



# Little Cherries

*Providing Early Years education through play*

## Information Handbook 2018 – 2019

Registered Charity No. 1030778  
OFSTED Registered No. 221863

[www.littlecherries.org.uk](http://www.littlecherries.org.uk)



## Welcome to Little Cherries

We very much hope that you and your child will enjoy your time at Little Cherries.

Your child is at a crucial stage in their development with research showing that children learn more rapidly in the first seven years of life than at any other time. It is therefore important that children are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential. As a parent/carer, we recognise that you play a vitally important role in your child's learning and development. We, at Little Cherries, hope to play our part by offering your child a variety of play experiences and activities designed to further their individual development. We hope that your child discovers that learning through play can be an enjoyable and worthwhile process.

This handbook is intended to give you information about Little Cherries but please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries or concerns.

Our contact details are:

Little Cherries  
Bewick Bridge Community Primary School  
Fulbourn Old Drift  
Cherry Hinton  
Cambridge  
CB1 9ND



Mobile telephone: 07725 951619



dreamstime.com  
info@littlecherries.org.uk

## **Organisation / management**

Little Cherries is a charitable enterprise and is managed by a committee of mainly parents/carers who volunteer their time. The Management Committee, who are trustees of the group, are elected by parents yearly at our Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Committee is responsible for:

- managing the group's finances;
- employing and managing the staff;
- making sure that Little Cherries has, and works to, policies that help it to provide a high quality service;
- making sure that Little Cherries works in partnership with the children's parents;
- fundraising; and
- ensuring that Little Cherries meets its statutory legal requirements (e.g. Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage).

The support of parents/carers is essential to the running of Little Cherries. The Management Committee must be made up of at least 60% parents. Without the Committee and the work of its members Little Cherries would be forced to close. For this reason it is important that parents attend the AGM and are willing to join or support the Committee.

### **Management Committee members (2017–2018)**

Chairperson	– Jennie Peacock
Secretary & Safeguarding designated officer	– Caroline Bane
Treasurer	– Linling Zhang
Policies lead	– Emily Walker
Data protection lead	– Lorna Torkington
General members	– Fahima Ali, Nisha Ayaz, Zainab Bharmal, Susan Condie, Charis Murton, Emma Smith.

## **Staff**

Little Cherries is led and managed day to day by the Manager. She is supported by a team of both qualified and experienced Early Years Practitioners. The team currently includes:

### **Anita Yates – Lead Practitioner/Manager – Employed since April 1998**

Foundation Degree in Early Years Education and Childcare (Level 5)

Designated role: Child Protection

#### **Personal statement:**

*'Since 1998 I have had the pleasure of managing the day-to-day running of Little Cherries. Cherry Hinton has been my home since 1991. As a pre-school that serves the local community, I enjoy working with the families and children to best meet their needs.*

*In 2010 I gained a Level 5 qualification in Early Years Education and Childcare. The team I manage are dedicated, enthusiastic and caring and have a wealth of experience, with most holding Level 2 or above qualifications, appropriate for the care and development of children, as required by Ofsted. All staff are encouraged to participate in additional training to continue their professional development, keeping up to date with new initiatives, to consolidate their areas of expertise and to keep abreast of new legislative requirements.'*

### **Dawn Sheehan – Deputy Practitioner – Employed since May 2003**

Foundation Degree in Early Years Education and Childcare (Level 5)

Designated roles: Inclusion Leader, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), Equalities Co-ordinator (ENCo), Behaviour Management

#### **Personal statement:**

*'It has been my pleasure to have been part of the pre-school team since 2003. My three children have all attended local schools in Cherry Hinton; where I have lived since 1992.*

*I became deputy practitioner in 2005 and SENCo in 2006. Using knowledge from theory and practice, that I strive to continue to develop, I am able to transfer skills, knowledge and strategies that support the inclusion of all children and their families. The whole team are committed providing all children with opportunities that allow fuller access to the play and learning opportunities. For example, alternative communication systems such as signing or visual support are adopted and implemented by all staff.'*

**Hannah Merwiak – Employed since September 2016**

*Room Co-ordinator*– CACHE Diploma for the Children and Young People’s Workforce (Level 3)

**Karen Kelly – Employed since December 2016**

*Room Co-ordinator*– CACHE Diploma in Pre-School Practice (Level 3)

**Liz Williams – Employed since November 2010**

*Inclusion Assistant* - CACHE Diploma for the Children and Young People’s Workforce (Level 3)

**Yvonne Bendall – Employed since November 2000**

*General Practitioner* – CACHE Certificate in Pre-School Practice (Level 2)

**Bridget Migdal – Employed since April 2004**

*General Practitioner* – CACHE Certificate in Pre-School Practice (Level 2)

**Stephanie Finch – Employed since January 2011**

*General Practitioner* – CACHE Diploma in Childcare and Education (Level 2)

**Angela Maycock – Employed since November 2011**

*General Practitioner / 1-1 support* - CACHE Diploma for the Children and Young People’s Workforce (Level 3)

**Fay Hartley – Employed since April 2013**

*Lunch Club Assistant*

**Marcus Laker – Employed since October 2014**

*Lunch Club Assistant* – CACHE Certificate in Playwork (Level 3)

**Support staff:**

**Christine Rookes – Administrator – Employed since May 2012**

**Alison Green – Finance & Admissions Manager – Employed since December 2016**

Staff may be employed to work with individual children – this can change throughout the year. We also have a bank of ‘pool staff’ who are able to supply cover in the case of staff absences, and may also support students from local colleges and schools who attend Little Cherries on work placements.

**Staff to children ratios:**

1 adult to 4 children under 3 years

1 adult to 8 children over 3 years

Maximum number of children per session: 34.

As part of our philosophy to support and nurture the children both individually and developmentally, staff wish to be called by their first name, thus allowing the children to form age-appropriate partnerships with them.

**Our aims**

Our aim is to provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment where children learn through play, exploration and experimentation.

We aim to:

- provide high-quality care and education for children below statutory school age;
- work in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop;
- add to the life and well-being of the local community; and
- offer children and their parents a service that promotes equality and values diversity.

We aim to ensure that each child:

- is helped to take forward her/his learning and development by being helped to build on what she/he already knows and can do;
- has a key worker who makes sure they make satisfying progress;
- is in a setting that sees parents as partners in helping each child to learn and develop; and
- is in a setting in which parents help to shape the provision it offers.

By teaching skills through incorporating both free and group structured play, and by encouraging physical, creative, imaginative and social play during our sessions, we aim to realise your child's full potential.

## **Key workers and your child**

Little Cherries uses a keyworker approach. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom she/he is particularly responsible. Your child's keyworker will be the person who works with you to make sure that what we provide is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts at Little Cherries, they will help your child to settle and throughout your child's time at Little Cherries they will help your child to benefit from the activities. In the event of your child's keyworker being absent, a secondary keyworker is also allocated to your child. We aim to allocate a key worker to your child prior to their start date.

To help us get to know your child, please use the booklet '*What to expect, when?*' which is provided with the registration pack. We recommend ticking and dating things that your child is able to do. Sometimes your child will demonstrate different abilities at Little Cherries from at home and this will help us to plan suitable activities for their development. Your child's key worker will discuss the booklet with you when your child first starts at Little Cherries. We will continue to use this booklet throughout your child's time at Little Cherries.

## **A typical session**

Below is a guide to how our sessions operate for both our morning session (9.00am – 12noon) & afternoon session (12.45pm – 3.45pm).

There are two rooms and an outside area with different activities being offered in each area. During free play children have the opportunity to access these areas where they can experience all activities and resources. Children then spend time in their room groups participating in group/targeted learning with their key person.

### 9.00am – 9.10am & 12.45pm – 12.55pm

On arrival parents/carers and children are greeted by the members of staff. Before saying goodbye and leaving, parent/carers are requested to support their child/ren to hang their bags and coats onto their peg and check them in by helping them to find their name card and place it into the post box. Parent/carers also have the opportunity to speak to staff, collect letters and information. This is a good time to pass on any information about your child/ren that will help us e.g. if they have not slept well and might be tired or even just catching us up on what they are interested in so we can build this into our planning.

#### 9.10am – 11.20am & 12.55pm – 3.05pm

Free play – children may choose from a range of resources and activities, either inside or outside. Play is freely chosen, personally directed, and intrinsically motivated. There are many activities for children to get involved in; sand, water, play-dough, painting, books, making things, building constructions, games, puzzles, music and so on. As well as the resources that are always available, staff will observe what children are interested in and add new experiences to extend their learning. Staff will lead or support children's play where needed.

#### 10.00am – 11.00am & 2.00pm – 3.00pm

Rolling Snack. This is a social and learning time where we offer the children a variety of healthy snacks tailored to the dietary needs of the child. Children are able to take part in preparing, or simply help themselves, to a healthy snack during the session. Water and milk is offered during this time and water is available throughout the session.

#### 11.20am – 11.30am & 3.05pm – 3.15pm

Children are encouraged to tidy up. Everyone does this together both indoors and out. We find many opportunities for learning as children pack away their activities; sorting and classifying resources, counting to make sure a collection is complete, working together, listening to and giving instructions, reading pictures or print to know what goes in drawers etc.

#### 11.30am - 11.50am & 3.15pm – 3.35pm

'Circle time' and 'targeted learning' is a time when all the children in their class come together. Starting with a 'circle time' song we welcome everyone to the group. This part of the session can include celebrating a birthday or festival, playing counting games or sounding of words, discussing weather, group rules etc. During this time children will have the opportunity to participate in adult-led activities, as an individual or in a small or large group. This is an opportunity for key workers to focus on targeted learning. Children enjoy these times when they can sit alongside their friends and share things altogether.

#### 11.50am – 12.00noon & 3.35pm – 3.45pm

We finish the session with singing and/or story time.

**End of session** – Parents/carers collect their children or children attend optional Lunch club until 12.45pm. Please be prompt to collect your child at the end of the session as late collection can be distressing for your child. Unless you have given prior notification in special circumstances, please do not expect to collect your child early since it also can be upsetting for a child to be removed from a group activity.

### **Attendance Matters**

We have found there are many benefits of regular attendance.

Your child can:

- Find the settling-in process easier.
- Make friends and learn social skills.
- Build good habits for school, future learning & adulthood.
- Play, learn and have fun.
- Develop in all areas.

Please let us know by text message or e-mail if for any reason your child is not able to attend. If you have not informed us, a member of staff is likely to contact you to make sure that everything is alright. This is simply to make sure your child is safe and well.

### **Lunch Club**

Lunch club runs from 12.00 noon – 12.45pm and here we provide a service where staff supervise children to eat a **packed lunch provided by parents/carers**. It is a sociable time for the children where they can gain valuable social skills and helps prepare them for shared mealtimes in a school environment.

Children must be able to eat their lunch independently. Staff are not able to feed children or heat food so please ensure you provide a healthy lunch which is easy for your child to eat independently. Please see our Food Policy and Lunch Club Advisory Notes on our website for further information.

Lunch Club can be booked for any child attending a morning or afternoon session and **must** be booked for a child attending all day at Little Cherries.

The cost is £3.25 per child per session. Places are limited and must be booked half termly in advance.

## **What will my child be doing during the session?**

Little Cherries uses the practice guidance Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to plan and provide a range of play activities which help children to make progress in each of the areas of learning and development.

Early Years education is about focusing on the development of the individual child with an emphasis on play. We believe that this is the best way for children to learn about the world around them. There is time for formal learning after the school reception year when the National Curriculum begins.

In some of these activities children decide how they will use the activity. In others, an adult takes the lead or a supporting role in helping the children to take part in the activity. Each of the activities offered to the children provide countless learning experiences for example:

- Seeing their names on paintings and looking at books in the book corner helps to familiarise the children with the printed word and encourage an interest in books.
- The children are preparing themselves for writing by expressing their ideas through drawing and painting, while developing their ability to hold pencils and pens.
- There is preparation for mathematics by sorting, matching, selecting and ordering as they play with materials such as sand, water, construction and gluing materials.
- Jigsaws, games, painting, drawing, computer programmes etc. encourage recognition of colour, shape and pattern.
- Children acquire knowledge of the world by participating in activities such as together time, singing and walking in the local environment.
- Developing skills such as listening, talking, questioning, recalling information and describing are encouraged through individual, small group and whole group activities.
- At Little Cherries children learn to make new friends and learn to respect one another. They learn to take turns, share and become more independent. They also learn to follow rules and carry out instructions.

The fact that there are so many activities may mean that your child does not always take home evidence of his/her play. However what they do take home is always their own work. Please remember that what may look like a scribble to us could be a work of art to your child, so always reward any effort with some praise!

To find out more about the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), please visit [www.foundationyears.org.uk/parents](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/parents). We will be sending all parent/carers a copy of 'What to expect, when?' The purpose of this booklet is to help you find out more about how your child is learning and developing during their first five years, in relation to the EYFS.

### **How can I be involved?**

Parents are always welcome to come into the session. If you have a particular interest or talent which you would like to share with us, please let us know!

We recognise parents as the first and most important educators of their children. Staff see themselves as partners with parents in providing care and education for each child. There are many ways in which you can take part in making Little Cherries a welcoming and stimulating place, such as:

- exchanging knowledge about your child's needs, activities, interests and progress with the staff;
- sharing your own special interests with the children;
- helping to provide, make and look after the equipment and materials used in the children's play activities;
- being part of the Parent Management Committee;
- taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum;
- joining in community activities in which Little Cherries takes part; and
- building friendships with other parents.

Parent/carers are invited to spend a session helping/joining their child in the group. We welcome mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, grandparents or other extended family members or friends. It is the perfect opportunity to share your child's experiences within Little Cherries.

### **How will I know how my child is doing?**

We welcome the opportunity to discuss your child's progress at any time. You are welcome to come in and spend a session with your child. During the year you will be invited to make an appointment to see your child's keyworker for a formal Parent

Consultation Meeting. The focus of these meetings will be to discuss your child's progress and also their transition into Reception / Foundation.

### **Assessment**

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them frequently. We use information that we gain from observations, to document their progress and where this may be leading them. We believe that parents know their children best and we ask them to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what their child likes to do and their achievements at home. We also share information with anyone else who regularly cares for your child (e.g. other nursery, childminder or family member).

Each child has a 'learning and development record' and a secure, on-line Learning Journal, known as 'Tapestry' which documents their learning journey at Little Cherries. Your child's Tapestry portal helps us to celebrate together their achievements / activities and is a wonderful keepsake to reflect upon for years to come. We would like you to contribute to Tapestry by adding information, uploading photos etc. to record their activities and achievements outside the group. More information regarding how to use and access Tapestry will be provided once your child starts at Little Cherries. The 'learning and development record' will follow your child into their next setting to enable an effective handover - e.g. to Reception / Foundation or to nursery or childminder.

As part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory requirements when your child is aged between two and three, we are required to review their progress, and provide you with a short written summary of your child's development.

### **How is my child expected to behave at Little Cherries?**

As in every community it is necessary for us to impose basic rules on behaviour. Certain rules regarding safety must be observed and all children will be expected to follow them.

Most rules serve two needs:

- 1) They prevent your child from doing something undesirable and, in turn, protect them from having something unpleasant done in return.
- 2) They will teach the children the importance of using equipment correctly and some rules are concerned with common courtesies such as learning to share toys, co-operate with others etc.

For more information, see our Promoting positive behaviour policy.

## **Fees and paying arrangements**

The current fee is £12.75 per session and £3.25 per session for Lunch Club. The price per session per child applies to all children, unless they are eligible for the Early Years Funding (see below). Fees are payable for all booked sessions including when your child is sick, or on holiday (regardless of the amount of notice given). Bank holidays, training days and school closure due to staff illness or adverse weather conditions will not be charged for.

Little Cherries is a non-profit making charitable enterprise. We aim to keep fees to a minimum, whilst still raising enough income to cover our running costs. We prefer fees to be paid by bank transfer, cheque, childcare voucher or through the government Tax-Free Childcare scheme. Fees can also be paid in cash. Please ensure fees are paid promptly. If fee paying is not followed satisfactorily, your child's place may be jeopardised.

**4 weeks notice, in writing, or fees in lieu is required if you intend to remove your child from the group, or cancel within four weeks of their start date. If you would like to request extra days, change of days or if any of your contact details change please speak to the Lead Practitioner/Manager.**

The Committee reserves the right to increase the fees yearly.

## **Early Years Funding**

Little Cherries is registered for the government Early Years Funding Scheme (EYFS). A child who is 3years+ is entitled to funding for a maximum of 15 hours per week for the terms following their 3rd birthday. Little Cherries does not offer more than 15 hours per week for each child. Parents eligible for the free 30 hours childcare for working parents can access this by sharing funding across two settings (e.g. Little Cherries and a childminder or other early years setting).

You will be informed when your child is eligible for EYFS. You will need to complete a form each term to claim the funding. The forms will be provided via Little Cherries. Please speak to the Finance & Admissions Manager (or e-mail [finance@littlecherries.org.uk](mailto:finance@littlecherries.org.uk)) for more information.

We are registered to provide free early years places for children receiving two year old funding. If you think you might be eligible for this funding please speak to the Finance & Admissions Manager.

As part of our agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council, we have been asked to notify them of any child that is taking an extended absence. Where a child is absent for an extended period, the County Council Early Years Funding team will decide on a case by case basis if they will continue to provide or cancel the funding for that child during their absence.

If a situation arises where the funding is cancelled, you will need to either:

- make payment of £12.75 per session to keep your child's place
- **or** cancel your child's place.

If you expect your child to be away from Little Cherries for three weeks or more please inform Little Cherries.

### **Policies and procedures**

The group operates under a number of policies and procedures, copies of which are available on the Little Cherries website ([www.littlecherries.org.uk](http://www.littlecherries.org.uk)) or on request.

We hope that you and your child enjoy being members of Little Cherries and that you find taking part in our activities interesting and stimulating. Staff are always ready and willing to talk with you about your ideas, views or questions.

**'Our Hands'**

