



Prospectus

**Spriggs Farm
Thaxted Road
Little Sampford
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB10 2SA**



Welcome to Westwood Montessori Preschool

Westwood Montessori Pre-School is set in a converted barn surrounded by countryside and woodland. The pre-school provides a Montessori education for children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years. We have a large outdoor play area and classroom that is freely accessible to the children all day. The pre-school has a variety of animals for the children to care for and uses the nearby forest for additional outside experiences. We operate a term time only preschool, opening Monday to Friday 9am –4pm on a session basis.

- The morning session runs from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm.
- An afternoon session runs from 1.00pm to 4.00pm.
- An all day session runs from 9.00 am to 4.00pm.

Mission Statement:

We aim to provide a safe, secure and happy environment. In this environment your child can be guided through the Montessori education system by adults with a full understanding of the Montessori Method. We will help your child to find their own potential and independence and whilst on this journey of self-discovery, aid them in becoming a balanced, well-mannered and confident individual.

- To provide a safe, secure and happy environment for your child.
- To lead your child to the joy of learning and self-discovery.
- To observe your child as an individual and to help them to find their own potential.
- To provide a wide and varied day, incorporating a full learning programme.
- To allow freedom of movement during the learning activities and to provide physical exercise indoors and outdoors.
- To encourage creativity in art, craft and musical expression.
- To encourage self-discipline, caring for others and social interaction.
- To promote independence and care of the immediate environment.

WHY MONTESSORI?

Maria Montessori pioneered the Montessori Method of Education early this century. In developing this method of education she combined a philosophy with a practical approach based on the idea of freedom and independence for the child but within a structured environment.

The Montessori Method takes into consideration the child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social abilities and develops these in a specially prepared environment. What is most unique about the method is the detailed emphasis given to sensorial experiences, developing the five senses and providing a solid foundation for speech, writing and arithmetic.

We recognise that children want to learn but it is vital that they are taught how to learn and through the Montessori method the child will gain this ability, thus creating a solid base on which they can build for their future learning.

We want to help your child become a balanced, well-mannered and confident individual, who through the Montessori education system will have a flying start at their next school and for life.



THE MONTESSORI LEARNING PROGRAMME

A Montessori learning programme aims to develop the child's self-motivation, independence and self-respect. It places no restraints on a child's ability and provides children with a step-by-step understanding of complex abstract concepts through the use of concrete materials.

A child's early years, from birth to six, are the period when he or she has the greatest capacity to learn and the greatest appetite for knowledge. It is during these years that the foundation is laid for all their future learning, for their sense of themselves, their confidence, self esteem, respect and interest in the world around the truly education for life.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Montessori classroom is a 'prepared environment' consciously designed to support the child's developmental needs. Every child develops at a different rate and because the classroom is equipped with a wide range of unique Montessori materials the child is able to choose freely from the materials suitable to individual progression. The special qualities of the teacher and the unique classroom environment combine to allow the maximum opportunity for intellectual growth at the same time promoting emotional and social development and self control, thus enabling the child to reach their full potential.

THE MONTESSORI CLASSROOM

The first aspect parents notice when entering a Montessori classroom for the first time is the quiet and calm atmosphere of the children busy at work!

The Montessori classroom can be a bewildering place for parents who for the first time watch what is happening. The equipment looks attractive and interesting but very different to the toys you are used to seeing your child play with at home. The teacher seems very fussy about the way the children handle the equipment yet no-one will appear to be controlling what they choose to work with or how long they work with it. The children all seem confident and calm, working quietly, tidying up after themselves and sharing their time and equipment.

The unique Montessori environment is carefully planned; every item is designed to meet the needs of your child. It is a child-sized world where the adults treat the children in their care with respect and understanding, guiding them through their most important years of learning. The child has the freedom to make their own choices and work freely with equipment that interest and stimulates them. The activities they have to choose from are carefully selected by the teachers and provide variety, interest and the necessary learning properties to stimulate your child. All the exercises have an in-built control of error, which enables the child to work with it on their own but guides them in reaching the correct conclusion.

On entering Westwood Montessori Pre-School your child will be working sub-consciously towards the goals of reading, writing and arithmetic from the very beginning. A good example to use to show this, is writing: to first strengthen a child's fingers in preparation to hold a pencil without tiring, the teacher will encourage the child to use his pincer grip to hold the knobs on the wooden blocks you will see on the sensorial shelves. The child will be shown how to grip tweezers in the same way when using them to transfer beads from one bowl to another when doing practical life work. They will then go onto to learn the shapes of the letters; as the child runs their fingers across sandpaper letters and mouths the sounds, the whole multi-sensory experience is absorbed. The child will then go on to become dexterous enough to draw the shapes with a pencil.



MONTESSORI AREAS OF LEARNING

Early learning/ Practical life

During these early stages emphasis is placed on developing practical life skills. The child learns to be independent and to take care of the environment. Importance is placed on exercises being carried out in an exact and organised manner. Many of these early materials are designed to prepare the child for the later stages of reading, writing and number work.

Sensorial

Children use materials designed to lead them to an understanding of the senses. This lays the foundation for future mathematical and literacy work.

Maths

The children, using a wide range of unique materials, develop a concrete understanding of numbers and quantity. Children will reach the stage of using materials and then transferring their findings to paper. We would stress that your child will move naturally through the different stages when he or she is ready.



Language

We use a wide range of sound learning and recognition activities to build phonic awareness before moving on to using the sandpaper letters. The child will learn through a multi sensory method the skills for word and sentence building. Specific materials prepare hand control for later written work. Your child will have his or her own pattern of progress and each new stage depends on your child's readiness.

Creative/Physical

The children have free flow access to the outside classroom and play area and our art and craft area is well stocked with materials to aid each child's creative development. There are music and movement sessions and circle time games and activities to enjoy.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

The Montessori curriculum also provides a sound introduction to history, geography, nature and science. Some of the materials are standard Montessori equipment but we also use equipment made by our teachers and the children to follow up a project of particular interest.

Commitment to Ofsted

The provision for children's development and learning is also linked to The Early Years Foundation Stage published by the department for education and skills.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances and for all children in our care we link to The Early Years Foundation Stage. (EYFS)

The EYFS framework sets out four key principles underpinning effective practice in the care, development and learning of young children. Its purpose and aims state that every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential.

The framework guides practice in settings where babies and toddlers are cared for and to help young children to achieve the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

A secure, safe and happy childhood is important and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they develop. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know that the pre-school they have selected will keep their children safe and help them to thrive.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the framework that provides that assurance. Our setting is guided by and promotes the four principles:

A Unique Child

Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognize the uniqueness of each individual child by acknowledging their individual potential and pace of development.

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

We acknowledge the parents' unique role as the child's first educators and we ensure a respectful partnership with parents and carers. We work closely with other early years professionals who support children outside of the nursery such as child minders, other settings, therapists and health visitors.

Enabling environment

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

The Montessori principle is founded on the principle of the favourable environment, which supports the child's self construction.

Learning and Development

Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

We see the child's education as a key to the child's development. The Montessori learning materials serve as tools to enable the children's learning.

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our pre-school helps children to continue to do this by providing all of the children with interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

At Westwood Montessori Preschool we aim to provide an environment in which all children achieve the best possible education and care and become confident learners with a growing ability to communicate their own views and are supported by the preschool to reach their full potential during the Early Years.

Children and young people with SEND have unique learning needs, socially, emotionally, cognitively or physically that make it harder for them to learn than other children and young people of the same age. These children and young people may need extra or different support from that given to others.

Our Aims

- We have regard for the DFE Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice 2014.
- We include all children in our provision as required by the Equality Act 2010.
- We provide practitioners to liaise with and help support parents and children with special educational needs (SEN)/disabilities.
- We identify the specific needs of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and meet those needs through a range of strategies.
- We work in partnership with parents and other agencies in meeting individual children's needs.
- We monitor and review our practice and provision and, if necessary, make adjustments.
- We use the graduated response system for identifying, assessing and responding to children's special educational needs and disabilities.

For further information please see Essex Local Offer website

The Local Offer is published as part of the SEND reforms under the Children and Families Act 2014.

<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk>

The Local Offer will:

- Give you information about education, health and care services
- Give you information about leisure activities and support groups
- Hold all the information in one place
- Be clear, comprehensive and accessible
- Make service provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations
- Be developed and reviewed with the service providers and service users



Other Information

Children's Welfare and Safeguarding

Westwood Montessori Pre-School works together with Social Care and Essex Safeguarding Children Board whose combined duty it is to protect the welfare and safety of children. All preschool staff receive regular updates and safeguarding children training.

Parental Involvement

Parents are welcome at any time to come and be part of life at Westwood. We recognise parents as the first and most important educators of their children. There are many ways in which parents can take part at Westwood, such as:

- Exchanging knowledge about their children's need, activities, interests and progress with the staff;
- Sharing their own special interests with the children, especially ones that may be topic related;
- Being part of the storytelling rota, particularly fathers;
- Taking part in school trips and other events;
- Building friendships with other parents in the setting.

From time to time the setting holds learning events for parents. These usually look at how adults can help children to learn and develop in their early years. Courses on similar topics are held locally. Please look at our Parents Information Board for further details about courses and parent groups.

Key person and your child

The setting has a key person system. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom they are responsible. The key person observes and guides the child, planning for each stage of your child's development and education and will help your child to settle and engage with the environment.

Your child's key person will work with you, as parents, to make sure that the pre-school is providing for your child's particular needs and interests and is available to discuss concerns or to share your child's personal achievements!



My Montessori Child

Our record keeping system within the preschool is called 'My Montessori Child'. This system is run using ipads to record visual evidence and observational records of your child's progress and achievements whilst they are with us at pre-school. The system allows the staff to plan individually for your child and produce a clear visual record of the activities which have captured their interest. The exciting part is, as a parent, you can log in to the system with a unique pass code, to view pictures and observations which have been recorded for your child. The system includes a 'parent's page' which will keep you up to date with the preschool news and Montessori updates.



My Montessori Book

Each child has their own book in which both the individual child and staff celebrate achievements during the weekly sessions attended. Your child's book helps us to celebrate her/his achievements and by staff and parents working together provides what your child needs for her/his well-being and development.

Staff Qualifications

As well as gaining qualifications in Early Years Care and Education, staff attend regular training days, either in house or at a local authority venue, to help them keep up to date with current thinking and best practice in the Early Years Care and Education sector. All staff hold fully enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks and regularly update qualifications in Safeguarding, Early Years, Positive Behaviour, Paediatric First Aid, Food Hygiene and Health & Safety.

School Handbook & Policies

The setting information book is on display in the reception area for parents and visitors to read and learn more about the pre-school and its ethos. A file containing our current school policies is available to read, located in the reception area by parents, visitors and outside agencies.

These policies help us to make sure that the service provided by Westwood is a high quality one and that, for you and your child, being part of Westwood is an enjoyable and beneficial experience.

Staff and Trustees work together to adopt the policies and all have the opportunity to contribute towards the policies. We review policies regularly to ensure that they are enabling us to maintain a quality service for children, parents, staff and the local community.

Outdoor Learning

The children have access to outdoor areas, at all times in all weathers, except when conditions are unsafe. We encourage children to move in and out as they wish, extending their activities in the outdoor classroom and zoned areas - willow dome, small animal area, music den, bike track, sandpit and climbing frame. The children can work under cover or out in the large garden, ensuring they move as much as they need to meet their physical, emotional and intellectual needs. We ask that children bring in suitable clothing, including sun hats and sun cream in summer and warm, waterproof clothes and welly boots for winter.



Forest School

We are lucky enough to have 'West Wood' behind the school which is managed by the Wildlife Trust. With their permission we take the children for regular nature walks and forest schooling sessions into the wood. In the Montessori curriculum children learn about the fundamental needs of man, the need for food and water to grow and develop, the need of oxygen to breath and the need to have the ability to reproduce and produce offspring. With all this in mind we teach them where to find food and water, they get concrete impression of how plants produce oxygen and why we need to care for them and they learn firsthand about plant and animal re-production.



Uniform

We supply 2 items of uniform when you enrol your child. This consists of either a rucksack, polo shirt or sweatshirt. Additional supplies of uniform are available to purchase.

We also advise that you send your child to preschool in 'old' clothes as there will be lots of opportunities for your child to engage in messy play!

School Lunches

School lunches are available for all the children. If your child has any special dietary requirements please ensure you inform the preschool staff. The menus will be set for each term on a rolling 3 week menu and will offer a nutritionally balanced but traditionally cooked lunch, freshly prepared on our premises on a daily basis, offering fresh vegetables with a choice of home cooked deserts, or a selection of fresh fruit or yogurt of the child's choice. We will cater for special dietary requirements and vegetarians. School lunches are included in the fees. *(For those accessing the 30 hour only funding school lunches are optional, at an additional cost.)*

Packed Lunches

We kindly request that parents pack children's lunch boxes in insulated lunch bags with freezer blocks, where possible, to keep the food chilled until lunchtime. All lunch boxes, food containers and drinks containers should be clearly labelled with the child's full name.

Registration and Waiting Lists

Once your child has been registered to start at our preschool s/he will be placed on the waiting list. We will inform you whether you have secured a place in the term before your child is due to start.

For our September intake the waiting list will be followed in strict order of receiving your child's registration form and fee.

For those children who register with us to start at other times during the academic year we will make every effort to accommodate the preferred start date and sessions but this is conditional on available spaces.

15 Hours Funded Early Education Entitlement Information

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours of grant funded early education per week until they either go into a Reception class or reach compulsory school age. The entitlement is paid from the term after your children turns 3 years old. The cut off dates are as follows: - 31st March, 31st August and 31st December.

There is also funding available for two year olds whose families are on low incomes or receiving certain benefits.

How to claim 15 Hours Funded Early Education Entitlement

Westwood Montessori Preschool will be able to apply for Grant Funded Early Education Entitlement funding on your behalf from Essex County Council. The funding is then paid directly to us on a termly basis.

Each term we will ask you to sign a parent/carer agreement form. The form is your commitment to Westwood Montessori Preschool for your child's place for the coming term. We will then submit the form to Essex County Council to claim the Grant Funded Early Education Entitlement for the forthcoming term. The entitlement will be deducted from the total of each terms fees.

From September 2017 – 30 Hours Free Childcare Entitlement

Working parents/carers of 3 and 4 year olds will be able to access 30 hours of free childcare per week, depending on individual circumstances. Please see the following website for more information www.childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk For those families who wish to access their 30 funded hours with no additional cost, the children will be able to attend any or all week days between the hours 10.00am – 4.00pm, subject to availability.

Preschool Fees

At the start of each term parents will receive an invoice for the forthcoming terms fees. The fee is the same for all three terms (autumn, spring, summer) irrespective of the length of the term. Please contact the preschool office for an up to date fee charges sheet or please see our website: Admissions and Fees page.

Childcare Vouchers

Childcare vouchers are available from some employers as part of your salary. We accept these.

Contact Information

If you need to contact the preschool during opening hours please telephone: **01371 831902 – press option 3 for the nursery room or press option 4 for the preschool room or email westwood@montessorigroup.org**

For invoice, payment and grant funding queries please contact our Bursar, Emma Briggs either by email: bursar@montessori.group.org or telephone: 01763 836996

The postal address for all correspondence is:

Westwood Montessori Preschool
Spriggs Yard,
Little Sampford,
Saffron Walden,
Essex
CB10 2SA

Website: www.westwoodmontessori.co.uk



TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ATTENDANCE:

To maintain the high standards of the Preschool it is necessary to stipulate the following regulations:

- The morning session runs from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm daily. The afternoon session runs from 1.00pm to 4.00pm. An all-day session runs from 9.00am to 4.00pm.
Please remember that your child could become distressed if you are late or regularly late. Children do not like to be the last to leave or may worry that you may not come to collect them. If you are delayed in traffic or something unavoidable please telephone us promptly.
- Our snack cafe is free flow and available all morning. Milk and water will be supplied, but we would ask that you supply a piece of fruit or vegetable, bread sticks, rice cakes or crackers each day to develop a healthy approach to eating and sharing with others.
- The children will sit down to lunch at 12pm. We ask that you provide a healthy packed lunch or a school lunch can be ordered. Drinking water will be provided.
- If someone other than yourself is collecting your child, please notify your child's key person and complete the collection book in the main reception area. Our staff will not release your child to anyone other than you unless this notification has been carried out.
- Please supply a named bag for your child containing spare clothes, nappies and wipes, as appropriate. They will require a raincoat or a winter coat, wellington boots, sunhat and sun cream for outside play. All items of clothing brought to the school should be clearly labelled with your child's name.
- Acceptance of children who are not fully toilet trained is customary.
- It is important that the Preschool is notified immediately if your child cannot attend due to illness. Please then ensure that they have fully recovered before returning to school. In the case of sickness and diarrhoea please ensure that your child does not return for 48 hours after the symptoms have ceased. This is in line with the Department Of Health regulations and guidance. Any infectious illness **must** be reported to us immediately.
- We can only administer prescription medicines with parental permission and the relevant completed healthcare form. In the case of long term medication being necessary, please speak to the Preschool leader who will require written permission to administer such medicines and a completed healthcare form detailing your child's medical needs.
- On **no account** must your child be sent to school in charge of his or her own medication. Medication should not be added to any food or drink in the child's lunchbox.
- If your child becomes unwell whilst at school we will make every attempt to contact either yourself or the emergency contact person. Please ensure that you keep the Preschool informed of any changes in your contact details.

