

**Castle Nursery Parent Information Pack**



**2012-2013**



## Our Aims:

- To provide professional care of the highest standard for parents who want their children to feel safe and secure in a caring environment.
- To provide a stimulating, child centred environment that meets the needs of individual children and enables them to reach their full potential.
- To work within a framework which ensures equality of opportunity for all children and families and to serve the needs of the local community.
- To embrace community values which encourage children to grow up into caring, responsible, confident and fulfilled adults with positive attitudes towards themselves and others in our multicultural society.

## We offer your child

- A broad and balanced curriculum relevant to your child's needs and which encourages children to explore and be confident.
- Individual care and attention made possible by a high ratio of adults to children.
- Fun and friendship with children and adults, to develop their spoken language, listening skills and build on their self-confidence.
- Opportunities for you and your family to be directly involved in the activities of the Nursery and in your own child's progress.

## Our Team

We have a highly qualified and committed team of staff to provide an excellent level of care.

**Managers** - Pauline Weighell and Sarah Weighell

**Administrators** – Emma O'Halloran and Caroline Benn

**Class 1 Leaders** - Glenda Erasmus and Emma Nicklin

### Key People Class 1

Glenda Erasmus, Yvonne Levis, Emma Nicklin, Claire Bodinnar, Herdeep Chohan, Heather Hewitt, Alexis Walmsley

**Class 2 Leaders** - Laura Power and Claudia Stone

### Key People Class 2

Laura Power, Claudia Stone, Liz Brandram, Junyi Wu, Yvonne Hollis, Amanda Reeves, Maureen Roberts, Gail Button

**French Assistant** - Ruth Abercrombie

## Training

The nursery is managed by qualified teachers. All staff currently hold or are working towards NVQ Level 2 or 3 qualifications. Staff also hold relevant qualifications such as: Special Needs, NNEB, Computer/Business Skills P.L.A. Pre-school Diploma, Child Protection, H.N.C., First Aid, Makaton, Early Years Professional Status.

## Registration

Castle Nursery is registered with Ofsted and the Nursery Education Grant Scheme. We received **“Outstanding” for learning** in our latest inspection report which can be read on the Ofsted website. The inspector commented that “The **exceptional educational programme**, equipment and resources offer rich, varied and imaginative experiences that help children make **outstanding** progress in their learning and development. Castle Nursery is a member of the **Pre-school Learning Alliance** and the **Warwickshire Early Years Partnership**. We have been accredited by the **Pre-school Learning Alliance** for the provision of high quality education and care. This achievement is endorsed by **Investors in Children**.

## Starting Nursery

Parents are advised to bring their child first to one of the introductory ‘Stay and Play’ sessions so that you can be with your child when they first meet their new friends, teachers and classroom.. A child who is unhappy will not be able to learn or play properly, so it is important for parents and staff to work together to help the child feel confident and secure in the group. This takes longer for some children than others and parents should not feel worried if their child takes a while to settle. Parents are welcome to stay with their child for as long as they want.

# Castle Nursery Curriculum



## Curriculum

At Castle Nursery all children are supported in developing their potential at their own pace with developmentally appropriate play activities. Our key worker system enables us to plan a curriculum tailored to the needs of each child. The **Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum** leads to nationally approved learning goals in the following areas: A copy of the Full EYFS is available for parents to read on the bookcase in the entrance hall.

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Mathematics
- Literacy
- Expressive art and design
- Understanding the world

## Key person system and learning journals

Each child will be assigned with a key person from our team of experienced staff. Your child's key person will work closely with you to make sure that your child settles quickly, feels safe, enjoys being here and makes good progress. Please understand that your child's key person can not always be present when your child is at nursery due to the staff rota, however we do encourage children to become familiar with all our staff so that they always feel comfortable. The key person will also be responsible for writing an individual **learning journal**, a scrapbook telling the story of your child's achievement and progress, recording the activities that your child has enjoyed in the setting and with family and friends at home with observations and photographs. We invite you to be part of this process by bringing in **photos from home** and filling in our **'something amazing happened today'** cards to record their developments. As staff complete observations, they will place them on our **observation display board** (class two have a castle and class one butterflies). This gives you the opportunity to look at the observations before they are stuck in the journals. Staff do spend a very long time completing these journals which costs the nursery thousands of pounds per year, so we would love you to come and share them with us at any time - class one journals are in the entrance hall and class two are outside the classroom. Please take the opportunity to use these scrapbooks as an **insight into your child's learning** at Castle Nursery. Please ask a member of staff for more details.

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Key Person:** \_\_\_\_\_

Your child's key person will introduce themselves when they ask you to fill in the first page of the scrapbook, an **'All about Me' information sheet**. Children who arrive before 9.00 and stay after 3.30 will be asked if they would like to have a **home diary** – a two way communication notebook between home and nursery. This is because the staff your child sees at nursery will not necessarily be around at your drop off or pick up times, therefore we need to ensure that messages about wellbeing are passed on from parents to staff and vice versa. Parents of children attending during school times (9.00-3.30) are welcome to **chat to staff at the start and end of sessions**.

## Additional Activities

For no extra charge children can choose to take part in **Cookery, Computer Skills, French, Chinese and Heuristic Play** sessions. Staff also plan **frequent trips** out for children aged three and over to the local area to enrich their understanding of the community and world around them (if additional help can be supplied from parents rota) including our 'Explorer Club' where children go to the woods. For an additional charge children can take part in **'Little Laces'** ball skills training and a **Music class** with specialist teachers who come into the nursery twice a week to provide special sessions.

**Please ask for further details.**

# Castle Nursery Routines



## Daily Programme

Children follow a daily routine of free choice play indoors or outdoors, story time, snack time, music and movement and outdoor play. Castle Nursery offers a unique blend of **teacher directed and child initiated** activities to engage children in play experiences. A **theme** is chosen each half term and all activities are linked to this theme. Parents are invited to discuss these themes at home and to encourage their children to **bring in pictures and objects** on our themes to be used in circle time and displayed in the classroom. All children enjoy the full range of our extensive outdoor spaces: the **outdoor classroom**, the **physical play surface** and the **big playground** where they can explore the log cabin, play on the physical equipment or choose a vehicle to ride on. Castle Nursery children also perform **annual concerts** to parents in the school hall - a great photo opportunity!

- **Class 1** offers a **gentle and caring approach** giving children the time and opportunities to learn and develop in a supportive environment. Children can choose to take part in different daily craft activities learning to glue, paint, cut, select, arrange and draw.
- **Class 2** have **circle time** at the start of the session where they **find their own name** and place it on the happy face board, then sit together and discuss the theme of the week. Class two children have the opportunity to enhance their educational provision by signing up to the **book bag system** where children take home a book to read at home and start to learn about letters.

### Typical Routine for Class 1 children during a three hour session

<u>1 hour</u>	Children are welcomed into class 1 and play indoors or outside.
<u>20 mins</u>	Toilet time and story on the carpet
<u>30 mins</u>	Children have snacks together then look at books, jigsaws and table games
<u>30 mins</u>	Outdoor activities for all class 1 children
<u>30 mins</u>	Music and movement then playing in the large classroom
<u>10 mins</u>	Children sing rhymes then say goodbye to their friends.

### Typical Routine for Class 2 children during a three hour session

<u>15 mins</u>	Children are welcomed into class 2 and sit together for Circle Time
<u>1 hour</u>	Free choice play activities indoors and outdoors
<u>30 mins</u>	Children go upstairs for a story, snack and drinks together then look at books
<u>30 mins</u>	Children come downstairs to enjoy sound, music and movement games
<u>30 mins</u>	Children go outside together to play in the big playground or small playground.
<u>15 mins</u>	Children sing rhymes, talk about the day and say goodbye to their friends.

### Typical Routine for nursery children during after school session

<u>3.30-3.45</u>	All nursery and reception children come together to wash hands then sit down to eat tea.
<u>3.45-4.00</u>	Books and story time while children are finishing their teas.
<u>4.00-4.30</u>	Play activities indoors, art and craft as well as table top games with adults. Children can also participate in club activities such as languages and cookery.
<u>4.30-5.00</u>	Outdoor play or activities in entrance area during wet weather.
<u>5.00-6.00</u>	Wind down play time, free choice books, toys and puzzles.

# Your role as parents



At Castle Nursery we respect parents as the children's first and most enduring educators. Therefore we invite you to be part of nursery life as much as possible whether this means simply contributing to your child's learning journal or volunteering on our parent's rota.

## Good Communication

Please be aware of the ways we communicate with you so that we can offer you a full picture of your child's learning experiences.

1. **Talking** – Please always feel welcome to talk to staff by phone or in person. The best time to do this is at the end of the sessions. Before 9.00, between 12 and 1, between 3.30-4 or by appointment.
2. **Pockets** – every child has a pocket in the cloakroom where we put things for you to collect including a notification slip if your child has an accident, your invoices, the children's creations and home diaries for you to read and respond to.
3. **Activity whiteboard in cloakroom** – this tells you about our weekly activities and trips so that you can ask your children about their day.
4. **Parent Area notice board** – for any notifications or useful information – please check this weekly
5. **Observation Castle and butterflies** – so that you can look at the staff observations of your child before they go into the learning journey.
6. **Learning journeys** which can be accessed and added to by you at any time
7. **Home Diaries** for those staying after 3.30
8. **Newsletters** – we put a termly newsletter in your child's pocket to make you aware of any up and coming events or notices
9. **Parents meetings** – one is scheduled each term to discuss up and coming events
10. **Individual meeting** – we arrange meetings for you to discuss your child's progress with the key person
11. **Book bags and story sacks** – Class two children can have a book bag for you to learn about letters together at home, both classes can take home a story sack from the entrance hall to enjoy interactive stories at bedtime with some wonderful books, puppets and story CDs.
12. **Curriculum plan sheets** – these tell you about our weekly themes.
13. **Parent Committee Meetings** – Please come and be part of our parent's committee. The Committee organise our two annual fund raising events but these are not possible without a new cohort of parents. These are a great social opportunity and a fantastic way to give back to the setting.
14. **Suggestions pouch** – We value your opinions so if you are not able to talk to us the please write your comment and place it in our suggestions pouch on the setting notice board in the entrance hall.
15. **Questionnaires** - each year we ask you to fill in a questionnaire about your child's experience with us.
16. **Policies** – our policies are in the policy folder in the entrance hall for you to read.
17. **Parent's rota** – we really appreciate parents volunteering once every half term where possible to help us with trips and extra activities and to help you get to know the environment.
18. **Entrance Hall Screen** – Displays photographs of the day.

## Please help us by:

- Keeping us informed about what is going on at home and in your child's life, we are always happy to talk.
- Please do not pick your child up without first informing their class teacher, allow them to be registered in the classroom at the end of the session.
- Please do not hold the front door open for other parents even if you know them, this is not only to keep out strangers but also to ensure that staff know exactly which children have come in to pick up.
- Please do not take out mobile phones or photography equipment at the setting.

# Procedures and Environment



## Illness, medical conditions and accidents

- If your child is ill or not able to come to Nursery please let us know. No child suffering from an infectious illness should knowingly be admitted to Nursery. If a child is taken ill while at Nursery, or has a head injury a parent/carer will be contacted.
- It is the responsibility of a parent to ensure we are aware of any medical conditions or allergies. If a child needs medication whilst at Nursery the parent/carer may come in and administer it themselves. If this is not possible the medication should be given to a member of staff to store safely and a medication form filled out giving details of the medication. Staff will administer the medication in strict adherence to the guidelines and parents must sign the medication book.
- It is the responsibility of all parents to inform the setting of any medical conditions including allergies. In these circumstances parents will be asked to complete a form detailing the condition and any action needed so that we can support your child in the best possible way.
- Because many children have nut allergies we ask parents not to send any foods containing nuts into the setting, including in any snacks or packed lunches.
- If your child has an accident at nursery, a member of staff will fill in an accident form and place an accident notification slip into your child's pocket. When you find an accident notification slip please approach a member of staff who will show you the accident form and ask you to countersign the entry. It is the responsibility of parents to check in their children's pockets on a daily basis to see if your child has had an accident. Any accident will be investigated and, where appropriate, steps taken to eliminate any risks identified. Staff must be informed about any allergies.

## Clothing

It is advised that all items of clothing are labelled and a spare set of clothes provided in a labelled bag which should be kept on the child's peg. Simple clothing which children can handle themselves will enable them to go to the toilet easily and independently. Please also ensure that children come in sensible footwear and all weather clothes with a sun hat for the summer and coats in the winter. These should be placed in the hat box in the cloakroom. In the summer please put sun cream on your child before he/she comes to nursery. If your child needs additional sun protection then bring a labelled bottle of cream and place it in the sun cream box in the cloakroom. During hot weather it will be reapplied after lunch for those children who stay all day.

## Meals and refreshments

**-Snacks:** Children are provided with a drink and snack during the morning and afternoon session. Milk, water or fruit squash is available. Parents are all asked to make a weekly donation of a healthy snack to the snack basket in the entrance hall.

**-Lunch:** Children staying for lunch at 12.00 can bring a packed lunch from home or ask for a hot dinner which can be ordered from the school. Lunches are booked on a half termly basis, no refunds can be given for absences.

**-Tea:** Children staying after 3.30 should bring a tea bag containing a snack. Please be aware that we are unable to warm or cook meals bought from home. **Ensure all food containers are clearly labelled.**

## Points to Consider

-As a nursery school our primary aim is education, our preschool class in particular is more suitable for children who are toilet-trained. If your child is in nappies please provide a **named bag** with plenty of supplies of nappies, wipes, nappy bags and spare clothes.

-If you are **toilet training** your child please **make staff aware** so that we can offer a consistent approach, by matching what you are doing at home. Please also provide a bag with plenty of **spare clothes**.

-We aim to develop children's language skills and so would prefer children not to use dummies at school.

-Children can bring personal items but please label them where possible and you should then put them in our special box or pocket to keep them safe.