



Hilltop Pre-School

Prospectus

Rayleigh Methodist Church
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Essex
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ABOUT US

Hilltop is a community based pre-school, which has been running for over 45 years. We are affiliated to the Pre-School Learning Alliance and work towards the Early Learning Goals, which form part of the Revised Early Years Foundation Stage. In order to receive Government Funding, it is necessary for us to be inspected by Ofsted (the Office for Standards of Education). The last inspection was in October 2019 when we were given a Good report, a copy of the inspection report is available the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports).

Hilltop is a Registered Charity and therefore is self-supporting and non-profit making, owned and run by the parents of the children attending the group at the time. In October, the Annual General Meeting takes place. A Committee of parents is elected to administer and be responsible for the Group's Policy and smooth running. All fees and Government funding that we receive are used for daily running costs such as rent of building and wages. Accordingly, any additional costs such as replacement of toys and equipment and also any trips etc must be covered by monies raised through fund-raising, donations and charity awards.

Hilltop Pre-school is held at the Rayleigh Methodist Church on the Eastwood Road, Rayleigh. The building belongs to the Rayleigh Methodist Church, but is only used by Hilltop when the pre-school is open. There is a car park so that parents/carers can drop off or pick up children, but we do ask parents/carers to bear in mind that the car park is also for the use of those visiting the the Church for community classes and services. We are lucky to have two classrooms, which allows us to have several activities running at once, giving the children plenty of choice. We have messy activities, such as painting and gluing, and several different toys (i.e. Farmyard, Building Blocks, and Dressing Up) and a quiet reading corner. As well as the classrooms we also have our own garden area where we are able to have large equipment such as the Climbing Frame or Slide out as well as access to ride on toys, a mud kitchen, water play, playhouse and other outdoor activities.



Each Term we follow various topics, and the things that the children make and do are themed to run with the topic throughout the term. These topics are related to the Early Learning Goals. We also have short trips to places of local interest, which we have found the children thoroughly enjoy. Throughout the year we celebrate festivals such as Christmas, Easter and also festivals of other lands and cultures such as the Chinese New Year or Diwali. The children make cards for Mother's Day, Easter, Father's Day and Christmas. We celebrate the children's Birthday with the giving of a card and present and singing "Happy Birthday". Other events throughout the year include sports day, Easter Bonnet Parade, Christmas nativity, Christmas party and

show and tell on a daily basis.

We give the children stickers for good work or improvement in certain aspects, which they can take home to show to their families. At times a child may also be given a certificate which they receive at the end of the session to take home with them.

Our setting aims 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.

Parents

Parents are regarded as members of our setting who have full participatory rights. These include a right to be:

- valued and respected;
- kept informed;
- consulted;
- involved; and
- included at all levels.

As a community based, voluntary managed setting, we also depend on the good will of parents and their involvement to keep going. Membership of the setting carries expectations on parents for their support and commitment.

Children's development and learning

We aim to ensure that each child:

- is in a safe and stimulating environment;
- is given generous care and attention, because of our ratio of qualified staff to children, as well as volunteer parent helpers;
- has the chance to join in with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together;
- 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 personal key person who makes sure each child makes 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 service it offers.

THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children's development and learning is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE revisions 2021). Our provision reflects the four overarching principles of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

A Unique Child

Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured.



Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

Enabling Environments

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers.

Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

How we provide for development and learning

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our setting 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.

The Areas of Development and Learning comprise:

Prime Areas

- Personal, social and emotional development.
- Physical development.
- Communication and language.

Specific Areas

- Literacy.
- Mathematics.
- Understanding the world.
- Expressive arts and design.



For each area, the level of progress that children are expected to have attained by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is defined by the Early Learning Goals. These goals state what it is expected that children will know, and be able to do, by the end of the reception year of their education.

The Development Matters guidance sets out the likely stages of progress a child makes along their learning journey towards the Early Learning Goals. Our setting has regard to these matters when we assess children and plan for their learning. Our programme supports children to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need for:

Personal, social and emotional development

- making relationships;
- self confidence and self awareness; and
- managing feelings and behaviour.

Physical development

- moving and handling; and
- health and self-care.



Communication and language

- listening and attention, understanding; and
- speaking.

Literacy

- reading; and
- writing.

Mathematics

- numbers; and
- shape, space and measure.

Understanding the world

- people and communities;
- the world; and
- technology.

Expressive arts and design

- exploring and using media and materials; and being imaginative.



Learning through play

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research has shown to be the means by which young children learn to think. Our setting uses the Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance to plan and provide a range of play activities, which help children to make progress in each of the areas of learning and development. In some of these activities, children decide how they will use the activity and, in others, an adult takes the lead in helping the children to take part in the activity. In all activities, information from 'Development Matters' the Early Years Foundation Stage has been used to decide what equipment to provide and how to provide it.

Characteristics of effective learning

We understand that all children engage with other people and their environment through the characteristics of effective learning that are described in the Development Matters the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance as:

- playing and exploring - engagement;
- active learning - motivation; and
- creating and thinking critically - thinking.

We aim to provide for the characteristics of effective learning by observing how a child is learning and being clear about what we can do and provide in order to support each child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Key person and your child

Our setting uses a key person approach. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom she is particularly responsible. Your child's key person will be the person who works with you to make sure that the childcare that we provide is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts at the setting, she will help your child to settle and throughout your child's time at the setting, she will help your child to benefit from the setting's activities.

Assessment

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them frequently. We use information that we gain from observations, as well as from photographs of the children, 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 children like to do at home and how they, as parents, are supporting development.

We make periodic assessment summaries of children's achievement based on our ongoing development records. These form part of children's records of achievement. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals, as well as times of transition, such as when a child moves into a different group or when they go on to school. We use Tapestry, an online learning journal to record and share all of the children's observations and assessments.

The progress check at age two

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires that we supply parents and carers with a short written summary of their child's development in the three prime areas of learning and development: personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language; when a child is aged between 24 - 36 months. The key person is responsible for completing the check using information from ongoing observational assessments carried out as part of our everyday practice, taking account of the views and contributions of parents and other professionals.

Records of achievement - Learning Journals

The setting keeps a record of achievement for each child. Your child's record of achievement helps us to celebrate together her/his achievements and to work together to provide what your child needs for her/his well-being and to make progress.

The learning journal is on Tapestry. This is an online system that includes photos and observations taken during preschool and special activities. The system is interactive and parents/carers are encouraged to share photos and experiences from home and comment on the skills reached and those which need to be developed in the following areas: personal, social, emotional, physical and language. The shared record keeping enables parents/carers and Hilltop to work together to ensure that each child reaches their full potential. The learning journal is made available for the parents to download and keep when the child goes to school or another setting.

Working together for your children

We maintain the ratio of adults to children in the setting that is set by the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements. We also have volunteer parent helpers, where possible, to complement these ratios. This helps us to:

- give time and attention to each child;
- talk with the children about their interests and activities;
- help children to experience and benefit from the activities we provide; and
- allow the children to explore and be adventurous in safety.

OUR STAFF

We are proud of the high ratio of adults to children within the group. This ensures that we are constantly in touch with new thinking in the field of child education and care. Ongoing staff training is available through courses arranged by both the Pre-School Learning Alliance and the Essex Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

The regular staff in the group are:-

TERRI VENABLES	-	PRE-SCHOOL TEAM LEADER
NICOLA EMBERSON	-	SUPERVISOR
NICOLA BRAGLIA	-	SUPERVISOR - Safeguarding Officer
SONIA LA TORRE	-	SUPERVISOR - SENCO
LINDA CLARK	-	ASSISTANT & ENCO (Equality Named Co-ordinator)
HAYLEY NELSON	-	ASSISTANT
HAYLEY REEVES	-	ASSISTANT
NATALIE RABEY	-	ASSISTANT
NICOLA QUINCE.	-	ASSISTANT
DONNA READ	-	FLEXIBLE ASSISTANT

As the qualifications of the staff change regularly, we keep details in the group in the blue Staff File.

Opening times

Monday	9.15am - 12.15pm
Tuesday	9.15am - 12.15pm/3.15pm or 12.15pm - 3.15pm
Wednesday	9.15am - 12.15pm/3.15pm or 12.15pm - 3.15pm
Thursday	9.15am - 12.15pm/3.15pm or 12.15pm - 3.15pm
Friday	9.15am - 12.15pm/3.15pm or 12.15pm - 3.15pm



On the **afternoon sessions**, children are asked to bring in a packed lunch, which they eat with the other children attending.

Hilltop Pre-School offers a high standard of care and education for up to 30 children per session between the ages of 2 years and 5 years.

How parents take part in the setting

Our setting recognises parents as the first and most important educators of their children. All of the staff see themselves as partners with parents in providing care and education for their children. There are many ways in which parents take part in making the setting a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents, such as:

- exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities, interests and progress with the staff;
- contributing to the progress check at age two - three;
- helping at sessions of the setting;
- sharing their own special interests with the children;
- helping to provide and look after the equipment and materials used in the children's play activities;
- being part of the management of the setting where appropriate;
- taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by the setting;
- joining in community activities, in which the setting takes part; and
- building friendships with other parents in the setting.

The parents' rota

The setting has a dated rota which parents can sign if they would like to help at a particular session or sessions of the setting. Helping at the session enables parents to see what the day-to-day life of the setting is like and to join in helping the children to get the best out of their activities.

Joining in

Joining the rota is not the only means of taking part in the life of the setting. Parents can offer to take part in a session by sharing their own interests and skills with the children. We welcome parents to drop into the setting to see it at work or to speak with the staff.

Learning opportunities for adults

As well as gaining childcare qualifications, our staff take part in further training to help them to keep up-to-date with thinking about early years care and education. The setting also keeps itself up-to-date with best practice, as a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance, through Under 5 magazine and other publications produced by the Alliance.

The setting's timetable and routines

Our setting believes that care and education are equally important in the experience which we offer children. The routines and activities that make up the day in the setting are provided in ways that:

- help each child to feel that she/he is a valued member of the setting;
- ensure the safety of each child;
- help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group; and
- provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning.

The session

We organise our sessions so that the children can choose from, and work at, a range of activities and, in doing so, build up their ability to select and work through a task to its completion. The children are also helped and encouraged to take part in adult-led small and large group activities, which introduce them to new experiences and help them to gain new skills, as well as helping them to learn to work with others. Outdoor activities contribute to children's health, their physical development and their knowledge of the

world around them. The children have the opportunity, and are encouraged, to take part in outdoor child-chosen and adult-led activities, as well as those provided in the indoor hall.

Snacks

The setting makes snack a social time at which children eat together. We ask that parents provide the children with a healthy and nutritious snack in a clearly named pot. The children are offered milk as part of the daily milk scheme or they can choose to drink their own drink. Please tell us about your child's dietary needs and we will make sure that these are met.

Clothing

We provide protective clothing for the children when they play with messy activities. We encourage children to gain the skills that help them to be independent and look after themselves. These include taking themselves to the toilet and taking off, and putting on, outdoor clothes. Clothing that is easy for them to manage will help them to do this.

Policies

Copies of the setting's policies and procedures are available for you to see at the setting (or on our website).

The setting's policies help us to make sure that the service provided by the setting is a high quality one and that being a member of the setting is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and her/his parents.

The staff and parents of the setting work together to adopt the policies and they all have the opportunity to take part in the annual review of the policies. This review helps us to make sure that the policies are enabling the setting to provide a quality service for its members and the local community.

Safeguarding children

Our setting has a duty under the law to help safeguard children against suspected or actual 'significant harm'. Our employment practices ensure children against the likelihood of abuse in our settings and we have a procedure for managing complaints or allegations against a member of staff.

Our way of working with children and their parents ensures we are aware of any problems that may emerge and can offer support, including referral to appropriate agencies when necessary, to help families in difficulty.

Our named safeguarding officer is

[Nicola Braglia](#)

Special needs

As part of the setting's policy to make sure that its provision meets the needs of each individual child, we take account of any special needs a child may have. The setting works to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2014 updated 2020).

Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is

[Sonia La Torre](#)

The management of our setting

A parent management committee - whose members are elected by the parents of the children who attend the setting - manages the setting. The elections take place at our Annual General Meeting. The committee is responsible for:

- managing the setting's finances;
- employing and managing the staff;
- making sure that the setting has, and works to, policies that help it to provide a high quality service; and
- making sure that the setting works in partnership with the children's parents.

The Committee are supported in their management of the setting by the administrative team, Terri Venables, Danielle Meecham and Lianne Orrock.

The Annual General Meeting in October is open to the parents of all of the children who attend the setting. It is our shared forum for looking back over the previous year's activities and shaping the coming year's plan.

For your child to keep her/his place at the setting, you must pay the fees. We are in receipt of funding for 3 and 4 year olds; where funding is not received, then fees apply.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

The Administrator is responsible for the admissions of pre-school.

It is our intention to make our pre-school genuinely accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community, regardless of class, status, race, sex, disability, cultural or religious background.

Our waiting list is arranged in date of birth order, date of enrolment and siblings already attending (or having previously attended). However, there are occasions when, at the discretion of the Committee, a child may be admitted on an emergency basis. We do attempt, when financially viable, to keep a place vacant in order to accommodate such emergency admissions. (ie. on referral from Social Services/Health Visitor, or due to special circumstances.)

As vacancies occur, children on the waiting list who are ready to attend, (on the basis of age and readiness following discussion with parents/carers) are invited to visit the pre-school accompanied by their parent/carer, spending a session with us. The child will be able to join in all the activities on offer and familiarise themselves with the surroundings. Parents/Carers will have the opportunity to talk to the staff and Supervisor with any queries or concerns that they may have.

Following the visit, we will forward a Welcome Pack with confirmation of your child's place, and details of the Pre-Schools Policies. You will be asked to complete a Registration Form providing us with essential information about your child. In addition we will ask you to complete an Emergency Collection Arrangement Form to be retained in the event that you are unforeseeably unable to collect your child. As you can see from this prospectus, photographs are taken within the group on a regular basis, to show the children taking part in activities, or during special events. These are placed in an album kept in the group that you may browse through at any time. Photos are also used in your child's reports and in our prospectus. You

will therefore, be asked for your permission for photos to be taken and used in the album, prospectus and reports.

FEES

The fees for our 3 hour sessions on a Monday (am only), Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (am or pm) are £15. A whole day session (Tuesday to Friday) is £30.00. Fees are reviewed annually in July. Fees are payable half-termly in advance. Invoices are distributed at the end of each half term, and if fees are not received by the date stated on the invoice an additional £15 will be added.

However, if you are experiencing financial difficulties, please contact the Administrator as it is sometimes possible for an alternative payment agreement to be made. If your child is absent due to holiday or sickness the fees will still need to be paid, as the running expenses remain the same. Government funding is available for 3 and 4 year old children (the term after the term in which the child is 3).

Funding is also available from the Government scheme for 2 year olds subject to certain strict criteria being met (further information is available upon request).

Funding is also available from the Government scheme for an additional 15 hours for 3-4 year olds subject to a strict certain criteria. This can be applied for via HMRC.

STARTING PRE-SCHOOL

The first days

We want your child to feel happy and safe with us. To make sure that this is the case, the staff will work with you to decide on how to help your child to settle into the setting. Our policy on the Role of the Key Person and Settling-in is available on our website or in the folder on the parents' table.

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

What should my child bring?

We would be grateful if your child could attend either wearing PLIMSOLES or have them in their bag to change into (not trainers as they hurt little fingers) Please put your child's name on all coats, shoes, boots etc. as this makes life much easier for the staff and also helps to locate lost items. A change of clothing is also helpful but we do have a good supply of clothes if necessary. Milk is also supplied or a cup of water. Any allergies or medical/religious requirements should be brought to our attention on the Enrolment and Registration Forms. If your child is in nappies then you will need to ensure that these items are also included. They will also require a healthy snack in a labelled container.

What should my child wear to pre-school?

Please do not let your child come to Hilltop in expensive/best clothes. Although we provide aprons for messy activities children will be children and spillages do occur despite the best efforts of the staff! We encourage the children to be independent so we would ask that they wear clothes that they are able to manage themselves - ie. leggings/shorts and sweatshirts/T-shirts. In hot weather, we would ask that you apply the appropriate sun-cream, together with a sun hat to be worn when in the garden.

If your child is ill

When children are unwell they are generally happier at home, and we would ask you not to bring them to pre-school, particularly if the spread of infection is to be limited, but to text/phone us on the first day of absence at the hall on 07967386414 to let us know. If we do not hear from you and we are expecting your child we will try to make contact with you.

Please let us know if your child catches an infectious disease such as chickenpox, measles, mumps, conjunctivitis, diarrhoea, etc. so that we may inform other parents to look out for the symptoms. If your child suffers an episode of diarrhoea or vomiting please keep them at home for **at least 48 hours** after the last bout of diarrhoea/vomiting.

If your child or another member of your family display symptoms of COVID-19, they must inform the preschool and isolate at home, following the guidance from the Government.

In the event of illness/injury occurring at pre-school, we will contact yourself or someone you have nominated to collect your child. If we are unable to reach the persons in question we will invoke the emergency collection arrangements. Should your child suffer a minor injury whilst in our care you will be asked to sign our accident book.

Additional sessions

If additional sessions are required, the request needs to be put in writing (forms available) or email the Administrator at hilltoppreschoolrayleigh@gmail.com .

If you wish to remove your child from pre-school

If you wish to remove your child we will require 4 weeks' notice by a letter addressed to the Administrator and a copy should be given to the Supervisors.

Making starting pre-school a happy event

- Avoid starting at a time when there has been disruption at home. A new baby or any changes in the home environment can require a settling-down period before your child is ready to tackle something new.
- Before starting pre-school, talk to your child cheerfully and positively about the good things that will happen there.
- Be prepared to remain with your child until he/she is ready to be left alone. All children are different and depending on their previous experience of being left it may take a little while for them to settle in happily and confidently.
- Please be punctual in collecting your child. If you are not there at collection time your child's newly built confidence can be upset, resulting in difficulty in separation in future.

FINALLY

We look forward to welcoming your child and family to Hilltop Pre-School. If there is anything that you are unsure about or any additional information you require, please contact us. Here are just a few examples of what other parents have to say:

- "Thank you very much for all your help and support with Daniel. I know that he has loved attending Hilltop and will miss his Tuesday and Thursday mornings. With your help he has achieved so many milestones and turned so many corners. Thank you very much and I know it won't be long and I shall be at your door with his sister".

- "Thank you so much for looking after both girls for the last 4½ years. We will really miss coming to the Pre-School, it's become a big part of our lives"
- "From the minute I stepped foot into Hilltop, I knew instantly it was right place for Freddie. The lovely calm teachers so friendly and helpful. Thank you so much for your kindness and patience towards him. You really should be proud of it; it's a lovely place for children to start growing up. See you next year with my other child".
- "We would like to thank you all for making Isabelle's time at Hilltop extremely enjoyable and fun. She has loved the time she has spent there and has learnt a lot".
- "Samuel has come on leaps and bounds this year and has always been happy to attend Hilltop every week. We found Hilltop very professional and supportive of Samuel's individual needs".
- "The school is a very special place and we have been privileged to have been part of it. Imogen is really looking forward to "Big school" and you should feel proud to have contributed to laying the foundations for her to have what we hope will be a successful education".
- "Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for the kindness and care you have shown to Holly over the last two years".
- "Niall has loved coming here and we always had to count how many sleeps until his next turn to come to pre-school".
- "Thank you for nurturing and supporting my daughter throughout her time at the pre-school. She has really enjoyed the time with you and your care and guidance has given her solid foundations with which to begin school life. If she is the confident, happy girl she is, it is in no short measure to your dedication".

REGISTERING YOUR CHILD

We thank you for your interest and hope that you have found our prospectus useful. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us, we will be happy to help.

To enroll your child on our Waiting List, please complete an Enrolment Form and return it to the Administrator, together with your £20.00 Enrolment Fee paid via BACS (details can be found on the Enrolment form). This fee is used to cover the cost of administration including the Registration Pack, personalised drawstring bag and is non-refundable.

We look forward to welcoming your child to Hilltop Pre-School.

CONTACT DETAILS

Hilltop Pre-School
Rayleigh Methodist Church
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