# Birchwood Nursery and Preschool

## Prospectus 2026

## MISSION STATEMENT

‘EVERY CHILD BELIEVED IN.
EVERY CHILD INSPIRED.’

Dear Parents,

We are all looking forward to your child joining us and we hope that their time at Birchwood Nursery will be a happy one. We want to ensure that your child enjoys their Nursery and Preschool experience and feels secure and cared for.

We have a happy, stimulating and creative environment where all children are encouraged and motivated to explore, discover and learn. These early years are the period when learning is most rapid. It is therefore very important that children are given a solid foundation on which to build their future learning.

We hope that you will find this booklet useful. If you have any questions or concerns, please do come and discuss them with the Nursery or Preschool staff or myself.

As parents, you aim to provide the best for your child, and as educators, we work with you in partnership to do the same.

Best wishes

Mrs Margaret Stocks
Headteacher

## VISION STATEMENT

At Birchwood Nursery School, we work together to create an inclusive environment where all are welcome and valued. We strive to create an environment, which is challenging, stimulating, creative and enjoyable. Everyone is encouraged to achieve their potential and to become independent and lifelong learners.

# OUR VALUES

### Nurturing

Our school community is built on kindness and respect where everyone feels safe, secure, happy and cared for.

### Inclusive

We embrace diversity and value everyone's strengths and contributions by promoting acceptance and empathy.

### Curiosity

We think creatively and provide an enjoyable, enriching and exciting environment that encourages curiosity, resilience and open-ended learning.

### Aspirational

We recognise the potential in every child and aspire for them all to be the best they can be.

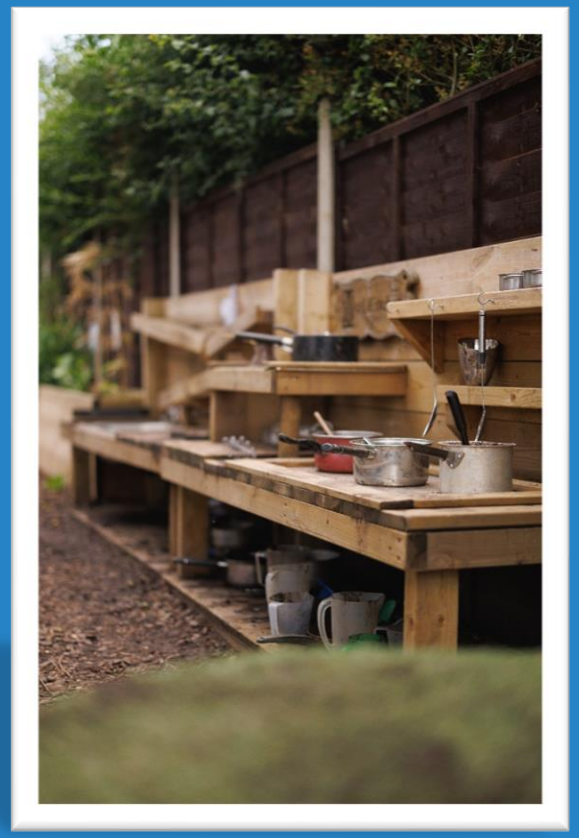
# ADMISSIONS

Our Preschool offers 2-year-old provision, and we are able to offer both funded and fee paying places. In Nursery, we offer15 hour funded places to all children who are three with effect from 1st September 2026 . We are also able to offer a 30 hour funded place for three to four year old children whose parents are eligible for the additional 15 hours for working parents.  In order to check your eligibility parents/carers are directed to www.childcarechoices.gov.uk where you can complete on online eligibility check. In addition, parents can choose to pay for the additional 15 hours.

Applications to the school are completed via our website at www.birchwoodnursery.herts.sch.uk. Your application will be acknowledged in writing by a member of our office team upon receipt and we will continue to communicate with you throughout the admissions process.

We are always delighted to welcome new families to Birchwood, as well as those returning to us with younger siblings. It is a privilege to support your children as they begin or continue their Nursery journey with us.
If at any point you have **any questions or queries**, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We are always here to help and to make your family's experience with us as positive as possible.

# PUNCTUALITY

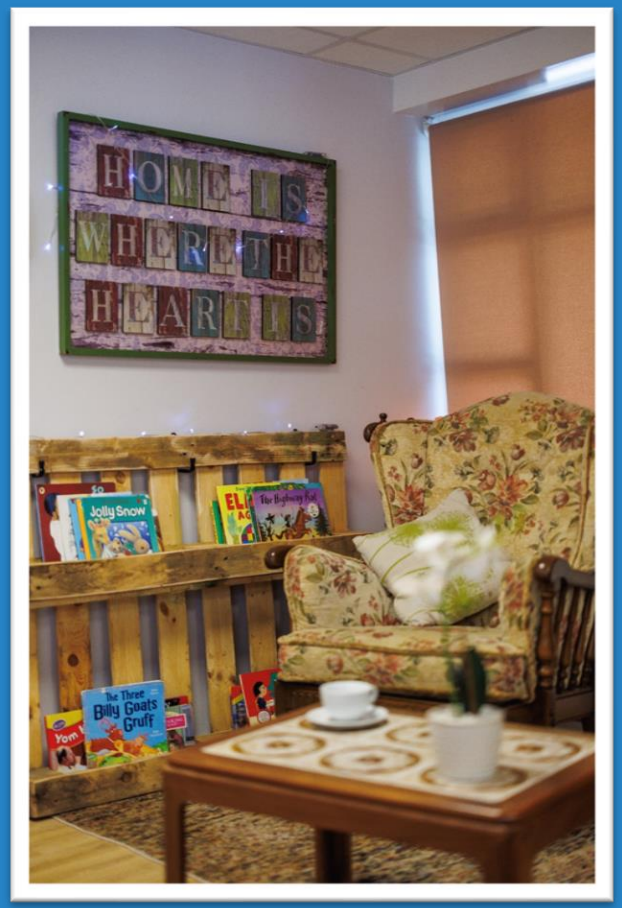


We ask that all families make every effort to arrive promptly at the start of your child's session so they can be present for registration. Arriving on time helps your child settle quickly and ensures they do not miss the important small-group learning that takes place at the beginning of the session. Late arrivals can disrupt the learning activity for both your child and the rest of the group. For this reason, parents bringing children in after the session has started will be asked to sign their child into our Late Book. This is a Health & Safety requirement and ensures that your child is correctly registered as present for the session.

If you anticipate that you will be late, please contact the School Office to let us know. This is especially important on days when your child is due to have lunch, as lunch numbers are sent to the kitchen promptly at 9:30 a.m.

At the end of each session the children must be collected by an adult. If someone other than the child's parent is collecting them, you should notify their Key Person or a member of the office staff. The person collecting will need to know the password you gave us when you completed your admissions paperwork.

# ATTENDANCE




Please notify the School Office if your child will be absent from school before the start of their session either by telephone on 01707 262648 (the office is manned from 8.30am, however a message can be left if you wish to call earlier or if the line is busy), via the Arbor app, or by emailing admin@birchwoodnursery.herts.sch.uk

**You should also contact the School Office on each subsequent day that your child remains unfit to attend.**

If your child vomits or has diarrhoea, they will need to remain off school for a period of 48 hours from the last episode to avoid spreading the illness.

Unfortunately, children who have been given Calpol or any other pain relief before school will not be able to attend as medication may disguise symptoms.

In the event that your child is prescribed medication by a doctor, but is otherwise fit to attend, we are able to administer it if required during the school day. You will need to bring the medication to the School Office in the original packaging clearly showing your child's name and dosage required and complete a Medicines Form.

Should your child become ill during the school day, we will contact you and ask you to collect your child as soon as possible. **You should ensure that your telephone number and that of your alternative emergency contacts are up to date.**

Nursery education is non-statutory, however, to ensure that pupils make progress it is important they attend regularly as there is a proven link between attendance, punctuality and children's attainment. Any holiday booked during term time should be notified to the School Office giving as much notice as possible.

# PROVISION

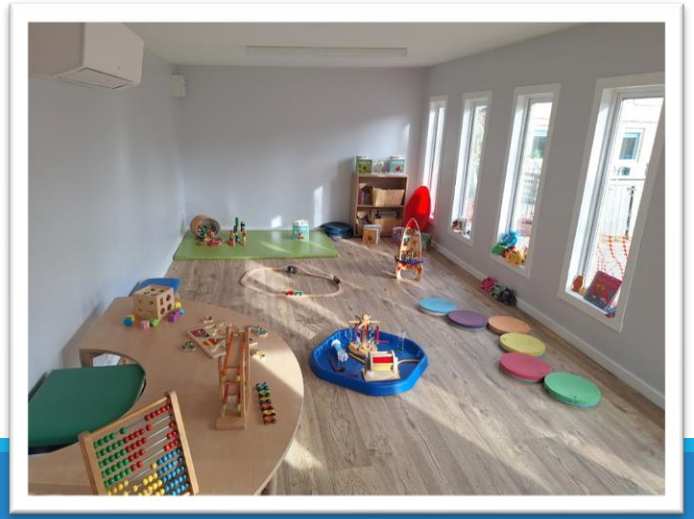
At Birchwood Nursery and Preschool our provision is organised to support both 2–3 year olds and 3–4 year olds with a range of funded and paid options.

**15-hour funded places** for eligible 2, 3 and 4-year-olds (9am-12pm)
**30-hour funded places** for eligible working parents (9am-3pm)
**Private paying places** for families who do not access funded hours

To support working families, we also provide:
**Breakfast Club** — 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
**Tea Club** — 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
These sessions can be added to any funded or paid place.

## School Times

- 8.00a.m Breakfast Club
- 9.00a.m Start of the school day
- 12.00p.m Morning children go home - *doors open 11.50 a.m*.
- 12.00p.m: Lunch time
- 3.00p.m 30 Hour children go home - *doors open at 2.50 p.m*.
- 3.00 – 4.00p.m Tea Club



# A TYPICAL DAY AT NURSERY

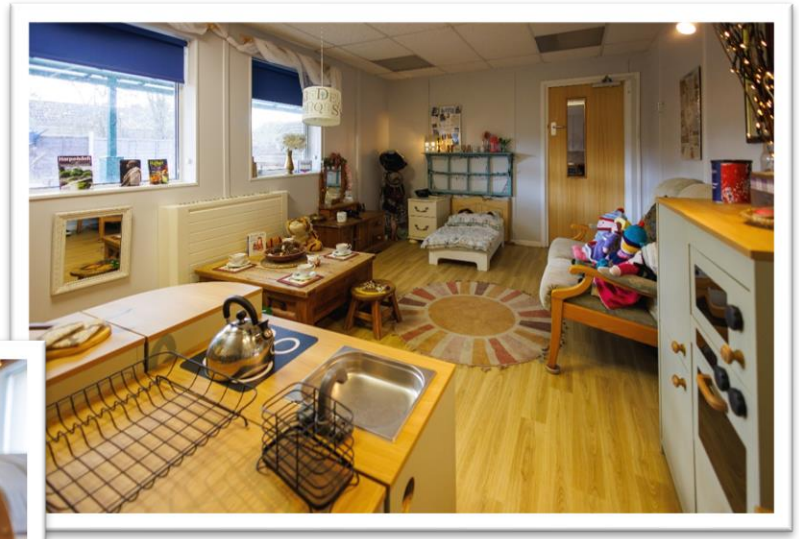
- Arrival
- Greeting by Key Person
- Adult Led Activity
- Child Initiated Learning
- Story and Rhymes
- Home Time/Lunch Time

**Children who attend for full days sessions have further learning opportunities in the afternoon.**

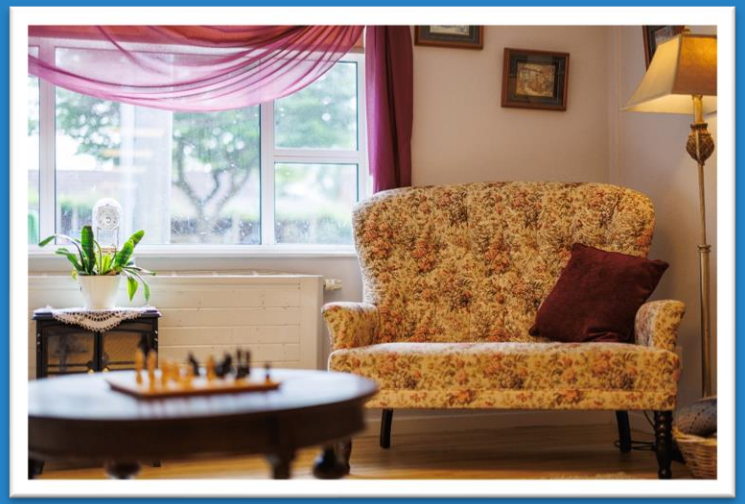
# A TYPICAL DAY AT PRESCHOOL

- Arrival
- Greeting by Key Person
- Child Initiated Learning
- Story and Rhymes
- Home Time/Lunch Time

**Children who attend for full days sessions have further learning opportunities in the afternoon.**



# KEY PERSON



**It is important you as a parent and your child's Key Person work together to ensure that your child reaches their full potential during their time with us at Birchwood Nursery and Preschool.**

Your child's Key Person will help your child to settle in and be responsible for ensuring that their needs are met in terms of personal, social and emotional requirements as well as educational. We have five qualified teachers and experienced Early Years Practitioners and Learning Support Assistants who make up our teaching staff team.

Your child's Key Person will keep a record of the observations made in school and these will be shared with you through **Tapestry**. These observations are based on wow moments that your child has been observed demonstrating during their time at Preschool and Nursery.

In Nursery, your child's Key Person will keep a special record of their year called their Family Book. This book celebrates your child's experiences, relationships, and learning throughout their time with us. You will be invited to provide photos of important people in your child's life. These will be used to create the first pages of the Family Book, helping your child feel secure and connected at Nursery. You will be able to come in and look through your child's Family Book at regular points during the school year, giving you a chance to see their progress and share in their Nursery journey.

# THE CURRICULUM

## PRIME AREAS

<u>Communication and Language</u>

Listening, Attention and Understanding

Speaking

<u>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</u>

Self Regulation

Managing Self

Building Relationships

<u>Physical Development</u>

Gross Motor Skills

Fine Motor Skills

# THE CURRICULUM

## SPECIFIC AREAS

**Literacy**

Comprehension

Word Reading

Writing

**Mathematics**

Number

Numerical Patterns

**Expressive Arts and Design**

Creating with Materials

Being Imaginative and Expressive

**Understanding the World**

Past and Present

People, Cultures and Communities

The Natural World

# ASSESSMENT

Assessment of children's progress is an integral part of our work in Nursery and Preschool. Observing the children during their play and joining their play allows us to assess their progress and to plan for future learning to meet their individual needs.

TAPESTRY
ONLINE LEARNING
JOURNAL

BIRCHWOOD
NURSERY SCHOOL

All About Me

Please attach a photo of your child here

My name is:

I like to be called:

Date of birth:

After your child has been attending Nursery or Preschool for a few weeks you will have the opportunity to discuss with your child's Key Person how they are settling in. There will be further discussions during the year to talk about your child's continuing progress and to work in partnership with you to support their next steps.

Prior to your child starting our school, we ask you to fill in an 'All About Me' questionnaire. This gives us information about your child and helps us to gain further information to assess where their learning journey begins.

Through Tapestry, our online learning journal, you will be able to see the observations and photographs and have the opportunity to add your own. We encourage parents to add to Tapestry as we work in partnership to support your child and their development.

# BEHAVIOUR

We have a positive approach to relationships and behaviour and encourage children to develop respect, understanding and tolerance. Our Relationships and Positive Behaviour Policy is aimed at improving outcomes for all children by promoting and supporting their engagement with education.

We aim for every member of our school to feel valued, be respected and to be treated fairly. We want everyone to feel happy, safe and secure. By treating everyone with respect and acknowledging feelings, we hope to encourage the children to be empathetic to others and raise their awareness of the consequences of their actions. A copy of our Home School Agreement and our Golden Rules will be given to you prior to your child joining us.

# LUNCHES

Where an absence is notified in advance, no meal will be ordered and no charge made.

Children staying for lunch are provided with a two course hot meal at a cost of £2.66 per day.

We use Herts Catering Limited, who prepare and cook the meals in the kitchen at Birchwood Avenue Primary school. Meals are brought across and served to the children in the Nursery Multipurpose Room and the Preschool Dining Room.

Herts Catering Limited operate a 3 weekly meal programme. A copy of the menu will be emailed to you before the start of term. **If you have declared a medically diagnosed food allergy on your child's application form, you will need to complete an online application for a special menu.** The link will be sent to you by the Nursery Office and must be completed at least 3 weeks before your child commences lunches with us. If you have not yet informed us of an allergy it is important that you do so immediately.

Meal payments are made via Arbor, either via the online Parent Portal or the Parent App. Charges are added to your account daily, as meals are taken, and we ask that you keep your account in credit at all times by either paying half-termly in advance or making regular top-up payments.

# MILK, FRUIT AND COOKING

Birchwood is a healthy school and promotes healthy eating. Milk is provided free of charge and water is available to all children throughout the morning.

It is important we are informed immediately of any allergies or special dietary requirements your child may have.

We offer the children a piece of fruit at snack time and we ask that parents contribute £1.00 per week towards this. Payment can be made half termly or termly via the Arbor Parent App.

Children take part in regular cooking sessions, where contributions will also be used to pay for ingredients children use.

# ARBOR

Birchwood Nursery School uses the Arbor management information system. The **Arbor Parent Portal** and **Arbor Parent App** are the means by which we communicate with parents, and are also how parents make payments for lunches and childcare fees, book parent consultations and view and amend the pupil record (key information that we hold such as contract details, addresses and medical information).

You will be sent a link to set up your Arbor account and enable you to log in. You will need to use the email address that you provided on your admission form to do this.

We encourage all parents to download the Arbor Parent App free of charge from their app store as this enables two way communication between you and the school at no cost to either party.

We advise that you enable push notifications on the Parent App so that you receive any urgent messages sent, and that you save the address **no-reply@mail.arbor-education.com** to your safe senders list to avoid emails going to your spam folder.

# UNIFORM

We do have a Birchwood Nursery School polo shirt and sweatshirt that many parents choose to purchase as they are hardwearing, machine washable and tumble dryable, and will also help to foster a sense of pride and belonging in your child. Having a specific ‘uniform’ for school also minimises any conflict in the morning over what to wear, easing morning routines. These items can be purchased from Smarty Schoolwear in Hatfield, or online at www.smartyschoolwear.co.uk.

Our uniform is NOT compulsory, please do not feel obliged to purchase.

BIRCHWOOD
NURSERY SCHOOL

We recognise that this prospectus may not have answered all your questions.

However, we are always available and very happy to discuss any matter with you or give further clarification, however small it may seem.