

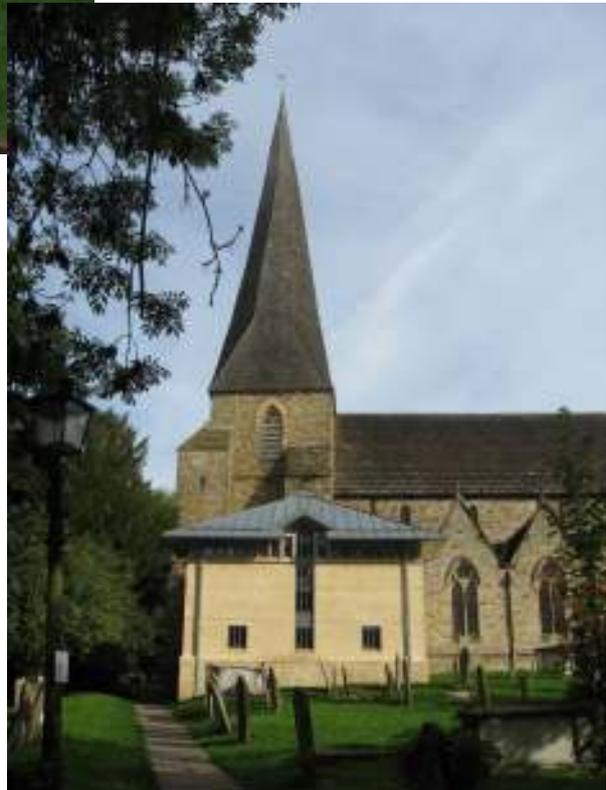


Welcome to
St. Mary's Nursery
School Horsham



Prospectus

2014/15



Hello and welcome!

We are very pleased to have the opportunity through this Prospectus to outline the work we do at St. Mary's Nursery and explain how we care for young children. If you have any questions or would like more information on any aspect of nursery life, do please contact us and we'll be happy to talk to you.

In this Prospectus you'll find information on our background, aims and ethos, and the curriculum we follow, along with practical matters such as our daily routines.



Our background

St Mary's Nursery School was established in 2002 by St. Mary's Church – the parish church in the centre of Horsham. We offer a caring, fun and stimulating pre-school environment for children aged from two-and-a-half to five years of age. A maximum of 24 children attend each morning or afternoon session. We seek to value each child as a unique individual, and to help children grow in the love and knowledge of Christ as a member of a caring, Christian community. We actively welcome children from other faiths and cultures, and encourage an atmosphere of respect for the beliefs and customs of others.

Just like schools, we are regulated by Ofsted. Ofsted looks not only at education, but also at the overall safety and welfare of children in our care. Our last Ofsted inspection was in 2009 and concluded that "Overall the quality of the provision is good". In particular, the inspector noted that "Children show that they have a good attitude towards learning .." and that their ".. learning is efficiently supported, to ensure that they make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff conduct regular observations of children which they use to assess their next steps in learning". You can request a copy of the report from the Nursery or it can be found on the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk – ref EY387285).

The Nursery children visit St. Mary's Church each half term for Nursery Worship. The Church holds many family events such as pond dipping and Dads' / Male carers' play mornings and has coffee mornings on 2 mornings each week for parents after drop off time.

The Nursery has strong links with nearby St Mary's Primary School. Many of our children do go on to St. Mary's Primary School, but also to numerous other schools across the Horsham area. Admission to St. Mary's Nursery School does not guarantee a place at St. Mary's Primary School, which has its own admissions criteria. Please contact the school directly for further information.



Our aims

“We aim to provide fully inclusive Early Years education of the highest quality, based on caring Christian values; to recognise and celebrate the unique strengths of each child and support their development in a broad, balanced and holistic way; to welcome and support parents and families; to nurture the individual and collective professional development of our team; and to share our ethos and expertise with the wider community”.

This – our official “mission statement” – expresses the ways in which we seek to provide the best possible early experiences for children. It translates into the following approach to caring for your child:

- Providing a secure, welcoming environment
- Encouraging children to develop confidence and self-esteem
- Challenging and stimulating children so that they become resourceful, independent learners
- Treating children and adults with warmth, kindness and compassion
- Valuing and including all children irrespective of faith, background, ability or additional needs
- Guiding children so that they develop respect for the ideas, attitudes, beliefs, feelings and values of others
- Helping children develop positive relationships with others
- Giving children an understanding of Christian values through guidance, opportunities for worship, and through example



Our ethos

At St. Mary's Nursery School, we believe in learning through play – and these are not just glib words. Our work centres around playing. This might be individual play, group play, adult-initiated, child-initiated, messy or quiet, but it is always recognised for what it is: the business of exploring the world on the child's own terms. This vital aspect of early education is increasingly recognised throughout the UK as the rock upon which successful later learning stands.

We take great pleasure in giving children as wide a range of play opportunities as possible. We encourage children to build on their natural curiosity and, as a team, we carefully identify each child's needs, interests, style of learning and developing skills.

Christian worship is an integral part of our ethos and we encourage children to learn about Christianity in a variety of ways, from exploring Bible stories with puppets to taking part in Harvest Festival and other celebrations throughout the year. We also give children the opportunity to learn about other faiths and cultures – for example by making Diwali lamps or finding out about traditional Chinese New Year celebrations.

We warmly welcome children with additional needs. These may range from slight speech and language delay to significant physical and/or learning disabilities. As a staff we have a great deal of experience in this area, and a strong commitment to supporting families who are caring for children with additional needs. In addition to offering practical and moral support to families and to individual children, we liaise with outside agencies such as Speech and Language Therapists, Community Nurses and the Education Authority as appropriate, and are happy to take on an advocacy role where this is helpful. Naturally, all work in this area is undertaken with complete confidentiality. We work hard to ensure that equal opportunities prevail within our nursery, and actively promote caring and inclusive behaviour within the nursery.

What will your child do at St. Mary's Nursery School?

At St. Mary's Nursery School, we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage. This covers the age range 0-5 years and provides not only a curriculum but an overall approach to early learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage seeks to combine early education with children's overall health and wellbeing. There are seven defined (but interlinking) curriculum areas:

Three prime areas (fundamental areas which support development in all other areas)

- Personal social and emotional development
- Communication and language
- Physical development

Four specific areas (specific skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society)

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design

Within nursery, we gently encourage each child to access all areas of the curriculum through play situations and activities with which they feel comfortable. An example of this might be using a clipboard and marker pen outside or whilst playing in the home corner or with the train set, rather than sitting at the "literacy table". We support the children as they develop the characteristics of effective learning.

The Characteristics of effective learning

The ways in which a child engages with other people and their environment underpin learning and development across all the above areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner. They are playing and exploring; active learning; creating and thinking critically

If you would like to know more about the Early Years Foundation Stage, and have internet access, you may like to visit teachernet.gov.uk. Alternatively, we will be happy to lend you one of our copies of the current materials or have a chat with you in nursery.



Everyday activities

So, how does this rather formal-sounding “curriculum” translate into a typical day at nursery? You will find that your child is free to access a wide range of activities including construction toys; sand and/or water play; painting and crafts; small world activities such as trains, cars and dolls’ houses; books; music, singing, dancing and performing; chatting with adults and other children; ICT equipment including supervised age-appropriate computer games; a programmable robot and microscope; physical play both inside and out; “writing” and drawing equipment including chalk, pens, crayons and markers; imaginative and role-play equipment such as dressing-up clothes, the home corner and the ever-popular puppet theatre. Children have lots of opportunities to take part in baking, cooking and other “real life” activities such as visiting the local supermarket. We regularly invite visitors to share their experiences with our children – everyone from an African Bishop on one occasion to a vet on another!

We are fortunate to have a safely enclosed, level garden with a large lawn and a paved area. We use this area every day (weather permitting) for group games and free play with equipment such as dolls’ prams, bikes, scooters, hoops, the see-saw, the sand pit and the climbing frame. We play lots of traditional games such as *What’s the time, Mr. Wolf?* Running around time is a crucial element of a happy morning or afternoon at St. Mary’s Nursery School.

A typical session will include story time – an opportunity to practise sitting in a group when we sing a prayer, share a story and talk about any special events - music or drama; snack time; free play inside and out; and the opportunity to take part in pre-planned activities such as model-making or hand-printing. We seek to achieve a balance between planned, adult-initiated activities and those inspired by the children’s own ideas and interests.



How each day is organised

The nursery day starts at 8.30am. We have self registration and then planned activities such as making play-dough are offered alongside free play. We have snack time where children are encouraged to drink milk or water and eat some fruit, vegetable or breadsticks. Water is available in case children are thirsty at any other time. During the morning we will have music time and also a story time for those going home at the end of each session. We will tidy up together at the end of the morning and the children have the chance to “show and tell” before being collected at 11.30am.

Our Lunch Club runs from 11.30am until 12.30pm. This session is not covered by the free entitlement and a charge is therefore made. The children have a short play outside or an activity in the classroom while everyone arrives. They will then wash their hands and sit down together to eat their packed lunch brought from home. We allow plenty of time for eating in a relaxed, carefully supervised way; lunchtime typically lasts for about 40 minutes and staff eat with the children to create a friendly, “family” atmosphere.

Afternoon sessions, which are for pre-school children only, run from 12.30 to 3.30pm. The children have the opportunity to take part in more challenging activities in the afternoon sessions, such as investigating shadows or how to stop ice from melting. We finish the afternoon with a snack and large group activity such as a puppet show or skittles game followed by a story and show & tell.



Our routines

Show and tell

We encourage children to bring in an item from home for “show and tell” – perhaps an interesting “find” from the park or a postcard from a foreign country; a photo of the new baby, an especially beautiful hair band or an impressively realistic toy fire engine...

Fruit for sharing

Most families bring some fruit or savoury snacks such as breadsticks each day for sharing at snack time, to support our healthy eating policy. Although we are very grateful for contributions, it's an optional aspect of nursery life.

We are a NUT-FREE nursery.



Items to name and bring in

Each child needs to bring in a bag (not drawstring) containing at least one change of clothes (including nappy/pull-ups, wipes and nappy sack if appropriate) and, in summer, sun cream and a hat. It is important that every item (including the bag!) is clearly named. In winter, children will need a coat, hat and, if it is very cold, mittens or gloves. Wellies are also needed as we aim to play outside every day. All of these items do need to be clearly named. You are welcome to use our nursery pens for this! When children stay for lunch, their lunchboxes and drinks containers should also be named clearly.

We keep spare clothes at nursery for emergencies and we ask parents and carers to wash and return these if used. We strongly recommend bringing children to nursery in simple, easy to manage clothes that don't matter, so that they are free to play without worrying about getting dirty, and to foster independence. We have nursery Sweatshirts and T-Shirts which you can purchase, second hand or brand new.

Beautiful pictures ... and so much more

Many parents and carers feel some anxiety about what their child actually does at nursery and we fully understand that having something to take home as “proof” of learning or opportunity can be very reassuring. While on many occasions your child will bring home a baking creation, drawing, painting or model, they will have been learning and developing in many different and valuable ways each time they attend nursery – even if this learning is not “visible”. For instance sharing, taking turns, being kind to others and developing listening skills.

We encourage children to participate in craft activities but also respect those who prefer to observe or who simply don't like getting messy! Please do not worry if your child does not appear to have “done” anything: he or she will certainly have been given the opportunity. Although lots of fun, art and craft is only one element of what your child may do at nursery.

We complete a notice board at the end of each session to tell you what we have been doing. We may also give parents and carers an “Ask Me About...” sheets to prompt discussion about activities that individual children have enjoyed – and we are very happy to receive these from home, too, as it's great to know about things the children have been doing when they are not at nursery. We use an online Learning Journal in which we record our photos and observations of the children. We invite you to contribute to this as well. The Journal records their progress throughout their time with us at St Mary's Nursery.



The wider life of the nursery

We play an active role within the community, taking part in events such as the annual Flower Festival at St. Mary's Church; inviting parents, carers and other family members to our regular Nursery Worship; and visiting the Age Concern Centre to entertain them with our Nativity Play.

New families can come and meet us at the Open Day we hold in the summer. There is an active parent social committee which organises events and coffee mornings and does a fantastic job in supporting the nursery and offering a warm welcome to new parents.



Our staff

We are exceptionally fortunate to have a dedicated, highly-qualified and experienced staff, some of whom have been with us since we opened in 2002, bringing a sense of stability which is crucial for the wellbeing of young children. We support our staff through further study, training and the development of individual areas of professional interest.

We welcome students on placements on a regular basis as we want to share our expertise and provide support to the nursery staff of the future; all students are carefully supervised in accordance with best practice.



Working with you

Your child will be allocated a Key Person who takes a special interest in his or her development, and who will keep written records. These are based on observations which, as a team, we carry out as a natural part of our work. Observations help us to understand each child's learning style and to see how we can best help them develop. In the fullness of time, these records accompany your child to school where the Reception Class teacher (who will also be following the Early Years Foundation Stage) continues them.

You are welcome to see and discuss your child's record at any time.

We encourage parents and carers to share with their Key Person any information or concerns which may affect their child's wellbeing or behaviour at nursery – anything from a major event such as moving house to a temporary hiccup such as a poor night's sleep or a mislaid teddy!

We have a parents' book for you to write information which need to know or you can make an appointment to see your key person or a manager if there is not the opportunity at drop off or pick up. You can also send an e-mail. We will also share information with you whenever appropriate. We hold a Parents Evening in the Autumn term and again early in the Summer Term.

Parents are very welcome as volunteers within the nursery. We would also appreciate your help to enable us to go on outings, such as mini-beast or Gruffalo hunts or visit the library.



Our policies

Like all schools and nurseries, we have a set of written policies covering topics such as equal opportunities and health and safety. Copies of these are kept in nursery and can also be viewed on our website. You are very welcome to borrow our copies held for parents – and we welcome feedback.

As a team, we are committed to the highest standards of practice. We know that, on occasion, this can mean accepting criticism and we aim to manage any complaints in a positive and professional manner. Most issues can be resolved in an informal manner by a chat with your child's Key Person or the Nursery Manager. We do, of course, have a formal complaints procedure. If you should ever need to make a formal complaint, our staff will explain the process to you. In order to meet our professional obligations, we also display details of how parents can contact Ofsted with any serious concerns which they feel they cannot discuss with nursery staff or management committee.



What does a session cost?

Each three-hour session currently costs £14.25 (with the cost being reviewed in September each year). We are a non-profit making organisation. Through the government's nursery education funding scheme, children aged three and four years old are eligible for up to 15 hours of free nursery education for up to 38 weeks of the year and most families take advantage of this. We will automatically apply for this funding on your behalf from the term after your child's third birthday. Please note however that we are usually only able to offer six or nine hours until your child is in their pre-school year. For further details, please see our admissions policy which is available on our website - www.stmarysnurseryhorsham.co.uk.

Fees for each term are due for payment by the first Friday of the term. We do offer the option to pay in instalments if this is helpful and we accept payment in cash, by cheque or through workplace nursery vouchers.

If at any time you have difficulty paying, do please contact us. We would never wish a child to be unable to attend our nursery due to financial considerations and we have a special fund which may be accessed for these circumstances. Naturally, we treat all such enquiries in complete confidence.

We require a full term's notice before a child is withdrawn from Nursery.



How do I reserve a place for my child?

If you would like your child to come to St. Mary's Nursery School, you will need to fill in an application form – you'll find one at the back of this Prospectus, and you can also download forms from our website: www.stmarysnurseryhorsham.co.uk. We recommend that you do this well in advance as we usually have a waiting list. Children can attend our nursery from age two-and-a-quarter (in the academic year that they are three) but readiness for nursery depends very much on the individual child. Many parents opt for two sessions initially and then build on this as their child becomes able to manage more. We offer separate morning and afternoon sessions and also full days including lunch, which echo the school day, for the older children.

Your application form should be returned, together with our £15 registration fee, to St Mary's Nursery, c/o The Parish Office, Causeway, Horsham RH12 1HE.

We allocate places about six months before the academic year your child is due to start at nursery, on a first come first served basis. If you accept our offer of a place, we ask for a £50 enrolment fee which is non-refundable. At this time, we will give you the opportunity to express your preference for the days you would like your child to attend.



Come and visit us!

If you would like to come and visit to get a sense of the atmosphere and meet the staff, you will be warmly welcomed. We try to arrange visits for mid-morning, to avoid the busiest “coming and going” times. You may like to bring your child for an hour or so.

Please book in advance so that we can arrange for extra cover to give us time to show you around and answer your questions.

You can get in touch with us by calling us during nursery hours on 01403 250223.

