

## **Tillingham Pre-school - Our Setting**

We are a charity run pre-school run by a committee that was established in 1963. We are located in the Village Hall of Tillingham and are a rural setting in a residential area across the road from St. Nicholas Primary School. We serve the local community and surrounding villages. We have a close working relationship with St. Nicholas School and often attend sports day, country dancing exhibitions, Christmas Plays, transition to school sessions and school dinners twice a week. We also have a fantastic Transition Programme in place with St. Nicholas School to make transition from Pre-school to Big School less scary.

We have a large Village Hall, which we divide into 7 key areas. These areas are a book corner, cosy corner, craft corner, home role-play area, snack area, discovery area and sand/water/malleable area. We have a fenced off outside area which now boasts permanent fences which were paid for from years of fundraising by parents/carers and families. This outside area is available to the children every session and in all weathers. We also have use of St. Nicholas Primary Schools playground and play equipment, the local park and the local playing field "West Field" which are all directly opposite the Village Hall.

We are registered to provide a service for 26 children per 3 hour session aged from two to five years. The majority of children registered with us receive 3-4 year funding some children are eligible for 2yr funding and 30hour funding for nursery education and we offer both of these funding options. Our sessions are 09:00 until 12:00 every morning and 12:00 until 15:00 on a Monday and Friday afternoon. We offer school dinners on a Wednesday and Friday from 12:00 until 13:00 over at St. Nicholas Primary School and hold a Lunch Box Club on a Thursday from 12:00 until 12:55 in the Village Hall.

We currently have 7 members of staff, four of which have completed their NVQ Level 3, two have completed their NVQ Level 2 and our new member of staff is working towards her NVQ Level 2. All members of staff and current committee members are registered with the DBS Barring System.

## **The Quality and standards of the Early Years provision and Quality of Education**

### **Evaluation of our daily set up**

We recently had a day without the children in the session, where we set up the hall to see what it was like to play in our setting from a child's view. Did we offer areas to encourage independence and give them the opportunities to use their imagination in play? Did we include things that some children may not have ever had the opportunity to experience in their lives or their environment at home. Do our areas spark Awe and Wonder in things they can achieve and do!!

### **Our daily routine**

All the children enter the pre-school and hang their bags onto their pegs. Dependant on the weather they will also hang their coat or they will enter the hall wearing them. The children now sit on circles on the floor instead of a mat. We found that when on the mat the children moved around, distracted each other and had the temptation of touching each other. By sitting on a circle the children have their own space, they choose which circle to sit on and we have found that they are a lot less distracted by others and fidget less. We stand up and sing our good morning song, we then quickly take the register, signing good morning to all children and adults and count how many of us there are. We then take a partner and get ready to go on our "Daily Mile" run around the West Field, we go in all weathers!!! We have found that since going on our morning run the children come back to pre-school with a calmer disposition, they are ready to play and have burnt off any additional energy they may have had. They come back from the run, hang their coats on their pegs, their wellies on the rack and put their own shoes on, asking for help if required. We encourage independence of doing these tasks themselves but are always on hand to help if needed. Obviously depending on the age of the children in on a specific session will dictate the help and support needed each morning.

### **Role Play Area - Magic Box**

The magic box has been in the pre-school for many years, it has been used in imaginative play for many things from cars, planes, tractors, taking the children to the beach on holiday, to the shops etc. The children take lots of different items into the area to extend their play, food for picnics, babies.

We introduced traffic lights and signs into the area but noticed that this then restricted their imagination to using it as a car and nothing else and it was then predominately used by just the boys, the girls seemed to stop using it in their play. We have decided to leave the magic box in the area by itself so that it can once again become anything they want it to.

We have a rule where 4 children at a time can play in the magic box. The children know this rule and will come and ask for the sand timer to assist them with turn taking. We do not automatically put the sand timer in the area as we like to give the children the opportunity to work out that they need to use it to take turns and then use their communication and language to come and ask an adult for it.

### **Discovery Area - Tuff Tray**

We started this area by introducing a tuff tray with a small mixture of odds and ends of toys that we had. This included a few cars, odd bricks that didn't match our sets, figures that didn't fit into any small world play, etc. The children have gradually built the box up by asking for items that they want to introduce into their play. The box has grown over the year and now has a multitude of different items within it, we often have requests to add specific things to it and each time it is played with the imaginative games are never the same.

### **Cosy Corner**

The cosy corner previously consisted of fluffy cushions and other cushions. The area was used as a dumping ground for toys from all areas and pillow fights! It was not utilised as a cosy corner at all, more of a somewhere to go and hide toys from others! We decided to enclose the area with a divider and put a large bean bag and two little ones as seating instead of lots of fluffy cushions. We added a canopy to hang over the top to make it feel more enclosed and cosy and hung nursery rhyme items and lights from the top. We added nursery rhyme flash cards and cuddly toys to the area too. The area is now used as it was intended. Children tend to go into the area to chat with friends or staff or for quiet time if it's a bit noisy in the hall. They can be heard singing the nursery rhymes from the cards or cuddling up to a toy for time out. It's now an utilised area used for so much more than hoarding toys.

### **Book Corner**

The book corner consisted of a book case, rug, beanbags and cushions on the floor as seating. Staff encouraged children to use the book corner for story time but it was always very uncomfortable sitting on the bean bags and trying to read to a few children at a time. Their view of the book was always restricted and they would fight for a space next to you so that they could see the book. The member of staff usually ended up sitting on the floor in front of the bean bags so that everyone could see the book. The bean bags were always moved around and then they were trodden on if they were in the way and the area would always look messy and uninviting. In the summer we had our annual Flower Show and the pre-school had a stall. Lots of fundraising took place by parents/grandparents and the local community and we raised a huge amount for the pre-school, we also received a donated signed West Ham shirt by Julian Dicks that raised a very high sum. After reviewing the book area we decided that maybe a settee would be a good idea to introduce a more permanent seating area. We used our fundraising money to purchase a corner sofa and was excited to place it in the area. The children loved our new addition and flocked to the book corner, unfortunately, there then was not enough seating for the children who wanted to use it and children were walking away from the area as they could not fit. Fortunately, we were in a position to purchase another settee and the area thrived with children utilising the area that had never wondered over there before. On our reflection day, we sat in the book corner on the settees and realised that although there was now lots of opportunity to sit and read, the area felt very clinical, more like a doctors waiting area rather than an inviting book corner. We decided to add cushions and throws and a few bean bags and our big fluffy dog "Barry" and the area has now been transformed into somewhere that's inviting, cosy and always busy!

### **Malleable area**

In this area we like to have playdough. We realise that some children do not get an opportunity to play with playdough due to mess and family time to supervise play. We also thought about giving the children the opportunity to make their own playdough. They use their tick list to ensure they have all the ingredients they need and then, supervised they will make their own using flour and water and whatever else they wish to mix into it. On our reflection day we realised that our rectangle table did not give enough space for many children to be involved in the activity also once the children sat on the four chairs available there was no room for children wanting to stand up at the table. We brought in a larger round table and realised that if we also removed the chairs, more children could fit and use the activity together. We also noticed that by removing the chairs the children were able to use their bodies to roll out the playdough and use the cutters easily putting body weight behind rolling and cutting. We introduced lots of different colours, textures and smells to the playdough too and the children love to choose what they want to add. Each day it's a different creation.

## **Snack area**

We try to provide a rolling snack each day for the children so that the children can ask for snack, within the time the café is open, when they are ready to eat it not when we want them to and when they have finished their activity or at a convenient time to halt their play. We give the children lots of opportunity to be independent during snack, offering support and assistance depending on age and stage of development or where necessary. The children will come and ask the member of staff if they can have snack. They are asked to go and wash their hands and come back and self-register, this helps in our ongoing name recognition activities. The children get the opportunity to select their snack and prepare it for themselves, buttering their crackers, spooning out raisins, counting out fruit etc and pouring their own drinks, we know that some children do not get a chance to do this at home. We encourage the use of sign language at the table for all children and incorporating the children that are non-verbal being able to request what they want to drink and saying please and thank you. Once they have finished their snack they use the food bin to dispose of any leftover food and they wash up their own plates/bowls and cups. Again we know that lots of our children are not allowed to wash up at home, or their parents only use a dishwasher.

## **Home Corner**

In this area we have tried to incorporate as many items that the children may have at home as possible so that they can role play experiences they have in their own houses. We encourage them to cook on the cooker with the correct utensils and serve dinner using the correct cutlery. We recently added a couple of arm chairs as the children used to sit on the floor on a rug as a front room area and this often ended up with pots, pans and all sorts all over the floor. We have developed this area over a long period adding wallpaper to the walls of the dividers to make it more homely and more recently a few children had asked why we didn't have a dishwasher in the home corner like they had at home. We decided to purchase one so that the children who were familiar with them could use it and the children that had never experienced a dish washer could learn how to use it and what it was used for. We encourage the children to sit at the table and eat dinner rather than walk around or sit on the floor. After many discussions around this it seems that many children do not have a dining table and do not spend meal times sitting with their families at the table, so we introduced a table and chairs into the area and encourage them to sit at it.

## **Craft corner**

We have a great selection of mark making opportunities in our craft corner. We started off introducing chalk boards and white boards but found that the area got very crowded. We are lucky enough that we have dividers that are opened up each morning so we thought it would be a good idea to turn the bottom half of one divider into a white board and the other into a black board, giving the children the space they need for more children to utilise these activities. On the table we have many different choices from crayons, pencils, chinks, colouring in, doodle pads and plain paper, we hope by offering this we have covered every eventuality of opportunity to mark make and practice emerging writing.

## **Our Practice is:**

**Good – We constantly reflect on our areas ensuring we are meeting the needs of all children in our setting. Giving them all possible opportunities and life experiences on their journey with us.**

## **Behaviour and attitudes**

All staff are good role models and consistently apply strategies to provide a clear guidance for children in what is acceptable behaviour. We encourage polite interactions and ask that the children are courteous to each other and share with their friends. We teach them about turn taking, tidying up after themselves, which they are given an opportunity to do on a daily basis and taking responsibility for the things they do.

We constantly review strategies for helping children to develop a deeper understanding of what behaviour is expected of them and have attended many Promoting Positive Behaviour workshops as a team. In our school readiness afternoon sessions we work very closely with the children giving them lots of independence, encouraging talking in front of small groups to build their confidence in social situations. We do these through many fun activities i.e. show and tell, home reading book exercises and by taking home our travelling bear "Bertie" and telling their friends what they got up to!

The staff enjoy playing with the children and we constantly strive to encourage them to explore and discover new things. We support the children in choosing their activities and encourage them to keep on trying should the going get tough! We provide challenge and risk reflecting the different ages and stages of development within the session and endeavour to stimulate their interest through shared attention, modelling and achieving their desired end result.

We monitor very closely attendance and have an agreement with the parents that they need to inform us if their child is absent from pre-school on the morning of their session. If we do not hear from the parent then the Supervisor/Deputy Supervisor will contact the parent to record the reason for their child's absence. Whilst we know attending pre-school is not mandatory, we have a very good record of attendance at the pre-school and we feel this is because we have a strong procedure in place.

#### **Our practice is:**

**Good – Our children have very high levels of respect for each other which is modelled by our staff on a daily basis. They are confident, happy children who are always eager to join in and have a “Can Do” and being willing to “have a go” approach to most things.**

### **Personal Development**

We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents well, and who can meet their individual needs. A key person approach benefits the child, the parents and the staff by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, staff are committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in. We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents/carers to have confidence in both their children's wellbeing and their role as active partners with the setting. Each child is assigned a Key Person when they first join the pre-school but there is flexibility to change if necessary. Each Key Person works closely with their key child and their family, ensuring that their individual child's needs are met. Parent's/carer's input is used to support the individual child's needs.

All staff have a thorough understanding of the EYFS curriculum. Learning Journeys form the basis of our observations on our children and are completed by each Key Person on a weekly basis, to track their child's development. These are shared with the children and are often taken home by the parents so that they can update it with home learning. We complete Development Trackers that tracks each child's development each half term. We use our Learning Journeys and our knowledge of our key children and from here we can plan each child's next steps and include this in our weekly planning.

Weekly planning is in place to ensure that the activities and resources meet our planned Next Steps for Intent, Implementation and Impact for each child and cover physical, mental and emotional health, which can be carried out inside and outside. There is a good balance of adult and child led activities and a wide range of resources for the children to choose from. Each activity is evaluated to find out if it worked, if the children enjoyed it, if it met the needs of the all our age and stages, if there are changes to be made if it is done again, how it was adapted for the different ages and if it met the needs of our SEN children.

We encourage the children to become independent and to manage their own personal care. We try to maintain privacy when the children are having their nappy changed and we work closely with the parents/carers with regards to toilet training. We will follow the parent's/carer's lead in the routine they have at home and offer help and advice if needed. The children are able to help themselves to tissues to wipe their noses and they are taught that they must put the tissue in the bin provided when they have finished. Water is available all session for the children and they are able to pour a drink for themselves whenever they require one. They know that their finished cup is now dirty and goes into the bowl ready to be washed up.

At snack time they wash their hands by themselves and take part in a healthy rolling snack experience. The children are made aware that the snack cafe is open and then they are able to decide when they wish to have their snack. They are able to complete their play or activity and are not told when to have a snack but to have it when they are ready. They wash their hands and then self-register to sit at the cafe table. Each child is provided with a variety of healthy choices such as fruit, vegetables, crackers, cheese etc. Dependent on the snack provided, sometimes they cut their own fruit or make their own sandwiches. They are offered milk or water to drink and they pour this out themselves. The menu is always adapted to suit any children with allergies or special dietary requirements. We find that a rolling snack time offers a good opportunity for developing social skills in a small group. Once they have finished their snack we teach them to be independent in managing for themselves, they use the food bin to dispose of any leftover food and they wash up their own plates/bowls and cups. Again we know that lots of our children are not allowed to wash up at home, or their parents only use a dishwasher.

We have a balanced selection of toys and resources to meet the children's needs and enable them to become confident learners through hands on experience. We offer self-selection where possible i.e. craft, sand, water toys etc. We have an outside area that is used on a daily basis and this is being constantly

developed to offer the range of experiences the children receive indoors. We provide lots of opportunity for physical active play inside and out and start the morning off with our "Daily Mile" supporting healthy choices around exercise.

Through play and daily experiences we support all children to consistently follow the rules of pre-school and to recognise the impact their behaviour may have on others. We promote respect for each other and the items/toys within pre-school. We allow the children to make their own choices wherever possible, in play, snack, tidy up time etc. We teach them that their opinions and the opinions of others are important and that we should listen and respect each other. We have a very close community and often have visits from local policemen/women, fire crews, nurses and often talk about "People who help us" and the laws and rules we need to follow.

#### **Our practice is:**

**Good – Our practice is very strong in this area but due to a recent intake of 2yr olds we working on implementing independence, managing their personal needs themselves and developing their understanding of fundamental British Values.**

### **Leadership and Management**

There is a clear management structure within the pre-school and all staff have defined roles and responsibilities and are issued with a Job Description when they first start, detailing these. All staff work well within their team. All staff and committee have been DBS checked and are enrolled on the DBS Barring System.

Staff appraisals are held annually for each member of staff, by the Chair of the Committee and the Supervisor. They are very well structured and staff are given the opportunity to discuss strengths, areas to improve, their performance and opportunities for further development through training and qualifications.

Staff peer on peer supervisions are completed on a regular basis and the information obtained in the observation is fed back to the member of staff in a short feedback meeting. In this meeting areas of strength, good practice, development and points for action can be discussed.

Half termly staff supervision meetings are held with the Supervisor where progress, targets/objectives, achievements and any other matters are discussed. If there are any safeguarding concerns regarding children, staff, committee or the setting, these can also be discussed. A sample of Learning Journey's and home school log books are brought into the meeting and viewed. Training requirements or requests are put forward and wherever possible training is implemented for the team as a whole. Four out of seven of the staff have a qualification in Understanding Safeguarding, on-line Safety and Understanding Prevent Duty. All staff recently attended EIF, Cultural Capital and Communication & Language workshops through the Early Years Alliance and also more recently a Phonological Awareness course with the local primary school, run by the Early Years Advisers.

Half termly staff meetings are held where staff and management can air any issues, new ideas, planning and the children's performance over the last term. Reflective practice of the setting and ourselves is discussed at each meeting. Committee meetings are held monthly with committee and the Supervisor/Deputy Supervisor and staff are invited to attend if they should want to.

The Supervisor and Deputy Supervisor attend regular Cluster meetings and local KIT meetings with EYFS Officers and local pre-school's and primary schools. These meetings are used to keep abreast of changes and to share ideas and common practice with each other.

Tillingham Pre-school have a very close relationship with the village primary school, St. Nicholas CofE Primary School. The Supervisor/Deputy Supervisor and the Reception Teacher meet on a regular basis to discuss current trends for school readiness and transition plans between pre-school and school.

#### **Our practice is:**

**Good – We pride ourselves in trying to attend as many training courses and workshops provided in the industry as possible to stay in-line with current affairs and legislation. We work as a fantastic team and use personal self-reflection and the provisions self-reflection as a means for constant improvement within our practice.**