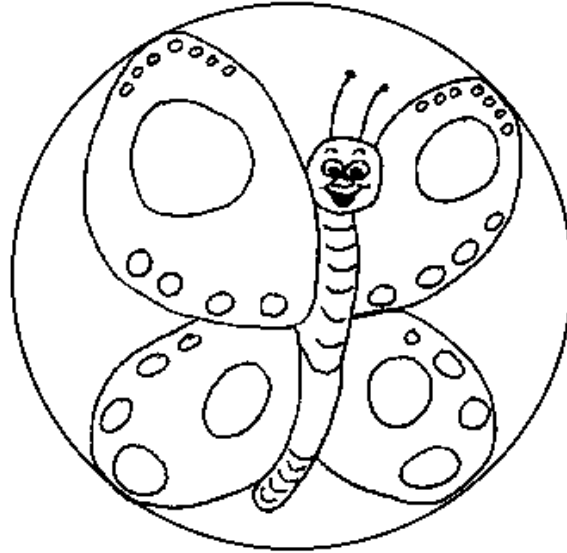


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**St Michael's Pre-School**

# **ST MICHAEL'S PRE-SCHOOL PROSPECTUS**



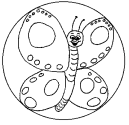
***Affiliated to the Pre-School Learning Alliance***

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***Registered Charity No: 1030520***



# St Michael's Pre-School

## Introduction

St Michael's Pre-School has been operating as a registered playgroup since 1993. Situated in St Michael's Church extension and with ample car parking, the Pre-School provides a safe, stimulating, fun and friendly environment where children can enjoy playing together and where parents and children can form relationships outside the family. Children develop skills by enjoying a range of activities to meet their individual needs and their natural sense of curiosity is encouraged as well as other aspects of their mental development such as independence, adaptability, consideration and sense of responsibility.

The Pre-School is run by a voluntary committee of parents and/or members of the local community, elected each year at the Annual General Meeting. The committee manages the affairs of the Pre-School, employs the staff and is responsible for policy making. St Michael's Policy Statements, covering a number of important issues such as Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety and Child Protection, are on display in the Pre-School. Please ask if you wish to receive a copy of these.

The Pre-School is inspected regularly by OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) to assess the quality of its provision. A few extracts from the last inspection (May 2006) are included throughout this prospectus. A full copy of the report can be obtained by speaking to a member of the committee or staff.

St Michael's Pre-School welcomes children from further afield than the local community and is known to all of the local primary schools. It has particularly strong links with, and is the main feeder to, Birchwood County Primary School which was placed third in Suffolk in the 2005 Achievement and Attainment Tables based on KeyStage 2 SATS. To find out more about Birchwood Primary School you can access its profile at <http://schoolprofile.parentscentre.gov.uk> or alternatively, visit the school's website, [www.birchwood.ik.org](http://www.birchwood.ik.org)

St Michael's Pre-School welcomes fathers, mothers, other relations and carers, including childminders/nannies and people from all cultural, ethnic, religious and social groups, with and without disabilities.

*'Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment.'* - Ofsted

More information about St Michael's Pre-School, including session plans, term dates and what we are currently doing, can be found on our website, [www.stmichaelspreschool.org.uk](http://www.stmichaelspreschool.org.uk)

## Structure of Play Sessions

We offer places for up to 19 children per session, from age 2½ years upwards. Our current play session schedule is as follows:

Day	Times	
Monday	09:15 - 11:45	12:45 - 15:15
Tuesday	09:15 - 11:45	12:45 - 15:15
Wednesday		13:15 - 15:45
Thursday	09:15 - 11:45	12:45 - 15:15
Friday	09:15 - 11:45	12:45 - 15:15



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In the Summer term, a 'Rising Fives' session will be offered for children who will be starting school within two terms. Children who will be attending Birchwood County Primary School are taken to the school on a regular basis to introduce them to the school environment.

For children who will be attending other local schools, including Gorseland, Cedarwood and Beacon Hill County Primary Schools, we invite their prospective teacher(s) to come into the playgroup setting for a short period of time (e.g. story time), to familiarise the children with their faces.

*'Children have a positive attitude to learning, they are happy, settled and purposefully engaged in their play' – Ofsted*

## Fees

We are registered to accept government funding in the term following your child's 3rd birthday, giving your child up to five free sessions per week. You will automatically receive the relevant form when your child becomes eligible.

For younger children, ineligible for government funding due to their age, our present fees are £8.35 per session. We have "special rates" for twins, triplets, etc. For children eligible for government funding who exceed their five free sessions per week (at one or more Pre-School setting) and wish to attend St Michael's for additional sessions, our present fees are £8.35 per session.

Fees are due for payment within the first week of each half-term. There are no refunds for periods of absenteeism, e.g., holiday, sickness. In exceptional circumstances please contact the Chairperson who will be happy to discuss the matter with you.

## Changing Sessions

Additional sessions can be added at the end of any term (where availability allows). These will be offered to the oldest child first and then to the next in descending birth dates. Once term has begun we cannot change a child's sessions except under exceptional circumstances.

## Leaving Your Child at St Michael's

Each child starting Pre-School for the first time will settle at a different rate. Some children take to Pre-School immediately; others spend a long time watching before beginning to join in.

It may take a few sessions before the time is right to leave your child, however, in our experience most children do settle in well in a reasonably short time. Our staff are very experienced at gently introducing the children to Pre-School life in a fun and friendly way.

## Staffing

There are normally three to four staff on duty at each session, including one registered Playgroup leader, plus a parent helper. Our staff hold a range of qualifications in Pre-School learning

*'(Staff) work as a highly motivated team and are enthusiastic, providing children with a wide range of stimulating activities and experiences' - Ofsted*



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and have the opportunity to broaden their knowledge with annual courses. In addition, our staff hold recognised First Aid and Food Hygiene certificates.

We adhere to the Pre-School Learning Alliance and Ofsted stipulated adult to child ratio policies, and appropriate Ofsted checks are carried out for all staff. Staff also hold mandatory Enhanced Disclosure Child Protection certificates.

## **Inclement Weather**

In certain bad conditions, it may be necessary to close the Pre-School for the day. It is our policy that if Birchwood Primary School is closed due to inclement weather, then the Pre-School will also be closed. Birchwood School is listed on the school closures list on Radio Suffolk's Snowline service so please listen to the local radio station in the morning for the latest information.

## **Curriculum and Routine**

We are affiliated to the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA) and follow their guide to curriculum.

A theme is chosen each half term and children have the opportunity to experience various activities around this theme including water play, painting, sand, dough, cooking, woodwork, music and physical exercise.

*'Children benefit from a well planned, broad, balanced program where they are able to engage in a range of activities' - Ofsted*

We provide a rich activity-centred environment in which children can engage in spontaneous play. We see our role in extending play by observing children, interacting with them, giving further information, adding or changing materials as appropriate and, in some instances, providing a sense of direction. We hope to achieve children with a degree of self-confidence, appropriate social skills and self-direction, who are ready for the kind of sustained play which enables significant growth in knowledge and understanding.

We work with the 'Every Child Matters' Outcomes Framework, brought into operation in October 2005 and enforced by Ofsted. For pre-school children this is presented in four sections:

- Be healthy
- Be safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution

Our curriculum fully prepares children to enter the Foundation Stage at Primary School by covering the following six areas of learning:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Language and literacy
- Mathematics
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creative development

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We also follow the recommendations set out in 'Birth to Three Matters' to inform our planning and care of children between the ages of 2 ½ and 3.

We operate a key practitioner system where each child is allocated to a member of staff, who observes and records, enabling us to plan for the child's individual needs and move them on to the "next step". It may be something as simple as sharing and taking turns.

Children are offered a cup of milk or water with a snack at each session. We also have access to the adjacent Harry Higgins Play Area and Martlesham Heath Green for P.E. activities.

Your child's Pre-School Leader/key practitioner will be pleased to answer any queries you may have.

## **Your Involvement with Pre-School**

Joining the parent helper rota provides a fantastic opportunity for parents and carers to watch their child in action – learning, integrating, having fun ... the list is endless.

Pre-School is such a valuable part of your child's educational experience and we encourage parents (or grandparents, other relations or carers) to join in with sessions wherever possible. We ask that you help at approximately 2 sessions per half term or, if unable to help in other than exceptional circumstances, to pay £8.35 in lieu of the session they would normally be covering.

The Pre-School committee also welcomes your involvement and support in any of its activities, fundraising or otherwise, and in the management of the group. You are welcome to attend committee meetings or to join the committee. We rely upon an active committee and your support in order that the Pre-School can continue to expand.

## **Our Waiting List**

Our waiting list is arranged in order of date of birth and we will endeavour to meet your requirements but unfortunately cannot guarantee this. We strongly advise you to add your child's name to our waiting list at the earliest opportunity.

## **Introductory Visit**

If you are interested in your child joining St Michael's Pre-School, we are happy for you to visit us beforehand to look around. Please telephone to arrange a convenient time.