



# Prospectus

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Registered Charity no. 1035963

## **ABOUT US**

We are a parent committee run playgroup situated in West Swindon for children from 3 years until they start Primary school. Previously known as Upper Shaw Farm Playgroup, the playgroup has been running since 1984. We changed our name to Shaw Ridge Playgroup when we moved into the new community suite of Shaw Ridge Primary school in 2010.

## **OUR AIM**

- Provide high quality care and education for children primarily below statutory school age
- Work in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop;
- Add to the life and well-being of its local community
- Offer children and their parents a service which promotes equality and values diversity

## **PARENTS**

Parents are regarded as members of our setting who have full participatory rights.

These include a right to be:

- Valued and respected
- Kept informed
- Consulted
- Involved
- Included at all levels

## **CHILDREN**

As a member of our Playgroup your child:

- Is in a fun, safe and stimulating environment
- Is given focused care and attention by the qualified staff
- Has the chance to join with other children and adults to play, work and learn together
- Is helped to take forward her/his learning and development by being helped to build on what she/he already knows and can do
- Has a personal Key Person who makes sure each child develops accordingly to their age and stage
- Is in a Playgroup which sees parents as equal partners in helping their child to learn and develop
- Is in a Playgroup in which parents help to shape the service it offers

## **CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING USING THE EYFS**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework that sets the standards that all Early Years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children are ready for school and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. **You can read more about this in our "Parents Guide to the EYFS" on our website.**

Children start to learn about the World around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by Our Playgroup helps children to continue to do this by providing all of the children with interesting activities that are right for their age and stage of development.

### **THE AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. Three areas are particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn and to thrive. These three areas, known here as the **prime areas** are:

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

Providers must also support children in four **specific areas** of learning and development, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world; and
- Expressive arts and design

## **OUR APPROACH TO LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT:**

### **LEARNING THROUGH PLAY**

We believe that young children learn best through play. Playing with others is important for children's social and emotional development. Through play children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research has shown to be the means by which young children think. Our Playgroup uses the EYFS guidance to plan and provide a range of play activities which help

children to make progress in each of the areas of learning and development. In some of these activities children decide how they will use the activity and, in others, an adult takes the lead in helping the children to take part in the activity. In all activities, information from the practice guidance has been used to decide what equipment to provide and how to provide it.

### **ASSESSMENT**

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them frequently. We use information that we gain from observations, as well as from photographs of the children, to document their progress and where this may be leading them. We believe that parents know their children best and we ask them to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what their children do at home and how they as parents are supporting development.

We make periodic assessment summaries of the children's achievement based on our ongoing development records. These form part of the children's 'Learning Journey'. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals as well as times of transition, such as when a child moves settings or when they go to school.

### **LEARNING JOURNEYS**

Shaw Ridge Playgroup keeps a learning journey for each child. Staff and parents working together on their children's learning journey is one of the ways in which the key worker and parents work in partnership. Your child's learning journey helps us to celebrate together his/her achievements and to work together to provide what your child needs for his/her well-being and to make progress. Your child's key worker will work with you to keep this record. To do this you and she will collect information about your child's needs, activities, interests and achievements. This information will enable the key worker to identify your child's stage of progress. The key person will then work with you to decide on how to help your child to move onto the next stage through setting their Next Steps. These will be shared with you so you can support your child at home.

### **WORKING TOGETHER FOR YOUR CHILDREN**

Our Playgroup maintains an adequate ratio of adults to children in the setting that is set through the Welfare requirements. This helps us to:

- Give time and attention to each child;
- Talk with the children about their interests and activities;
- Help children to experience and benefit from the activities we provide;
- Allow the children to explore and be adventurous in safety.

## **KEY WORKERS**

Our Playgroup has a key worker system. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom she is particularly responsible. Your child's key worker will be the person who works with you to make sure that what the Playgroup provides is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts at the Playgroup, she will help your child to settle, and throughout your child's time at the Playgroup, she will help your child to benefit from the Playgroup's activities.

## **OUR STAFF**

NAME	JOB TITLE	QUALIFICATION
Emma Gunston	Supervisor	NVQ 3
Alison Pope	Deputy Supervisor	NVQ 3
Jackie White	Playgroup Assistant	NVQ 3

## **STAFF TRAINING**

As well as gaining qualifications in Early Years Care and Education, Our Playgroup staff take part in further training to help them to keep up-to-date with new developments and changes in practice. Currently all staff hold certificates in First Aid, Food Hygiene and Safeguarding. Our Playgroup also keeps itself up-to-date in Early Years Care and Education through the Pre-school Learning Alliance's magazine, Under Fives and publications produced by the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## **STARTING AT OUR PLAYGROUP**

### **REGISTERING YOUR CHILD AT PLAYGROUP**

If you would like to register your child at our Playgroup, please complete a Registration Form (available from staff or on our website) and return it to the Playgroup. Your child will then be added to our waiting list. Your child will be allocated places in the term before they are due to start, so please do not expect to hear anything before then. However, if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Playgroup.

### **HOME VISITS**

The playgroup Supervisor and Deputy will arrange to come and visit you prior to your child starting with us. This is an opportunity for us to bring all the paperwork we require you to complete and talk to you about any individual needs you may have. We also take a photograph of your child ready for them to use in self-registration

on their first day. We will also arrange a date and time for you and your child to come into the Playgroup to return all of your completed paperwork. This enables you to come and meet your child's key worker, the other the Playgroup ladies and see the setting if you haven't already.

### **THE FIRST DAYS - SETTLING IN**

We want your child to feel happy and safe with us. To make sure that this is the case, the staff will work with you to decide on how to help your child to settle into the Playgroup. The Playgroup has a policy about helping children to settle; this is available from the playgroup and is something we discuss during your setting visit.

### **THE PLAYGROUPS TIMETABLE AND ROUTINES**

Shaw Ridge Playgroup believes that care and education are equally important in the experience which we offer children. The routines and activities that make up the Playgroup's session are provided in ways that:

- help each child to feel that she/he is a valued member of the Playgroup
- ensure the safety of each child and teach them our "Shaw Ridge Rules"
- help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group
- provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning

### **THE SESSIONS**

- We are open 38 weeks each year, term time only.
- We offer 2 sessions each day (except for Friday which is morning only) the morning session is 8.50am - 11.50am and the afternoon session is 11.50am - 2.50pm. Although this may vary throughout the year, depending on the number of children on our register.
- We have an intake at the beginning of September, January and Easter.
- After their first term you may have the option of them staying all day should you wish, subject to available spaces.
- If we have spaces available you can chose to pay for extra sessions, these are charged in-line with government funding rates. Please see the section "Fees" further on for more information.

Our Playgroup organises it's 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, both inside and outdoors. The children are also helped and encouraged to take part in adult-led small and large group activities, including circle time, 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 have the opportunity, and are encouraged, to take part in outdoor child-chosen and adult-led activities, as well as those provided in the indoor playroom.

### **SNACKS**

We make snack time a social time at which children and adults eat together. Milk or water will be available for those children who wish to have it. Children are encouraged to be independent in serving themselves snack, pouring their own drinks from a jug and washing up their own plates and cups when they have finished.

For each **morning session** that your child attends you provide them with a small snack. **PLEASE NOTE THIS MUST BE LABELLED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME** or we will not be able to give it to them and it will be disposed of. A labelled Tupperware tub for daily use would be ideal.

As we promote healthy eating in the playgroup we would ask the snack you provide supports this; suggested items are:

- Fruit/vegetables
- A **small** sandwich with a healthy filling (NO JAM/CHOCOLATE SPREAD)
- Yoghurt (please provide a spoon)
- Breadsticks/hummus
- Crackers/oatcakes/rice cakes

The playgroup will retain a very small selection of stand-by snack for the odd occasion that a parent may forget to bring snack. The committee have agreed that there will be a suggested charge of 50p per day to cover the costs.

To promote your child's independence and to support their learning at home, getting them to help you prepare their snack each day will give you a great opportunity to develop their cutting skills; knowledge of healthy eating and name recognition.

### **CLOTHING**

The Playgroup provides protective clothing for the children when they play with messy activities, however, please make sure your child wears suitable clothing for the session. We would hate them to get glue or paint over their 'best' clothes and lots of buttons and belts are difficult when using the toilet. If for some reason we have to change clothing in Playgroup, you will be asked to sign our borrowed clothing book and we would respectfully ask that you please return them clean and washed as soon as possible.

The Playgroup encourages children to gain the skills which help them to be independent and look after themselves. These include being independent in the

toilet and taking off - and putting on - outdoor clothes. Clothing which is easy for them to manage will help them to do this. Would you please ensure your child's coat, accessories etc are clearly marked with his/her name, when used in Playgroup. We allow the children free access to the outdoor area, so please make sure they are dressed appropriately for the weather, i.e. coats/sunhats when applicable.

### **ILLNESS**

Please let us know if your child is going to be absent.

- The playgroup can refuse admittance to children who have a temperature, sickness and diarrhoea or a contagious infection or disease.
- Where children have been prescribed antibiotics, parents are asked to keep them at home for 48 hours before returning to the setting.
- After sickness and/or diarrhoea, parents are asked to keep children home for 48 clear hours after their last bout of illness.

Would you please let the staff know if your child has any condition which may be contagious, (i.e. chickenpox ) as soon as possible and please don't let your child into Playgroup until they have been treated.

### **TIMEKEEPING**

Please deliver and collect your child promptly at the beginning and end of each session of Playgroup. We only have access to the room until 3pm so prompt collection is essential.

The Playgroup gate will be locked at 8.55am and 11.55am. It is imperative that you inform staff, of any changes as to who is authorised to collect your child from Playgroup. **This is kept as a written record and is strictly adhered to.** Any changes to instructions should be put in writing and handed to the Playgroup staff. You will be asked to provide a password for security purposes.

There is a 'Late Collection Fee', for anyone who is late in collecting a child from a Playgroup session, these charges are as follows:-

5 Minutes	£1.00	20 Minutes	£7.50
10 Minutes	£2.50	25 Minutes	£10.00
15 Minutes	£6.00	30 Minutes	£15.00

## **POLICIES**

Copies of our policies and procedures are available for you to see at the setting and on our website. The Playgroup's policies help us to make sure that the service provided by the Playgroup is a high quality one and that being a member of the Playgroup is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and their parents.

The staff and committee of the Playgroup work together to adopt the policies and all have the opportunity to take part in the annual review of the policies. This review helps us to make sure that the policies are enabling the Playgroup to provide a quality service for its members and the local community.

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

Shaw Ridge Playgroup has a duty under the law to help safeguard children against suspected or actual 'significant harm'. Please see our statement on the settings child protection responsibilities displayed on the notice board. Our Designated named member of staff for Safeguarding is Emma Gunston and the Deputy Designated member is Alison Pope. We also have a named committee member who is a Safeguarding point of contact for staff.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

We provide an environment in which all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, are supported to reach their full potential.

- We have regard for the DFES Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2014).
- We ensure our provision is inclusive to all children with SEND.
- We identify the specific needs of children with SEND and meet those needs through a range of SEN strategies.
- We work in partnership with parents and other agencies in supporting and meeting individual children's needs.
- We monitor and review our policy, practice and provision and, if necessary, make adjustments.
- We comply with the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and The Equality Act (2010)

## **HOW PARENTS TAKE PART IN THE PLAYGROUP**

As a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance, we recognise parents as the first and most important educators of their children. All of the staff see themselves as

partners with parents in providing care and education for their child. There are many ways in which parents take part in making the Playgroup a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents, such as:

- Exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities, interests and progress, through the use of the "All About Me" forms, WOW moments and talking to staff
- Attending Key Worker meetings and contributing to children's Progress Reports
- Reading information on our Notice board and termly Newsletter
- Using our "Honesty Lending Library" to share stories at home with your child
- Babysitting "Benny Bear" and sharing a diary of your time spent together
- Using our numerous and varied "Home Learning Sacks" with your child
- Joining us in our Stay and Play sessions
- Sharing their own special cultural and personal interests with the children
- Sometimes helping to provide, make and look after the equipment and materials used in the children's play activities
- Being part of the management of the Playgroup, by becoming members of the management committee
- Taking part in events and trips outside of playgroup, i.e. museum and garden centre visits etc
- Joining in community activities in which the Playgroup takes part;
- Building friendships with other parents in the Playgroup
- Making use of our "Open Door" policy, which means you are welcome to speak to staff at any time regarding your questions or concerns

### **STAY AND PLAY**

Each term stay and play dates will be included in the Newsletter. These sessions are a lovely opportunity for parents to see how much their children enjoy their time at playgroup. Parents are able to stay with their child for the first half hour of their child's normal session in the morning and join us for their last half hour in the afternoon. You are welcome to stay longer should you wish. We also hold Special Stay and Play sessions for events such as Mother's Day and Father's Day.

### **JOINING IN**

Stay and Play sessions are not the *only* means of taking part in the life of playgroup. You can offer to take part in a session by sharing your own interests and skills with the children. Parents have visited the Playgroup to share their culture and foods, read us their favourite story and also to explain about their occupations. Do feel free to arrange to drop into the Playgroup if you would like to see it at work or to speak with the staff.

## THE MANAGEMENT OF PLAYGROUP

A Parent Management Committee - whose members are elected by the parents of the children who attend the Playgroup - manages the Playgroup. The elections take place at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) which is held in September/October of each year. The committee is responsible for:

- Managing the Playgroup's finances
- Employing and managing the staff
- Making sure that the Playgroup has - and works to - policies which help it to provide a high quality service;
- Helping raise important funds to purchase new equipment, and
- Making sure that the Playgroup works in partnership with the children's parents

The Annual General Meeting is open to the parents of all of the children who attend Shaw Ridge Playgroup. It is our forum for looking back over the previous year's activities and to elect a new parent committee. **A crucial factor, to be stressed to you as a parent/guardian, is the necessity for your practical involvement and support with the Playgroup.** Shaw Ridge Playgroup can only function if a committee of parents/guardians is elected. This is done at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), during which at least 10% of parents/guardians must attend. Parents/guardians are invited to stand for a variety of posts, for example, Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and General Member etc.

Please consider what involvement you can offer. You do not need to have experience of Committee work, just a keen interest in your child's development. Being involved will give you the opportunity to get to know other parents, as well as giving you extra insight and involvement into the running of the Playgroup. Please feel free to discuss any concerns/ideas with the present Committee members or staff. **We cannot stress strongly enough that this is your child's Playgroup and your support is needed to help keep the Playgroup operating successfully. If we do not have a parent committee, then we cannot legally open the sessions.**

## **FUNDRAISING**

Shaw Ridge Playgroup also operates a 'Fundraising Committee', who are responsible for raising extra funds for Playgroup equipment, parties and other Playgroup expenses. If you are able to help by serving on the Committee or just giving up a few hours of your time to assist them in this important role, your help would be greatly appreciated. It's a great way of making new friends and really getting involved in your Playgroup.

## FEES

Fees, where applicable, are currently in line with government funding. Fees must still be paid if children are absent for a short period of time, i.e. off sick or on holiday. If your child has to be absent over a long period of time, talk to Emma Gunston, Supervisor. The Playgroup Fees are reviewed annually and are therefore, subject to change. There are special arrangements available for those parents/guardians who have difficulties in paying fees. This will be dealt with confidentially by the Supervisor and at the discretion of the committee.

For your child to keep his/her place at the playgroup, you must pay your fees. We are in receipt of nursery education funding for 3 and 4 year olds, where funding is not received, then fees apply. The Playgroup is totally dependant upon fees for our regular income. Fees pay for staff wages, room rental, insurances and for the day to day play materials of Playgroup. **It is essential that fees are paid with the first week of each term to avoid financial problems.** If fees are not paid within the first week allocated a 'first reminder' letter will be issued and a further week will be allowed for payment to be made. However, if the fees are still outstanding after this time, an added charge of 10% of the total fees will be made. This is to cover additional administration costs.

### **FUNDED CHILDREN**

Children are eligible for funding the term following their third birthday, as follows:

<b>Birthdays between</b>	<b>Funding Starts</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> April and 31 <sup>st</sup> August	September
1 <sup>st</sup> September and 31 <sup>st</sup> December	January
1 <sup>st</sup> January and 31 <sup>st</sup> March	April

To enable the playgroup to apply for funding for your child, it is imperative that you complete the Parent Declaration Form (PDF) that will be sent home to you in the relevant term. We will also require a copy of your child's birth certificate to validate this form. If we do not receive a copy of the birth certificate we have the right to charge you for your child's sessions as we are unable to claim the funding for them.

### **\*Please note**

**We are not able to increase your child's sessions mid funding term (after the headcount date) as the local authority will not be able to adjust funding payments. This also applies to children wishing to claim further sessions at other playgroups. It is important therefore, to ensure you have claimed as many sessions as you require per funding term. However, children starting**

playgroup after the headcount date, will be funded for the remaining weeks of the term.

#### **ADMINISTRATION COSTS**

Due to the extra administration involved, we ask that all parents wishing to reduce their child's sessions or remove them from the Playgroup give at least one full terms notice in writing. If you do not provide a full term's notice then you will be asked to pay us the full amount in lieu of the funding that will not be received.

Thank you for requesting a prospectus from us.  
We hope this information has been helpful, should you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be more than happy to help.