



# WELCOME TO BRAUNSTON PRE-SCHOOL

## 2008-2009

We the staff and parents of Braunston Pre-school aim to provide a happy, safe and stimulating environment for our children during their pre-school years. 'The aim of the pre-school is to enhance the development and education of children primarily under statutory school age by encouraging parents to understand and provide for the needs of their children through community groups'.

### Objectives of Braunston Pre-school

- To support children and parents in working towards positive educational experiences
- To provide good learning experiences according to guidelines laid out by OFSTED
- To help children contextualise the world and their environment through structured play
- We firmly believe in working towards equal opportunities for all children and families. (Please refer to our equal opportunities policy).

We feel a happy introduction to Pre-School is very important. To begin with, preferably in the half term before your child starts, it is a good idea to make several short visits with him/her, so that you get to know the staff. If they are friends of yours, they will be your child's friends too.

Braunston Pre-School is registered with The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and we are visited regularly by qualified inspectors. They issue a report annually and parents are encouraged to read this.

We are also a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance - this ensures we are constantly in touch with new thinking in the field of child education and care.

We believe that children learn through play and so we place emphasis on children having fun! We also believe a child's time in pre-school is precious and invite parents, grandparents and carers to share this experience by becoming involved in many different ways, such as helping at a session, joining the committee, mending dolls' clothes and other equipment, helping take children on outings etc.

Pre-School will only run if it continues to enjoy the active support of its members. This means **YOUR PRE-SCHOOL NEEDS YOU.**

### **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/carers and pre-school staff to work together to help children to feel confident and secure in the group. Until a child feels accustomed to the environment they may well want you to stay with them. Please feel free to stay and play! Generally a child who attends two or more sessions a week will settle more quickly, as they soon become familiar with the group. When you feel your child is ready to stay on their own please talk to the supervisors about how to handle leaving. If you are confident about how you plan to act it will often help. One way is to tell your child that you will go, but that you will be back at a certain time. You are very welcome to wait in the outer hall for a while if your child is upset. Very often children who appear inconsolable will quickly settle – but you are the best judge of your own child. Some children may take a little longer to settle in than others – but please do not worry, and discuss any concerns with the supervisors.

So that they feel free to explore and use all the different materials (including the messy ones) it is sensible for children to be in clothes that are easily washable or not too new. Play aprons are used for painting etc., but a child "dressed in their best" is often too scared of getting dirty to enjoy their session.

It is good for children to practise the skills that will make them independent. Simple clothing will make going to the toilet easier and will encourage children to put on and take off their outdoor clothes/shoes without needing too much help. Please avoid shoes with a smooth sole as these can slip on the hall floor. Children are required to bring with them each time they attend pre-school, a pair of soft indoor shoes, ie black plimsolls. They will need to be clearly named and brought in a bag that is also clearly named.

Staff members escort the children to the toilets to ensure absolute safety. However, whilst encouraging the children to go to the toilet and clean themselves properly afterwards, staff will remain outside the toilet cubicle. Staff members do actively help the children wash their hands afterwards.

## **Special Needs**

The number of adults present in pre-school enables us to provide individual attention for each child. Each child is able to progress at his/her own rate in all areas of development, and this is true for children with and without disabilities or learning difficulties. We can access support from professionals across the range of special needs. If you would like to discuss how the group can meet your own child's special needs please talk to the supervisors.

## **Pre-School Times**

We meet in Braunston Village Hall during school term and our current session times are:

Monday 9:05 - 11:35

Tuesday 9:05 - 11:35

Wednesday 9:05 - 11:35 and 12.15 – 14.45

Thursday 9:05 - 12:35 (this session is for children in their pre-school year only)

Friday 9:05 - 11:35

The Pre-School accepts children between the ages of 2½ and 5.

## **Fees**

Fees are currently £6.50 per session for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, for the longer Thursday session the fee is £9.00. Fees are payable half-termly in advance. The level of the fees will be reviewed annually. Fees continue to be payable if a child is absent without notice or for a short time. In cases of prolonged absence, parents should consult the committee about fee payment as soon as possible. In cases of financial hardship, please ask for an application form for the "Help A Pre-School Child" Fund. If paying weekly in advance would be better for you please talk to the supervisors.

Children are currently eligible for Government funding from the term after their third birthday. If your child is eligible for this funding a staff member will give you a claim form to complete. Please note however that this funding only covers 2½ hours of pre-school education per day and consequently there remains a charge of £2.50 for the additional hour on Thursday's session.

## **Moving on to Reception Class**

Reception class teachers from the local schools (for example Ashby Fields and Welton) are invited to visit us during the summer term before the older children move on to school. We maintain close links with the village school in Braunston. We visit at during the summer term, and invite the reception class children up to Pre-school sessions for special events such as the Christmas Carols. This helps maintain the contact with friends who have moved on to school.

## **Swimming**

**Children are able to use the school's swimming pool in the summer if we have a qualified lifesaver to supervise.**

## **Pre-School Staff**

We like to maintain a high ratio of adults to children in our group. This ensures individual attention to the needs and development of each child.

The regular staff in the group are:

Lyn Crooks and Carole Tippet, who job-share the supervisor's role.

Sue Allinson, Becky Craig, Alison Rowe, Janette Penhall, Nicky Owen, Frank Smith and Sam Wright are part-time assistants.

## **Pre-School Rota**

Our rota system aims to involve all parents and carers in helping at the sessions on a regular basis. This helps to maintain the high ratio of adults to children, ensuring individual care and attention for each child. It also gives parents/carers the opportunity to take an active part in the group, to see what happens there and to talk about it afterwards with their child. In addition, the rota system provides a valuable opportunity for all children to see their own parents/carers in a new role. The rota will be on the notice board just by the door. When you help at a session please come along 15

minutes early to join in with the setting out and to talk to the supervisors and find out what activities are planned, and what to do.

### **Pre-School Curriculum**

Within the group, all children are supported in developing their own potential at their own pace. We offer play activities that are appropriate to the child's development, a high level of individual adult input, and a curriculum, which leads to nationally approved "learning outcomes". This prepares children to progress with confidence to the National Curriculum at the age of five years. Records are kept monitoring children's individual development in the six areas as listed below:

### **Communication, Language and Literacy**

Children are encouraged to extend their vocabulary and fluency by talking and listening, and by hearing and responding to stories, songs and rhymes. The first activity of the morning is the circle, where each child is encouraged to talk to the group and listen to the contributions of others. 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 aware of their uses, both for reference and as a source of stories and pictures. In addition, books are used on the interest table and during other activities (as appropriate) to ensure that books are seen to be a part of everyday life.

### **Personal and social development**

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

## **Mathematics**

By means of adult-supported practical experience, children become familiar with the sorting, matching, ordering, sequencing and counting activities, which form the basis for 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, and their relative size/quantity. Songs, games and picture books help children become aware of number sequences and, when they are ready, to use simple mathematical operations such as adding.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

Pre-school aims to provide a safe and stimulating environment which 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 sharing and recording of their findings. Children are assisted in exploring and understanding their environment, both within the group and also in the wider community. A range of safe and well maintained equipment enables children to extend their technological understanding using simple tools and techniques as appropriate to achieve their intentions and to solve problems.

### **Physical development**

A range of equipment and opportunities allows children to develop confidence and enjoyment in the use and development of their own bodily skills, A high level of adult supervision enables children safely to 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 the fine motor skills required to use tools, including pens and pencils, and to handle small objects with increasing control and precision.

### **Creative development**

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, provide the opportunity 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.

**Activities in Braunston Pre-School include: -**

- \* Sand and Water Play \* Bricks and construction \* Jigsaws
- \* Home Corner \* Trikes and cars \* Baking
- \* Play-dough and Clay \* Paints and Crayons \* Music/Movement
- \* Cutting and sticking \* Printing and Chalks \* Puppets
- \* Sewing \* Floor Puzzles \* Book Corner
- \* Stories and Rhymes \* Singing \* Dressing Up
- \* "Mouse skills" Toys \* Phonics desk
- \* Swimming in the summer term
- \* Large Apparatus - climbing frame, trampoline, tunnel, balance beam and many, many more!

**Security**

The front door of the hall is kept locked during sessions from 15 minutes after the start until 15 minutes before the end. If you need to return to the Hall for any reason during this time please knock at the kitchen fire door where a member of staff will help you.

It is essential that the supervisor receives written permission if any adult other than a parent or legal guardian is to collect a child from Pre-School. This is for your child's safety. We also operate a password system at the end of session.

When taking children on outings/walks we always ensure extra adult helpers are present.

All staff wear a badge of identification whilst in the group.

**Pre-school Committee**

The Pre-School is a registered charity and is run by an elected committee, which ensures that major decision making is in the hands of the parents who use the group, although the day to day running of the group is in the hands of experienced staff. The committee is responsible for reviewing both policy and practice, and for the employment and appraisal of members of staff. Our Annual General Meeting, at which the committee

for the following year is elected, is held in October and parents/carers will be informed in good time so they are able to attend.

For details of the present committee please see the Pre-School Notice Board.

**Policies – please read these as they affect your child and their environment**

We currently have policies for: -

Admissions,  
Equal Opportunities,  
Child Protection,  
Health and Hygiene,  
Behaviour Management,  
Complaints Procedures,  
Safety - Policy and Practice,  
Confidentiality,  
Parental Involvement,  
Settling in Pre-School-Policy and Practice,  
Special Needs,  
Diet-Policy and Practice,  
Staffing and Employment,  
Student Placement,  
Selecting Equipment /Toys-Policy and Practice,  
Families Experiencing Financial Hardship,  
Absent Committee Members,  
Associate Members,  
Procedure covering action taken if there is no parent/carer present to collect a child at close of pre-school,  
Procedure for when a child leaves the group unaccompanied.

All parents/carers are expected to read these policies when their child starts Pre-School.

**Training**

Our membership of the Pre-School Learning Alliance ensures we receive a monthly magazine offering practical advice and up to date information, and have access to a range of professionally produced publications.

Parents/carers are encouraged to read this material, which is displayed in the Information Box. In addition, on-going training is available through Pre-School Learning

Alliance courses, which welcome both staff and parents. Informal training is available through local meetings and conferences, and parents will be informed about these.

We hope that your child's time in Pre-School will be a very happy and productive one. If you have any queries or if we can be of any help, please contact the staff or committee at any time.

### **Questions and Answers**

We hope that this section will help you, by answering some of the questions most frequently asked by Pre-School parents:

**Q. Do I need to provide anything for my child to bring to Pre-School?**

A. We provide plastic aprons for messy play, cups and plates for snack time and tissues. We also have spare clothes in case of accidents, water splashes etc., but you may provide your own if you prefer.

**Q. Who will help take my child to the toilet?**

A. Only members of staff and helpers who have had a police check are allowed to accompany children to the toilet.

**Q. I am helping on the Rota - may I bring my one-year-old with me?**

A. Sorry, no. We do discourage younger children, as the activities we provide may be unsuitable for children under 2 years, 6 months. But we hope that parents/carers can make arrangements that mean they are still able to come in and share a pre-school session.

**Q. What is expected of me when I help in a pre-school session?**

A. There are many jobs that need doing during the morning! During the first part of the morning, share some activities with the children - talking and listening with them, reading stories, helping dress dolls, playing games, making play-dough or clay models, building with blocks, the list is endless! Later other jobs such as washing paint pots and brushes, putting away equipment are a huge help to the staff. During the morning please do ask any of the staff or regular helpers if you are unsure of anything and have some questions. Please read through the "when I come to help" guide. A copy will be kept with the supervisors.

**Q. Can my child bring a toy from home?**

A. We encourage children to look for items to display on our weekly interest table; these could be toys, books or natural materials. Please label any special toys with your child's name to avoid any upset.

**Q. How can I discuss my child's progress?**

A. The supervisor is available at the beginning and the end of each session to discuss children's progress with their parents/carers. If you prefer you can make arrangements for a chat at a different time.

**Q. My child has been ill in the night but seems fine in the morning. Should I bring him/her to Pre-School?**

A. No, please keep your child at home until you are sure they have fully recovered. In cases of contagious illnesses please inform the supervisors.

**Q. How can I keep up to date with current Pre-School information?**

A. The committee issue a regular newsletter with dates and information and the Notice board is constantly updated with important information. There is also a Parent's/Carers information box containing books, magazines, leaflets - all of which are available to borrow. Information about the theme that the children will be exploring in any particular week is also detailed on the Notice Board.

**Q. What snack do you provide for the children?**

A. We offer milk to drink (with water for non-milk drinkers) and a variety of snacks - such as cheese and crackers, bananas, apples, toast, sandwiches (prepared by the children) and cereal. Children who attend the longer Thursday session are asked to bring a packed lunch.

Braunston Pre-School  
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Braunston

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[1](#) Constitution of Pre-School Learning Alliance