Welcome to Pre-school

Start your child’s learning journey today

“The children’s learning and development is impressive, as all the children are achieving as much as they can and the provision for developing their knowledge and understanding of the world is excellent.”

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Our Pre-schools

The transition into pre-school is a very special milestone in your child’s development. Your child will have grown in confidence and ability and is now ready to develop all the skills needed for the new challenge of school.

Our pre-school rooms are led by Early Years Professionals (EYPs) and childcare practitioners who plan for the individual needs of each child.

Your child will develop at their own pace; have fun; make friends; learning while they play, making good use of our wonderful natural outdoor areas. They will be encouraged to be creative, explore, experiment and activities are planned through observing their individual interest and needs. Your child will learn the important social skills of sharing and cooperating, while building self-esteem and becoming competent with number and language.

“Children's interact positively and play well together. There are many opportunities to play alongside and with other children, which promotes friendships. Children are extremely confident and self-assured.”

Ofsted 2011

Our pre-school rooms offer a large wealth of resources. The indoor environment is organised in a way that encourages children's exploration. Children can independently access toys, equipment and books to support their play. The outdoors gives them first hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world.

Children will always be able to access; sand and water play; book corner; role play and small world areas; art and craft; construction, information technology; science area; outdoor learning; physical movement; problem solving reasoning and numeracy activities and language resources and programmes.

“The environment and expert practice actively contributes to helping children make the best possible progress in their learning and development.”

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Outdoor Learning

Pre-school children go outdoors every day and activities take place in all weathers. The outdoor areas in each of our nurseries have been specially designed and imaginatively resourced with multi-sensory gardens, raised vegetable beds, willow dens, tree houses and large sand pits and woodland areas.

Inspired by forest school* practice we make good use of the natural resources found in the nursery gardens and woodland environments; exploring nature trails; making dens and mud kitchens; climbing areas; sheltered places for children to listen to stories and share their own tales and observing wildlife. Wood piles and wild flowers attract insects and small mammals and the children are encouraged to investigate & explore and respect all living things. The nursery team support the child’s learning-responding to their sense of awe and wonder of the natural world.

Outdoor activities:

• provide the flexibility and freedom for child-initiated, experimental learning which increases motivation and concentration.

• encourage the development of physical skills; co-ordination; manipulation and strength while developing an understanding of risk and building self-confidence.

• increase health and well-being

• develop strong social skills & improve communication and co-operation with the ability to work in groups

• develop a sense of trust and achievement, self-esteem and confidence

• encourage problem solving and creative skills

*The development of Forest School began in Britain in the mid-1990s; it is based on a Scandinavian idea developed in the 50’s focusing on teaching children about the natural world.
Healthy Eating

Every child at nursery enjoys a well-balanced healthy diet in order to build a strong body and mind. We provide nutritious and wholesome meals and snacks in carefully designed 4 week rotational menus, prepared by our experienced cooks. Menus can be downloaded from the nursery website at [www.portlandnurseries.co.uk](http://www.portlandnurseries.co.uk).

We follow nutritional guidelines from the School Food Trust and include suggestions from parents in our planning. Vegetarian options are available at every meal and we are able to cater for all special diets. The meals are prepared in the nursery kitchens from locally sourced fresh ingredients and the menu is changed to reflect the seasons of the year and the diverse culture we live in.

"The children make healthy choices about what they eat and drink, as meals are made from freshly prepared ingredients."

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"In recognition of our commitment to quality nutrition and food preparation all the nurseries have been awarded the Kirklees ‘Healthy Eating’ Gold Award and the ‘Food Hygiene’ top rating of 5."

Mealtimes are valuable for encouraging social and personal skills and provide opportunities to learn about healthy eating. Practitioners sit together with the children at mealtimes encouraging conversation and good manners. The children learn how to set the table and serve themselves and how to use child size cutlery properly.

Working Together

We encourage parents to work with us and provide opportunities for you to be actively involved and we always want to hear about your child’s interests and outings at home. Here are some of the ways in which we work together.
**Key Person**
Each child in pre-school will have a Key Person who is sensitive and caring to the needs of your child. The Key Person will help your child become familiar with the setting; communicate with you on a daily basis about their day at nursery. The key person will observe your child’s learning and progression throughout their time in nursery and will track their development in your child’s Learning Journal.

**Learning Journal**
Your child’s achievements will be recorded and displayed in your child’s Learning Journal. The key person will observe your child on a day to day basis while they are playing and exploring and track their development. The journal will include observations, photographs, WOW cards and examples of children’s work. Contributions from home are always welcome. Your child’s Learning Journal is always available for you to see and take home.

**WOW card**
Wow cards allow you and the nursery to record special milestones in your child’s development. They don’t need to be amazing feats, just special to your child. So it may be that ‘Matthew rode his bike by himself’ or “Chloe can write her name” During circle time children have the opportunity to sit together and share these special moments.

**All about Me**
When your child starts pre-school you will be asked to reflect on what your child likes to do at home. You will receive an ‘All about Me’ sheet to bring with you for the first meeting. This gives you the opportunity to tell us more about your child’s interests and abilities, such as “My favourite story”; “I like to eat”; “I am fantastic at”; “I have just learned”.

**Daily Feedback**
Your child’s key person will communicate with you on a daily basis about your child’s day at nursery and discuss any questions you may have.

**Whiteboards**
We use whiteboards in pre-school to communicate the children’s key daily activities and any themes we are exploring that week. These are great if you are in a rush and don’t have much time for verbal feedback with your child’s key person.

**Progress reports**
These will be completed three months after your child starts nursery and then every six months after. This report will include a brief description of your child’s progress and what the next steps might be. You will be asked to read through the report and feedback your comments.

**Parents’ evenings**
Are held regularly for you to meet with your child’s key person and discuss in more detail your child’s development. You will also be able to go through their Learning Journal and recent progress reports. (You may also arrange to have individual appointments anytime throughout the year)

**Stay and play**
These are a fantastic opportunity for parents and grandparents to join in nursery activities with your child. We hold these sessions every month usually between 4-5pm. It is also a good time to chat to your child’s keyworker and look at your child’s Learning Journal, as well as meeting other parents.
Nursery Networking

You will have the opportunity to become involved in charity fundraising events, planned trips and the Christmas party. Parents are always welcome in the nursery to share skills and hobbies; lend a hand in the garden, or read a story.

The nursery website [www.portlandnurseries.co.uk](http://www.portlandnurseries.co.uk), newsletters, parent’s intranet, notice boards and forums will keep you regularly up to date with nursery news and information. And of course you can call or email the nursery at any time.

“Enthusiastic parents visit the nursery to share their expert knowledge of diverse cultures at times of celebration such as Chinese New Year, Diwali or Eid. Parental involvement inspires children to develop positive attitudes to their own and other people’s cultural and spiritual beliefs.”

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Induction – starting pre-school

Once your child has a place confirmed at nursery an introductory visit will be arranged with your child’s key person. This will allow you to discuss your child’s daily routine and individual needs and the ‘All about Me’ sheet. We will arrange a number of free “settling in visits” giving your child the opportunity to join in pre-school activities, experience mealtimes and become familiar with the new environment. Parents are always welcome to accompany their child during these visits.

Transition from toddlers to pre-school

If your child is already in one of our toddler rooms your child’s key person will arrange a meeting to discuss the ideal time to start the transition process into pre-school. This happens when everyone is confident your child is ready for the next stage in their learning and development.

Transition visits usually last over a period of two weeks, or until everyone is confident that your child will settle. To begin with your child will make these visits with their key worker, joining in pre-school activities and experiencing mealtimes. They will begin building a relationship with their new key person, other members of the team and the children. There will always be lots of familiar faces in the pre-school as your child will move with many of their friends from toddlers. Your child’s Learning Journal will carry on through to pre-school.
The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

We follow the play based Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) from birth to five years. This gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. The children play and learn in a fun environment with adults who understand and care about them, ensuring that each individual child is learning through high quality play that is tailored towards their individual needs.

Our Early Years Professionals and childcare practitioners provide a rich, varied and imaginative environment for every child. Activities are planned by assessing and monitoring your child’s development through observations and tracking.

“Consistently high levels of qualifications, comprehensive knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and child development means that staff are skilled at identifying and meeting children’s diverse needs”

Ofsted 2011

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Communication and language

We provide a rich language environment where children can develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

“Children confidently talk about the outings that they have been on to the park, library and dentist and demonstrate an exceptional understanding of keeping themselves safe when they go out on walks.”

Ofsted 2011

“Circle time activities provide opportunities to talk about favourite foods and preferences, which helps children to respect differences and begin to understand that they are all individuals and unique” Ofsted 2011

Physical development

Children are encouraged to be active and will 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.

“The children have innovative opportunities to engage in a wide range of physical activities and experiment with different ways of moving. The children choose when they would like to play outside; they have access to waterproof suits and can play out in all weathers.”

Ofsted 2011
Personal, social and emotional development

We help 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.

“The children’s behaviour is exemplary, for instance children share, take turns, use good manners without being prompted to do so and enjoy the responsibility of being either a ‘helper’ or ‘inspector’ The show an excellent understanding of what standards of behaviour are expected and apply these in order to keep themselves safe.”

Ofsted 2011

Literacy

We encourage children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children have access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest and we use “Jolly Phonics” to support their learning.

“Staff are highly skilled at teaching children about sounds and linking letters. For example, listening and singing songs, tracing letter shapes in the sand and playing sound lotto.”

Ofsted 2011

“The environment provides rich, varied and imaginative opportunities to develop early writing skill. For example, mark making outdoors on the chalk board and shopping lists in the home corner.

Ofsted 2011

Mathematics

Children have opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers; calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

“Children’s numeracy skills are enhanced through everyday activities. For example, one to one matching when laying the table shows children’s understanding of numbers as labels for counting. Sorting and grouping toys and resources a tidy up time effectively develops children’s calculating skills.” Ofsted 2011

“Children can confidently count from 1-20 and can successfully add two different types of objects together.”

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Understanding the world

Children are encouraged 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.

“The children develop a positive attitude to others and a very good understanding about the wider world and local community. They learn about interesting religious festivals and events such as Ramadan, Diwali and Burns Night.”

Ofsted 2011

The children grow, harvest and eat fruit and vegetables; they go out on nature walks and feed the ducks. As a result, the children are developing an excellent knowledge of the natural world.”

Ofsted 2011

Expressive arts and design

There are opportunities to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as 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.

Children are developing their skills for the future by using information and communication technology. Children use the computer to play games, torches, telephones, C.D player and recording pegs. They know how to use the digital camera and enjoy taking photos.”

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Transition to school

Starting school is a big step for both the child and their family. We will work in partnership with you and the local schools to fully prepare your child for the new challenge.

- All our nurseries maintain strong links with local primary schools in our catchment areas.
- You will be invited to a presentation on the transition process to school with local reception teachers joining us to answer any questions and queries.
- Children will make group visits to local schools with their pre-school key workers.
- Reception teachers are invited to the nursery to speak to the children in pre-school.
- Children are able to dress up in school uniform and look through booklets provided by local schools with photos of school life.

At the end of your child’s time in pre-school your child’s key worker will complete a profile, providing parents, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of your child.

N.B. Parents should submit an application to the school of their choice when their child reaches three years of age.

Are you ready for pre-school?

Every child develops at a different pace but children are usually ready around the age of 3 years, but remember that the nursery education funding does not start until the term after your child’s third birthday.

Your child should be able to use a toilet and no longer be using nappies or pull-ups. If you have any worries about this please talk to your child’s key person who will help you plan ahead.
What we provide

- Meals, drinks, snacks
- Sun cream
- Every child in pre-school will have access to a set of Kozi Kidz waterproof dungarees and jacket for outdoor play. The Dungarees can be used all year round and are designed to be worn over your child’s trousers to keep their legs nice and dry. The Jacket is designed to be layered over a warm fleece during the cold winter months and then can be used over lighter layers during warmer days.

What to bring to nursery

- Hat, gloves, coat, wellies, sun hat.
- We would like you to provide your child with a warm fleece that can be left at nursery for wearing under nursery outdoor clothing in the colder months.
- Please provide a bag for your child to leave at nursery to store these items in. Your child will have their own peg in the entrance where this can be kept safe during the day.
- A change of clothes
- Clearly label all clothing and footwear

Paying for childcare

Free Nursery Education Place

All children from the school term after their third birthday are entitled to 15 hours funded nursery education per week for 38 weeks of the year during term time. This entitlement continues until the term after the child’s fifth birthday when compulsory schooling begins. These funded hours must be taken over a minimum of three days to ensure your child receives the maximum benefit of this early education.

Nursery Education is funded by Kirklees directly to the nursery; the funded period is free to you. We charge for meals and snacks and any childcare that you need before or after the funded period. Most parents will be able to enjoy a straightforward reduction in nursery fees. The entitlement needs to be spread across three days so if your child attends for less than this ask the nursery manager how you can access the full fifteen hours.

Childcare Tax Credit

Families who are in work and who pay for Ofsted-registered childcare can receive financial help through tax credits. Please check with HM Revenue & Customs www.hmrc.gov.uk or with your local Children & Families Information Service for further information.

Childcare Vouchers are one of the ways your employer can support you to pay for childcare with a registered provider. Employers can offer you the opportunity to pay your childcare costs through a salary sacrifice, known as Childcare Vouchers. To find out more information please speak to the Nursery Manager or contact your local Children & Families Information Service.