

St John's Playtime Pre-school



Prospectus/Information Pack 2025

**St John's Playtime Pre-school
St John's United Reformed Church
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Welcome to St John's Playtime Pre-school!



We are a committee-run charity pre-school based in a residential area of East Ipswich, and we have been providing a welcoming, happy and safe environment for pre-school children for over 40 years.

Our pre-school was established in 1980 in St John's United Reformed Church. We originally operated in two small rooms on the ground floor of the church, and catered for just 15 children per session. Over the years, the pre-school has grown and developed, and we now occupy a spacious main hall in the church and are able to provide spaces for 32 children per day.

In 2010, the pre-school obtained planning permission, both from the church and Suffolk County Council, to convert the outside area in front of the church into an enclosed garden area and four years later we received funding from the council to install a gate across the front of the church, which increased the outside space for the children to use and also provided additional security.

In 2016, we extended our opening hours and became more flexible for our families and their childcare needs. Since this time, we have amended our insurance and can now accept children from the age of 18 months due to local demand for younger childcare spaces. We have a dedicated sensory/quiet room for the younger children with a safe sleeping area when needed.



St John's Playtime Pre-school is fully Ofsted registered (Reg. No. 251650) and we are currently rated as 'Good' following our last inspection in April 2024. Ofsted monitors the pre-school in terms of our learning environment and curriculum to ensure we are meeting their standards and delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) effectively. We are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (No. 73096) and are compliant with their policies and procedures too. As we are a committee-run pre-school, we are also a registered charity (Reg. No. 1027030) and comply with the charity standards set out by the Charity Commission.

Our Aims and Objectives

At St John's Playtime Pre-school, we aim to facilitate learning through play with the emphasis on wonderful opportunities and the natural curiosity of the child. Our staff members understand that every child develops at a different rate and has varying needs and interests. Every child who attends our setting is celebrated for being unique and our staff will plan activities and next steps based on their individual interests and abilities.



We strive to:

- ❖ Provide a rich and varied learning environment for all children in our care
- ❖ Work in partnership with all parents and carers to promote continuity of care and support every child's learning, development and wellbeing
- ❖ Serve the local community
- ❖ Offer all children and their parents and carers a service that promotes equality and values and avidly promotes diversity

We also aim to ensure that every child in our setting:

- ❖ Feels safe and secure, enabling them to be happy and confident to explore their environment
- ❖ Is given generous care and attention thanks to our excellent adult to child ratios
- ❖ Has the opportunity to join with other children and adults to play, work and learn together
- ❖ Is progressed through their next steps by building on the skills they already have
- ❖ Has a Key Person who is central to every aspect of their care, learning and development
- ❖ Is attending a pre-school where we work closely with parents and carers to provide the best possible care for their children

Care, Education and our Learning Environment



St John's Playtime Pre-school offers a welcoming, happy and safe environment for all pre-school children to learn, play and develop. We have a wide range of resources that are accessible to all our children and our staff plan exciting activities based on each child's current interests and abilities.

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which is the statutory framework that sets the standards that all Early Years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children are ready for school and gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for excellent future progress through school and life. The EYFS is based on 3 principles; A Unique Child, Positive Relationships and Enabling Environments which combined together encourages learning and development. We celebrate and promote diversity in our setting, following the 'British Values' ethos to value each other's beliefs, cultures and heritage, giving every child a true sense of belonging in our setting.

Our Curriculum

Our Curriculum is planned around the seven areas of learning in the 'Birth to 5 Framework'. These include the prime areas of learning: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development, and the specific areas of learning: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. Each individual child's voice is listened to, by using knowledge of their current interests, staff are able to plan effectively in each area of learning, ensuring that every child can make excellent progress during their time in our pre-school.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We recognise that each child has different ways of learning and it is of utmost importance to allow and plan for these individual learning styles in order to enable good progress. A unique child will adapt their learning strategies as they continue to develop, often beginning with initial engagement through interactions with others and their environment moving through to the ability to think critically and learn through being creative, solving problems and linking ideas. The key person will be knowledgeable of your child's learning characteristics and will plan activities accordingly to facilitate and enhance the learning process.

Catering for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We provide equal opportunities for learning for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. We have a designated Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo) and trained deputy who oversee all children with additional needs and monitor their progress following statutory guidance from the SEND Code of Practice (2015). Our setting is accessible for children with limited mobility, including access to the outside play area. We always strive to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that all children in our care have the same access to every opportunity. We strongly believe that all children have the right to reach their potential and will do everything in our power to ensure that this is achievable.

We use a 'graduated approach' response to assess and plan for children who may need additional support. We firmly believe that earlier intervention will lead to the best possible outcomes for children with SEND and by working closely together with parents, we will identify, respond to and regularly review any individual support needs that a child may have. As well as being trained in Makaton (a universal sign language support system), our staff also use visual timetables and prompts to support children with SEND.

A typical day in pre-school

We follow a daily routine in pre-school so our children become familiar with structure and expectations, readying them for learning in future settings. We feel that this gives them the most of the opportunities that they can access, by understanding routine, boundaries and preparation for lifelong learning as well as supporting confidence, resilience and wellbeing. We regularly focus on small and larger group interactions whilst maintaining a balance of adult led and child led play. A typical day in our pre-school looks like this:

TIME	ACTIVITY
8.15am – 9.00am	Children begin to be welcomed into setting and provided with toast or cereal if they require breakfast
9.00am – 9.45am	Most children arrive to setting during this time and engage in free play and inviting activities that have been set up for the day
9.45am – 10.15am	Children are offered a 'rolling snack', those that are involved in play may choose to sit and have snack when they are ready
10.15am – 11.15am	Groups of children are taken into the garden for outdoor play or for a local walk
11.15am – 11.45am	Tidy up time: the children get together to help tidy away the morning's toys and then settle down into some smaller group time with their key person
11.45am – 12.00pm	Children all come together for singing and/or dancing. Adults use this larger group opportunity for storytelling or teaching about a particular theme we are currently learning about; e.g. discussing with children about pre-school's 'golden rules' or the importance of washing hands before eating
12.00pm – 12.30pm	Children who are here for lunch all sit down together and enjoy their food, chat and some quiet downtime before the afternoon activities begin. Adults support this social time by reinforcing expectations and creating an environment that encourages communication and building of relationships
12.30pm – 2.00pm	Children will engage in free play, smaller group sessions and outdoor play
2.00pm – 2.15pm	Tidy up time followed by a tasty afternoon snack
2.15pm – 3.00pm	Free play, smaller group time, singing and storytelling
3.00pm – 4.15pm	Outdoor play

Assessments

Your child's key person will, through observations, be aware of your child's learning and development and be able to plan accordingly to extend and build up on their existing progress. They are confident in identifying possible gaps in learning and will use the child's voice (interests, likes) to plan for opportunities to enhance the child's development. The key person will be able to provide a statutory summative assessment if the child is 2 years old (the 2-year-old progress check) which will give an overall professional judgement of the child's development and progress based on holistic observations.

Commitment to Safeguarding

As part of our commitment to the care of your children, St John's Playtime Pre-school is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery. Our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is our manager, Natalie and our deputy designated safeguarding lead is Sarah. All staff are fully trained and regularly update their safeguarding knowledge so that they are able to identify concerns and make referrals if appropriate. We are fully compliant with up-to-date legislation and guidance and all staff are competent and confident to deal with any safeguarding concerns effectively and efficiently.









Management and Staffing

St John's Playtime Pre-school is managed by a committee of trustees who have overall control of the pre-school and our staff. The Committee is made up of parents and carers, and members are elected to fill the roles of Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which takes place each September/October.

The day-to-day management and running of the pre-school is delegated to our Manager Natalie Bailey who oversees the key person/buddy system and who is responsible for curriculum planning, staff management and supervision, and all childcare matters as well as working alongside the Deputy Manager and Administrator.

All practitioners are fully committed to interacting with all the children and will engage them in a variety of activities and monitor their progress using a Learning Journey (on the Tapestry system). Each member of staff is also a Key Person, meaning that they have specific children that they will monitor, assess and plan for. We employ an Administration and Finance Assistant who works closely with the pre-school manager to deal with funding, fees and general administrative duties. Finally, all staff are appropriately qualified (Level 3 or above), have current Level 3 Paediatric First Aid training, enhanced DBS certificates and updates, current safeguarding training and food & hygiene certificates.

Our Pre-school Team

Natalie Manager BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies Designated Safeguarding Lead	Megan Deputy Manager Level 4 Qualified	Sarah Lead SENDCo Level 3 Qualified	Mary Deputy SENDCo/Admin & Finance assistant Level 3 Qualified
			
Lena Early Years Practitioner Level 3 Qualified	Kenna Early Years Practitioner Level 4 Qualified	Lucy Early Years Practitioner Level 3 Qualified	Janine Early Years Practitioner Level 4 Qualified
			

Parent Help, Students, Volunteers and Visitors



Here at St John's Playtime Pre-school we understand the importance of working in partnership with all our parents and carers, and involving them in their child's learning experience as much as possible.

We are always looking for ways to promote positive 'Parent Partnerships' and we will always welcome parents and carers into our setting.

We have been running termly 'stay and play' sessions for many years and these are proving to be very popular with both children and their families...



We regularly accept students from local schools and colleges to undertake placements in our setting. This encourages links with the local community and the children enjoy interacting with a variety of different adults.

Our Local Community

We are proud to be a part of our local community. We engage in the local community through walks, trips to the local parks and shops, as well as visits to our local gymnastics centre and our elderly neighbours in their residential care home.





Lunchtime Information for Parents/Carers



Please send your child's lunch in a lunch box/lunch bag and **mark it clearly with their full name.**

- The lunch boxes/lunch bags are stored on a trolley during the morning so it is advised that an ice pack is put in with your child's lunch to keep things cool.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- Staff will send all uneaten food home. Food wrappers will be disposed of at pre-school.
- Unfortunately, we do not have the facilities to re-heat any food sent in from home.
- We operate a **NO NUT** policy so please avoid sending your child with whole nuts or sandwiches containing peanut butter.
- Please ensure that grapes are cut in half **lengthways** and cherry tomatoes are cut in half to reduce the risk of choking.
- We **do not** allow any fizzy drinks, sweets, chocolate or products that contain nuts.
- We ask that you provide the normal amount of food that your child eats at lunchtime at home. We have a lot of questions from parents about what to pack so we have created a list of ideas:

Sandwiches	Wraps/Bagels/Pitta	Muffins/Cakes
Cold pasta	Brioche	Sausage/Vegetarian rolls
Salad or crunchy vegetable sticks	Cereal Bars (no nuts!)	Pizza slices
Crackers	Yoghurt	Smoothies
Cheese	Crisps	Hard boiled eggs
Cold Meats	Fruit	Pasties
Rice	Dried fruit	Popcorn
Breadsticks/Dip	Biscuits	Jelly

What to bring to pre-school?

- Please bring a small bag for your child to include: nappies and wipes (if applicable), spare clothes in case of accidents/getting wet, sunhats (weather depending), gloves and hats (weather depending), extra jumpers, underwear and socks, wellies (weather depending).
- Please also make sure that all items of clothing and shoes are named!

Our Hours and Fees



St John's Playtime Pre-school is open Monday – Friday during term time from 08:15 – 16:15. (Closing at 16:00 on Fridays) We offer flexible hours to families, so parents/carers are able to choose when they wish for their children to attend. Children are welcome to stay all day if they wish - many families choose to do this when their child is entitled to their funded hours.

Funding

All children are entitled to 15 hours of funded, free Early Education the term after their 3rd birthday (To clarify, your child has to be born before the 31st August to receive funding for the autumn term, 31st December to receive funding for the spring term and 31st March to receive funding for the summer term).

Funding is also available for some 2-year-olds who meet certain eligibility criteria. This includes the new offer for children of working parents, please visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk to see what you might be entitled to. We will advise you on how and when you can apply for funding and offer guidance on how to complete the forms. We also happily accept children with 'Golden Tickets' and those also entitled to 30 hours of extended funded hours.

Fees

We charge **£5.50** per hour (from September 2024) These fees apply to all fee paying children who are aged 2 and above (those who aren't entitled to funding yet or those who wish to do extra hours in addition to their funded hours). We charge **£6.00** per hour for children aged between 18 months and 2 years.

Our fees are charged on a half-termly basis. Parents/carers are welcome to pay their fees on a weekly basis or they can pay the full amount in one go. We accept payment via cash or bank transfer. We also accept Childcare Vouchers as payment/part-payment. All payments made will receive a receipt.

Snacks

We provide breakfast (cereal/toast) for all children who attend between 08.15 – 09.00. We offer a snack during the morning and afternoon for all children (consisting of fruits, vegetables and a savoury snack) We do ask for a voluntary contribution towards the provision of snacks, this is currently suggested at 25p per snack.

Lunch Children who attend between 12.00 – 12.30 are required to bring a packed lunch with them. We ask that any grapes or cherry tomatoes are cut in halves (lengthways) to prevent choking hazards. We are also a 'nut free' setting so please avoid packing **anything** that might contain nuts. We unfortunately do not have the facilities to reheat any cooked food for children. Finally, we ask that children do not bring sweets or fizzy drinks with them into pre-school. Further guidance about lunches is available on joining pre-school.



Jumpers and T-shirts

We do advise that children come to pre-school in clothing that can get messy! We do have jumpers and t-shirts with the pre-school logo available for parents and carers to purchase if they wish. Our jumpers are £9.00 and our t-shirts are £5.00, both are available in age 3-4 and 5-6 years.

Further Information

- ❖ **Policies and Procedures:** All pre-school policies and procedures are made available to our families on joining pre-school. Copies can be found for your reference on our website and in the lobby (outside the main pre-school room). These are checked thoroughly by management and the committee and updated annually or more often as required.
- ❖ **Data Protection and Privacy:** All families will receive a detailed privacy policy on joining pre-school. This explains what personal information we need to obtain and keep for our records. In line with The Data Protection Act (2018), we only hold relevant information and destroy records after the correct retention period.
- ❖ **Tapestry Online Learning Journeys:** We use an online system called 'Tapestry' to keep a secure record of your child's journey with us in pre-school. This includes observations made by their key person and photographs to document their learning and development. Parents are also able to upload photographs and comments from home, building a detailed record of their child's early years. We print the entire 'journey' when a child leaves our setting so parents can keep this for their use. It also serves as a useful tool for management to pass on messages or reminders to parents, in modern life where people are often busy with work, Tapestry allows a two-way communication to keep you updated on your child's progress and to inform us of any developments at home.
- ❖ **Transitions:** At St John's Playtime Pres-school, we are positioned between several different primary schools. Our 'feeder' schools are mainly Britannia, Sidegate, St John's, Clifford Road, Rosehill and St Mary's. However, we also have several children who go to school further afield. We do our very best to make these transitions as smooth as possible which means liaising with new teachers in the summer term and preparing your child to feel confident about moving to a new setting. Likewise, if your child is going through a transitional period at home (e.g. a new baby in the family), we will do what we can to support this change in their life and work closely with parents to see how we can put this support into place.
- ❖ **Parent Feedback:** We are in a fortunate position that we have families return to us year after year with younger siblings and excellent feedback allows us to keep busy simply through 'word of mouth'. However, we always strive to improve our provision and regularly ask parents for suggestions or feedback on our service. This is invaluable as it enables us to make positive changes where necessary. We pride ourselves on our strong relationships with our families and are always happy to offer support where needed.

"You guys do a great job and P and S are thriving under your care! (As did Q)"

"Thank you  for the hard work of all time .You all are Stars  ?"

Applying for a Place

If you would like to apply for a place for your child at St John's Playtime Pre-school, please complete the below form and send it to the address on the front cover. Alternatively, if you would like an admission form emailed to you, please email us. We are always happy for you to come into the pre-school and have a look around; please call us to arrange a visit.

Please complete the below details:

Name of child:

Date of birth:

Name and Address of Parent(s)/Carers:.....

.....

.....

..... **Postcode:**.....

Telephone Number(s):

Email Address:

Please give details of the hours you would like your child to attend:

Monday.....

Tuesday.....

Wednesday.....

Thursday.....

Friday.....

Signature of parent/carer:

Cancellation of Spaces

- After being allocated a space for the following term, parents/carers of new starters must inform the setting if they wish to withdraw their child's space, giving as much notice as possible and no less than 4 weeks.
- If no notice of cancellation is given, or if it is given at the beginning of a new term when the child is about to start at the setting, a late cancellation charge will be payable. The charge will be the sum of one week's sessions (based on the individual new starter and their 'booked' hours).