces are available.

Fees Policy

Drawn up in accordance with the Wiltshire Early Years Free Entitlement Guidelines

- Fee are currently **£4.50** per hour.
- **From the term after a child's 3rd birthday** (depending on the exact date of the birthday) fees are paid for by the Free Entitlement up to a maximum of 15 hours a week. In the event of the grant covering fewer weeks than our term parents will be notified the term before (via the Session Confirmation Form) that they will be billed for any extra weeks not covered by the grant. Parents then have the option of whether or not they wish their child to attend pre-school during these weeks.
- Some children may be entitled to an additional 15 hours a week (Extended entitlement). This is means tested and parents must apply directly through the government website. For more information please visit <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>
- Some families are also eligible for two year old Free Entitlement funding. Parents must apply directly to Wiltshire council, not the pre-school. More information on eligibility and how to apply can be found at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk>
- The free entitlement/extended entitlement payent comes directly to the pre-school and a parent/guardian will need to sign a form at the beginning of each term. This is to verify the number of hours being taken at Downton Pre-school, the number of hours taken at other settings, and all other relevant details including the date of birth. Downton Pre-school is not obliged to offer all 15 hours. We will try to offer as many hours as possible but high numbers may not always allow this.

- Fees are payable in advance termly and an invoice is sent out during the first week of term.
- We will not charge a 'top up' fee for a session where the grant value per session is lower than Pre-school's fee per session
- Payments can be made by cheque, childcare vouchers or online and **payment is requested by the end of the second week of term.**
- In some circumstances it is possible to pay in instalments.
- As sessions are pre-booked your child is assured a place, however this means that **all absences due to illness, holidays etc. must be paid for.** If there is a problem which results in long-term absence we will do our best to help.
- Once your sessions have been allocated you will need to sign a **Session Confirmation Form** confirming you accept those sessions. **Please read the declaration carefully before you sign it.** This system has been introduced to ensure that all parents are in agreement with the sessions allocated to them and committed to honour payment.
- **If any parent/guardian encounters difficulties meeting the costs please speak to pre-school and we will do our best to work out an alternative payment arrangement. If payment is not forthcoming after a reminder has been sent and alternative arrangements have been made, then the Pre-school operates a policy that the child will only be entitled to sessions covered by the Free Entitlement. This will continue to apply until the payments are received and up to date.**

Take part in the management of the Pre-School

We are a charity registered with the Charity Commission for England & Wales (registered charity number 1027574) and as such are run by a committee of volunteer parents and members of the community who, by serving on the committee, become trustees of the charity.

As a community based, voluntary managed setting, we depend on the good will of parents and their involvement to keep going. Without a committee of trustees to manage it, the Pre-School would cease to exist and it is important that parents attend the Annual General Meeting every year to elect the new committee who will be responsible for running the charity (and therefore the Pre-School) the following year. As with every committee, we have a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and we also have elected members who are responsible for fundraising. This way all the responsibilities are shared. The committee work as a team with the Pre-School staff and the Pre-

School Leader and Administrator attend our monthly meetings where we deal with day-to-day issues and review policies, practices, the curriculum and organise special events/fundraising. The committee is also responsible for decisions about the employment and appraisal of staff and the premises. This is a wonderful opportunity to ensure we give the children the very best we can offer.

Fundraising

As a voluntary organisation we have several fundraising events each year and we depend on the money raised to buy equipment and ensure our fees stay as low as possible. It is also an excellent way of the Pre-School getting involved in the community which it is part of and them being able to join with us. As parents of a child at Pre-School, even if you feel you have too many other



commitments to become a member of the committee, you still have plenty to offer by baking cakes to sell, helping on stalls, supporting our events or donating prizes for raffles.

Starting Pre-School

A child who is tense or unhappy will not be able to play or learn properly, so it is important for parents and Pre-School staff to work together to help the child to feel confident and secure in the group. This takes longer for some children than for others and parents should not feel worried if their child takes a while to settle. We are here to provide a secure environment in which your child can mix with other children and get used to being away from home for a short time. Always be positive about it and if we can help you in any way with a problem, please do not hesitate to ask us. If there are any events at home which you think we need to be aware of e.g. a birth in the family, parent working away etc. please speak to the Pre-School Leader. All information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.



What to wear

It is good for children to practice skills which will make them feel independent, so simple clothing which they can manage by themselves will help them to go to the toilet or get ready to play outside without too much help. In order for the children to be able to experiment and explore all kinds of materials, including messy ones, it is best if they wear something which is easily washable and / or not too new! Pre-school t-shirts and sweatshirts are available to buy in a range of sizes. It is not compulsory for your child to wear them but it's a lovely way to get them used to wearing a 'uniform' before they start school.



Information

There are copies of all our policies and our OfSTED report in a folder in the lobby and we encourage you to read them. If you would like your own copy to take away, please just ask. We regularly produce newsletters giving information about Pre-School, forthcoming events and term dates but if you have any queries about anything please contact a member of staff or the committee, at any time. Similarly our website is updated regularly.

For further information please contact:

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The Memorial Centre

The Borough

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SP5 3NB

Tel: 01725 511178

e-mail: admin@downtonpreschool.co.uk

Or go to www.downtonpreschool.co.uk

*Most of all we hope your child's time
at Pre-School will be a happy one!*