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 **St Mary's Pre-School, Shortlands.**

**Welcome** to St Mary’s Pre-school Shortlands, we are open for a maximum of 38 weeks a year from 9.15am - 12.15pm.

We are registered with the London Borough of Bromley and are inspected by Ofsted. We are members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

You may contact us to place your child’s name on our waiting list and we will inform you in writing when a place becomes available. If we are oversubscribed we take siblings and proximity into account when offering places. Please note that as the majority of children leave in July to go to primary schools, the majority of our new children start in the autumn term.

You are very welcome to come and visit, please contact us to arrange a suitable time. You may bring your child with you on this visit, which lasts about 15 minutes. Also during the term before your child starts with us, you and your child will be invited in to meet the staff and see the pre-school in action. This is an ideal time to talk about any worries or concerns you may have and also to let us have any information which you think may be vital or useful for us to know to enable us to prepare for your child starting.

**Aims & Objectives**

We aim to provide a warm, safe, stimulating and welcoming environment for your child to learn and enhance their development.

We are a fun-filled pre-school that looks forward to the challenge of preparing children, during their very important early years, for their future both in schools and in their lives ahead.

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and the children learn through play.

We are committed to meeting the needs of every child, and to ensuring that they have every chance to develop to their full potential through play and a structured programme, no matter what age, class, race, ability, ethnic origin, gender, family circumstances, linguistic background, religion or belief. This applies throughout all pre-school policies, curriculum plans and procedures.

We are a church group and we celebrate Christian festivals. Children and families of other religions are very welcome and we celebrate the variety of lifestyles and cultures within our community.

During the time that the children are with the pre-school we aim to prepare them for school and the outside world through play.

The children will learn the following social skills:

* Learning to share and take turns
* Learning good manners
* Making friends and respecting others
* Understanding that we are all of equal value
* Learning to be truthful
* Learning to make choices and decisions
* Learning to expand their language and their imagination

**Staff**

Pre-school Leader - Christine Hall

Deputy Leader & SEND Co-ordinator - Erin Hayes

We have a total staff of seven; at each session there will be five staff on duty. Six members of staff are qualified. We send our staff on as many revision and new courses as can be managed and if possible we fund unqualified staff to train. All the staff have undertaken a 12 hour First Aid training course and are DBS checked.

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) by working on the 7 areas of learning and development.

For children under 3 we concentrate on developing the **3 prime areas**.

* Personal, Social and Emotional Development
* Communication & Language
* Physical Development.

As children grow the prime areas help them to develop skills in the **4 specific areas.**

* Literacy
* Mathematics
* Understanding the World
* Expressive Arts & Design

We observe how the children are progressing within these areas and set them ‘next steps’. A member of staff is allocated to each child (keyperson). Each child is planned for individually.

We use a variety of topics to cover the 7 areas. Every term we inform parents of the topic that will be covered each week so that, if the children want to bring something from home that is relevant to the topic, they are welcome to do so. These items will be kept safely on the topic table until they are taken home. The children show what they have brought in at ‘showing time’. Sometimes the children choose what toys we get out.

Having a topic each week enables us to cover a wide range of subjects and to teach the children a great deal. It allows us to pass on all sorts of important ideas to children in a fun way. The music and the planning of each session are similarly worked around each week’s topic.

Through the EYFS children learn by playing, exploring, being active and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outdoors.

**Resources**

We have a large variety of resources for your child to use. These include

* craft activities such as painting, gluing and cutting.
* Tactile activities such as water, playdough, cornflour, magic snow, ice blocks, pasta, rubber and shredded paper.
* Role play area such as the home corner, shop, café, hospital, construction site and airport.
* Reading corner.
* Writing table and maths table.
* Climbing frame and physical equipment.
* Construction toys.
* Table top activities such as magnetic fishing, puppet theatre and puzzles.
* Music and singing activities.
* Computer, tablet, beebots and remote control cars
* various outside toys such as trikes, scooters and a Wendy House

**How a pre-school session runs**

When the children arrive they find their name cards and then have a short time of freeplay. We then have a ‘register’ time when we talk about the day, the weather and what we are going to be doing that day. We then continue with freeplay during which time the ‘snack-bar’ is open. Parents help to run the ‘snack-bar’ and we offer milk, water and a variety of fruit.

During freeplay the staff may be observing the children or doing activities with them. Towards the end of freeplay we have a toilet time, they may go at other times but have to ask a member of staff to accompany them.

We then have tidy-up time and the children help to put away the toys into boxes.The next activity is circle time or ‘show and tell’, the children can show items they have brought in related to our weekly topic and then it is singing time. This is followed by a range of activities including games with hoops, balls, bean bags, a circuit, musical movement, team games, musical chairs, dancing, acting out nursery rhymes or maybe dominoes, a sounds game, a memory game or playing with the parachute.

We end with a story read in 2 groups.

Not every session will run like this as we might have a visitor coming in to talk to the children. Towards the end of term we may be practising for a concert.

There is an enclosed patio area attached to the hall which we use every day. If it is cold we have coats for the children to wear.

When the weather is fine and warm, we are able to go outside to the grassed area at the side of the hall; there we have a small garden where we grow things with the help of the children. The children are always supervised outside and the area is fenced off from the road and pavements.

Each day we put a notice on the door informing you of the main activities that we have done during that session - in case you do not get told!

**Outings**

We organise several outings while your child is with us. We have an annual trip to Crystal Palace Park to see the dinosaurs and the children’s zoo and we have a train trip to Cator Park. We aim to have a spring and an autumn walk.

**Settling In**

Each child is treated individually when settling in at pre-school. Please come and discuss this with a member of the staff if you think there will be a problem - generally we ‘play it by ear’ and work along with you. We will phone you during your child’s first session to let you know how your child is getting on.

**Discipline**

If a child is hurt or upset by another child we listen to both sides of the story and if one child is considered to have behaved inappropriately, he/she is asked to say sorry. If a child continues to misbehave, then he/she stays with one of the staff and is given a task to do and is not allowed to return to the original activity until that member of staff says that they may. If we feel there is a real problem with your child, we will speak to you so that we can work on it together.

**Parental participation**

As parents/carers you are invited to join us at the end of term concerts. We have a notice board by the main entrance (which we ask you to check regularly) to tell you what is going on at the pre-school, and we are always happy to hear your valuable comments and suggestions. We ask for volunteers to help with the snack-bar, for visits out, during staff sickness, or for an activity that needs extra help.

We celebrate cultural festivals and welcome parents to come in to help with this.

**Moving on**

We have good links with all the local primary schools. Reception teachers visit us, usually just before children are about to move on to primary schools and the pre-school leader and deputy visit local schools.

**Mobile phones**

In the interests of the children’s safety we have taken the decision to make the pre-school a **‘mobile-free zone’**. We would ask you to keep your mobile phones in your bags or pockets while you are in the pre-school building.