



Dear Prospective Parent/Carer

Thank you for your interest in Acorns Pre-school. Please find attached an information pack containing an Application & Medical Details form and a Permission Sheet, which can also be found on the Acorns website [www.acorns-preschool.org.uk](http://www.acorns-preschool.org.uk).

We hope you will find all the information you need within this pack. Should you have further questions or wish to arrange a visit to Acorns and view the pre-school and meet the staff then please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below.

To register your child, please return the Application & Medical Details form and Permission Sheet to Acorns Pre-school as soon as possible. Our aim is to offer you the hours you wish but sometimes these can be very busy and we may have to offer you an alternative.

When you have registered your child you will get one morning or afternoon at Acorns free of charge. The main purpose of this is to give you an opportunity to view the pre-school in action and to help your child to settle in. Please indicate your preferred time and day on the application form. We will then contact you to arrange a convenient date.

We look forward to hearing from you and to welcoming you to Acorns.

Yours sincerely

Paula Jenkins BA(Hons)  
(Manager)

Acorns Pre-school, The Pratten,  
Church Road, Christian Malford,  
Chippenham, Wiltshire. SN15 4BW  
Charity No.1031613



## **Acorns Pre-school - Information Pack**

Acorns Pre-school opened in 1972 and is managed by a committee of parents and carers. The committee supports Acorns by involving themselves in policies and procedures. Acorns are a registered charity and the committee also takes on the additional role of fundraising throughout the school year.

Since 1972 Acorns Pre-school has kept abreast of the many educational changes and as a result it has developed into what you can see today; a happy, stimulating and secure environment which allows the child to learn through play, explore and grow in all aspects of their social, emotional and educational development.

### **Location**

Acorns Pre-school is positioned in a quiet location within the rural community of Christian Malford.

We are a small friendly pre-school situated in the Pratten building on Church Road behind the Christian Malford Church of England Primary School and close to the historic All Saints' Church. As a consequence we enjoy close links with both the Primary School and All Saints' Church and are able to use many of the school's facilities and learning equipment. These close links have also allowed the children to gain familiarity with their surroundings, teachers and the school children at the neighbouring Primary School. This proximity has been shown to help the children make the transition to school more smoothly.

We have our own large, enclosed and secure garden with a covered area, which encourages exploration through free flow play in all weathers. We have received an award for excellent practice within the foundation stage and as a result have been included in the Early Years Good Practice File.

### **Our Aim**

Our aim is to create a happy and fun learning environment that encourages children to learn through play in order for them to achieve confidence and their best potential in all aspects of their development.

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We achieve this through a secure and happy environment with qualified members of staff giving a high adult to child ratio. The high staff to child ratio enables each individual child's learning needs to be tailored to their stage of development.

## **Curriculum**

Our curriculum follows the statutory framework of the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS) and its main objective is for your child to have fun whilst learning and meeting the seven learning goals, these being;

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

Each term covers a variety of themes based on the individual children's interests and needs. For example, one particular child showed an interest in farms and farming. As a result we were able to plan the learning around that topic to ensure the seven areas of development were achieved.

At each session the children enjoy supervised free play both inside and outside and have the opportunity to participate in more structured adult-led activities covering the early learning goals and relevant theme. There are a wide variety of toys, games and equipment that are regularly rotated to maintain variety, interest and stimulation.

Acorns Pre-school is inspected by Ofsted. We were inspected in January 2012 and given an overall rating of 'outstanding' by Ofsted. If you wish to see a summary of the latest Ofsted report or to discuss your child's assessment please speak to the Manager or your child's keyperson who will be happy to discuss it with you. The Ofsted report can also be found on the internet through the website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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## **Staff**

We have five highly experienced, dedicated and permanent members of staff, providing a high staff to child ratio, who are Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked. Our staff are also trained in First Aid and Child Protection. They work together very closely and are always creating new learning ideas to keep the children stimulated and interested as their aim is to make your child's pre-school years as fulfilling and enjoyable as possible.

Our current staff to child ratio as laid down by the EYFS Government guideline is as follows; 1 member of staff being responsible for 4 children under the age of 3 years old and 1 member of staff being responsible for 8 children over the age of 3 years old. There are no more than 20 children per session.

Upon starting at Acorns Pre-School, your child will be allocated a Keyperson from the team of five staff. The Keyworker will be responsible for monitoring your child's progress during their life at Acorns Pre-School. However, your child will also work closely with all the members of staff.

### **Manager**

Paula Jenkins BA (Hons) Early Years Care and Education: Paula has over twenty years experience working with children and has worked at Acorns since 2002, first as deputy and since September 2007 as Manager. Paula gained a first class honours degree in 2013.

### **Deputy Play Leader**

Michelle Rees: Michelle is qualified to NVQ level 3. She is a mum of four and has worked at Acorns since 2007. Michelle is also our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

### **Play Assistant**

Amanda Wilcox: Amanda is a mum of two and is qualified to NVQ level 3. She has seventeen years experience of working with children. Her love of the outdoor environment further enhances the children's learning within the setting.



### Play Assistant

Laura Sidhu: Mum to three, Laura, is our newest member of staff. Laura has served on the committee for a number of years, she currently also runs Little Acorns, the Parent and Toddler Group, and has sent all three of her children to Acorns for their preschool learning and care. Laura will begin a childcare qualification in September 2015.

### Play Assistant

Hannah Bright: Following her GCSE exams Hannah began an apprenticeship with Acorns in September 2014. Hannah is extremely popular with all the children at Acorns and fortunately will continue her apprenticeship with us in September 2015 to gain a level 3 qualification.

All staff currently undergoing training are supported by a mentor in the setting and an assessor from a credited training provider. On occasion we provide local students with closely supervised work experience.

### Wilderness Days

In September 2011 Acorns Pre-school, Christian Malford launched our Wilderness Days. Wilderness Days are based on the Forest School concept. Forest School is an innovative approach to outdoor play and learning which originated in Scandinavia. Wilderness Days promote sensory child-led outdoor play, encouraging and stimulating curiosity and absorption. They build self confidence and self esteem, combine freedom with responsibility, and allow children to see the changing seasons first hand.

A typical Wilderness Day includes the children making bread for their morning snack, getting ready to go outside by themselves, walking to the nearby woodland where they participate in a group activity then returning to the setting to make their own hot chocolate. The day we hold our wilderness day changes three times throughout the year. Please ask for details.



## Opening Hours

We follow the Wiltshire County Council's school terms and holidays. We can accept a child from the age of 2 years. We are open from Monday to Friday 8.30am – 3.00pm and can take up to 18 children at a time.

Early Morning	Mornings	Afternoons
8.30 – 9am	9am – 12noon	12noon – 3pm

NB: Lunch will be taken between 12noon and 1pm. Children who come to Acorns for a morning only can stay for lunch. This will either be taken out of a child's Nursery Education Free Entitlement or charged at the appropriate hourly rate.

Children who have lunch at Acorns have the option of having hot, home cooked meals prepared using locally sourced ingredients or bringing a packed lunch and drink. The hot meals cost £2.30 and are ordered and paid for three weeks in advance.

If children bring a packed lunch we encourage parents and carers to provide a nutritionally well balanced lunch box (e.g. sandwiches, yoghurt and fruit). We have no facilities to refrigerate lunch boxes so in the warmer months we advise you place a small freezer pack inside your child's lunch box.

## Fees/Registration

We will need to see your child's birth certificate or passport as proof of their date of birth, this is mandatory for all applicants.

Our current fees are outlined separately in the pack and are revised by the Committee on an annual basis.

Fees are to be paid termly in advance. Please note we operate a 'no-pay, no-stay policy'. **If you decide to remove your child from Acorns a half terms notice is required or the full terms fees will be charged.**

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In the event that Acorns is unable to open i.e. in extreme weather conditions, you will not be charged for any sessions your child should have attended on the affected days, however, if Acorns is open and your child does not attend, then you will be charged for any missed sessions on those days.

We currently accept Wiltshire Education Authority Nursery vouchers, Accor Childcare vouchers, Computershare Childcare vouchers and Sodexo vouchers.

If you have any queries with regards to the fees or the payment terms please speak to Paula Jenkins.

### **The Nursery Education Grant**

All children are currently eligible for free Nursery Education for 15 hours a week, 38 weeks a year from the term after their third birthday. The funding terms are set out nationally as follows:

Autumn term	:	1 September – 31 December
Spring term	:	1 January – 31 March
Summer term	:	1 April – 31 August

The 15 hours must be spread over a minimum of three days with a maximum of 12.5 hours in two days and a minimum of 2.5 hours. Anything over and above 2.5 hours is flexible. However, we run in core sessions so that the days flow well and there is continuity for your child. The hours can be shared between two settings (three settings when a child has complex needs and a District Specialist Centre is one of them).

At the beginning of each term you will be asked to sign a form confirming your child's date of birth, postcode and the number of sessions required. The headcount is used by Wiltshire County Council to allocate funding direct to Acorns Pre-school for the whole term.

In addition you will be asked to complete a contract with Acorns on an annual basis confirming the hours your child will be attending.

You can find out further information on the internet [www.askwiltshire.org](http://www.askwiltshire.org).

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## **Snack Bar**

The children help to prepare the snack each morning under the supervision of a member of staff. Then all children are invited to choose their own snack and drink and sit together as a group. The snack is provided by the pre-school and is always healthy and nutritious. The children are offered either milk or water to drink. Please inform us if your child has any food allergies.

Until the end of 2009 there was always a parent helper on duty in the morning. This is now run on a voluntary basis as we believe parents and carers love to see how their children are developing.

We would be delighted to accommodate any parent or carer who wishes to spend a morning in the pre-school. Please discuss it with a staff member in advance.

## **Discipline**

We encourage children to be caring and tolerant towards each other and do not allow bullying or bad language. We do not smack a child, shout at a child or humiliate a child in any way. We aim to maintain a good level of discipline without being strict or intimidating. Our procedure is to:

- Quietly ask the child not to do whatever is causing a problem, or suggest a different approach
- Talk to the child, explaining why what they are doing is unacceptable
- Diffuse any situation of conflict by suggesting a way of sharing, taking turns or introducing a different activity.

## **Sickness**

We take children who have colds but please do not bring your child if they are unwell in any other way and notify Acorns Pre-school of their nonattendance and the reason of their absence, tel. no. 07816 280810. Children who have suffered from sickness and diarrhoea must have been clear of symptoms for at least 48 hours.

Please inform us in writing if your child needs to take any medication; however we ask you to consider whether your child should attend Acorns Pre-school, if



your child requires regular Calpol/Calprofen (i.e. medicine to reduce pain or fever).

### **Clothing**

Please supply spare dry clothing as your child is encouraged to participate in all kinds of activities during the day, some of which are messy and we aim for them to spend half of the session outdoors. Please therefore make sure your child is adequately dressed. In winter, warm suitable clothing for outdoor play is needed including waterproof clothing and wellies. In summer a sunhat and sun cream are required. Please also put a nametape on any coat/jacket.

If your child is not toilet trained please provide spare nappies/wipes. If your child is not entirely toilet trained please provide a dry change of clothes.

### **Fire/Accident procedure**

Fire drills are carried out on a regular basis and staff are fully aware of the procedure. Details of any accident, no matter how small, are entered into an accident book and signed by the Play Leader and parent/carer of the child. Any major accident would be dealt with in the appropriate way and the parent/carer contacted.

### **Special Needs**

We are able to accept children with special needs and have a special educational needs coordinator.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We support equal opportunities in our childcare and employment of staff. As set out in the Policies and Procedures for EYFS we are committed to anti-discriminatory practice to promote equal opportunity and the valuing of diversity for all the children and families in Acorns Pre-school.



## **Day carers and child protection**

As a day carer registered with Social Services we are required to follow the Child Protection procedures agreed through the Area Child Protection Committee in Wiltshire. We have a copy of the child protection procedures and guidance in Wiltshire for you to see if you wish.

We will try at all times to share with you any concerns we may have. However, we do have a duty to refer to Social Services if we suspect that child abuse may be an issue. Our first concern will always be the welfare of your child. Further information is available from the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board: [www.wiltshirelscb.org.uk](http://www.wiltshirelscb.org.uk)

## **Acorns Policy and Procedures**

Acorns policies and procedures are available for all to read in the setting, in addition key policies are available for download from the setting website.

## **Acorns Committee & Fundraising**

Acorns are a non profit making charity (charity no. 1031613) run by a committee of parent volunteers for the benefit of all our children. This means that parent participation on the committee and support for fund raising is vital so please get involved - it's also an excellent way to be involved with your child's education, meet new people and have fun. We look forward to seeing you!

## **Complaints/Suggestions**

Please do not hesitate to use our complaints/suggestion box in the main entrance area. This is checked on a weekly basis by the Chair and will be dealt with appropriately. Should you wish to take matters further or seek a second opinion please make contact with any of the following:

- Child's keyworker (listed on whiteboard)
- Manager
- Chair (details listed on notice board)
- Any committee member (details listed on notice board)
- OFSTED (address and telephone number listed on notice board)

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