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Registered Charity No. 1041775 Pre-school Learning Alliance No. 9700

# Welcome to Thames Pre-school

We would like to welcome you and your child to Thames Pre-school. By working in partnership with you, we aim to provide a quality environment to support your child's learning and individual needs. We hope your child's time with us will be a happy, fun-filled and positive experience.

## Our aims:

- To provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment in which children can learn and develop.
- To provide a wide range of experiences which support and structure a child's learning through play within a framework, which ensures equality of opportunity for all children and families. Such opportunities promote the holistic development of the child – socially, emotionally, morally, intellectually, creatively and physically.

We are an independent community Pre-school and have existed in Cricklade since 1984. We are situated on St. Sampson's Primary School site with which we have close links. Thames Pre-school is a registered charity and belongs to the Pre-school Learning Alliance constitution.

## Our Team

### Management Committee

Thames Pre-school is run by a Management Committee, which consists of staff, parents and carers. The Committee employs a Leader, a Deputy Leader and seven other early years' practitioners.

The Committee are elected each year at our AGM, to which all parents are warmly invited. We are very grateful for all those who give up time to be part of this vital group.

We are always open to new ideas and welcome any input you can provide. Should you feel you can spare a little time and would like to be involved in essential fundraising activities we would love to hear from you. Just talk to any of the Committee members or email [chair@thamespreschool.co.uk](mailto:chair@thamespreschool.co.uk).

### Our Staff

We have a highly experienced and qualified team of Early Year's Practitioners at Thames. We work closely as a team to ensure we can provide a consistent and quality childcare.

The Pre-school Leader holds a Foundation Degree in Early Years.

Currently we also have three staff members with NVQ 3 in Childcare and Education, two with a Diploma in Childcare and Young People's Workforce, one with Diploma in Caring Services (Nursery Nursing) and two with Certificates in Childcare and Young People's Workforce.

All staff hold current DBS (police) checks in accordance with the national guidelines.  
All staff hold a paediatric first aid qualification which is renewed every three years.  
All staff also undergo regular safeguarding training, and hold food hygiene certificates.

## Policies

Copies of Thames Pre-school's policies are available on our website and in the lobby. If you require a hard copy please speak to the Leader or Deputy Leader who will be happy to provide one.

Our latest Ofsted report is available in the lobby or on our website.

## Term Dates and Session Times

We are open between 9am and 3pm, Monday to Friday, in school term time only. We aim to follow the same dates as St Sampson's Primary School where possible.

We offer flexible sessions, of the times below, although we suggest that at least two sessions per week would be beneficial to the child.

Morning Sessions	9am – 12pm 9am – 1pm
Afternoon Sessions	12pm – 3pm 1pm – 3pm
Full Day Session	9am – 3pm

We do not allow drop off or collection outside of the above times. If you need to pick up your child at a different time on occasion, please speak to a member of staff to arrange this.

## Fees and Funding

Children aged 2 to 3 years	£4.60 per hour
Children aged 3 years and over	£4.40 per hour

Fees are applicable for all non-funded hours and parents will be provided with an invoice during the term. We appreciate prompt payment of fees, however, if you have any difficulty paying please contact the Pre-school Leader or Deputy Leader as soon as possible.

Fees are reviewed annually in April, with any changes being advised in writing beforehand.

If any child is hospitalised and misses their sessions at Thames, fees will not be applied (proof of hospitalisation is needed). All other absences, such as short-term illnesses, holiday etc. will attract the normal fees.

## Funding and the Nursery Education Grant

Children attending Thames Pre-school are entitled to claim free sessions from the start of the term **after** their third birthday (in January, April or September).

The Nursery Education Grant provides each child with 15 hours of universal entitlement per week. Extended entitlement (an additional 15 hours per week) came into force in September 2017 and is also offered by Thames, subject to availability, and to certain criteria being met by parents. For more information regarding free entitlement, please speak to a member of

staff or visit [www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds](http://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds)

We currently operate the Government voucher system, which means that we receive funding from the Government to support the education of three and four year old children. We are also a member of the Government's early education scheme for two year olds. This scheme supports funding for **some** two year olds.

## Settling In and Your Child's Key Person

The way children respond to starting Pre-school for the first time differs greatly. There is no normal reaction and each child needs support from both you and us.

A child who is unhappy will not be able to play or learn, so it is important for parents and staff to work together to help the child feel confident and secure in the group. This may take longer for some children than for others. Parents should not worry if their child takes a while to settle.

Parents/Carers are welcome to stay with their child and when appropriate, separate from their child for a brief period at first, gradually building up to longer sessions.

When your child is offered a place at Thames, you will be invited for a visit. This will give you the opportunity to look around, meet your child's key person and the rest of the staff while your child explores and plays with the reassurance that you are nearby.

### Your Child's Key Person'

Each child at Thames is assigned a 'key person' who is responsible for their emotional well-being and educational needs and development by:

- helping the child to become familiar with the setting and feel confident and safe within it,
- developing a genuine bond with the child and offering a settled, close relationship,
- meeting the needs of each child in their care and responding sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour,
- tailoring any planning to include the individual needs of the key child,
- maintaining links with the child's parents through shared record-keeping to ensure that all children are supported in reaching their full potential.

## Our Day at Thames

We encourage children to reach their full potential through play, and through carefully planned activities. Focusing on how children learn, as well as on what they learn, allows us to offer a responsive curriculum, based on a child's individual learning styles and needs.

A typical morning or afternoon session consists of:

- Child-initiated play
- Adult-initiated activity and child-initiated play including free flow into the garden
- Snack time
- Tidy up time

- Circle time

We enjoy many different activities such as music and movement, cooking, sports sessions, special visitors, local outings, small group time and 'Letters and Sounds' to name just a few.

## Our Pre-school Room and Gardens

The Pre-school comprises of one main indoor room, which is divided into two sections. There is a smaller section for the under threes with age-appropriate resources. The larger area is for children from three years to school age. Both sections contain all areas of learning in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage and are staffed with the necessary adult to child ratio. The outdoor gardens provide shared areas for both age groups.

### Rear Garden

We are very fortunate to have a large outdoor garden area and this is an essential part of our daily life at Thames. Our garden offers a huge sense of freedom, where children can be creative, challenge themselves and be in charge of their play environment.

### Vegetable Garden and Sensory Garden

With the support of the adults, the children are able to plant, grow and harvest vegetables in the front garden, which they use in their snacks and sell to the local community. Our newly developed sensory garden to the side of the Pre-school allows small groups of children to explore texture, sound and light.

## Snacks and Lunch Club

### Snacks

We offer a varied and healthy choice of snacks at our snack bar every day. Children can choose from the snack advertised or fruit from the fruit bowl.

A copy of the weekly menu is displayed on our Facebook page and in the noticeboard on the wall outside the entrance to the Pre-school.

Parents are asked to give a voluntary contribution for snack, which can be placed in a donation box on the sign-in desk.

### Snack Donations

If your child attends less than 15 hours a week.	<b>£1.50 each month</b>
If your child attends between 15 and 29 hours a week.	<b>£2.50 each month</b>
If your child attends 30 hours a week.	<b>£5.00 each month</b>

### Lunch Club

Lunch Club takes place between 12pm and 1pm. If your child attends pre-school during these times they will be included in lunch club. Lunch club provides children with a valuable opportunity to eat socially as part of a group, develop self-help skills and eat within a time scale.

Parents can either purchase a hot school meal provided by St Sampson's School (current price £2.16 for a main course and pudding) or provide their child with a cold packed lunch.

Lunch boxes need to contain a **healthy** lunch, a drink (not fizzy), a spoon if needed and a cool block. We suggest a sandwich/pasta/wrap, a yoghurt, some fruit and a small treat such as a chocolate biscuit. We would ask that you do not provide a chocolate bar as a treat.

We would also request that if your child has grapes or cocktail sausages in their lunch boxes that these are cut into quarters to minimise the risk of choking.

## **Food Allergies**

Please **do not** include any nuts or items which contain nuts in your child's packed lunch, as we occasionally have children who have nut allergies.

## **Forest School**

Forest schooling is a process, which builds on an individual's instinctive motivation and positive attitude to learning. It allows children to make their own choices, take risks and initiate learning for themselves. It allows everyone to have fun and enjoy themselves whilst giving them the opportunity to develop an inquisitive and positive relationship with the natural world.

We are fortunate to be able to offer weekly Forest School sessions to a small group of six children every six weeks. These are run by our Forest School Leader and another member of staff. They last approximately two hours and include a range of activities which involve fire safety, the use of tools including secateurs and hacksaws, exploration of the natural world and nature art. These sessions take place either within the grounds of the Pre-school, St Sampson's School or further afield in North Meadow or Millennium Wood.

This is an optional experience for children at Thames and therefore a charge of £20 is currently made to parents for the set of six sessions.

## **Drop Off and Collection**

### **Signing Your Child In and Out of Pre-school**

As part of Ofsted's requirements, each child must be signed in on our register at the beginning of the session and out at the end of the session.

We ask parents to inform us if any other responsible adult is going to collect their child. For one-off occasions, please inform a member of staff when the child arrives at Pre-school, or telephone us and provide a password. If another adult will be collecting your child on a regular basis, we would ask that you let us know in writing so that a note can be made on the registration document.

Please note that if you have not previously notified us, we will be unable to release your child to anyone other than those who collect them on a regular basis.

The law states that children under the age of eight may not be released to minors (a child under the age of sixteen).

In the unlikely event of a child not being collected:

- Staff will wait 15 minutes before trying to contact the main contacts from the registration document. If they have no success, they will try to call the emergency contacts from the same form.
- If no-one collects the child and the premises are closing, they will contact our local social services office.

## Behaviour Management

Thames is a friendly and welcoming environment and much emphasis is put on positive behaviour. Strong communication and positive reinforcement aid to promoting a positive learning environment

Should a child present challenging behaviour, the staff will seek help from the parents in formulating an individual plan to rectify this situation.

## The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Learning Journals

The Early Years Foundation Stage sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- quality and consistency
- a secure foundation
- partnership working
- equality of opportunity

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding and promoting their welfare. The requirements are:

- the areas of learning and development must shape activities and experiences for children,
- the early learning goals must help children work towards their development,
- assessment arrangements must be in place to measure progress and report to parents and/or carers.

The EYFS is based around four themes:

- Every child is a **unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- 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 and parents and/or carers.

- Children **develop and learn in different ways**. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years' provisions, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

## The Areas of Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years' settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three prime areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Providers must also support children in four specific areas through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

There specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are

- **playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things and have a go.
- **active learning** – children concentrate and keep trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **creative and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

## Recording your child's learning

At Thames Pre-school we record your child's progress in a 'Learning Journal'. We do this using a system called Tapestry, in which we can collect written observations and photographs, to provide a visible and accessible record and analysis of each child's individual learning and development.

Each child's progress is individual to them and different children develop at different rates. Tracking the the direction of progress of individual children enables us to celebrate what they have achieved over time, as well as to help us build on their interests and skills to promote further development.

The Tapestry system allows parents access to view their child's learning journal at any time, as well as the opportunity to contribute comments or observations of your own. This enables us to create a collaborative record of your child's development during their time at Thames.



## **Additional Needs**

We aim to provide equality of opportunity for all members of our Pre-School. We are experienced in working closely with professionals across the range of special needs and we operate in accordance with the Government's Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

Thames Pre-school has a nominated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinating Officer who liaises with both parents and staff to ensure that all needs of each individual child are met in accordance with the Code.

## **Accidents, Illness, Absence and Medicines**

### **Accidents**

All accidents and incidents are recorded and parents will be informed at pick up time and will be asked to sign the accident form.

Serious accidents/incidents will be reported to Ofsted. All practitioners are paediatric first aid trained and hold a current certificate, which is valid for three years.

### **Illness**

If your child is ill whilst at Pre-school, we will contact you and ask you to collect them as soon as possible. A member of staff will sit with your child to ensure their safety and provide comfort and reassurance.

If a child is suffering from sickness or diarrhoea they should be kept at home for 48 hours from the last bout of illness.

Certain childhood diseases incur a period of exclusion. For details of these please see the Pre-school Leader. We would request that you inform a member of staff if your child has any illness e.g., chicken pox, as we are obliged to display a sign to advise other parents to be on the lookout for the symptoms in their own child.

### **Absence**

If your child will not be attending their usual sessions at Thames, for any reason, we would ask that you inform us by telephoning or emailing prior to the start of the session. Please would you add the expected date of return when you contact us.

### **Medicines**

Our Administering Medicines policy states that medication will be administered by the Pre-school staff, where necessary. Facilities are available for the safe storage of the medicines. If you request us to administer medicine to your child, written permission will be requested. This will include clear instructions on the dosage and administration of the medicine needed. When medicine has been administered, parents will be notified and asked to sign the Medication Book.

It is our policy that, if the doctor has prescribed your child antibiotics, they should remain at home until they have taken the medicine for 48 hours, as a precaution against any adverse reaction.

## **Parental Communication and Concerns**

We value our relationship with parents/carers and make every effort to keep you informed of everything concerning your child's development and the running of Thames. This is done through many channels:

- A notice-board outside near the main door
- Newsletters
- Thames Pre-school Facebook page
- Parent/carer and key person meetings (Nov, Easter, July)
- Open door policy – all parents are welcome to come into Pre-school to discuss their child's progress at any time.
- Parent feedback survey

If you feel that you would like to spend some time with your child's key person, speak to us and we will arrange a mutually agreeable time. If you have a career, skill or hobby which you think might be of interest to the children please do let the Pre-school Leader know.

## **Emergency Closure Statement**

In the event of very bad weather, failure of essential services, or any other event that puts the welfare of children and staff at risk, Pre-school may be required to close. Information will be given to parents through notices at the St Sampson's School, an email to all current parents and a notice on our Facebook page. We will also try to provide information via local radio stations – Heart FM and Wiltshire FM.

## **Concerns**

If you have any concerns regarding the education or organisation of Thames Pre-school, please discuss these with the Pre-school Leader. In the unlikely event that these issues are not resolved, then please contact the Committee Chairperson. Alternatively, contact the OFSTED helpline 0300 123 1231.

## **Safeguarding and Child Protection**

The partnership between parents, carers and the local authority is an important part of protecting your child and promoting their welfare. We have a duty to inform the local authority of any concerns regarding the children in our care.

## **Equal Opportunities**

We are committed to providing equal opportunities for all children and families. We believe that no child, individual or family should be excluded from Thames Pre-school on the grounds of gender, sexuality, class, family status, means, disability, colour, ethnic origin, culture, religion or beliefs.

## What Your Child Needs at Thames Pre-school

<b>Uniform</b>	<p>Uniform is optional, however, it can give your child a sense of belonging and help prepare your child for wearing a complete uniform when they start school.</p> <p>We sell Thames branded polo shirts and hoodies which we recommend for all children. We also have a small stock of second-hand uniform which has been donated by parents. We ask that a small donation be made for any second-hand item taken.</p> <p>Please speak to a member of staff if you would like any new or second-hand uniform. If however, you don't want to purchase the school uniform, then please can we ask that children are sent to Pre-school in clothes suitable for painting and playing.</p>
<b>Footwear</b>	<p>We would encourage all children to wear sensible and "enabling" shoes to Pre-school which they are able to put on and take off with little support from an adult e.g. Velcro fastenings are ideal.</p> <p>In the summer months, we prefer children not to wear 'Croc' style shoes or flip flops and would recommend closed toe sandals.</p> <p>If it is raining and your child wears Wellington boots to Pre-school, please provide a change of footwear for indoors.</p>
<b>Water Bottle</b>	<p>We try to encourage children to drink plenty of fluids throughout the session. Please provide your child with an empty drink bottle, clearly labelled with their name. These will be stored at Pre-school and the staff will fill them up with fresh drinking water every session. The water bottles will be sterilised every week.</p>
<b>Sun Hat</b>	<p>All children are required to wear sun hats in the garden in sunny weather. We can provide sun hats, but, if your child prefers to wear their own, please provide a labelled, wide-brimmed or legionnaire style hat which covers the back of the neck.</p> <p>Please do not provide a baseball hat as these do not provide enough sun protection.</p>
<b>Sun screen</b>	<p>Please apply sunscreen on sunny days before your child arrives at Pre-school. If your child is at Pre-school all day, our staff will reapply sunscreen. However, if you would like your child to use their own sunscreen, please provide it in a labelled bottle and hand to staff on arrival.</p>
<b>Wellies</b>	<p>Please provide a pair of wellington boots.</p>
<b>Coat</b>	<p>Please ensure your child has a coat at Pre-school.</p>
<b>Gloves/Mittens</b>	<p>Please provide a pair of gloves or mittens.</p>

**Please ensure all of your child's belongings are clearly labelled with their name.**