



Squirrels Pre-School



Parents' Handbook

(Please note some information has been repeated from the Butterfly Booklet for the benefit of parents whose children go directly into the Squirrels Rm).

33months - 60months

Strawberry How Nursery School is a Private Day Nursery managed by Julie Richardson

Introduction and Ethos

■ Our setting is the only private purpose-built Nursery in West Cumbria . It was built in 2004 ago and it incorporates the higher safety features of a single storey building that enables ease of movement for our children to access outside spaces. The Squirrels Room occupies a position that allows our children to have safe free flow access to the outside play spaces as well as the covered canopy.

The Nursery is managed by Mrs Julie Richardson B.Ed whose last post was as Headteacher of an Independent Infant School with attached Nursery in Teesside. Strawberry How Nursery attempts to offer a full educational experience for your child that is much more than simple "child care".



We deliver the EYFS curriculum for 50 weeks a year compared to the 38 weeks offered by schools. Our staff are highly skilled—in fact until very recently School assistants were not qualified to work in Day Nurseries. Our adult to child ratios are higher than those recommended by Ofsted. While we were rated as "Outstanding" in our 2013 and 2019 inspections, the inspectors described our setting as exceptional.

We are highly regarded by Cumbria Education Services and many of our practices are seen as models that should be used by other nurseries in our area. We are committed to providing the very best education with the very best care. This handbook is designed to help you support your child when they move to the Squirrels Room. Please take the time to read the handbook and then if you want please talk to us about any further questions you may have.

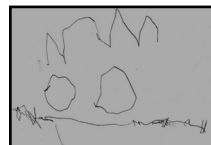
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**Nadine Stainton
Stevens
Room Leader DCE 3**



**Angela Skelton
NVQ3**



**Georgina
Frears
NVQ3**



**Rebecca McKenzie
NVQ 3**



■ Our Aims

Strawberry How is a 'home from home' environment which provides care for every child that comes to the nursery. Physical contact, emotional support and practical challenges are part of all our lives, and our nursery provides the children with a way to enjoy their days spent at the nursery. We provide an environment where young children have space and freedom, noise and peace, opportunities to enjoy themselves, fulfil ambitions, try out new ideas and share friendships within a framework of care and support.

Staff are dedicated to making your child's experience at nursery happy and fulfilling. Our nursery practitioners are committed to providing a caring environment where high quality play and education are used to encourage your child's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development. We will -

- provide a happy and secure learning environment in which to learn and play
- encourage children to develop their independence and maturity
- promote physical, social, moral, creative and intellectual development
- establish a genuine partnership between home and nursery.



Our Curriculum

We are proud of our curriculum. We aim to offer a curriculum which builds on things the children already know and can do. While it is based on Foundation Stage Curriculum which includes seven main areas of learning we have added greater variety that extend the requirements of the EYFS. We are specialists in this area and our children are exposed to a massive variety of experiences that are designed to extend learning.

■ The Prime and Specific Areas of Learning

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

■ The Characteristics of Learning (learning through play)

Taking into account recent educational research we offer a Curriculum, which is based on children learning through planned and self-initiated purposeful play-based activities.

This allows children to become confident learners;

- a) by playing and exploring (being engaged),
- b) by active investigating learning (being motivated) and
- c) by creating and thinking critically (becoming a thinker).

Children learn at their own pace through valuable first hand experiences. We provide learning opportunities through:

- Sand—texture, sorting and matching
- Water—floating, sinking and volume
- Malleable Materials—observing, manipulating and changing substances
- Painting—fine and gross motor control, colour mixing and experimentation



- Music—listening and exploring
- Construction—building, selecting and arranging
- Small-World—imagination and sharing
- Role-Play—imagination, creativity, speaking and listening
- Mark-Making—fine motor control, co-ordination and communication
- Story—sequencing, narrating, left to right orientation
- Outdoors—co-ordination, communication, exploring and movement
- ICT— hand-eye coordination, mouse control, investigation

These areas are available throughout the day in the Squirrel Preschool Room, canopy and playground.



■ We are the only nursery that we know of that publishes it's weekly thematic planning - available on the website after log in. Within this we also give suggestions for parents to support their child's learning with follow up activities. .





■ Thematic Planning for Squirrel Preschool

Thematic planning is a continual process and we strive to improve the experiences that we offer the children by incorporating some structured themes together with the children's own interests. A selection of our activities which takes into account topical changes throughout the year are indicated below.

Autumn	Pets Farm Animals Zoo Animals	Witches and Wizards Halloween-Ugly Bug Ball Bonfire Night
	Autumn Stories Spiders	Superheros and Poppy Day Space and Aliens Special Week
Winter	Christmas Festivities Toys Me	Love Big and Small Day and Night
	My Family Winter and Ice Chinese New Year	Traditional Stories Makaton Dinosaurs
Spring	Fantasy Circus Spring	Science People who Help Us Children in Charge
	Easter Eggs Spring Watch and Planting Windy Week	Cockermouth England Around the World
Summer	Summer Sports Artist Week	Garden and Flowers Mountains and Lakes Sea Life
	Indian Wedding Minibeasts Forest School and Camping	Beaches and Seas Pirates Children in Charge

Additionally this information can be found on the parents notice board in the porch. There is a Parents' Meetings held each year to discuss your child's progress where parents are encouraged to look through their child's Tapestry progress record.

Sample of 6 week Thematic Planning Sheet available on the website after parental log in.

Outline Plan Squirrel Room						Home Activity	
31.10.16	Bonfire Night	 Halloween Ugly Bug Ball Come dressed in your spookiest outfit ready to take part in some gruesome games ... AS	Circle Time - Hovis Hedging HH Paper Plate Catherine Wheels Put paper plates into the salad spinner, add lots of colourful paints, pop on the lid and twirl! Once dried attach to a stick using a split pin and you're ready to watch it spin AS	Edible Sparklers Using breadsticks dipped in melted chocolate and lots of sprinkles, enjoy for afternoon snack HH	Apple Bobbing Getting into the Bonfire spirit by playing apple bobbing, dip your head into the water and try to catch the apples bobbing about NSS	Explosive Firework Pictures Create colourful fireworks using a variety of blow, bubble and splatter painting HH	Visit your local Bonfire or Fireworks night
7.11.16	Poppy Day & Superheroes	Circle Time - 'Go, Jetties - Big Ben' NSS Superhero Capes Using fabric paint and paint decorate your own t-shirt, once dried cut into superhero cape shape - ready to go!	Superheroes Keep Fit Superheroes have to be very strong to be able to save the world, take part in our keep fit exercise class, building up those muscles! HH	Superhero Badges You now need to create your own unique badge with a superhero name, so everyone will remember who saved the day NSS	Superhero Quest Now we're fit and healthy and we've made our capes it's time to help save the world from the mystery maker. Following various clues you must stop the mystery maker from taking over the world ... Good luck Superheroes! AS	Poppy Field Make your own poppy field to remember the fallen heroes. Using your finger dipped in red paint make poppy flowers, adding poppy seeds to create the middle of the flower HH	Make your own superhero face masks using paper, crayons and some ribbon
14.11.16	Space & Aliens	Circle Time - Aliens Love Underpants HH Star Constellations Paint and collage a variety of different sized stars ready to hang up in the canopy HH	Telescopes Using kitchen roll tubes decorate your own telescope ready to search for stars, planets and even aliens in the sky AS	Alien Headbands Take a strip of card and attach googly eyes, bendy pipe cleaners and lots of glitter to create your own alien headband NSS	Alien Potato Printing Chop the potatoes in half, dip in paint, dab onto your paper, add some legs, arms, eyes and tentacles and tada - you're alien has arrived! HH	 Children in Need Day 'Be Spectacular' Come dressed all in spots and join in with fun games and activities all day long	Have a look into the dark sky, see if you can spot any stars or maybe even an alien or two
21.11.16	Winter	Circle Time - 'Show Me Show Me Winter' Special' AS Ice Ornaments Using winter materials such as leaves and glitter freeze them in ice, hang them up in the yard and watch them sparkle in the winter sun NSS	Snowman Biscuits Weigh, stir and measure all the ingredients to create snowmen biscuits. Enjoy around the 'camp fire' with hot chocolate - yum! HH	Hanging Snowmen Using paper plates with the middle cut out, fill with glitter, cotton wool and sequins to create your own snowmen, hang in the canopy AS	Snow Sensory Bottles Make our own wintery sensory bottles using water, glitter, snowflakes and paint. Can you shake and twirl to watch the mesmerising colours move HH	Scarf Threading Thread your needle and wool through the holes of the cardboard to create a fabulous 'scarf' NSS	Go on a forsy winter walk, spotting all the changes winter makes to the leaves and paths
28.11.16	Christmas	Circle Time - The Jolly Christmas Postman NSS 'Cracker Present Using kitchen roll tubes, tissue paper and collage materials, make your own crackers - there might be something special hiding inside NSS	Canvas Calendar Using masking tape and paint to create your own personalised canvas, attach a calendar and it's ready to hang all year round HH	Christmas Lights Finger Print Card Using your fingers dipped in a variety of coloured paints, create christmas lights cards AS	Buttton Wreath Decoration Using kitchen roll tubes, tissue paper and collage materials, make your own crackers - there might be something special hiding inside HH	Cracker Present Using kitchen roll tubes, tissue paper and collage materials, make your own crackers - there might be something special hiding inside HH	Make seasonally shapes salt dough biscuits to hang on your Christmas tree
05.12.16	Christmas	Buttton Wreath Decoration Using buttons and wool, thread the buttons to create a wreath circle, adding a bow to complete, ready to hang on your tree AS	Cracker Present Using kitchen roll tubes, tissue paper and collage materials, make your own crackers - there might be something special hiding inside NSS	Canvas Calendar Using masking tape and paint to create your own personalised canvas, attach a calendar and it's ready to hang all year round HH	Christmas Lights Finger Print Card Using your fingers dipped in a variety of coloured paints, create christmas lights cards AS	Buttton Wreath Decoration Using buttons and wool, thread the buttons to create a wreath circle, adding a bow to complete, ready to hang on your tree NSS	Decorate your Christmas tree, helping to pop on the baubles

In addition, we plan daily Literacy and Numeracy activities:

- Following the **Letters & Sounds** programme we introduce **Jolly Phonics** and **Alphablocks** to help develop reading and writing
- To compliment our phonics programme we have **Action Words** which helps to reinforce the first 100 key words (non phonetic words)
- All the children are encouraged to learn a simple form of sign language called **Makaton** and they watch **Mr Tumble** to see the communication in action
- We also introduces the Squirrels to Spanish
- Introducing and reinforcing **Numbers from 1-20**
- Helping to develop **Shape** recognition
- Providing practical activities to help develop the concepts of **Size and Measurement**
- Working with **Colours** during mathematics and art activities
- Developing the skills to complete more complex **Puzzles and Games**
- Introducing **New Computer Programmes** for Literacy, Numeracy, Knowledge of the World and Control Skills
- Watching **Come Outside** with Auntie Mabel and Pippin the Dog to learn about how our world works
- Regular **Circle Time** where the children talk together about the thoughts and feelings with **Beat Baby** and **Dogum**
- During PE activities they children enjoy **Sticky Kids** in the playground and our **Sports Wii** and **Boogie Beebies** on the carpet.





■ Inside and Outdoor Play

We have created a secure outdoor play area with creative and stimulating play equipment. This development has been carefully designed to promote and develop both positive free and structured play in the fresh air. This area includes an aviary, play house, shop, den, a castle together with a slide, a sandpit, raised beds, a green house and a large canopy.

The grass was replaced with new turf. Our children grow peas, strawberries, raspberries and tomatoes. We also have a variety of "smelly" herbs including rosemary, lavender and mint.

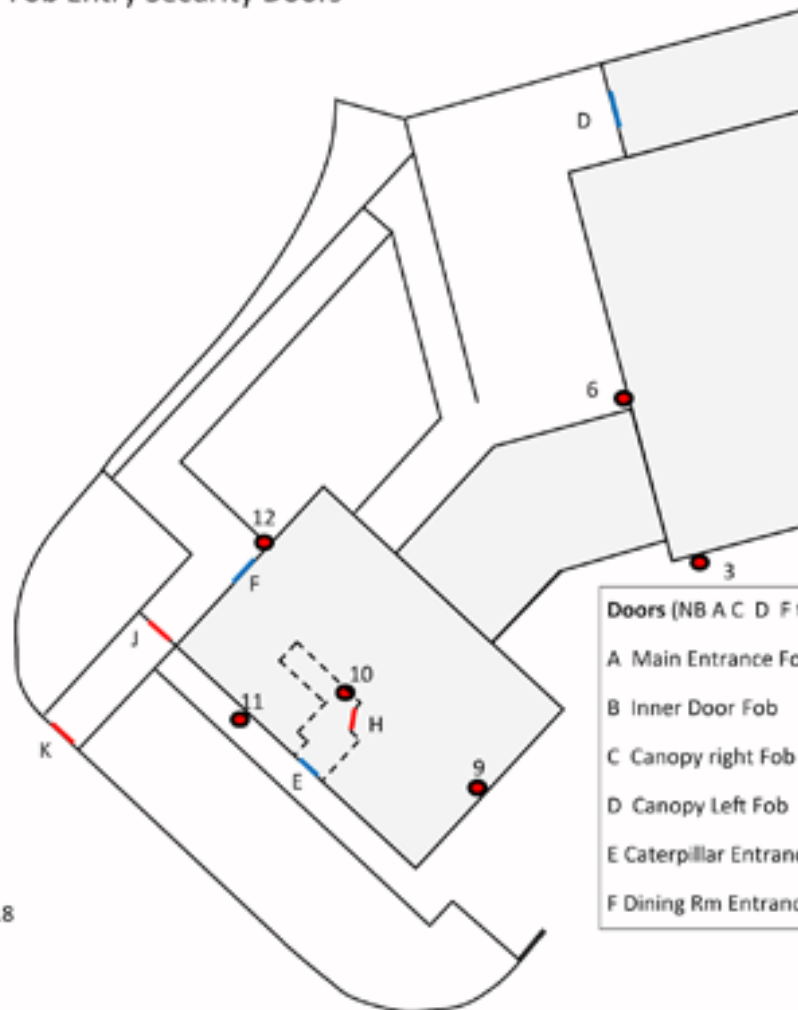




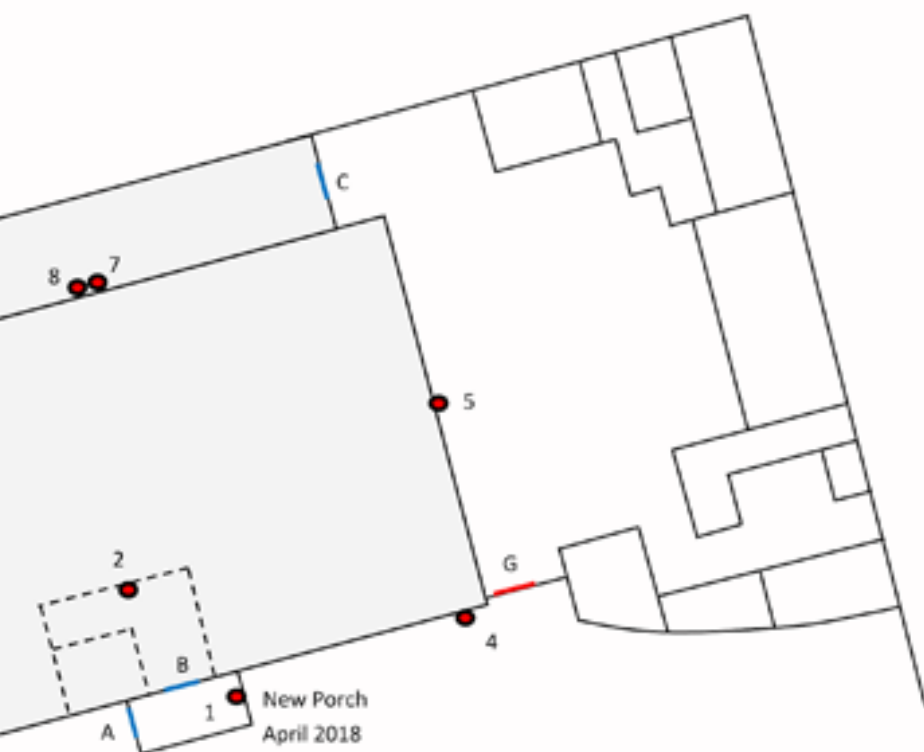


Strawberry How Nursery School Upgraded Physical Security April 2018

- Entrance Cameras
- Locked gates
- Fob Entry Security Doors



12 March 2018



to be installed April 2018)

b G Yard gate Bolt

H Caterpillar Rm Keypad

J Back Gate 2 Locked

K Back Gate 1 Locked

e Fob

e Fob

Cameras (NB 1 3 4 7 8 to be installed April 2018)

1. Porch

2 Main Lobby

3 Nursery Front Left

4 Nursery Front Right

5 Main Playground Entrance

6 Small Playground Entrance

7 Canopy Right Door

8 Canopy Left Door

9 Dining Room

10 Caterpillar Lobby

11 Caterpillar Entrance

12 Dining Room Entrance





■ Transition from Butterflies to Squirrels Preschool

Before a move to the Squirrels, parents will receive an email telling them of the date their child is due to move, an appointment time for parents and their new room leader to have a telephone appointment (if required) and a copy of the Squirrel's Parents Handbook. During the telephone meeting the Squirrel room leader will talk to parents about the routines in the Squirrel Room and take answer any questions they might have. Throughout the month before they move they will join in with taster sessions in the Squirrel room.



■ Food in Nursery

Using our menus we are better placed to offer greater variety and to monitor allergens/sugar/salt. We spend much time designing balanced snack menus and these are rotated seasonally 8 times a year and involve Breakfast - Morning Snack - Lunch - Afternoon Snack - Tea. In fact our friends at Ofsted considered our menus to be Outstanding - we also have had a 5 star rating from Food Hygiene Inspectors since 2009. The menus are placed on our website after log in as well as being posted near the entrances of the rooms. Lunches are cooked by the chef at Lorton school and these menus are posted on the website on Friday for the following week. Where a child has special dietary needs we work alongside parents to deliver these needs. At the onset of Nursery Funding we must charge for food properly as the £608.00/mth funding itself does not cover food. Even then the food charges are modest and delivered at cost - Breakfast 30p (before 8.45am), Morning Snack 40p (10.00am), Lunch £3.00 12.00noon, Afternoon Snack 40p (2.00pm) and Tea 80p (4.15pm).

■ Educational Visits

We believe that it is very important for children to have the opportunity to experience 'real things'. This is a notion that is central to our nursery. We are blessed with a great location so we try our best to use it. To this end Mrs Richardson arranges a variety of trips for the children and these visits are designed and risk assessed specifically for the age of the children concerned.

- When children enter our Squirrel Preschool they have the opportunity to walk to the local supermarket and shops.
- Later they will be able to visit the local opticians, dentist, vets and health centre in Cockermouth.
- Some trips further afield involve a journey in a minibus for example to a local farm.
- The children also have the opportunity to take a coach trip even further to Mawbray beach, Crummock, The Lake District Wildlife Park, Whinlatter, Theatre by the Lake and the Aquarium. You can see all the locations that we visit on our website.



Little Walks and Big Trips!



Visitors to Nursery

Although we provide many opportunities for the children to go on educational trips we also encourage local people in the community to visit the nursery. We invite people involved in the local community services to talk about the things they do to help both children and their adults.



Cockermouth Mountain Rescue

They came to talk about how they rescue people and the equipment they use to help.



The Story Teller

He told the children wonderful stories with actions about weird and magical creatures.



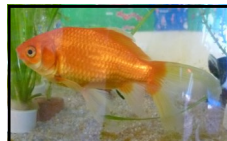
Doctors and Nurses

They explained about the hospital where children go to be made better and showed the kind of equipment they use.



Zoolab

The children were able to see and touch some wonderful exotic creatures from the Rain Forest. There were snakes, lizards, beetles and frogs to mention but a few.



Daily Routine (as a sample although we must operate flexibly)

07.30-8.45	Breakfast
08.45-09.30	Welcome Child-initiated play
09.30-09.45	Planned Literacy Activities
09.45-11.45	Child-initiated play, planned activities and rolling snack
11.45-12.00	Variety of activities (Spanish/Beat Baby/ Story Time/Makaton Time)
12.00-12.15	Tidy up time
12.15-12.45	Lunch time
12.45-1.30	Playtime
1.30-1.45	Planned Numeracy Activities and play
1.45-3.30	Child initiated play and rolling snack
3.30-4.00	Variety of activities (P.E./Story Time/Song Time)
4.00-4.15	Tidy up time
4.15-4.30	Tea time
4.30-6.00	Child-initiated play



Regular visits to the toilet are scheduled throughout the day (and of course when needed).

Activities are designed to promote interest, curiosity, exploration and the spirit of adventure. We encourage children to be independent learners happy to discover the world around them by providing safe and secure environments.





Squirrel Adventures



Taster Session

If your child is moving from the Butterfly Room we will contact you about the changes and we will organise Taster Sessions in-house. If your child is new we will contact you to arrange a transition meeting as well as to sort out a Taster Session(s). During the meeting or at the time of the first taster parents will be asked to provide the nursery staff with as much information as possible to help settle their child into the Squirrel Room. Detailed information about their child's routines and eating habits provide the staff with very useful information to assist them in following routines at home. Other information includes

- Allergies
- Rests after eating
- Special likes and dislikes
- Special medication

The staff make a record of all that was eaten throughout the day and this information is passed on to parents at the end of the day. Please note that while our nursery aspires to be "nut free" we cannot guarantee this because some purchased food products are prepared in environments that use nuts.

At our nursery we know that you understand your child very well and are 'in tune' with their development and changes. We therefore ask to be informed if there are any changes in your child's routines as soon as possible allowing staff to adjust routines in the nursery to match your child's continual development. This is one sample of the eight snack menus for both the Butterflies and Squirrels we provide throughout the year.

<p>Our Breakfast Menu in the Squirrel's Room</p> <p>Selection of (nut free) cereals to include Ready Brek, cornflakes, rice crispies, weetabix, with full fat cows milk. Wholemeal toast with honey or fruit jam. Served with water, organic cows milk or fruit juice.</p> <p>September 2015November 2015</p>				
<p>Our Snack and Tea Menu in the Butterfly Room</p> <p>Early AutumnLate Autumn</p>				
Monday	Morning	Cheese slices on toast & tomatoes (option)	Morning	Croissant with blackcurrant jam dip
	Afternoon	Apple pie slices and cream	Afternoon	Apple and Blackcurrant Fruit Pies with cream
	Tea	Chicken Soup & Wholemeal Roll	Tea	Tomato and Mozzarella Pasta Bake
Tuesday	Morning	Croissant with blackcurrant jam dip	Morning	Fruit bread squares with honey
	Afternoon	Apples, pear and blackberries	Afternoon	Grapes, Blueberries & raspberries
	Tea	Chicken dippers with sweet and sour sauce	Tea	Pizza slices with home-made tomato dip
Wednesday	Morning	Blueberry Wholemeal muffins	Morning	Oatmeal cookies & warm milk dip
	Afternoon	Gluten Free digestive biscuits with milk	Afternoon	Pittabread & houmous
	Tea	Spaghetti and cheese on toast squares	Tea	Chicken dippers with sweet and sour sauce
Thursday	Morning	Bagels and soft cheese	Morning	Rice cakes with soft cheese and cucumber
	Afternoon	Fruit Bread with melted butter	Afternoon	Apples, pears and melon
	Tea	Chicken and Bacon Sandwiches	Tea	Hot potato wedges with cool salsa or cheese and chive dips
Friday	Morning	Pancakes and Apple sauce	Morning	Beans on Toast
	Afternoon	Raisins, celery & cheese	Afternoon	Brioche loaf with banana slices
	Tea	Tomato and Mozzarella Pasta Bake	Tea	Ham and cheese tortilla wraps with cucumber

■ Administration of Medication

On the Nursery registration form we ask parents to give the staff permission to administer medication, for example, Calpol to reduce temperatures or Sudocrem for slight skin irritation. The staff will only administer prescribed medicine after parents have posted their permission along with instructions via Tapestry, this is to ensure that all instructions have been given to the Nursery Nurses. We ask parents to inform the Nursery should their child's medical situation change after completing our initial registration form.



■ Ratios for Staff and Children

At all times we ensure that our staff/child ratios are above the Ofsted guidelines. To maintain this level of care we ask parents to inform us of any changes to their child's registered attendance before the 15th of each month for the following month in order that we can allocate staff their hours and provide the children with quality care at the highest level at all times. The Nursery is unable to swap days within a month once these hours have been booked.

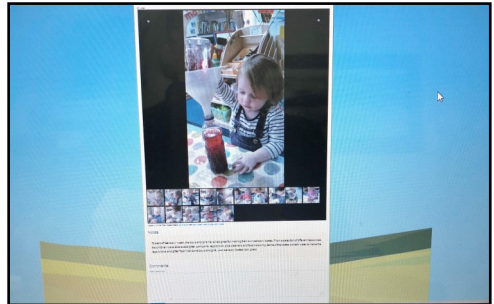
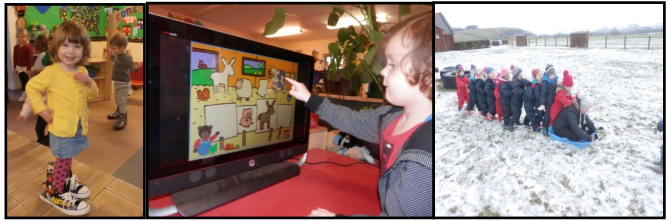
■ Key Person

While each Nursery Nurse will know the individual needs of all children each child is given a 'Key Person' who is there to take special responsibility for their care, learning and well-being. The Key Person also compiles a special progress record on our assessment platform 'Tapestry' for parents, to record their child's progress whilst in Nursery. Parents are welcome to view their child's record on Tapestry and are also encouraged to contribute to the record using their special parent login. Parents can upload pictures and videos while writing about adventures their child has had at home and at weekend.

■ Tapestry

Every child's progress is monitored using their Tapestry online journal.

Detailed feedback is offered once a month by their key person. Parents are very welcome to contribute to these files. Also regular group activities are posted on Tapestry and our secret Facebook Group. There is a Parents' Evening once a year to discuss their child's progress.



■ Collection of Children and Password

The Nursery staff will only hand over a child to a known adult. If a member of staff does not know the person they will ask them to wait outside the door until they have got confirmation that they have the authority to collect the child. In the case of an emergency and a parent is unable to collect their child, and they send an unknown person in their place, that person must know the special password, given to us by the parents during the registration process.

■ Website and Login

We have a comprehensive website which is designed to give parents detailed information about our nursery. It also keeps parents up to date with nursery developments. Each family is given a parental login to give them access to our 'Parents Pages' that are not viewed by the general public.

■ Newsletters

We publish a newsletter each month on our website. This newsletter gives parents information about activities which have taken place at nursery together with forthcoming events. There are lots of photographs of the play and learning activities. There are a number of previous issues for parents to download available on our website. Our parents are also able to view more photographs and videos via our parents login.

■ Facebook

In order to share information, pictures and videos of our daily activities with parents we have set up a secret facebook page (only invited parents can join us). Staff from each room take time to post activities on our page so parents can see what the children have been doing as a result of our planning publish each month. This facebook page has proved very successful especially with grandparents who live overseas.

Because we want to be absolutely professional we ask parents to refrain to from including our staff as friends on their Facebook page.



■ General Information

- You do not need to send drinks. We provide milk and water throughout the day. Please do not provide individual cups.
- Please label or name all of your child's belongings - their bags, all their clothes and other items.
- Please ensure your child's bag is as small as possible - we have limited storage space.
- We have a collection of spare clothes and you only need to provide spare clothes during potty training.
- Should your child feel sleepy there will always be an opportunity to take a nap during the day.

■ The Library

We have links with the local library in Cockermouth and the children often



walk down to the library to collect some books for nursery. The Librarian is always happy to read the children a story. We constantly update and replenishing our picture and story books in the Squirrel Room.

■ Ted Bear and Cuddles' Adventures



In the Squirrel Room the children have a number of special teddy bears. When a child goes on holiday, has a special event at the weekend or simply wants a friend to come over and play they can take Ted Bear or Cuddles home with them. Mums and Dads record all the adventures by taking

photographs to show where Ted or Cuddles has been and they put them in their special book. If you would like to take one of the bears home with you please ask a Nursery Nurse to arrange a visit.



All Year Wrap Around Quality Education and Care

Strawberry How Nursery School
is open from 7.30am - 6.00pm
Monday to Friday
51 weeks of the year.

We are closed on Bank Holidays and for a week
between Christmas and the New Year.

