



Registered Charity # 1203754

About our Childcare at Houghton and Wyton Pre-school

Welcome to Houghton and Wyton Pre-school! We are delighted that you have chosen us to support your child's care and early education. This handbook provides an overview of our pre-school, our approach to nurturing your child's learning and development, and how we work in partnership with families to meet each child's unique needs.

At Houghton and Wyton Pre-school, we strive to create a caring, supportive environment where children can thrive physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually. Our dedicated team is passionate about helping every child achieve their full potential within a nurturing, stimulating, and homely setting.

This guide is designed to help you settle your child into our pre-school and to serve as a reference throughout their time with us. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to speak with the Pre-school Manager, the Deputy Manager, or your child's key person. We are here to support you and your child every step of the way.

We look forward to building a strong and positive partnership with your family.

Our Ethos and Philosophy

At Houghton and Wyton Pre-school, we are proud to provide outstanding early years care and education. We aim to create a warm, nurturing environment where children feel safe, valued, and inspired to explore, learn, and grow.

We combine evidence-based approaches to ensure a balanced and holistic development for every child. Our practitioners understand that children learn through play, observation, guided activities, and direct teaching. We tailor our care to meet each child's unique needs, fostering their confidence, independence, and curiosity.

We support children in the following ways:

- **Encouraging Creativity and Critical Thinking:** Through imaginative play, hands-on activities, and problem-solving tasks, we inspire children to think creatively and explore the world around them.
- **Fostering Social and Emotional Growth:** We help children develop self-confidence, empathy, and the ability to manage their emotions. Our practitioners guide children in understanding feelings, building friendships, and working collaboratively.
- **Language and Communication Skills:** Language is the foundation of learning. We enrich children's communication skills through storytelling, discussions, and activities that lay the groundwork for early literacy.

We also emphasise the importance of respect and inclusion, teaching children to value diversity and appreciate differences. By promoting equality and understanding, we create a supportive community where every child can flourish.

We view learning as a shared journey between practitioners, parents, and carers. By working closely with families, we can provide the best possible start to your child's educational journey.



Our Mission Statement

'Inspiring Growth, Together'

At Houghton and Wyton Pre-school, our mission is to nurture every child's potential through play, learning, and collaboration. We create a safe, caring, and stimulating environment where children grow into confident, curious, and capable learners while fostering strong partnerships with families.

Our Aims

We are committed to providing children and families with a nurturing and enriching environment where every child can thrive. Our aims are:

1. To Provide a Safe and Caring Environment:
 - We ensure children feel secure, supported, and valued in a space where they can explore, learn, and grow.
2. To Offer Accessible, Affordable, and High-Quality Care:
 - We strive to provide exceptional early education and childcare that meets the needs of all families in our community.
3. To Build Confidence and Independence:
 - We encourage children to develop self-assurance, independence, and a readiness to embrace new challenges.
4. To Deliver Outstanding Early Education:
 - Through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), we help children build essential skills across all areas of learning.
5. To Inspire a Love for Learning:
 - We provide an engaging and stimulating environment that fosters curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong passion for learning.
6. To Lay the Foundations for the Future:
 - By nurturing key skills and positive attitudes, we prepare children for success in their future education.
7. To Foster a Language-Enriched Environment:
 - We emphasise communication, helping children build the foundation for development across all areas of learning.
8. To Promote Health and Physical Activity:
 - We ensure children are active and healthy, understanding that physical well-being enhances learning, social skills, and overall development. Activities are designed to support:
 - Building social skills and relationships.
 - Support brain development and restful sleep.
 - Strengthening muscles, bones, movement, and coordination.
9. To Partner with Families:
 - We work closely with parents and carers to ensure every child's growth and achievements are celebrated and supported



Parents

At Houghton and Wyton Pre-school, we view parents as essential members of our community and key partners in their child's early education. We believe that fostering a collaborative relationship with families enhances each child's learning experience.

As valued members of our pre-school, parents have the right to:

- Be **valued and respected**.
- Be **kept informed** about their child's progress and pre-school activities.
- Be **consulted** on decisions affecting their child.
- Be **involved** in the learning process and pre-school events.
- Be **included** in all levels of engagement.

We believe that by working together, we can provide the strongest foundation for your child's future.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

Our provision for the care and education of children from birth to five years is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. This framework is designed to ensure that every child receives high-quality early learning experiences and lays the foundation for their future development.

The Four Overarching Principles of the EYFS

The EYFS is built on four key principles that guide our practice:

1. **A Unique Child:** Every child is a unique individual, constantly learning and capable of being resilient, confident, and self-assured.
2. **Positive Relationships:** Children thrive in strong, positive relationships that help them become independent and secure.
3. **Enabling Environments:** Children develop well in environments that inspire curiosity, provide support, and are tailored to their individual needs. We prioritise partnerships between practitioners and families to enhance learning experiences.
4. **Learning and Development:** Children develop at their own pace. The EYFS framework supports the education and care of all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

How We Provide for Learning and Development

From birth, children are naturally curious and begin learning about the world around them. At Houghton and Wyton Pre-school, we nurture this curiosity by providing engaging, age-appropriate activities that support their ongoing development.

The Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS divides learning into **Prime Areas** and **Specific Areas**, each with a focus on key developmental milestones:

Prime Areas:

- **Personal, Social, and Emotional Development:** Building self-regulation, independence, and strong relationships.
- **Physical Development:** Enhancing gross and fine motor skills through active play and hands-on activities.
- **Communication and Language:** Encouraging listening, understanding, and speaking skills.



Specific Areas:

- **Literacy:** Developing comprehension, word recognition, and writing abilities.
- **Mathematics:** Exploring numbers and numerical patterns.
- **Understanding the World:** Learning about people, cultures, communities, and the natural world.
- **Expressive Arts and Design:** Encouraging creativity, imagination, and self-expression.

Each area is supported by **Early Learning Goals**, which outline what children are expected to achieve by the end of the reception year.

How We Support Children's Progress

We use non-statutory curriculum guidance to assess each child's development and tailor our educational programs. These programs are ambitious and designed to meet every child's individual needs, ensuring they develop essential knowledge, skills, and understanding.

Our curriculum specifically focuses on:

- **Personal, Social, and Emotional Development:** Supporting self-regulation, independence, and positive relationships.
- **Physical Development:** Strengthening coordination, balance, and motor skills.
- **Communication and Language:** Promoting attentive listening, clear communication, and comprehension.
- **Literacy:** Building strong foundations in reading, writing, and language comprehension.
- **Mathematics:** Fostering confidence in numbers and patterns through engaging, practical activities.
- **Understanding the World:** Encouraging curiosity about history, cultures, communities, and nature.
- **Expressive Arts and Design:** Inspiring creativity through art, music, and imaginative play.

Health, Well-being, and Life Skills

As part of our curriculum, we teach children how to care for themselves physically and mentally. This includes:

- **Healthy Eating:** Introducing the importance of balanced nutrition through activities and discussions.
- **Staying Active:** Encouraging physical movement through play and planned activities.
- **Oral Health:** Helping children understand the importance of brushing their teeth and maintaining good oral hygiene.

These themes are embedded into our daily activities and routines.



Our Approach to Learning, Development and Assessment

Learning Through Play

We believe that young children learn best through play. Being active and engaging in hands-on activities helps them make sense of the world around them. Our educational programmes, guided by the EYFS statutory framework, include a mix of child-led and practitioner-planned activities to encourage progress in all areas of development.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We observe and support children as they engage with people and their environment through three key characteristics:

1. Playing and Exploring – Encouraging curiosity and engagement.
2. Active Learning – Fostering motivation and persistence.
3. Creating and Thinking Critically – Supporting independent thinking and problem-solving.

By observing how each child learns, we tailor our support and activities to nurture their unique learning style.

Ongoing Observations

We assess each child's learning and development through regular observations. These help us track their progress and identify areas where further support may be needed.

We value parental input in the assessment process. By sharing information about your child's activities and interests at home, we can build a more complete picture of their development.

Assessment Summaries

Periodic assessment summaries are prepared based on our observations. These provide insights into your child's achievements and progress during their time with us, particularly during transitions to new groups or school.

The Progress Check at Age Two

When your child is between **24 and 36 months**, we complete a written progress check covering the **three prime areas of development**:

- Personal, Social, and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language

This check is completed by your child's key person and includes observations from our practice as well as parental input.

Records of Achievement/Learning Journeys

Each child has a **learning journey**, accessible via their Family account, which documents their development and achievements. This collaborative record helps us celebrate milestones and plan for further growth. Your child's key person works closely with you to maintain and update this record.



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Working Together for your Children

Adult-Child Ratios and Volunteer Support

We adhere to and often exceed the required adult-to-child ratios set by the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements. Whenever possible, we maintain a higher ratio, ensuring additional support for the children. This approach reflects our commitment to providing the best care and attention for every child. Additionally, volunteers help enrich our environment by:

- giving time and attention to each child
- talking with the children about their interests and activities
- helping children to experience and benefit from the activities we provide
- allowing the children to explore and be adventurous in a safe environment

How We Communicate

Hard copies of our policies and procedures can be requested at any time and are also available on our website. Our policies help us ensure the service we provide is of high quality, making the experience enjoyable and beneficial for every child and their parents. The pre-school is inspected by Ofsted every six years. We aim to keep parents well-informed through Family, where you'll find regular updates. Our parent information board is in the pre-school side garden, and you can find additional updates on Family or our Facebook page.

Parent Consultation Meetings

We hold regular meetings to discuss your child's progress, either face-to-face, or online via Zoom. These meetings are scheduled once per term with your child's key person. If you feel that more frequent meetings are needed, please let your child's key person know, and we will be happy to arrange additional appointments.

Events and Supporting Pre-school

The pre-school is managed by a group of charity trustees, who oversee its operations, as we are a registered charity. We have a fundraising committee and encourage parents to get involved. This gives you the opportunity to meet other families, be part of the pre-school community, and help shape the future of our pre-school. We aim to hold regular events such as fun days, charity events, and seasonal activities. All parents and children are welcome to attend these events, and we welcome any help with organising activities.

Key Person and Your Child

Our setting uses the key person approach, meaning each staff member is responsible for a specific group of children. Your child's key person will work with you to ensure that the care we provide meets your child's individual needs and interests. When your child first joins us, their key person will conduct the initial home visit, organise stay-and-play sessions, help your child settle, and support their development throughout their time at the pre-school. They will also keep you informed of your child's progress and work with you if additional support is needed. While your child's key person will be your primary contact, all staff are available to listen, support, and engage with you and your child.



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Learning Opportunities for Adults

In addition to their childcare qualifications, our staff members engage in ongoing training to stay current with the latest approaches in early years education and care. Occasionally, we also host learning events for parents, focusing on how adults can support children's development during their early years.

Information We Hold About You and Your Child

We comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR 2018) regarding the collection, storage, and sharing of personal information. The data we collect:

1. Is processed fairly, lawfully, and transparently
2. Is collected for specific, explicit, and legitimate purposes
3. Is adequate, relevant, and limited to what is necessary
4. Is accurate and kept up to date
5. Is kept in a form that allows identification only for as long as necessary
6. Is processed securely to protect against unauthorized access, loss, destruction, or damage

During the registration process, we will provide you with information on how we collect, store, and manage your data in accordance with our privacy policies and GDPR (2018).

Safeguarding Children

We have a legal duty to safeguard children from suspected or actual 'significant harm.' Our employment practices ensure that those looking after children are suitable for their roles, helping to prevent abuse. Our approach also ensures that we are aware of any emerging problems and can offer support, including referrals to outside agencies when necessary.

Designated Safeguarding Lead's (DSL):

Alex Boyce and Krystina Baramuszczak

Special Educational Needs

To meet the needs of each individual child, we adhere to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015). We are well placed to observe any child who may need additional support. If we identify a concern about your child's development, the pre-school's Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) will discuss it with you, and a plan will be made. If needed, we may seek advice from external professionals with your consent. Confidentiality is always maintained.

Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO):

Alex Boyce and Helene Schwier

Supporting Behaviour at Pre-school

We believe children thrive when they know what behaviour is expected of them. We aim to foster respectful and positive behaviour, ensuring that children can learn and play in a safe environment. We expect all adults, including staff, parents, volunteers, and visitors, to model positive behaviour by treating each other and the children with kindness and respect. We use positive strategies to manage conflicts, appropriate to the child's age and development stage, such as discussion, distraction, and praise. We avoid creating situations where children are rewarded for undesirable behaviour.

In the case of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other forms of abuse, we make it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable, using explanations rather than personal blame. Physical,



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emotional, or corporal punishment is never used, and we do not shout at children or raise our voices in a threatening manner.

We work closely with parents to address recurring or concerning behaviours, using objective observations to identify the cause and agree on appropriate responses. With your consent, we may involve external agencies if necessary.

Equal Opportunities

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities for all children, regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability, race, or religion. We aim to provide equal access to all children, considering their individual circumstances and the pre-school's ability to meet their needs.

Equalities Named Coordinator (ENCo):

Emma Bentley

The Management of Our Setting

Our setting is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and is managed by charity trustees, responsible for:

- Managing our finances
- Employing and managing staff
- Ensuring we have policies that maintain a high-quality service
- Partnering with parents to deliver the best care

Fees

The fees are £7.25 per hour, payable monthly in advance. Fees are reviewed annually. Fees must still be paid if children are absent for short periods. For long-term absences, please speak to Alex Boyce or Kayleigh Nicoli, who will liaise with the trustees.

To maintain your child's place at our setting, fees must be paid. We receive government funding for eligible two-, three-, and four-year-olds; if funding is not received, regular fees apply.