



# Little Squirrels Prospectus

## CONTENTS

About Us	2
Aims	3
Curriculum	3
The Pre-School Day	5
Sessions, Numbers and Fees	6
Procedures and Policies	7
Parental Involvement	8
How the Pre-School is Managed	8

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## **ABOUT US**

We are a small, friendly community pre-school for children between 2 and 5 years old. We have first-rate, highly experienced staff and excellent adult to child ratios. We pride ourselves on a relaxed atmosphere with plenty of attention to each individual child.

The care and safety of each child are paramount. We provide a happy, stimulating, inclusive environment. Our equipment is good and, following a recent large grant, we will soon boast an impressive range of up to date equipment including computers.

The programme through the year follows the national curriculum. Each session is carefully planned around learning goals in line with the curriculum, while keeping the timetable flexible to incorporate the children's selected play activities.

Established in 1989, we are managed by a committee of parents and local residents, fully regulated and inspected by Ofsted. We are a registered charity, and belong to the Pre-school Learning Alliance which has over 40 years' experience of pre-school childcare and education.

### **How to find us**

We are at Kilndown Village Hall, which is on Church Road, the main road through the village. There is space to park outside the hall when dropping off or picking up children.

Kilndown is a pretty, quiet village in the High Weald (an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), yet is within a few minutes drive of the A21 on the Kent/East Sussex border. The villages of Lamberhurst, Goudhurst and Flimwell all lie within a 3 mile radius.

The Village Hall is a bright and airy building which is centrally heated. To the rear and side of the hall is a secure outside play area with a child-safety surface. There is a children's garden and the children are encouraged to grow and care for a range of fruit, vegetables and other plants. The hall is next to the large village green and its range of play equipment. Footpaths lead from the green into Kilndown Woods – ideal for nature walks.

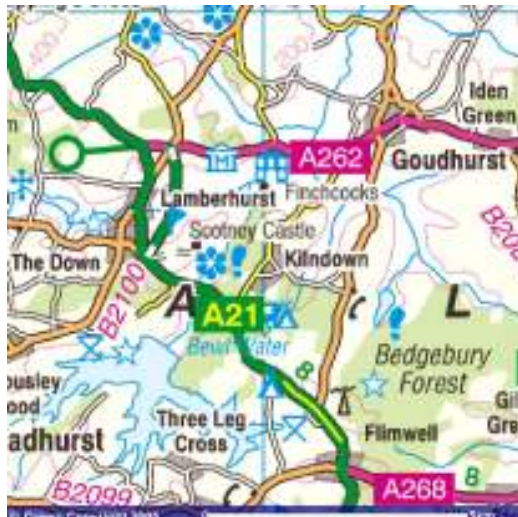


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## AIMS

We aim:

1. To provide a loving, stimulating and safe environment in which each child feels special.
2. To provide quality care and education.
3. To meet the child's individual needs within the group's setting.
4. To provide a full, varied, broad and balanced curriculum.
5. To promote a working partnership between the child's parents/carers and the pre-school.
6. To provide equal opportunities for all children and their families.

## CURRICULUM

We help children to learn about the world around them by providing all of the children with interesting activities that are right for their age and stage of development.

For children between the ages of 2 and 3, we follow the guidance set out in *Birth to Three Matters*, published by the Department for Education and Skills (DFES). We concentrate on the children's self-confidence, ensuring they feel happy and secure, and on their core personal and social skills.

For children between the ages of 3 and 5 years, the pre-school provides a curriculum for the foundation stage of education. The pre-school follows the guidance set out in the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* document, published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the DFES.

The guidance divides children's learning and development into six areas. For each area, the guidance sets out early learning goals. These goals state what children will be expected to know and be able to do by the end of the reception year of their education. For each early learning goal, the guidance sets out stepping stones, which describe the stages through which children are likely to pass as they move to achieving their goals.

An outline of the learning and development areas is given below; more details can be supplied on request.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

This area of children's development covers:

- having a positive approach to learning and finding out about the world around them
- having confidence in themselves and their ability to do things, and valuing their own achievements
- being able to get on, work and make friendships with other people
- becoming aware of - and being able to keep to - the rules which we all need to help us to look after ourselves, other people and our environment
- being able to dress and undress themselves, and look after their personal hygiene needs

- being able to expect to have their ways of doing things respected and to respect other people's ways of doing things.

### **Communication language and literacy**

This area of children's development covers:

- being able to use conversation with one other person, in small groups and in large groups
- to talk with and listen to others; adding to their vocabulary by learning the meaning of - and being able to use - new words
- being able to use words to describe their experiences
- getting to know the sounds and letters which make up the words we use
- listening to - and talking about - stories; knowing how to handle books and that they can be a source of stories and information; knowing the purposes for which we use writing; and making their own attempts at writing.

### **Mathematical development**

This area of children's development covers:

- building up ideas about *how many, how much, how far and how big*
- building up ideas about patterns, the shape of objects and parts of objects, and the amount of space taken up by objects
- starting to understand that numbers help us to answer questions about *how many, how much, how far and how big*; building up ideas about how to use counting to find out *how many*; and being introduced to finding the result of adding more or taking away from the amount we already have.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

This area of children's development covers:

- finding out about the natural world and how it works
- finding out about the made world and how it works
- learning how to choose - and use - the right tool for a task
- learning about computers, how to use them and what they can help us to do
- starting to put together ideas about past and present and the links between them
- beginning to learn about their locality and its special features
- and learning about their own and other cultures.

### **Physical development**

This area of children's development covers:

- gaining control over the large movements which we can make with our arms, legs and bodies, so that they can run, jump, hop, skip, roll, climb, balance and lift

- gaining control over the small movements we can make with our arms, wrists and hands, so that they can pick up and use objects, tools and materials; and learning about the importance of - and how to look after - their bodies.

### **Creative development**

This area of children's development covers:

- using paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories and role-play to express their ideas and feelings
- becoming interested in the way that paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories and role-play can be used to express ideas and feelings.

### **Key workers**

We use the key worker system. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom she/he is particularly responsible. Your child's key worker will be the person who works with you to make sure that what the pre-school provides is right for your child's particular needs and interests.

### **Records of achievement**

The pre-school keeps a record of achievement for each child. Your child's key worker, along with the other staff, collects information about your child's activities, interests and achievements, from which your child's stage of progress can be identified. Parents/carers can ask to see their child's record at any time.

## **THE PRE-SCHOOL DAY**

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 also 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 are encouraged to take part in outdoor child-chosen and adult-led activities, as well as those provided in the indoor playroom.

### **The first days**

We want each child to feel happy and safe at the pre-school. To make sure that this is the case, the staff will work with individual parents/carers to decide on how to help their child to settle into the pre-school. Parents are welcome to visit the group with their child for a trial morning prior to admission and are encouraged to stay at subsequent sessions until their child is settled.

### **Clothing**

We provide protective clothing for the children when they play with messy activities.

We encourage 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.

Pre-school T-shirts and sweatshirts are available for purchase. These are hard-wearing and generally popular with the children. We also usually have a supply of reasonable second-hand items for sale.

## **SESSIONS, NUMBERS and FEES**

### **Sessions**

Kilndown Pre-School is open during term-time\* as follows:

- Morning sessions run from 9.15am to 12.15pm Monday-Thursday.
- Afternoon sessions (1.15pm to 3.45pm) and Friday morning sessions are available as soon as demand is sufficient.
- An optional lunch club is held on Monday and Thursday after the morning session, which then finishes at 1pm. An additional fee is payable of £2.20.

Once afternoon sessions are provided, all-day attendance is restricted to children aged 3 and above.

\*Occasionally the pre-school term will start slightly later or end slightly earlier than the state school term. The pre-school will be closed when the local primary school closes for staff training days.

### **Numbers**

We are registered to accept up to 20 children per session, between the ages of 2 and 5, of whom up to 12 may be between the ages of 2 and 3. We can accept children who are still in nappies.

As a stipulation of our registration, the following adult to children ratios are maintained:

1:4 for children aged 2-3 years

1:8 for children aged 3-5 years

These are maximum ratios and we often operate with fewer children per adult than this.

### **Fees**

Fees are per session and reflect the regional average for pre-schools of this type. Currently our fees are £10.00 per session. The optional lunch club costs £2.20.

Fees are billed termly in advance. Payment may be made as a single amount or in 2 instalments due at the beginning of each half term. We can accept payment by weekly instalments where necessary and by prior arrangement.

The pre-school is registered on the government funding scheme, under which up to 5 sessions of 2½ hours per week are free for all 3 and 4 year-olds. This means that, for a 3-hour session, the remaining ½ hour has to be paid for. The government funding is currently limited to 11 weeks per term, and any extra weeks attended have to be paid for. A child becomes eligible for funded

places at the start of the term following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. The optional lunch club is not covered by funding.

Unfortunately we are unable to refund fees if a child is absent, even if the absence is because of sickness or a family holiday. A full half-term's notice is required if a child is to be withdrawn from the group, or the number of sessions attended reduced.

## **PROCEDURES and POLICIES**

The pre-school's policies help us to make sure that the service provided by the pre-school is a high quality one and that being a member of the pre-school is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and his/her parents or carers.

The staff and parents of the pre-school work together to adopt the policies and they all have the opportunity to take part in reviewing the policies.

Full details of all the pre-school policies are kept at the pre-school and copies can be supplied upon request.

### **Special needs**

As part of the pre-school's policy to make sure that its provision meets the needs of each individual child, we take account of any special needs which a child may have. We will work closely with parents/carers to determine the best approach for each child and we are happy to work with other professionals where necessary.

The pre-school works to the requirements of the 1993 Education Act and The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2000).

### **Child Protection Policy**

Our staff are trained in the area of child protection. As an approved body Kilndown Pre-school Learning Group, whether acting as individuals or as an organisation, is legally bound to contact the appropriate authorities where it believes any child appears vulnerable, is suffering any form of abuse or where it appears the child may need help. Such matters are always treated with the strictest confidence.

### **Accidents**

A first-aid trained staff member is always present. Accidents are recorded in the Accidents Book. If an accident occurs, parents/carers are informed (at the end of the session if the accident is minor), and asked to sign the record.

### **Complaints**

Any complaints or concerns regarding a child's development or care, or with pre-school procedures, should be raised with the committee chairperson. Complaints will always be taken seriously and replied to swiftly. If not satisfied with the response of the chairperson, the complaint may be raised with the full committee.

## Equal Opportunities Policy

We believe that no child, individual or family should be excluded from the Pre-school's activities on the grounds of race, gender, colour, disability, culture, religion or family status. We aim to ensure that all who wish to work in, or volunteer to help with our Pre-school have an equal chance to do so.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

We recognise parents and carers as the first and most important educators of their children. All of the staff see themselves as co-workers with you in providing care and education for your child.

Parental involvement in all aspects of the pre-school is always encouraged. This can include helping out during sessions, sharing special interests, joining in fundraising and other community activities and being part of the management committee.

## **HOW THE PRE-SCHOOL IS MANAGED**

The pre-school is managed by a committee of volunteers. The committee has to include parents of children currently at the pre-school. Committee officers are elected at the pre-school's Annual General Meeting which is held in October each year. The committee is responsible for:

- Setting the vision of the pre-school and overseeing its implementation;
- Managing the pre-school's finances;
- Employing and managing the staff;
- Making sure that the pre-school provides a high quality service;
- Making sure that the pre-school works in partnership with the children's parents/carers.

The Annual General Meeting is open to the parents of all of the children who attend the pre-school. It is their forum for looking back over the previous year's activities and shaping the coming year's activities.

