



Caterpillars Pre-school

Birch Prospectus

2023-2024

Caterpillars Pre-school
Birch C of E Primary School
School Hill
Birch
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Background

Caterpillars was established in the 1960's when it was based at Eight Ash Green. In 2002, the group moved premises to St Andrew's Church in Marks Tey.

Caterpillars at Birch was opened in September 2009, after the successful bid from their sister pre-school at Marks Tey to run a pre-school at the purpose built log cabin which was built by Birch Primary school.

Ofsted last inspected Birch in October 2014 and rated it as Outstanding (The full report is available to read on request or via our website).

Caterpillars is an ever evolving establishment, changing to meet children's needs, community needs and government policies and standards. In addition, we implement new ideas and change our practice as staff consistently undertaken on-going training. At Caterpillars, we all learn together and we learn from each other.

Our Sessions

Caterpillars is open for 38 weeks of the year in line with local school term dates.

Caterpillars is a member of the Early Years Learning Alliance and registered with OFSTED for children aged 2 ½ years old to 4 years old.

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.

Caterpillars is open Monday – Thursday between 9am-2:45pm. Depending on your child's age, we operate the following sessions;

2.5yrs olds and over			
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9:00 – 12:30	9:00 – 12:30	9:00 – 12:30	9:00 – 12:30
3 and 4 year olds only			
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9:00 – 2:45	9:00 – 2:45	9:00 – 2:45	9:00 – 2:45

Caterpillars Birch request your child attends for a minimum of 2 morning sessions per week.

Birch is a small setting and over time we have found that when children only attend for one session per week, it takes them longer to settle and adjust to the change to their home and pre-school routines.

This ultimately means it takes them longer to fully engage and get the most out of their time with us.

Fees

Fees are charged on a per session basis but based on the following hourly rates;

- Under 3's – £7.81 per hour
- Over 3's - £6.50 per hour

As a minimum, our charges match those paid for Government Funded places and will be reviewed every April but may also be reviewed during the year if funded rates change or other financial pressures demand it.

All non-funded hours will be invoiced electronically on a half termly basis.

The under 3 year old rate (£7.81) will be charged until the term after your child turns 3.

Funded Places

Parents can claim **15 hours** a week government funding for their child from the start of the full new term (Autumn, Spring, Summer) after their 3rd Birthday. Parents need to complete and sign a funding form at the start of each term. This covers the whole of the term and additional days cannot be claimed for after the funding headcount date (19th of the month in which the term starts).

Please visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk to find out more about funding for your child's place and how to register if you are eligible for up to 30 hours funding.

For those parents that qualified for the scheme (closed to new parents in October 2018) we do accept childcare vouchers as a means of paying for Caterpillars fees.

Changes to Agreed Sessions & Notice periods

If you need to reduce the number of sessions your child attends or find that their place is no longer required then 4 week's notice is required. If 4 week's notice is not given then the fees for the sessions your child would have attended remain payable for the duration of the notice period.

Snacks and meals

The setting makes snacks and meals a social time at which children and adults eat together. Caterpillars provides a snack daily for children at morning snack time. A charge of £1 per day is applied to cover the cost of the snack and other food based activities.

Children aged 3 and over can bring a packed lunch and stay for lunch clubs which forms part of our afternoon sessions. Staff help the children learn how to manage their lunch and pack it away afterwards before playing in groups with staff.

Caterpillars' philosophy

Learning should be Fun!

We strive to provide an environment and activities that stimulate and inspire children to learn through practical experience.

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 Early Years Foundation Stage 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 the Early Years Foundation Stage has been used to decide what equipment to provide and how to provide it.

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 or videos 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 on-going 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.

Working together for your children

At Caterpillars we maintain the ratio of adults to children and aim to exceed this ratio where possible. 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;
- allow the children to explore and be adventurous in safety.

Our Ofsted report stated that: "The manager and staff have an extremely good understanding of how children learn and develop. The exceptionally child-friendly environment strongly reflects the children's backgrounds and wider community."

Records of achievement

The setting keeps a record of achievement for each child – a learning journey. Staff and parents working together on their children's records of achievement is one of the ways in which the key person and parents work in partnership. Your child's learning journey helps us to celebrate together their achievements and to work together to provide what your child needs for their well-being and to make progress.

Your child's key person will work with you to keep this record. To do this you and they will collect information about your child's needs, activities, interests and achievements. This information will enable the key person to identify your child's stage of progress. You and the key person will then decide on how to help your child to move on to the next stage.

Uniform

We do have a selection of uniform items on sale.

T-shirts - £6.50

Jumpers - £12.00

Book bags - £7.50

A starter pack comprises a book bag and information pack for parents, and a t-shirt and costs £18. If you wish to include a jumper, the pack costs £30.

Policies

Caterpillars have a set of policies and procedures in place that we encourage Parents to be aware of. These can be found on our website and in our policy folder which is in our reception area.

Caterpillars are committed to the safety and welfare of the children who attend. Staff are well trained in every area of the curriculum and regularly update their knowledge.

We strive to provide an environment and activities that stimulate and inspire children to learn through play and practical experience.

What to do next

If you require any further information or you would like to visit Caterpillars, please contact Chrystal Clark, Manager on 07840 857592 or email birch@caterpillarspreschool.org