



# **Hamsterley Primary School**

## **Pre - School**



## **Information for Parents**

**Mrs Lynn Cowans  
Head Teacher**





# Hamsterley Primary School

# Pre-school

Mission statement:

*'Opening minds, unlocking potential, celebrating success together'*



## Parent Information

Telephone 01388 488279

e.mail : [hamsterley@durhamlearning.net](mailto:hamsterley@durhamlearning.net)

website : <http://www.hamsterley.durham.sch.uk>

# Welcome to the Early Years Foundation Stage at Hamsterley Primary School

**Mission statement: 'Opening Minds, Unlocking Potential, Celebrating Success Together'**

Our pre-school is for children 3 - 4 years old. We have a sixteen place (8 children 15 hours am or pm) pre-school class together with a mixed Reception, Year 1 and year 2 Class of pupils.

**Our Early Years/Class 1 staff consists of;**

Early Years/Class 1 Teacher (KS1) Teacher & Head Teacher  
Mrs Lynn Cowans



Early Years/Class 1 teacher - Mrs Jane Stephens



Early Years/Class 1 teacher - Mrs Andre Bennett



Early Years/Class 1 Teaching Assistant - Miss Kaye



Deputy Head Teacher/Class 2 Teacher (KS2) - Mr Damian Hassan



School Secretary - Mrs Allison Walker



Mrs Linda Williamson  
Caretaker/Cleaner &  
Lunchtime Supervisory



Mrs Janet Brunskill  
Out of Hours Assistant



Mr Stephen Grinham  
Caretaker/Cleaner



Mrs Janice Bainbridge  
Taylor Shaw Cook

### **Organisation of the setting;**

The Pre-school children have experiences of indoor and outdoor learning environment and sometimes with reception pupils in class 1. Pre-school children will have opportunities to work together, and alongside older children in this family environment to give experiences of learning in different situations.

### **Times:**

We can offer 15 hours of Free Entitlement over 5 days from 9am until 12pm. There is the option to alter/extend these times upon request depending on demand and payment for extra sessions over the 15 hour free entitlement. Please feel free to discuss this with us.

**Lunch - 12 noon - 12.15 pm** - Your child can stay for a meal if you wish. The cost is £2.40 for the meal which we would like you to pay separately. Please inform us in advance when your child is to stay for lunch and pay at the school office.

**Breakfast Club care** is available from 8am - 9am - £2.50 per drop in session or £10 for a booked week.

### **Admission to pre-school**

The main entry for children to start pre-school is the term after they are 3. We can contact parents the term before they start to offer a place and arrange inductions. Names can be placed on the pre-school waiting list in the September after a child's first birthday and priority will be given to children by age.

In the September following a child's 4th birthday they will move onto Primary School, however, a place at our pre-school doesn't automatically mean a place in the school, as the criteria for admission is not the same. See website below for details:

<http://www.durham.gov.uk/pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=7770>

### **Safeguarding your child at Hamsterley Primary School**

Hamsterley School has a duty to protect every child in it's care, keep children safe and away from harm. We are fully aware that abuse does occur in our society and we have a duty to act on any concerns we may encounter with children in our care.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator is the Headteacher, Mrs Lynn Cowans and Deputy Headteacher Mr Damian Hassan in her absence.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality with regards to all children and families within Hamsterley Primary School will be maintained at all times.

## Equal Opportunities

Hamsterley School operates within an equal opportunities framework at all times.

We aim to:

- create an environment in which each individual feels valued, irrespective of ethnic origin, language, gender, ability or age;
- ensure equal access to all areas of the curriculum for all the children in our care;
- promote the belief that all can and should achieve to their highest potential in all areas of the taught and "hidden" curriculum;
- provide materials to promote learning that are appropriate and reflect diversity

## Clothing

For everyday wear and tear your child needs suitable clothing which could possibly get dirty or stained. We do have aprons but unfortunately, paint, glue, shaving foam, soil, etc... have a tendency to get everywhere! Clothes which enable children to be independent when going to the toilet are a necessity to prevent accidents, and Velcro shoes are ideal. They need wellingtons and warm coats, hats, scarves and gloves for colder weather, with indoor plimsolls to change into.

School sweatshirts and cardigans are very hard wearing and can be purchased. Please ensure EVERY item of clothing has a name in, including footwear. **We discourage the wearing of any kind of jewellery in pre-school as accidents can easily happen.**

In summer children need sunhats to wear with names in and sun cream should be applied **before** coming to pre-school.

## Toileting

Although we realise that occasionally children have 'accidents' when they are engrossed in activities, we do expect children of pre-school age to be independently using the toilet, flushing it and washing their own hands. This will become second nature to them as they freely use our toilets. We do have a supply of spare clothes just in case, **but please ensure they are wearing clothes they can manage themselves.**

**Hall time** - as we are lucky enough to have use of our school hall, children need to be able to remove and put on their own shoes and socks for activities.

## Healthy living

We feel it's important to promote a healthy lifestyle from the start, encouraging children to be aware of healthy practices. We provide opportunities for developing healthy bodies and minds. Children are offered milk or water at snack time and such things as fruit, cheese, crackers, toast and the occasional birthday cake. We sometimes bake biscuits and cakes thereby demonstrating that we can all eat any foods in moderation. We ask for a donation of £1 per week towards the purchase of snack.

## Illness

Staff would appreciate it if you could ring school on 01388 488279 and let us know if your child is unwell and therefore not coming in. Many childhood illnesses are spread by contact and by sharing germs amongst children playing together. Children do not play or learn effectively if they are unwell. Being sick or having a tummy upset at pre-school can seriously distress children, and if they do have sickness/diarrhea, **they must not return for 48 hours after the last bout to prevent it from**

**spreading.** If they return to pre-school when they are well, they will be much less likely to pick up another infection.

PLEASE don't let your child decide when they are well enough!

**Also, please inform the school if you find head lice.**

### **Medicine and accidents**

We have trained paediatric first aiders on the school premises. Should children need medical attention, parents will be notified. Children will not be administered medicine of any kind unless it's a prescribed medicine, cream for eczema or an inhaler for asthma and written permission is given. Parents will be informed of any bumps and scrapes we are aware of and these will be dealt with as they happen.

### **Pre-school 'rules'**

We have some common sense rules for everyone's safety which is related to throwing sand, hitting, kicking, swearing, running in pre-school, etc. Children misbehaving will be spoken to quietly but firmly by qualified staff and occasionally excluded from a fun activity by being asked to sit out with a 30 second timer. Only rarely will it be necessary to inform parents as most incidents are forgotten about once dealt with. Parents are only involved if unacceptable behaviour is persistent and causing disruption in pre-school.

### **Leaving and collecting children**

Staff will be available in the pre-school from 9am. Always bring your child right into the school grounds outside of the pre-school entrance (side entrance) and see the staff there so that we know they have arrived safely, and never take a child out of pre-school without staff being aware. **It is important that the children arrive punctually at 9am and parents collect them at the agreed time.**

If any other person is to collect your child please inform staff or telephone the school office. It is most important that you let the staff know who it will be collecting your child and that they are aware of the correct pre-school session times. Could you also be aware that only adults **over the age of 16** can collect children and under no circumstances will we let children leave pre-school with a minor.

### **Car parking**

Your child's safety is paramount to us, so please help us by ensuring that vehicles are never brought onto school grounds without prior permission from the Head Teacher. We do encourage our parents to park their cars in the Club car park and walk down to school. We take parking very seriously and monitor cars parked inappropriately outside school as cars blocking the entrance can affect deliveries and emergency vehicles getting into school. You also need to be aware of other children and families, particularly at school times. Please help us keep your children safe.

### **Your child's Progress**

Your child's progress in all areas of learning is monitored during their time in pre-school through staff observations during free play and planned activities. Your child will have a 'Learning Journey' book of their time in pre-school. Parents can discuss their child's progress at any time but will also be invited

into school for an informal chat. We have a 'Graduation Ceremony' when your child leaves pre-school to start the reception year in school.

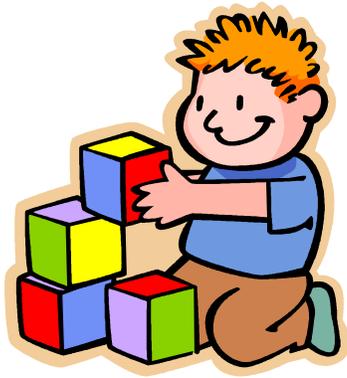
We have a Class 1 bear called Baby Bear who goes home with children on a weekend in a backpack. The bear has a diary too and you and your child can record in the diary the bear's visit to you. This is an ongoing project and we appreciate the bears safe return and diary entry.

As we are a governor run pre-school unit attached to a Primary School, which includes the Foundation Stage (Reception), we share many policies and procedures with them. All of these are available to parents and can be obtained through the Head Teacher.

We hope that you and your child will be very happy with us at Hamsterley Primary School. We have a friendly and approachable staff and will answer any questions you may have.

Forms (available from the office) need to be completed when your child starts pre-school and Mrs Walker (school admin) needs to be informed of any changes.

Please talk to a member of staff if you require any further information or help. If you have any concerns or complaints about our service please contact us.



*Mrs Lynn Cowans*  
*Headteacher*

# The EYFS Profile

The EYFS Profile summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the EYFS. It is based on ongoing observation and assessment in the three prime and four specific areas of learning, and the three learning characteristics, set out below:

## The prime areas of learning:

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

## The specific areas of learning:

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

## The learning characteristics:

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically

For young children who can't read or write, they need opportunities to learn and express their feelings through playing. It's through play that they discover new things about the world, enabling them to develop new skills and build relationships.

## Personal, Social & Emotional Development

We believe that children who learn to respect one another and the things around them will grow up as confident, independent, curious and enthusiastic individuals.

Children are happy when they feel good about themselves, they show an interest in learning and have motivation. They show sensitivity to the needs and views of others. To help children develop in this area, we provide them with; a caring environment with staff as good role models, where they are encouraged to work, play, cooperate, help one another, be friendly and polite and function in a group beyond the family. We share our feelings, stories that promote respect, empathy and self control. We celebrate the Christian religion through school assemblies, birthdays, Christmas & Easter. We value other cultures, try food from other countries and listen to different types of music.

## **Communication, Language and Literacy**

Children should be supported to become competent in communicating, speaking and listening. In our pre-school children are encouraged to talk about their experiences, express themselves clearly and confidently and ask questions. Developing good communication skills at an early age can have a really positive effect on future educational success. It is important that you to talk to your child and listen to what he/she has to say. YOU are your child's best teacher of language!

Children should be provided with opportunities for listening to stories, looking at books alone or with a friend, as this will help develop skills necessary for the eventual process of reading. Books play an important part in language development as children begin to understand that print carries meaning and they begin to recognise their name and some letter symbols. We have lots of writing and labels around pre-school to read!

Many activities lead directly into writing and it is a process which can't be hurried. Children need to use mark making materials of every description - pencils, pens, crayons, chalk, paintbrushes and other tools perhaps in the sand, soil, dough, shaving foam and clay. They need to feel confident about making marks before they can be expected to produce letter symbols such as their name.

In pre-school they 'write' for all kinds of reasons, for example:

\*appointments/plans in role play \*shopping lists

\*filling in forms \* captions for pictures \*letters and cards \*

You can help by 'pretending' you know what they have written - ask your child to read it to you.

Children need to go through these stages before they are able to control a pencil well enough to 'write' a letter or number (so even if it looks like scribble, it is part of a process).

In our pre-school we also contribute to the provision for CLL by carrying out adult led activities from Phase 1 of the Letters & Sounds Programme. This focuses on good listening, sound discrimination, rhythm & rhyme, music and singing and oral blending of sounds in words. Children are encouraged to continue these activities during free play.

It's important for parents to understand that we will not only support learning and development, but build the important foundations necessary for children to read and write once they move into Primary School.

## **Problem solving, Reasoning and Numeracy**

There is so much more to maths than counting and numbers! Rote counting means nothing unless children can understand that  $1 = 1$  object,  $2 = 2$  objects, and so on. Lots of activities in pre-school provide mathematical and scientific experiences. Playing with blocks, threading beads, jigsaws, construction sets, etc. will provide opportunities for comparing, sorting, matching, ordering, pattern making, sequencing and counting. Mathematics is happening all the time in young children's lives, for example, when shopping, in the car, at home, in the café. Make it fun for them. Children will be encouraged to measure, estimate and classify. They will learn to use mathematical language, solve practical problems, show curiosity and investigate objects and materials. In pre-school many activities are what we call 'cross-curricular' which means they cover many areas. Investigating sand and water provides early experiences of capacity and volume, and activities such as cooking and growing things build mathematical and scientific opportunities into children's play. Sand play may be related to:- pre-maths skills - weighing, matching shapes, volume. Science - discovering properties of dry sand, what it feels like, how it pours. Language development - learning new words and ideas related to sand and equipment, talking about sand.

As children progress some will begin to show an interest in numbers, they will be able to count reliably, recognise some number symbols and begin to write them. By singing number rhymes and playing counting games it is fun and counting seems much easier!

### **Creative Development**

Children love to dress up and pretend, and playing out real life situations helps them to understand the world around them. In our pre-school we have a 'life area' which can be transformed into a hospital, a hairdressers, a building site, a garage, a travel agents and more! Children will find ways to communicate by using colour, sound, texture, movement and shape. We offer opportunities for them to use their senses. They paint, write, draw, make collage pictures and models from reclaimed materials. They create something which is unique to them.

Representing and communicating ideas and feelings in a variety of ways through such things as language, paint, music, and dance is important for creative expression. Children love listening to different music and sounds, making sounds, singing rhymes and songs and exploring how they can move their bodies. We also have what we call 'small world' activities which children use to make pretend situations - cars, wild and farm animals, 'playmobil', train tracks, pirate ships, etc. to name but a few!

### **Physical Development**

In order to gain confidence and develop physically, children need to climb, balance, run, jump, crawl, ride, throw, catch and kick. At Hamsterley School we have our own safe enclosed area where children can use the bikes and scooters and play with small equipment such as balls, cars and garage, dolls, bricks and models such as plastic animals. We have our own climbing apparatus and lots of things to investigate. We have a selection of boxes and planks for children to explore building and balance. We have use of the school hall for P.E., gymnastics and dance.

By using a wide range of small equipment such as building blocks, peg boards, lacing cards, threading beads, scissors, etc., the children will increase their fine manipulative skills and develop better hand eye coordination. Playdough is always a popular way to develop fine motor skills and we provide a variety of resources to make it fun.

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

Children have the opportunity to find out about the world in which they live, exploring creatures, plants and objects in their natural environment. They will investigate how things work, exploring such things as magnets, mirrors, colour and natural objects. Through their play they experience sand, water, soil, gravel, bark, etc. which provides an ideal environment for learning. Children are encouraged to discuss their past and talk about significant things in their lives and the lives of their families. They are given opportunities to meet people who help us in the community. We look at changes during the weather and seasons, when cooking or freezing and we learn about new life through animals and plants. We grow seeds, we've hatched quails and we've watched caterpillars turn into butterflies.

Children are introduced to all forms of Information Technology and they have access to computers and programs designed to enhance and support their learning. Children are monitored as to their use of the computer to enable all children to share and to learn basic skills.