

Prospectus

Alderton Acorns Pre-School Group

at
Alderton Village Hall
Dibden Lane
Alderton
Tewkesbury
Gloucestershire
GL20 8NT

Tel: 07842 161159

www.aldertonacorns.org.uk

A member of the Gloucestershire Playgroup and Toddler Association
Registered Charity No 1052664

WELCOME TO ALDERTON ACORNS PRE-SCHOOL GROUP

When your child starts Pre-School it is an important time for both child and parents. We hope that this booklet will explain a little about us and perhaps answer some of the questions you might have. You are always welcome to come and chat to the staff and see what we offer.

The Pre-School meets at Alderton Village Hall, which is a bright, spacious, centrally heated setting. We have use of a large main room and a smaller side room as well as special toilet facilities, a kitchen for cookery and preparation of snacks for the children and two easily accessed outside areas. We have our own large range of play equipment, which is regularly updated and added to. We provide a safe, stimulating and caring environment that promotes learning through play, using a wide range of resources, and the opportunity for children to develop their social skills as they play alongside and with other children.

We are open to children from 2 years 9 months up to 5 years. We also operate "an accompanied child" session for children aged from 2 years 6 months. Children join us to have fun and to learn, through play, the individual skills needed to enter school confidently and enthusiastically.

Sessions run from 9am to 12pm Monday to Thursday during term time with a packed lunch club from 12pm - 1pm. We also run a Forest School, which operates on Thursdays from 1pm - 3pm and is held in the Millennium copse in Alderton Park.

Children usually start with two sessions per week and build up to more when they are ready. For children in their pre-school year we include more structured sessions to help make a smoother transition from Pre-School to School, concentrating on more structured play and pre-reading and writing skills.

The Playleader is Sian Tryner who holds a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). She is also a parent and understands the everyday pressures of entertaining a pre-school child! Sian is assisted by her friendly and experienced team.

THE PLAYLEADER AND HELPERS

Playleader	Sian Tryner:	Postgraduate Certificate in Education BSc (Hons) in Zoology with Marine Zoology
Deputy Playleader	Sarah Westgate:	BA (Hons) in Multi-disciplinary Design NVQ in Childcare Level 3 SENCO representative Forest School Leader
Play Assistants	Suzy Webb:	CACHE Childminding in Practice Level 3

All staff are trained in first-aid and child protection.
In addition all the staff members are mothers and understand!

FEES

Fees are £3.25 per hour/£13 per 9am - 1pm session, paid on invoice. Forest School is £9 per 2 hour session. If you are going on holiday, please let Sian or the Treasurer know in advance so that you will not be charged for the sessions missed (maximum of two weeks holiday per year). Unfortunately we are unable to make a refund if your child misses a session for any other reason.

NURSERY EDUCATION GRANT

Children become eligible for a nursery education grant in the term after their third birthday, which entitles them to 15 funded hours per week. However the Local Education Authority do have cut-off dates so please check with the Treasurer to see when your child is eligible. Grants are paid from the Local Education Authority direct to Alderton Acorns for a maximum of 15 hours per week. If your child attends a Pre-School setting for more than 15 hours, you will be invoiced for the extra hours at a rate of £3.25 per hour.

"ACCOMPANIED CHILD" SESSIONS available from 2 Years 6 months

It is our hope that these sessions provide an invaluable introduction to Pre-School life. The aim of the session is to allow your child to become comfortable within our Pre-School environment, whilst leading up to a time of independence on reaching 2 years 9 months and "going solo". As the title suggests you are required to stay with your child for the session. There will be a fee of £2.50 per session which is payable on invoice. Please contact Sian if you would like to take up this opportunity on **07842 161159**

ARRIVAL AND COLLECTION

It is a good idea to arrive a few minutes early in the morning to settle your child in before you go, but please do not leave your child before the official start time of 9am, when insurance cover begins (unless pre-arranged with Sian in special circumstances). Please be ready to collect your child promptly at the end of the session. You may not worry if you are a bit late, but your child will! If you are delayed for any reason, please telephone us at the village hall on **07842 161159**.

A TYPICAL SESSION

9.00 - 9.15	Arrive and settle in
9.15 - 9.25	Welcome time
9.25 - 11.30	Free play; a choice of activities for example: Painting and colouring, play dough, sand and water play, dressing up, junk-modelling, cookery, home corner, bikes and trikes, climbing frame and slide including drink & snack time within key worker groups
11.30 - 11.45	Tidy up time
11.45 - 12.00	Whole group activity such as drama, ball skills, music & dance.
12.00 - 12.45	Lunch time followed by outside play
12.45 - 13.00	Story time

13.00

End of session/Home time

The activities above will take place both indoors and outdoors.

COME AND JOIN IN!

Our Pre-School is a happy place where children can learn through play how to:

- share and play with other children
- trust new adults and accept new situations
- experiment with all sorts of materials and activities
- express themselves in many different ways both verbally and physically
- develop skills on different levels; intellectual, moral, physical, language, emotional and social
- work things out for themselves and become independent

Obviously, getting to know and understand the little community our Pre-School becomes each morning is very important for your child and yourself. Why not try short visits together first? Your child will soon notice the friendships you develop with all the staff, and other parents and will very quickly establish his or her own relationships with the other children and adults.

Eventually you will be able to leave your child in *their* very own Pre-School, growing every day in confidence and independence.

CHILDREN AT 'WORK'

The children are encouraged to explore and learn from different materials such as water, sand, paint, glue and clay. They will get messy (wearing overalls of course), which is a necessary part of learning. Old clothes are best for playing in. The activities will take place indoors and outdoors, whatever the weather! Please make sure that your child has suitable clothing to cope with the unpredictable British weather! Come rain or shine!

Confidence comes from being able to do things for yourself. Try to make sure that all fastenings are simple and your child will soon learn to go to the toilet without help, put their coat on and so on. Naturally the staff are always about to lend a hand.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

The Early Years Foundation Stage has four Principles:

A Unique Child: Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships: Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and /or a key person.

Enabling Environments: The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

Learning and Development: Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected. There are six areas of Learning and Development. Using learning through play we plan to provide activities for the children based on these 6 areas and the children's individual development and needs.

The six areas of Learning and Development are as follows;

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children develop confidence, show respect for themselves and others and can establish positive relationships with children and adults within the setting. They can work in a group or alone, can concentrate and persevere and solve simple problems. They show independence in dressing and choosing tasks, can take turns and understand what is right and wrong and why. Children treat living things, property and their environment with care. They respond to relevant cultural and religious events and show feelings in response to their experiences of the world.

Communication, Language and Literacy

In small and large groups children listen and can talk about their experiences using a growing vocabulary. They listen and respond to stories, songs and poems, can make up stories and take part in role-play. They enjoy books and handle them with care, knowing that words and pictures carry a meaning and begin to associate sounds with words and letters. In early writing they use pictures, symbols and sometimes words to communicate. They may be able to write their own name.

Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

Children use mathematical language, such as in front of, more or less than, to describe shape, position, size and quantity. They are familiar with number rhymes, stories and songs, can recognise and use numbers 1 to 10 and are familiar with some larger numbers. They compare, sort, match, order, sequence and count and begin to show awareness of addition and subtraction.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Children can talk about their families, past and present events. They explore and recognise features of living things, objects and events, talk about their observations and ask questions. They explore different materials and use skills such as cutting, folding, joining and building for various reasons.

Physical Development

Children move confidently and imaginatively with increasing control and co-ordination and an awareness of space and others. They use a range of small and large equipment to balance on and climb with increasing skill.

They also handle tools, objects and materials safely and with increasing control. They show an

increasing awareness of how exercise, eating, sleeping and hygiene promote good health.

Creative Development

Children explore sound and colour, texture, shape, form and space in two and three dimensions. They respond to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel. Through art, music, dance, stories and imaginative play, they listen, observe and use imagination. They use a widening range of tools, materials and instruments to express ideas and communicate feelings.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

If a child shows specific areas of concern the following procedure will be put into operation.

The child's Key Person and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) will meet to discuss any issues and will seek to express those concerns to parents/carers.

An Individual Educational Plan (IEP) may be put into operation if appropriate and/or an application for Specialist support through the Early Start project may be submitted. This is a way of working with early years children with learning/developmental needs that aims to identify these needs as early as possible and to offer early intervention at an appropriate level of support for the child.

At all stages parents are involved and kept informed.

KEY PERSON

Each child at Pre-School is allocated a Key Person who works closely with them and their family and ensures individual care and attention. The Key Person will ensure that the activities that are offered at Pre-School are tailored to the unique needs of each individual child so that all children are supported in reaching their full potential. The Key Person will be responsible for the welfare of your child as well as all their records and assessments. We recognise that parents are the most important educators of young children and we aim to share information and work closely with you in order to support this. We are quite flexible and in practice each member of staff develops a good relationship with all the children. This is especially useful if your child's Key Person is absent.

Each child has their own Pre-School Diary kept in their named drawer. This is a record of some of the activities they have taken part in at Pre-School. Your child's Key Person keeps this record up to date. This information will enable the Key Person to identify your child's stage of progress and decide on how to help your child move on to the next stage. You are welcome to see this record at any time, and we would love you to contribute to it as well. Each term we will send the Diary home for you to share with the rest of your family but please add to it at any time during the year. The children love looking back at the photos and drawings and sharing their diaries with friends and family.

PARENTS AT ALDERTON ACORNS

Alderton Acorns is a community group with charitable status, owned and run by the parents of the children attending. Therefore, we rely on your help and support. There are four main ways in which you can help:

Committee Member

In May, every year, a committee of parent volunteers is elected to administer and be responsible

for the running of the group. We understand that this can initially seem daunting, so if you do not want to take a role on the committee then we would welcome your input at committee meetings. The meetings occur termly and we discuss issues relevant to the group at that time.

Fundraising

In order to raise money for the group we organise various fund raising events during the year. We would always value your support, help and donations for these events. Once again this is meant to be a fun way in which you can support the group and your child.

Cleaning

There are times during the year that we need to wash toys, aprons etc... Once again we always appreciate your support with this task.

Rota Helper

You are an essential part of the Pre-School team. In order to keep fees to a minimum, we operate a parent's rota. This is a *requirement* of your child attending preschool. Please do not feel daunted by this task. It is meant to be fun and a special time in which you can enter your child's world and see first-hand how they are developing skills in a setting outside the home.

The parent rota system is covered in detail in the 'welcome pack' you receive when your child starts Pre-School. You will only be required to become a parent helper for a maximum of a couple of times per term* (with one child attending the group). If you cannot fulfil the role then you can elect a friend, grandparent etc... You are exempt if you are pregnant, have a baby less than 6 months old or are deemed medically unfit to work.

* 6 terms per academic year

When it is your turn, we do ask you to arrive **at 9am**. Please bring a fruit/savoury snack to share with the group at snack time.

Your jobs may include;

- Helping to put out and clear away equipment
- Mixing paint
- Joining in a game
- Supervising painting or sticking
- Preparing mid-morning drinks and snacks for the children
- Making the all-important coffee!
- Reading a story to a small group

Tips for rota duty:

- Spend as much time as possible with the children but do as little as possible for them
- Sit down with the children -- get down to their level. Encourage conversation and be prepared to listen to the answers
- Resist the temptation to take over; let the children do their own thing (within reason) and not what you want them to do
- When children take part in activities they are not always looking for an end product - it is the

doing which matters most to them

The welcome table at the front of the hall contains details of meetings, rota duties and any other information. You will also find the signing in sheet, which you need to fill in at each session. There is a blue folder on the welcome table with a copy of the Pre-School policies. You are free to borrow this at any time.

Alderton Acorns is registered and approved by Ofsted. We are also a member of Gloucestershire Playgroup and Toddler Association (PATA).

PATA

Alderton Acorns Pre-School Group is a member of an organisation called the **PLAYGROUP AND TODDLER ASSOCIATION (PATA)**.

PATA is a registered charity, actively supported by Gloucestershire County Council and membership provides us with;

- financial support through the administration of LEA grants
- specialist support when required
- advice and expertise

At branch meetings we are able to exchange ideas and information and keep up to date on the latest issues. PATA also provides training courses on various subjects, such as practical play activities and on specialist topics including child development and family issues, which last from one day to one year. These are open both to staff as in service training and to all parents and carers involved in playgroup, for a reasonable fee.

ALDERTON PARENT, BABY AND TODDLER GROUP

Every Friday morning including during school holidays, Alderton Parent, Baby and Toddler group meet at the Village Hall from 10am - 12 pm. It is open to all babies and toddlers accompanied by a parent or carer (who may be a childminder, grandparent, other relative or friend) and costs £1.50 for one child or £2.00 per family, including coffee/tea (for grown-ups!), and a drink and snack for children. This is a good way to get children used to mixing with others, to become familiar with the environment and helps prepare them for moving on to Pre-School. Parents and other adults also get the chance to meet for a chat (and maybe discuss the joys and trials of parenthood....) No need to book, just turn up and join in!

FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

If you need any further information or advice concerning your child at Alderton Acorns, your Play leader Siân Tryner or any of our friendly staff are happy to answer your questions. If you are unable to speak to them at Pre-School, you can phone us on **07842 161159**.

On the following page is an Admission Form, which you should complete and return to Pre-School as soon as possible to reserve your child's place.

We look forward to welcoming your child and yourself into your own community run Pre-School group.