



Little Owls Preschool (Boxted)

Welcome Pack

*The children are at the heart of
everything we do.*

*They lead their own learning, guided by
a practitioner's knowledgeable hand.*

Little Owls Preschool (Boxted)

Ofsted Number - EY400589

Contact details

Phone - 01206 273226

Email - enquiries@littleowlsboxted.co.uk

Website - www.littleowlsboxted.co.uk.

Facebook - Little Owls Preschool - Boxted

Instagram - little_owls_preschool

Our address is

King George Playing Field, Cage Lane, Boxted, Colchester CO4 5RE

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Our Intent - To lay the foundations for future learning in an exciting and stimulating environment to foster a positive attitude to future learning. Striving for our children to be confident, resilient, independent and curious learners, thinking critically and taking risks to accomplish their forever growing challenges.

"Awe and Wonder"

Statement - We provide a happy, caring environment where children are valued and safe.

We provide high quality education and care for the children to develop the skills they need for learning in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage, whilst developing their confidence and independence.

Values - We strive to help children develop confidence and independence and a positive attitude to learning.

We provide a happy, stimulating environment where children feel safe and valued and can develop and learn.

We promote high standards of behaviour and help children to understand each others feelings.

Children learn to care for and respect themselves and others.

Working closely with parents and carers is important to us as we believe that our children's learning and achievements is something to be shared.

Curriculum - We consider the all-round development of the children. We provide opportunities which enable the children to exercise options and express ideas, reflect on experiences and information, share thoughts and make decisions and discoveries.

We follow children's interests and add to their knowledge and vocabulary, scaffolding learning while we play. Our curriculum helps us to establish where a child's learning starts and how we progress that child. All children develop at different rates and we need to allow for repetition, deeper knowledge and consolidation of learning before moving a child on. Our learning environment covers all 7 areas of learning and is rich and inviting, promoting engagement in play with meaningful adult engagement to support the children in their play.

We plan using children's interests, keypersons next steps, in the moment opportunities and topics to incorporate new learning and experiences.

We use a balanced mix of child initiated, adult supported, adult initiated and in the moment pedagogy.

Throughout the year we organise visits on and off the premises to enhance the children's learning. The children have the opportunity to take part in Forest School during their time with us.

About Little Owls Preschool

We are a charitable company, registered with the Charity Commission, and run by a voluntary Board of Trustees made up mostly of parents. We encourage parental involvement, and welcome parents who wish to take an active part in the running of the preschool, either by becoming a trustee or by helping with fundraising. The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the management of the preschool, whilst the managers and team of staff manage the day to day running of the setting. We have a team of qualified and experienced preschool practitioners. In addition, our business manager deals with all the administration.

We are registered with Ofsted to care for children from two to five years of age, and accept government funded children. As an Ofsted registered provider, we follow the welfare and the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, and are inspected regularly by Ofsted. Please see our last inspection on our website.

We are very fortunate to have sole use of a purpose-designed building on the village playing field, and have a very open outdoor space right outside our building. Parents and visitors can use the adjoining car park.

Staff

We have an experienced team of qualified staff, most of whom are trained to Level 3, one to Level 6 and one QTS. All staff receive regular training in safeguarding children and paediatric first aid and attend professional development courses to improve and update their knowledge. In addition, we have a business manager, who deals with all administration. All our staff and their qualifications can be viewed on our website and on our preschool premises. All staff have been DBS checked. Each member of staff also has a keyperson role, supporting a small group of children and their parents.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS reflects the outcomes of Every Child Matters: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

We ensure that we meet both the learning and development requirements and the welfare requirements of the EYFS. The four guiding themes of the EYFS are:

- **A Unique Child** — every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, competent and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** — children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.
- **Enabling Environments** — the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.
- **Learning and Development** — children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

The EYFS divides children's learning and development into seven areas, three 'prime areas' and four 'specific areas':

Prime areas

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

Specific areas

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

For each area, the guidance sets out early learning goals. These goals state what children will normally be expected to know and to be able to do by the end of the reception year at primary school. With the youngest children, we focus on the three prime areas, which are considered to be the basis for successful learning in the other 'specific' areas. There is a more equal focus on all areas as the children grow in confidence and ability. All areas are delivered through a wide range of activities, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Our planning is led by the children -

their interests, their needs and their stages of development. In a normal session activities and resources are provided which encourage and develop

- art and creativity
- imaginative play
- musical awareness
- enjoyment of stories
- and most importantly, good speaking, listening and understanding, which is the basis for successful future learning
- manipulation skills
- co-ordination and balance
- early literacy and maths
- independence in self care

Children have free access to almost all of our equipment and resources and can choose which activities to take part in. We encourage independence and whilst adults are always on hand to give support when needed, children will always spend a good amount of their time on their self-initiated play. We consider it important that children are allowed to become engrossed in their play and our routines are set up so that children can play without interruption as much as possible. Part of the role of adults in the setting is to support and extend learning experiences, but we believe that children need time to learn and explore independently too.

Tapestry Learning Journeys

What is the Learning Journey?

Your child's Learning Journey is a record of their learning and development during the Early Years Foundation Stage (0-5 years). Practitioners at preschool observe your child and these observations form the Learning Journey. Information from parents is also included so that we can take account of skills that your child shows at home. We use these assessments and observations to plan next steps for each child and to make sure that extra early support is given if a child's development or learning is delayed for any reason.

What is Tapestry?

We use a digital form of Learning Journey, provided by Tapestry, building a secure online Learning Journey for each child. Observations are made using iPads during the preschool sessions. Photos or videos accompany most observations. As a parent you are given a username and password to enable you to access your child's Learning Journey from any mobile device or computer, wherever and whenever you choose. Many preschools, nurseries and reception classes also use Tapestry, so we can transfer the Learning Journey to the new setting or school when your child leaves us.

How can you as a parent contribute to the Learning Journey?

- We encourage your involvement with your child's learning journey, you can add photos and details of what your child has been learning at home.
- Your key person may assess the information you've given if it tells us something new about your child's learning or development.

- You can reply to the observations that have been done by preschool staff.
- Your key person may ask you if you can add a post or photo about a specific area of development, such as using a computer or speech (especially if your child is generally very quiet within the preschool environment).
- Your initial 'About Me' information will be entered into Tapestry to help with compiling the 'starting points' assessment.

How do we monitor progress?

Your key person will be using their professional judgement and Tapestry to look at how your child has progressed over a period of time. She can use it to help plan for the next steps in your child's learning. We can also look at how different groups of children (e.g. boys, girls, 2-year-olds) are progressing as a group so that we can look at what we provide for different groups.

If your child is due a 2-year check, this will be done on Tapestry and you will be given access to it online. The exact timing of this progress check will depend on the age at which a child starts attending preschool and the number of hours a week he/she attends, but where possible it will be completed before the health visitor's 2-year developmental check so that any concerns or developmental delays can be identified and addressed at an early age.

Will you have a copy of the Learning Journey when your child leaves Little Owls?

If your child is moving to another setting or school which also uses Tapestry, the Learning Journey will be transferred and will carry on in the new setting. If the new setting doesn't use Tapestry, you will be able to download the Learning Journey as a PDF file.

Little Owls Preschool policy statements

The preschool has a full range of policies and procedures to ensure that the children in our care are looked after in safety and with consideration for their family background, ethnicity and needs. The policies are available to view at the preschool and on our website www.littleowlsboxted.co.uk.

Our policies are in line with the general welfare requirements of the EYFS:

Safeguarding - *we take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, children's behaviour is managed effectively and appropriately for their stage of development and individual need, and we promote the good health of the children, taking necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate actions when they are ill.*

Suitable people - we ensure that adults looking after children, or having unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.

Suitable premises - outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture and toys are safe and suitable for their purpose.

Organisation - we plan and organise our systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs. We maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Safeguarding and Complaints Policy

All our policies can be found on our website (www.littleowlsboxted.co.uk), but it is very important that you read the safeguarding and complaints policies. The telephone number for Ofsted is 0300 123 4666 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. We can provide a hard copy of all policies if required.

Attendance and Absence Policy

We take steps to ensure that children are kept safe, that their wellbeing is promoted, and they do not miss their entitlements and opportunities. At the very least, good attendance promotes good outcomes for children. In a small minority of cases, good attendance may also lead to early identification of more serious concerns for a child or family.

There are several reasons why a child may be absent from a setting:

- In most cases it is reasonable to expect that parents/carers alert the setting as soon as possible.
- In the case of appointments or holidays give adequate notice.
- The attendance and absence policy are shared with parents and carers and they are advised that they should contact the setting within one hour of the time the child would have been expected to advise of their absence.
- Designated safeguarding leads must also adhere to Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from the provision
 - If a child who normally attends fails to arrive and no contact has been received from their parents/carers, the designated safeguarding lead, takes immediate action to contact them to seek an explanation for the absence and be assured that the child is safe and well.
 - If contact is not made on this first attempt further attempts to contact the child's parents/carers or other named carers continue throughout the day on the first day of absence.

- If no contact is made with the parents/carers and there is no means to verify the reason for the child's absence i.e. through a named contact on the child's registration form, we would contact siblings settings e.g school, any agencies involved. This is recorded as an unexplained absence on the register and is followed up by the manager each day until contact is made.
- If contact has not been made, and we have any reason for concern about a child's wellbeing and welfare, children's services will be contacted for advice about making a referral immediately. If contact has not been made and we do not have any immediate concerns about a child's wellbeing or welfare, we would contact children's services if contact still hasn't been made within 3 days.
- If there is any cause for concern i.e. the child has a child protection plan in place or there have been previous safeguarding and welfare concerns, the designated person attempts to contact the child's parent/carer immediately. If no contact is made Social Care are contacted immediately, and safeguarding procedures are followed.
- All absences are recorded in the register with the reason given for the absence and the expected duration. If any follow up action is required, this is recorded in the child's personal file.
- The register will be monitored to identify patterns and trends in children's attendance. An understanding of the child's and family's individual circumstances will inform the setting's judgement in determining what constitutes a prolonged period of absence.
- Registers containing absences are retained for at least three years, or until the next Ofsted inspection following a cohort of children moving on to school.

If at any time further information becomes known that gives cause for concern, we would immediately contact Children's Services or the Police.

Poor/irregular attendance

Whilst attendance at an early years setting is not mandatory, regular poor attendance may be indicative of safeguarding and welfare concerns that should be followed up.

- In the first instance the setting manager should discuss a child's attendance with their parents/carers to ascertain any potential barriers i.e. transport, working patterns etc and should work with the parents/carers to offer support where possible.
- If poor attendance continues and strategies to support are not having an impact, the setting manager must review the situation and decide if a referral to a multi-agency team is appropriate.
- Where there are already safeguarding and welfare concerns about a child or a child protection plan is in place, poor/irregular attendance at the setting is reported to the Social Care worker without delay.

In the case of funded children, the local authority may use their discretion, where absence is recurring or for extended periods, considering the reason for the absence and impact on the setting. The setting manager is aware of the local authority policy on reclaiming refunds when a child is absent from a setting.

Website

On our website you will find all general information, our most recent Ofsted report, along with **term dates**, **PD days** and our half termly blog about what the children will be learning and how you can support them at home. Please sign up to the blog on the website, so you are alerted when a new blog is live. All our procedures and policies can also be found here.

Useful Information

Snack time

During each session children are offered a drink and a snack. If your child has any special dietary needs, please let us know so we can accommodate these. Fresh drinking water is available throughout the session. We provide a snack of a variety of fruit, vegetables and cheese, various types of crackers. We encourage the children to become independent during snack time, so they will be encouraged to pour their own drinks. We introduce children to foods from cultures other than their own and promote understanding of healthy eating practices. Snack time is an important part of the session, as it develops personal, emotional and social skills in a relaxed setting and is a good time to extend language and communication skills.

Lunch

We are not able to provide lunch, so a lunch box should be brought from home. Please ensure that the lunch you provide helps us to promote healthy eating and good oral health. Lunches provided **MUST** be nutritionally balanced with regard to the four food groups: carbohydrates, protein, dairy or alternative and fruit and vegetables. We will **NOT** except crisps, snack bars, chocolate, cakes, sweets, high sugar foods, packaged processed foods. Drinks to be water or milk rather than juice. Do not send in fizzy drinks, squash or smoothies. As part of our safer eating commitment, as with foods in setting any food brought from home must be suitably prepared for children taking into account size, shape and texture to prevent choking hazards. Any foods that do not meet the guidelines will be removed from the child's lunch box and returned home. Lunch boxes must have an ice pack inside to ensure food stays at the correct temperature as we do not have refrigeration facilities.

Please see link to the requirements of the Eat Well guidelines.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/742750/Eatwell_Guide_booklet_2018v4.pdf

Drop off/Collection

It is very important that children are brought to preschool on time to begin their session promptly. Late drop offs are disruptive. If you have not booked an Early Bird session for your children, please drop off promptly at 9.15am. Parents are asked to collect their children promptly at the arranged collection time and to advise us if someone other than yourself is collecting your child. You will be asked for details of the person collecting and a password. We have procedures in place to make sure that any uncollected child is cared for safely either until he/she is collected or other arrangements have been made. Please note there is no authorised entrance through the garden gate. Please ring the doorbell and wait for a member of staff.

Drop Off Times

Early bird session - 8.45am-9.15am drop off during this time

Morning core session - 9.15am

Collection Times

End of morning core - 12.15pm

End of Lunch - 12.45pm

End of day (early pick up) - 2.45pm

End of afternoon core - 3.15pm

Clothing

Many activities are very messy so please dress your child in clothes which you won't mind getting dirty. We have a range of Little Owls sweatshirts and t-shirts available to buy. We do not aim to make a profit from sales of these items, just to cover the cost. They provide an ideal way of making sure your child's good clothes do not come home covered in glue or paint! Please ensure you supply plenty of spare clothes including socks during each session and please check regularly that your child has not grown out of these.

In winter, a warm coat and wellington boots are essential and in summer, a sun hat and clothing which protects the skin. It is parent/carer responsibility to apply sun-cream at the beginning of their child's session. We will top this up throughout the day as required. Children have access to the outdoors throughout each session, so outdoor wear is essential. **All items of clothing should be clearly named.** Please do not let your child wear jewellery to preschool - necklaces can cause problems if they become caught in toys and all jewellery is liable to go missing and be hard to find. If ears are pierced, studs only should be worn for preschool.

Accidents

In case of serious accident or emergency you will be contacted immediately. All minor accidents will be dealt with by first aid trained preschool staff and the incident noted on Tapestry which you will be asked to sign, when you collect your child.

Illness

Please do not bring your child to preschool if he/she is unwell. It's likely he/she will not enjoy or benefit from the session. If your child has suffered from vomiting or diarrhoea, please keep him/her away from preschool for 48 hours. Please do not bring your child in if they have a temperature or have needed Calpol before leaving home.

Teaching

All our planning is led by the needs and interests of individual children, and practitioners aim to challenge and encourage children whatever their stage of development. We believe that developing good communication skills, confidence and independence are the most important foundations for the children to go on and fulfil their potential. For this reason, we place a great deal of emphasis on talking to and listening to the children in a variety of situations and on encouraging them to take responsibility for their own needs, appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Reading in the school system is now taught using a systematic synthetic phonics approach. As a preschool environment we will usually be following Phase 1 of the Government's Letters and Sounds document. This means that we will be concentrating on all aspects of speaking and listening, developing children's awareness of different sounds in the environment and in speech, so that they are well prepared before they move on to a systematic introduction to phonics. In addition, of course, we will continue to develop early numeracy skills, and will give the children a wide range of activities which encourage mark marking, understanding of the importance of text and writing, and appreciation of the enjoyment which stories, rhymes and songs can give. The activities introduced by practitioners will be highly motivating and engaging to support all areas of learning.

SEN

Any child that requires extra support will receive this in collaboration with the parent/carer, SENCO, key person and any relevant outside agencies. We follow procedures as laid out in the SEND Code of Practice.

Dummies and comforters

Our Special Educational Needs policy includes a statement relating to supporting children with speech, language and communication needs. Because the use of dummies and bottles can delay speech development, EYFS guidance is that parents should be encouraged to phase out the use of dummies and bottles as soon as possible, particularly during the day. Our policies reflect this guidance:

- We will encourage children to take dummies out of their mouths when speaking.
- We will encourage children to leave their dummies in a safe place for periods of time during the sessions.
- **But** - we recognise that many children need their dummies for comfort and security, particularly in a new environment, and we will always be sensitive to each child's emotional needs.

If you would like more information or guidance on how to help your child give up a dummy, please talk to a member of staff.

If your child has a special blanket or toy, it is sometimes useful if it is brought to preschool, even if left in your child's bag. Please tell your keyperson where the comforter is and any special name your child has given it. If your child has just one special comforter, please don't forget to take it home!