



**An Introduction to
Acorns Nursery at Howe Green House School**

Parent's Information Booklet

Welcome to Acorns Nursery

This booklet has been written to provide essential and useful information for parents, but if this guide does not provide the answer to any questions then please do not hesitate to speak to Mrs Sellars, the Nursery Manager.

Dear Parents

Welcome to Acorns Nursery

Here at Acorns Nursery we treat every child as an individual, with special interests and needs and we place great importance in getting to know your child very well. We will provide your child with a developmentally appropriate curriculum full of exciting activities to stimulate and fill them with the desire to learn.

We follow the guidelines of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

Our Nursery aims to:

Provide high quality care and education for children.

Work in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop.

Offer children and parents a service that promotes equality and values diversity.

Parents

Parents are regarded as members of our Nursery who have full participatory rights. These include a right to be:

Valued and respected

Kept informed

Consulted

Involved and included at all levels.

Children's development and learning

We aim to ensure that each child.

Is in a safe and stimulating environment.

Is given generous care and attention, because of our ratio of qualified staff to children.

Has the chance to join in with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together.

Is helped to take forward her/his learning and development by being helped to build on what she/he already knows and can do.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision for children's development and learning is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2014). Our Nursery reflects the overarching principles of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

How we provide for development and learning

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our Nursery helps children to continue to do this by providing all of the children with interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. Our play is child centred and children are encouraged to explore and experiment with activities using both the outdoor and indoor environments. We aim to build the children's self esteem and confidence by providing a fun filled environment, catering for children's different needs and rates of development. Young children learn from first hand experiences, through being actively involved in their environment. Details of our curriculum are outlined in our Foundation Stage Policy.

Children's Development and Learning

There are seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three 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, the prime areas, are:

1. Communication and language;
 - Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
2. Physical development;
 - Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children will be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
3. Personal, social and emotional development;
 - Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

We also support children in four other specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. We provide activities and experiences for children, as follows.

1. Literacy;
 - Literacy development involves encouraging children to recognise, link sounds and letters and begin to write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
2. Mathematics;
 - Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple problems; and describing shapes, spaces, and measurements.

3. Understanding the world;

- Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

4. Expressive arts and design;

- Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

For each area, the level of progress that children are expected to have attained by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is defined by the Early Learning Goals. These goals state what is expected that children will know, and be able to do, by the end of the Reception year of their education.

The Development Matters guidance sets out the likely stages of progress a child makes along their learning journey towards the Early Learning Goals. Our Nursery has regard to these matters when we assess children and plan for their learning. Our programme supports children to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need for:

Our approach to learning, development and assessment.

Learning through Play

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research has shown to be the means by which young children think. Acorns Nursery uses the Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance to plan and provide a range of play activities, which help children to make progress in each of the areas of learning and development. In some of these activities children decide how they will use the activity and, in others, an adult takes the lead in helping the children to take part in the activity. In all activities, information from "Development Matters" the Early Years Foundation Stage has been used to decide what equipment to provide and how to provide it.

Characteristics of effective learning

We understand that all children engage with other people and their environment through the characteristics of effective learning that are described in the Development Matters the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance as:

Playing and exploring – engagement;

Active learning – motivation; and

Creating and thinking critically – thinking.

We aim to provide for the characteristics of effective learning by observing how a child is learning and being clear about what we can do and provide in order to support each child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Assessment

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them frequently. We use information that we gain from observations, as well as from photographs or videos of the

children, to document their progress and where this may be leading them. We believe that parents know their children best and we ask them to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what their children like to do at home and how they, as parents, are supporting development.

We make periodic summaries of children's achievement based on our on-going development records. These form part of children's records of achievement. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals, as well as times of transition, such as when a child moves into Kindergarten or further afield.

The Progress check at age two

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires that we supply parents with a short written summary of their child's development in the three prime areas of learning and development: personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language; when a child is aged between 24-36 months. The Key Person is responsible for completing the check using information from on-going observational assessments carried out as part of our everyday practice, taking account of the views and contributions of parents and other professionals.

Records of Achievement

The Nursery keeps a Record of Achievement called a "Learning Journey" for each child. Your child's record of achievement helps us to celebrate together her/his achievements and to work together to provide what your child needs for her/his well-being and to make progress.

Your child's Key Person will work in partnership with you to keep this record. To do this you will both collect information about your child's needs, activities and achievements. This information will enable the Key Person to identify your child's stage of progress. You and the key person will then decide on how to help your child move onto the next stage.

A full written report of your child's progress will be issued at the end of their final term in the Nursery. Parent's consultations meetings will take place in the spring term with the Nursery Manager.

Working together for all children.

We maintain the ratio of adults to children in the Nursery that is set by the safeguarding and welfare requirements, this helps us to:

Give time and attention to each child;

Talk with the children about their interests and activities;

Help children to experience and benefit from activities we provide; and

Allow the children to explore and be adventurous in safety.

The Staff who work in Acorns Nursery during the current academic year are:

Mrs Julie Sellears - Nursery Manager

Nursery Assistants;

Mrs Corner, Mrs Harrington, Miss Perry, Mrs Takami, and Mrs Vyas.

Nursery Hours are:

8.45am – 11.45am

11.45am – 12.45pm (Lunchtime)

12.45pm – 3.45pm

We are open Monday to Friday, term time only.

We provide care and education for young children between the ages of two and three years.

Fees

The fees from September 2016 – August 2017 are:

Am session £29.75

Pm session £29.75

All day £51.00

Fees are invoiced half-termly in advance with payment due on or before the first session of each half-term. Fees must still be paid if children are absent without notice for a short period of time. If your child has to be absent over a long period of time, please talk to Mrs Sellears, Nursery Manager.

Acorns Nursery is currently registered to offer Free Early Educational Entitlement up to 15 hours per week depending on availability of sessions. Additional hours and services requested via the Nursery Manager are invoiced as above.

How parents take part in the Nursery

The Nursery recognises parents as the first and most important educators of their children. All of the staff sees themselves as partners with parents providing care and education for their children.

There are many ways in which parents take part in making the Nursery a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents such as;

Exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities, interests and progress with the staff;

Contributing to the progress check at age two;

Sharing their own special interests with the children;

Taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by the setting;

Joining in community activities in which the setting takes part; and

Building friendships with other parents of children in the Nursery.

Parents are always welcome at the Nursery and, if you have a skill to share or you would like to come in and spend some time with us, please let Mrs Sellears the Nursery Manager know.

If you have a specific concern to discuss, it is preferable to make an appointment with Mrs Sellears the Nursery Manager. Two way communications are vital and confidentially is respected at all times. We have a private room available for discussions.

Key Person and Your Child

Our Nursery uses a Key Person approach. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom she/he is particularly responsible. Your child's Key Person will be the person who works with you to make sure that the childcare that we provide is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts at the setting, she/he will help your child to settle and support them throughout your child's time at the Nursery. She/He will help your child to benefit from the setting's activities.

Learning Opportunities for Staff

As well as gaining childcare qualifications, our staff take part in further training to help them to keep up to date with thinking about early years care and education. The Nursery also keeps itself up-to-date with best practice, as a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance, through Under Five's magazines and other publications produced by the Alliance.

The Staff bring into the setting new ideas and activities learnt from on-going courses, which are seen as good practice.

The Nursery's Timetable and Routines

Our Nursery believes that care and education are equally important in the experience which we offer children. The routines and activities that make up the day in the setting are provided in ways that:

Help each child to feel that she/he is a valued member of the setting;

Ensure the safety of each child;

Helps children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group;

Provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning.

The Session

We organise our sessions so that the children can choose from, and work at, a range of activities and, in doing so, build up their ability to select and work through a task to its completion. The children are also helped and encouraged to take part in adult-led small and large group activities, which introduce them to new experiences and help them to gain new skills, as well as helping them to learn to work with others. Outdoor activities contribute to children's health, their physical development and their knowledge of the world around them. The children have the opportunity, and are encouraged, to take part in outdoor child chosen and adult-led activities, as well as those provided in the indoors.

Snack time and cookery activities

A mid-morning / afternoon drink of milk or orange juice is provided. The children all have access to fresh drinking water throughout the session.

Please provide a cereal bar or fruit to eat (oranges and apples to be peeled and chopped and grapes to be quartered due to these being a choking hazard) no sweets, chocolate, peanut butter or anything containing nuts please.

We ask for a termly contribution towards shared snack and cookery ingredients. You may not always see the end product of our cookery sessions as we sometimes make things to share at snack time, i.e. toast, vegetable soup, porridge, scrambled eggs. This allows the children and their peers to experiment with different tastes and encourages them to try different foods together. It is important that you tell us in the "All About Me" questionnaire if your child has any likes or dislikes or even more importantly any allergies.

Lunch Time

Lunch begins at 11.45am for the children staying all day. We do not have a kitchen on site to enable us to prepare hot food. So a packed lunch will be required, please include an ice pack to keep food cool. From experience children seem to enjoy a lunch containing small amounts of a variety of foods to choose from. We will ensure your child eats as much of it as possible. Please check the parent's notice board to see how well your child has eaten at lunch time. Also to see what the Nursery has been sharing at snack time during the week.

Rest Time

Rest time begins at 12.15pm. The children all have quiet time, they relax looking at books or listening to music. Some children will snuggle into their sleeping bag and sleep. Please check the parents information board to see if your child has slept and for how long.

Each child will have their own sleeping bag provided by the school, which they will use during their time in the Nursery. For health reasons each bag will have an embroidered name label attached by Velcro. Each parent will be asked to launder their own child's sleeping bag at the end of each term or if they become soiled.

Clothing/ Uniform

Please send your child in clothes that will survive the wear and tear of Nursery life. Please provide a bag of spare clothes in case of little accidents or a change of clothes may be necessary after a little creative play, as we do like to allow them to explore all activities which include painting and water play. The Nursery provides protective aprons for the children when they play with messy activities. We encourage the wearing of Acorns t-shirts, sweatshirts, and summer caps which can be obtained from our school supplier:-

Ottis; Telephone number 01279 731052

The Nursery encourages children to gain the skills, which help them to be independent and look after themselves. These include taking themselves to the toilet and taking off and putting on outdoor clothes. Clothing which is easy for them to manage will help them to do this.

For the winter months please can you ensure your child has a warm coat, hat and mittens as we do like to go outside as much as possible.

In the summer a sun hat and sun cream are essential. When the weather is warm can you please apply sun cream to your child before you arrive at Nursery. We will reapply when necessary using our own Acorns supply of sun cream. Please could you check that our sun

cream is suitable for your child or, if you would prefer, please leave a named bottle of sun cream in your child's drawer to be applied when necessary.

I ask, please, that all clothing and shoes be named.

We have nappy changing facilities within the Nursery; please provide a plentiful supply of nappies in a bag with spare clothes in case of any little accidents.

Procedures

The Nursery have a list of procedures which we use as a guide to make sure that the service provided by the Nursery is a high quality one and that being a member of the Nursery is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and his/her parents.

Safeguarding Children

Our setting has a duty under law to help safeguard children against suspected or actual 'significant harm'.

Our employment practices ensure children against the likelihood of abuse in our settings and we have a procedure for managing complaints or allegations against a member of staff.

Our way of working with children and their parents ensures we are aware of any problems that may emerge and can offer support, including referral to appropriate agencies when necessary, to help families in difficulty.

Special Needs

As part of the Nursery's policy to make sure that its provision meets the needs of each individual child, we take account of any special needs a child may have.

The Nursery works to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2014).

The Nursery's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is Mrs Sellears

Inclusion Development Programme Co-ordinator is: Mrs Vyas

Starting at Acorns Nursery

In order to make settling in as easy as possible for your child, we offer two induction sessions before starting the Nursery, when you will get to meet your child's Key Person. Parents accompany their child during these introductory sessions and it is the ideal opportunity for you to experience Nursery life, meet the staff and have fun joining in with your child. Please talk to your child after your visits in a positive way and discuss the activities you have shared and enjoyed. This helps the child to feel more confident about visiting again.

Settling in and the First Days

We want your child to feel happy and safe in the Nursery. However, if you think your child may be upset when you leave, it is unwise to prolong the leave taking. Most children recover extremely quickly once the parent has gone. If your child is not used to being left or has never been separated from you before, we appreciate the process may be difficult for you as well as for your child. Please be reassured. We will be ready to work with you to make the settling in process as stress free as possible if you or your child find the separation difficult. Once you

have left your child in our care, please do not sit and worry, always phone the Nursery if you are at all concerned and the staff will be able to reassure you. Please be prompt to collect your child at the end of each session. They will be ready to see you but may not choose to share with you all the exciting things they have discovered. The children are kept very busy having lots of fun so they may initially be very tired. Be patient and when your child is ready he/she will talk about his/her time in the Nursery.

Please inform the Nursery Manager of any change in the collection routine. The Nursery staff will not allow your child to leave with an unauthorised person.

Comforters and Toys

Children learn best when they feel secure and loved. Whilst at Nursery your child may bring a special toy or comforter to help ease the transition from home to school. Please let us know in the "All about Me" questionnaire if your child has any fears or worries, however trivial they may seem.

Illness, Allergies and Accidents

Please advise the Nursery Manager in person if your child suffers from any allergies or medical conditions and in the "All about Me" questionnaire. No medicines or tablets can be administered to children by members of staff. Exceptions can only be made for children suffering life threatening conditions e.g. Asthma, Epilepsy and Diabetes.

See our procedures

"Administering Medicine Procedure"

"Managing Children with Allergies, or who are Sick or Infectious".

"Asthma Procedure"

Absent/Sickness

If your child is absent from Nursery, please telephone on the day. If your child is suffering with sickness or diarrhoea please keep your child at home for a minimum of 48 hours after the symptoms have ceased. Please do not bring your child to Nursery with a high temperature or any contagious diseases. If your child becomes unwell during the day the Nursery Manager will telephone you to collect your child. We will look after your child until you can arrive.. The Nursery staff are well qualified to deal with minor injuries and we will inform you as soon as possible about circumstances of any accidents and our response to them.

In the event of an emergency you will be notified as soon as possible. Should your child need to go to hospital a member of staff will accompany him/ her and remain with them until you are able to get there.

Acorns first aid officers are;

Newsletters

You will receive a class newsletter at the beginning of each term from the Nursery Manager to inform you of what is happening within the term. School weekly newsletters go out every Tuesday via email, which will provide on-going information about the whole school.

The Outdoor and Indoor Curriculum

The safe and stimulating environment provides us with the opportunity to broaden our knowledge and understanding of the world around us. We will be planting and caring for plants and growing vegetables and discovering the world of mini-beasts. We will observe the changing seasons and look at patterns and differences in nature. Physical activities to promote gross motor skills will be encouraged. Here in Acorns Nursery the children have the opportunity within both the indoor and outdoor environments to use paints, pencils, books, beads and mark making materials to establish the use of symbols and patterns, which form the basis of reading and writing. We have a quiet area where children can go and spend time looking at books or enjoy activities of their choice in a calming environment. A love of books, art, music and drama will be fostered and your child encouraged to express his/her thoughts and feelings through a variety of media. We place a great deal of importance on developing a child's spoken language and teach the children to value and respect what others have to say.

Dry and wet sand, water, construction toys, sorting and matching games will form the basis of mathematical understanding. Mathematical language will be used to describe size, shape, position, volume and number. Sensory play is encouraged through the use of clay, dough, gloop, cooked and uncooked pasta, sand and shaving foam. The children will have many opportunities to use a wide range of art resources in order to express their own ideas and feelings. We will explore colour, texture and develop skills in painting and drawing. The role play area is designed to promote language and imaginative skills. Your child can act out events from first hand experiences and take part in improvised drama.

The personal, social and emotional development of the child is of paramount importance to us and we use a variety of activities and games to promote self-esteem and self-confidence. We listen carefully to what your child is saying and respond sensitively to his/her needs. Your child will be introduced to ICT through carefully chosen software and will have the opportunity to learn basic mouse and keyboard skills.

The computer is used as an effective teaching tool to promote interest in colour, number and letter recognition.

As a member of Acorns Nursery, your child:

Is in a safe and stimulating environment;

Is given generous care and attention, because of our high ratio of adults to children;

Has the chance to join with other children and adults to play, work and learn together;

Is helped to take forward his/her learning and development by being helped to build on what he/she already knows and can do;

Has a personal Key Person who makes sure each child makes satisfying progress;

Is in a Nursery, which sees you as a partner in helping your child to learn and develop.

Acorns Nursery hopes that you and your child enjoy being members of the Nursery and that you both find taking part in our activities interesting and stimulating. The Manager Mrs Sellears is available at the beginning and end of each session for a quick chat, however if you would like to time to talk in more depth please ask to make an appointment.

The Nursery is managed by Mrs. Sellears, a qualified Early Years practitioner who has a long association with Howe Green House School. The ethos of the school is that love, trust and respect are intrinsic to the acquisition of knowledge, self-esteem and development. The foundations of these fundamental values are laid down in Acorns Nursery.

Tapestry Online Learning Journal

What is Tapestry?

Tapestry is an online learning journal to record photos, observations and comments, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, to build up a record of your child's experiences during their time with us. This system allows us to work with parents and carers to share information and record the children's play and learning in and outside of the classroom.

What is Tapestry's website address?

www.tapestryjournal.com

How do Tapestry system work?

Tapestry provides each individual child with their own learning journal held online. Parents and carers are given their own log-in using their email and password (which is pre-set by us but can be changed by you to make it more secure). All our teachers are given secure pin log-in number. They can record and assess children linking to the EYFS curriculum, uploading photo or video media. Once saved and completed each observation is approved by the manager. An email is then automatically generated to parents/carers set up to that child's account and they are informed that an observation has been added so they can have a look and add any of their own comments to it.

Who can access to Tapestry?

As parents/carers you both can access Tapestry by completing the permission slip with email address that you wish to link with the system.

Can other relatives join in Tapestry?

Yes they can, if you wish to add grandparents/aunts/uncles etc. to the account please complete the additional person box on the permission form and they can be set up. Only those people who you have given permission to have a login and password will be able to see your child's journals.

Where do I start?

Once you have given us an email address, we will set up an account for you. Go to

www.tapestryjournal.com on your computer.

Or if you have an **iPhone/iPad** please visit the iTunes store and download the Tapestry app from the Education section (search for Tapestry Mobile).

<https://itunes.apple.com/tr/app/tapestry-mobile-online-learning/id583394125?mt=8>

if you have an **Android/Tablet**, search for Tapestry learning journal app.

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.fsf.tapestrymobile&hl=en_GB

Login using your email address and the password we give you. We strongly recommend that you change your password on your first visit.

What is the PIN setting up for?

When you access Tapestry through mobile phone or tablet, please set a unique PIN when you log into for the first time. This will be required whenever you return to the application or after the screen has locked.

How do I change my settings on the computer?

At the top right of your screen you will see your name, and selecting this will give you the option to 'Edit Preferences'. Choose this option and you will be presented with a screen giving you the option to change your email address and password. You also have the option to receive an email whenever a new observation is added to your child's Learning Journey – just tick or untick the relevant box if you would like to change this setting.

How do I change my settings on iPhone/iPad/Android?

To change your settings on the iPhone/iPad app, click the 'gear' button on the top right hand side of the application. This enables you to change password and/or email address.

How can I view my child's Learning Journals?

Once logged in, you will see your child's observations on your home screen in a list – selecting any one of these will open up the observation for you to look at. You may add comments in the box at the bottom of the observation if you would like to - and we would love to receive such comments!

How do I know that my child's Learning Journal has been updated?

The system will automatically send you an email when an observation for your child has been added.

How do I add an entry to my child's Learning Journal.

Choose the 'Add Observation' option (or the 'plus' icon on your iPhone/iPad/Android) and add the relevant information in the boxes on screen. Photos and videos may be uploaded by choosing the 'add media' option. When you have saved your observation, you may go back to the home screen at any time by choosing 'home'.

"From little acorns mighty oak trees grow"

