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Welcome to Sandford Playgroup. We hope that this prospectus will give you an insight into our playgroup and what we can offer your child/ren.

Sandford Playgroup was established in 1970. We are a playgroup at the heart of our community and strive to enrich the children's learning by using a variety of local resources. Our sessions are held in the spacious Parish Hall. We have strong links with Sandford School which also allows us to use their facilities.

Being a registered charity Sandford Playgroup is run by a committee who work alongside the playgroup staff. We believe in giving the children a broad range of experiences and education which we deliver through the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. We are Ofsted registered and in our latest Ofsted Inspection, in November 2014, we were judged to be a good playgroup.

“Children are cared for by an enthusiastic and highly committed team, who demonstrate a good understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.”

“Children are settled and secure because they have formed close bonds with their key person, who knows them well.”

“Staff fully recognise children's individual needs, interests and learning styles...they make learning fun and so children enjoy coming to the pre-school.”

“All children make good progress and are ready for the next stage in their learning, including going to school.”

“Children receive lots of positive praise and encouragement, which supports their confidence and self-esteem.”

“Parents are warmly welcomed into the pre-school by all staff. They share good quality information about their children, which is used well to support children's all-round development.”

Our Mission Statement

Our mission at Sandford Playgroup is to focus on the whole child, providing quality education and care for children between

the ages of 2 and 5 years old. We provide a safe nurturing environment that welcomes children and their families. We are a highly dedicated and qualified team of staff who guide your children in their learning and development. Our committed staff pride themselves in knowing and understanding the children in their care. Sandford Playgroup believes in learning through play. We let children know that they are special and unique, and encourage them to express their personal creativity. We make them feel safe to explore their world, try new things and encourage them to treat each other with kindness and respect.

Our links with Sandford School

We have a very close and supportive link with Sandford Primary School. We go to the school for lunch where the children can have a school meal or bring a packed lunch. On Thursday's we stay at school in the afternoon and join with the Reception Class for an Outdoor Learning session. As much cross over as possible is encouraged with the younger school children, attending various events such as Sports Day and shows throughout the year. To prepare the children for their transition they make extra visits to Sandford School in the Summer Term. Sandford Primary School has an excellent reputation and was recognised as a good school with some outstanding examples of practice in their May 2012 Inspection.

“All pupils achieve well.”

“There is a positive climate for learning.”

“Pupils talk confidently.”

“Parents are successfully engaged.”

If you are interested in finding out more about Sandford School please see their website www.sandford-school.devon.sch.uk/ or phone 01363 772256.

Meet the team

Playgroup Leader: Caroline Hemmings

I am a qualified teacher with 13 years experience teaching key stage 1 and 2. I live in Crediton with my husband and our three boys, all who have attended Sandford School. They all attended Sandford Playgroup before moving on to school and whilst my children were at playgroup I was a committee member having a variety of roles from secretary to fundraiser. I believe every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that a good playgroup can provide, working alongside parents and developing children's experiences will provide the right foundation for good progress through school and life. As a parent I found this to be true of Sandford Playgroup and as playleader I strive to provide this for all our children.

Playgroup Assistant: Barbara Munday

My family have lived in Sandford for many years now. I have been working for Sandford Playgroup for nearly 20 years. I started to work as a volunteer when my own children started school as I missed their company. I have always treated the children at playgroup as I would like my own children to be treated at that age. I have recently gained my NVQ 3 in childcare. In my spare time I enjoy music, reading, exploring new places and child minding.

Playgroup Assistant: Jill Northcote

I also live in the village, along with my husband, and daughter called Lucy who is twenty one, and our son called James who is fifteen. Lucy and James have passed through the playgroup, primary school and QECC, where James is still in education. In the past I have worked at Sandford Playgroup as a One to One assistant with a child who required special and constant needs. I have been with playgroup for just over nine years. At the moment I am in charge of the Library, helping the children regularly change their books. I have just gained my NVQ Level 3 in childcare.

Playgroup Assistant: Alison Archibald

I live in the village with my three children. They have all been through playgroup and are now at Sandford School and QE. I worked as a mental health nurse in Oxford before returning to Sandford. I have been working at playgroup for three years and have completed my NVQ 2 in childcare.

I am the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) for the setting and I have completed the necessary training for this role. I also attend regular meetings to help us provide for any children who need additional help.

Administrator: Ally Partridge

I live just outside the village on our family farm with my husband and two sons, who attend Exeter College and QE. My sons both attended Sandford Playgroup and Sandford School.

I have been the administrator for 6 years and enjoy being a part of the playgroup and meeting local parents. I deal with the playgroup finances, attendance, billing, funding, DBS checks, booking training courses and many other jobs that need doing. I mainly work from home but go to playgroup on Wednesday mornings to catch up with Caroline and the staff. If you don't see me at playgroup and want to contact me you can email sandfordplaygroup@btinternet.com

Committee and Parental Involvement

The committee is run entirely by volunteer parents/carers from whom we actively encourage participation. A committee is necessary in order for the setting to remain open and to ensure that legal and policy issues are complied with. We are also responsible for the accounts of the group and the overall well-being of the staff and children. Everyone is welcome to attend meetings and to step forward as an active member at our annual general meeting, which is held during the summer term. It is an ideal way to really become involved with making decisions that affect the setting and to meet with other parents and carers. Regular newsletters are produced to keep everyone informed on the topics of the term, forthcoming fundraiser events, outings and meetings. Parents/carers are always welcome to come in and chat to the children, particularly if they have an interesting job or hobby.

Fundraising

Fundraising is vital for playgroup as it allows us to provide a broader range of learning experiences such as Music with Mervyn. In order to provide a variety of high quality activities we are always keen to hear from those who will help out or if you have new and exciting ways of raising money. Although fundraisers are predominately organised by the committee we always need parents to help out at events.

Admissions

We try our best to accommodate your preferred days and ask that you register your child at the earliest opportunity. We accept children from 2 years old onwards. Prior to your child starting you will receive a welcome letter and registration forms and information regarding the funding available to you for your child's place. We offer Early Years Funding from the term after your child is 3 years old. We also offer 2gether Funding for those eligible, please contact our administrator for more details. We offer 1 free morning trial session where you and your child are welcome to come along from 9.00am until 12 noon.

Record Keeping

We are required to keep a record of your child's development whilst they attend the playgroup and we also keep a Learning Journey to document your child's journey through playgroup and for you to keep when your child moves on to school. In the term before your child starts school a transition document will be completed which the playgroup leader will discuss with your chosen school. We require your written consent to agree to such records and would encourage you to complete the forms that our administrator will send to you. Also included on the forms are general questions on health and a parental consent form that asks your permission to take photographs,

apply sun creams and administer first aid to your child. This is a good time for you to keep us formally up to date with any and all information that will help us to get to know your child better

Session Times and Fees

Currently our registered session times are from 9.00am to 12.00 midday and from 1pm to 4pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. We also offer a lunch club from 12 noon until 1pm. These hours are during school term times only.

We take the children up to Sandford School to have their lunch. They can either take their packed lunch to eat at school or have a school dinner. This has to be ordered and paid for when the child is dropped off at playgroup.

Hourly rate for all children (unless claiming funding)

£ 3.60

School dinner (extra cost)

£ 2.10

Fees are paid termly to the administrator. Unfortunately we cannot guarantee a placement in the following term unless the fees are paid. Help with fees may be available depending upon your personal circumstances and our administrator will be able to advise you on this matter. Fees are non-returnable for absence or holidays. It is important to notify the administrator of any changes in session requirements the term before the changes are needed. Sandford playgroup is a

registered provider for Early Years Government funding for all 3-5 year olds, this is currently for 15 hours a week. We also offer 2Gether funding for those 2 year olds who are eligible.

First Days/Settling In

Please tell a member of staff if there is anything that might affect your child's behaviour, for example the death of a pet or relation, a parent's absence or moving home. This will help us to understand if a child appears upset or unsettled. If you feel

that your child would benefit from extra support, please speak to our playgroup leader. Snacks and drinks are provided every morning and afternoon, but please advise of any special dietary requirements. We also need to be informed of any allergies or intolerances your child may have. We know from experience that 'accidents' happen and we do keep a small supply of spare clothes, but in the early stages of toilet training it would be advisable for you to bring a small bag with your child containing spare clothes - just in case! Please dress your child in sensible clothes and shoes as many of our activities are messy as well as great fun. Settling in varies from child to child and we are more than happy for you to stay for as long as it takes for your child to feel comfortable and settled.

Policies and procedures

We have comprehensive policies that may be seen upon request. Please see the Playgroup Leader for further information. Policies include Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Child Protection, Special Needs, and all operations that are set down by Government legislation and Ofsted. All policies are updated by the committee in accordance with legislation. Should you have any concerns about an infectious illness, or what constitutes as such, please refer to the playgroup leader who will refer you to the "Spotty Book" and provide you with specific information regarding incubation and exclusion periods of the most common infectious diseases.

Our staff are first aid trained and carry Child Protection Certificates. We encourage staff to attend further training courses to enhance their performance and well-being in addition to legislative courses.

Special Occasions and Events

We understand that children come from a wide and varied background and have differing customs and belief systems. We aim to look

at different religious festivals and would welcome any input from parents, particularly if you are able to come in and discuss festivals and their meanings to our children - please see our playgroup leader to arrange a convenient meeting.

Snack Time

This takes place about 10.30am and 2.30pm. The children get used to finding their name card, a cup and plate, and washing their hands. We all sit together and encourage manners and conversation. They share around a variety of fruits, bread sticks and crackers in the morning and in the afternoon they have fruit and a biscuit.

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. This is individually monitored for each child through their learning journey. Assessments are made continuously but also formalised each term to allow us to track development and plan for their next steps. Parents are given copies of these assessments and the learning journey can be taken home at the end of your child's time with us. A two year old check is also completed if your child is with us at two years This ties in with their health visitor check and helps to identify if a child's development is not progressing as we would expect.

Activities and Curriculum

Our termly topics are planned to cover the 7 areas of learning and development set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014). These are the prime areas of personal, social and emotional development, communication and language, physical development. We also look at the four specific areas of literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive art and design which include essential skills and knowledge for

children to participate successfully in society. The children will learn through the Characteristics of Effective Learning which are playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically. Termly plans are displayed on the notice board as well as plans for the Leap into Life programme and outdoor learning. Please see the playgroup leader if you would like more details.

Equal Opportunities

All children will be treated as individuals, regardless of ability, race and gender. Children will take an active role in the planning of sessions. We also have experience of working with children with challenging behavior, Autistic spectrum disorders, physical needs and speech & language difficulties.