

# St George's



CHILDCARE



**PLAY, LEARN, SMILE**

# OUR STORY AND VALUES

Here at St George's we believe that the early years are fundamental for every child's development. Learning and playing with other children of a similar age and enjoying nutritious, tasty food with others gives them a great start in life.

As far back as 1905, the premises were used by St George's Home for Boys to care for orphaned children and those from low-income families. In 1951, services were extended to include a nursery, and in 1981, St George's Community Children's Project was founded as an independent charity. We are trading as St George's Childcare since 2017.

## Our Vision

To provide an exceptional level of childcare to children irrespective of their ethnic, social or financial backgrounds.

## Our Mission

To give all children the opportunity to develop socially, emotionally, cognitively and physically within a safe and secure environment.



Rated  
★★★★★  
by our parents on  
Google

“ St George’s is a fantastic nursery and made going back to work so much easier. Oscar loves being there - he is in Squirrels and the staff are all fantastic - he quite often doesn’t want to come home. ”

Lorraine H

# OUR APPROACH

## Independent, happy children

We want our children to learn, play and explore indoors and out; and of course, have lots of fun; this way, a thirst for learning stays with them for life.

At St George's, we encourage independence by letting our children choose what they want to play with throughout most of the day. This helps them to become confident at making choices as they grow. Our amazing staff go above and beyond and create activity boards for the children to enjoy.

## Professional, Caring Staff

Consistency is important for children, so each room has its own Senior Childcare Leader and Childcare Practitioners. To cover absences, we have a floating staff team and extra supply staff to support other team members wherever they are needed. Our staff are fully qualified to work with children or have many years' experience as nursery assistants. We also provide regular training sessions, delivered in-house or by outside trainers, to energise everyone and keep our ideas fresh.

## Child Safety

Children's safety is extremely important to us. We take our duty of care very seriously and we need to know who is in the building at all times, so we have a CCTV camera at every entrance.

If anyone other than a nominated person is going to collect a child, it is vital we know in advance. We will need their name, description and relationship to the child and agree a password with them and our staff. If this procedure is not followed, we may have to refuse to let a child leave the premises until their nominated person comes to collect them – if in doubt, we always put safety first.

## Food and Nutrition

Tasty food can also be nutritious food. We are committed to educating and encouraging our children to eat a balanced and varied diet. We believe that giving healthy options from the start will encourage children to eat healthily later on in life.

We cook up lots of different, familiar and exciting new tastes to explore from around the world. Our menu board in the hallway is updated every day and all our food is prepared and cooked daily in our modern, on-site kitchen by our two talented chefs. Our catering staff are fussy about cleanliness and we have a 5-star Food Hygiene rating – the top award given by the Government's Food Standards Agency – to prove it.

We also ensure that the children have plenty of fresh water throughout the day. The older children are encouraged to help themselves to drinks and they love helping the staff give drinks to the younger ones.



## Special Dietary Requirements and Cakes

At the time of a child's settling in visits, we will find out if they have any dietary needs or food allergies. We use food preference charts in all areas, a coloured plate system and individual children's place mats to make sure every child's diet is correct.

*“ I have been very, very impressed with St. George's. My son's key person has been instrumental in his progress and all of us discuss key strategies and plans to help with issues that he may have. ”*





## NURSERY

Every day at St George's is packed with fun-filled learning and adventures.

Children can relax with a book; get busy with construction toys or role-playing props; get creative with musical instruments, art and craft materials and our sand and water areas; learn in our maths areas and explore the garden. Our range of resources embraces the needs of a wide variety of abilities and cultures, giving our children the chance to learn about the different backgrounds of their new friends.

# LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Throughout their early years, play is one of the most important things for a child, as it helps them to discover that learning can be lots of fun. At St George's, we offer a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities, so that every child has the chance to develop their natural curiosity. As Georgie, our mascot, might put it, we want them to **"Play, Learn and Smile"**.

We are governed by Ofsted and follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); the government framework that sets standards for care and learning in the early years. This framework, plus our Key Person approach, gives every child continuity, security, reassurance and a chance to learn and grow as they play.



**“** I know that my child is happy at St Georges and enjoys it! The staff are friendly and always welcoming. The setting is busy and always full of life. **”**

# THE EYFS\* IS DIVIDED INTO 4 THEMES:

## 1. A unique child

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

Meeting individual needs of every child lies at the heart of the EYFS. At St George's we plan for each child's unique care and learning requirements and promote positive attitudes to diversity.

## 2. Positive relationships

*Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.*

We use the Key Person system to build up relationships with children and their families from the very first settling in visit. The visits help your child to get used to their new surroundings and for you both to get to know the staff and ask lots of questions.

## 3. 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 and parents and carers.*

All our rooms have age-appropriate toys to encourage children to choose, investigate and explore the different learning areas.



## 4. Learning and development

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

We get to know every child and create an online journal through ParentZone to show how they are developing. We'll encourage you to read your child's journal and add interesting things they've done outside nursery. This helps us plan activities that they will enjoy and find stimulating.



**“** The space is really inviting, and the outside play area is fantastic. I love that the children get to play out there in all weathers.

**”**

# SQUIRRELS



# SQUIRRELS (3 MONTHS - 2 YEARS)

<b>Age:</b>	3 months – 2 years
<b>Staffing ratio:</b>	1:3
<b>Sessions:</b>	Full Day 7.30am–6.30pm Morning 7.30am-1pm Afternoon 1pm-6.30pm

**We know that it isn't always easy leaving your baby at nursery, but we're here to make it as easy as possible.**

No one knows them as well as you do, so during your settling in visits, we will ask you lots of questions about your baby and their daily routine allowing us to follow it as closely as possible.

## **Happy baby and a happy you**

Like you, we want to ensure your baby gets the best possible start in life. Each day, our Squirrels staff will set up a variety of activities for them to enjoy. These fun activities will be changed regularly to stimulate their natural curiosity.





# HEDGEHOGS



# HEDGEHOGS (1.5-2.5 YEARS)

<b>Age:</b>	1.5 – 2.5 years
<b>Staffing ratio:</b>	1:3
<b>Sessions:</b>	Full Day 7.30am–6.30pm Morning 7.30am-1pm Afternoon 1pm-6.30pm

**Every child grows up at their own pace. Our Hedgehogs room is the perfect stepping-stone between Squirrels (3 months-2 years) and Moles (2-3 years old).**

## Taking baby steps

Some children are ready to bounce straight from one room to the other. Whereas others feel happier taking a few extra ‘baby steps’ before they’re physically or emotionally ready to join the older children in Moles. It’s quite a jump from being a baby to an active little toddler. Hedgehogs is all about getting your child used to making their own choices and decisions. This group provides a little confidence booster to help them take those first steps.





# MOLES



# MOLES (2-3 YEARS)

<b>Age:</b>	2 - 3 years
<b>Staffing ratio:</b>	1:4
<b>Sessions:</b>	Full Day 7.30am–6.30pm Morning 7.30am-1pm Afternoon 1pm-6.30pm

**Whether your child is new to St George's or is moving up to Moles from Squirrels or Hedgehogs, we will arrange settling in sessions with you to make sure they are ready and happy.**

## So much to explore, so much to learn

By this stage, your child will be starting to become more independent, so Moles gives them the perfect environment to make decisions and choices. They are encouraged to dress themselves, lay the table, serve meals and choose snacks, and help themselves to drinks of water throughout the day.



# BADGERS & OTTERS



# BADGERS & OTTERS (3-5 YEARS)

<b>Age:</b>	3 - 5 years
<b>Staffing ratio:</b>	1:8
<b>Sessions:</b>	Full Day 7.30am–6.30pm Morning 7.30am–1pm Afternoon 1pm–6.30pm

As our children enter their pre-school years we encourage them to be confident in making their own choices and inventing their own games. Both rooms are arranged so that children can choose which activities they want to do.

## Special time together

During group time, we all sit together, learning to listen to each other while we discuss topics like the seasons, birthdays, holidays or families. Along with play, we spend time with all our children encouraging writing skills, recognising numbers and colours, and using their interests to plan future activities.





# LITTLE DRAGONS





# LITTLE DRAGONS

## TERM TIME PRE-SCHOOL

<b>Age:</b>	2½-5 years
<b>Staffing ratio:</b>	1:4 children under 3 1:8 children over 3
<b>Sessions:</b>	Full Day 9am-3pm Morning 9am-12pm Afternoon 12pm-3pm

**St George's Little Dragons term-time playgroup offers parents and carers a great alternative to full nursery care.**

## Growing, exploring and having fun

38 weeks a year, Little Dragons provides morning and afternoon sessions of fun and learning. Our wonderful team will gently encourage your child to join in with all sorts of age-appropriate activities that are planned from the children's own interests. Allowing them to choose whatever they want to play with encourages them to become independent, inquisitive learners and more confident in making their own decisions.

As well as toys and games, we have a quiet corner where the children can snuggle up and read a book with staff or friends. Outside, our large garden gives our Little Dragons the space to run around and play balancing, jumping, climbing, catching and exploring games. They have a vegetable plot so they can plant, look after, cook and eat their own fruit and veg.



# AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB

Our After-school Club runs during term time, picking up children from St John's and St Jame's Primary schools. Our regular team provide a familiar and friendly face for your child when they come out of school and accompany them back to St George's in our 17 seater mini bus.

Children from other schools are welcome to join us, but their own transport would need to be arranged.

## Lots of fun and lots to learn

Children can choose from a wide range of indoor activities including snooker, karaoke and air hockey. We have role-play areas, board games, arts and crafts equipment and construction toys. Our sofa room is a relaxing space for children to read, listen to music or watch TV. We also have a Nintendo Wii, PS3 with age appropriate games and a computer to improve IT skills.

We have a large garden to play in, full of age-appropriate games and equipment. There is football, netball, basketball, tennis, badminton, scooters, bikes and stilts. The children absolutely love our large wooden cabin with its camouflage kit, camp building materials and explorer's kit. They can even get busy growing vegetables and flowers in their mini allotments.





*“ So much love,  
kindness and  
attention is given  
to the children. ”*



# HOLIDAY CLUB

With so much to do at our Holiday Club, which is open during all school holidays you'll never hear 'I'm bored' again. Advanced booking and payment are required.

Here's just a taste of the activities on offer and the fun your child can have:

- A large garden to run around in, with football, netball, basketball, tennis/badminton nets, scooters, bikes and stilts
- A large wooden cabin with camouflage kit, camp building materials and everything any explorer could possibly need including microscopes, bug-busting kits, binoculars, magnifying glasses and bug reference books
- A fire Pit to learn a lot of science, some basic survival and bushcraft skills, learn about fire safety and managing risks but also to have the enjoyment and excitement of being around a campfire'
- A vegetable plot, where the children can grow and care for fruit and vegetables – they'll even get a chance to prepare, cook and eat their own home-grown, healthy food
- Lots of board games, table top games and free-standing games, such as air hockey and snooker
- A quiet room with a TV for 'cinema' afternoons, a Nintendo Wii and a well-stocked reading and reference area
- A computer, games consoles, remote control cars and robots
- A role-play area with lots of dressing-up clothes
- A 17-seater minibus for outings.

## Lunch time

Children need to bring a packed lunch or a lunch box can be purchased for £2.50 on the day from our kitchen. The box contains:

- Yogurt
- Pom Bears or plain crisps
- Marmite, cheese or jam sandwich
- Homemade fruit loaf or homemade biscuit
- Apple, satsuma or pear



## Tea time For After School Club and Holiday Club

Our home-cooked menu offers a wide variety of tasty food for afternoon tea, such as spaghetti bolognese, jacket potatoes with various toppings, sausages and mash, lamb curry and rice and roast dinners. We also have a range of homemade desserts. Fresh fruit, milk and water are available throughout the sessions.

We ask parents to advise us if a child has any dietary requirements or allergies.



# OUR OUTDOOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

At St George's we believe that there is no bad weather, only unsuitable clothing, so all the children get to use our spacious playground and allotment everyday come rain or shine. We have a wide range of toys and equipment available for all ages and children are encouraged to plant vegetables and flower seeds in our allotment so they can see them grow and enjoy them later on during the year.



*“Lovely nurturing environment and happy to see my child's confidence grow”*



*“The environment is fantastic,  
I cannot fault it.”*





## OUR ECO-FRIENDLY APPROACH

### The power of the early years

The way to a more sustainable planet depends on how we educate the next generation. We want children to grow up with an understanding of how to look after the planet, and in turn go on and influence others with their behaviour. The earlier we can teach these principles, the better.



For this reason, your children's awareness of the planet and the environment should be promoted through their daily activities, the resources that they use, and the interactions we all have with them.



## Being more sustainable

St George's provides reusable cotton tote bags for parents to use instead of plastic bags when bringing their children's wellies etc into the setting. We also ask them to provide a long-life sustainable water bottle for each child.

St George's offers a "cycle to work scheme" to all employees in order to promote cycling instead of driving.

## Recycling, re-using, and repurposing.

St George's recycles paper, cardboard, plastic, cans, and tins or we reuse them for arts and crafts. In the rooms and in the garden we have kid-sized bins so the children can get involved in the sorting.

All rooms use recycling food waste caddies for leftover food from snacks and meals. The content is then put into our garden compost bins.



## Using less paper

Most, if not all, of our parents and carers' communications and invoicing are made electronically by email, so we print as little as possible.

Our interactive app ParentZone allows us to share a child's pictures and updates with their parents without the need for printing.

Online banking and the use of online finance software is helping us move towards becoming a paperless business and all our marketing is done through social media.





## Making use of the outdoors (and little green fingers!)

We are lucky enough to have great outdoor space, so the children are able to grow flowers, fruit and veggies in our allotment.

We host weekly Forest School sessions for the children in a specially developed area of our allotment.

## What we buy

Where we can, we buy in bulk to reduce packaging waste (and save money!). We collect natural materials for play, like feathers, conkers, pine cones, or sticks.

When we buy new things, we try to make sustainable equipment purchases – wooden toys and tables, rather than bad-quality plastic which we would have to replace in a few years.

We buy locally sourced products for the meals which are prepared in our kitchen each day; our butcher and greengrocer are based in the Tunbridge Wells area.



## Water conservation

With water being such a valuable resource, teaching children to use it wisely is vital. At St George's, we make sure children do not waste water by playing with the toilet flush or taps etc. Rainwater is collected in our water butts so we can water plants and our crops sustainably.



# PARENTS AND CARERS

At St George's, we recognise the importance of parents and guardians as primary carers.

Before a child even joins us, their Senior Childcare Leader will call to arrange settling in visits. This gives parents/carers and children a chance to get to know the staff and ask lots of questions, and for us to find out as much as we can about each child's individual daily routine, likes and dislikes.

Each child will be appointed a 'Key Person' as we feel that each child needs to have a special person to relate to. This helps to build strong links between St George's and home. Through daily observations and open conversations with parents/carers, the Key Person will really get to know each of their key children which helps the care we provide to continue to get better and better. The Key Person will also add to each child's online Learning Journal and plan the next steps in their learning on a regular basis.

## Getting involved

St George's holds parents' evenings where parents/carers can have more in-depth conversations with their child's Key Person. To further help us improve our services, you will also find a suggestion box in our hallway. We welcome constructive criticism and if you think we've done anything particularly well, we'd love to hear about that too.

We operate an open-door policy and welcome parents at any time during our working day. Call in and find out what's going on and if you wish, you could even volunteer to help at one of our fundraising events. If you're happy to dedicate even more of your time, you may wish to apply to join our Board of Trustees. We have parents past and present on our Board and new members are elected any time of the year when there is a vacancy available.

As a parent or carer, you will receive regular newsletters to keep you up to date with what's happening at St George's – of course, we'd love you to keep in touch with us too.

We offer fresh, home cooked meals and a well-balanced diet to all our children. We can offer alternatives to those children that have special dietary requirements such as allergies, vegetarian diets and where possible we will provide meals for children with preferences.

We also offer a cake making service where, for a small fee, we will bake and decorate a traybake cake for a child's birthday.

## Our staff

All our staff are checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). We also insist on two written references, regular appraisals and supervisions. All our staff are aware of all our policies and procedures, and we ensure they are up to date with any changes. Being strict with the staff-to-child ratios means that we promise to keep every child safe. Our students and volunteers are also DBS checked, but they are not included in our staff-to-child ratios.

## Photography

We have a strict no mobile phone policy and only nursery cameras are used to photograph the children at play. Photos are printed for use in the building, coat pegs, table mats, wall displays, Social Media posts and Marketing and Fundraising materials etc. with parental permission.

## Hygiene

Hand washing, cleaning rotas, toileting and nappy procedures keep our children as safe as possible from germs. Hand gel is used in every room as well as soap and water, and the children learn about hygiene from the staff, who are great role models for them. The safety of our children and our staff is our top priority. In light of the recent Covid pandemic, we have put in place safety measures in accordance with Public Health England (PHE) and the Department for Education's requirements and the latest government guidance. Enhanced end of day cleans and frequent deep cleans at weekends are done by our cleaning company.

## Equipment and health & safety procedures

Regular risk assessments ensure that our resources, furniture, hallways and garden are kept safe for our children. For instance, the play area in our garden has an impact-absorbing surface so that slips and falls don't end in tears.

Regular emergency evacuation drills teach the staff and children how to leave the building quickly, should the need arise. To ensure no one becomes complacent, these drills are carried out once a term and during the summer holidays on different days and times.

All our staff have regular safeguarding training, we have nominated Safeguarding and Behaviour Management Officers and our strict safeguarding procedure protects children at all times.

We want every child to have a fun, happy and safe time at St George's'. We regularly review our policies and procedures and bring them up to date as necessary.



## THE BEST CHILDCARE FOR EVERYONE

St George's gives children from all walks of life, the loving, expert care they need to develop healthy relationships and valuable life skills. In fact, we are the only childcare provider in Tunbridge Wells that offers subsidised or sometimes even completely free places for children in vulnerable circumstances, all paid for by our fundraising activities.

We are proud to be able to offer amazing childcare to everyone, no matter their background or circumstances.

We work closely with social services, health visitors and the women's refuge to support children who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford nursery education. Some children come to us from unstable homes where parents are dealing with difficult issues. While the children are in our care, their families have the time and space to get the help they need to move on in their lives.

## Who we support through Assisted Places Scheme

Although Tunbridge Wells may appear to be affluent, like all communities, there are those that cannot afford the costs of childcare and need support. Through our Assisted Places Scheme, we support families who may be facing a number of challenges. For example:

- Living in temporary accommodation
- Parents / carers in unemployment or temporarily / permanently unable to work
- In receipt of Universal Credit
- Have an annual gross family income of no more than £16,190 per year
- Children receiving Disability Living Allowance
- Parents / carers / family members with mental health problems

Families should talk to one of our Childcare Managers if they feel they could benefit from our subsidised places, or if they know someone who could benefit. We also take referrals from social workers, health visitors, women's refuge, children's centres, doctors surgeries and other local support services.

Places are allocated on a case by case basis, in discussion with families.

## Our Impact on children and their families

The children we care for benefit immensely from being in a safe, nurturing environment. They develop their social and emotional skills by playing with other children and a wonderful selection of toys, books, musical instruments and art and craft materials. They play indoors and outside in our large garden, they receive healthy snacks and at least one nutritious hot meal per session, and of course they benefit from lots of TLC from their key workers and all of our Childcare Team here.



It's not just the children who benefit; Parents and carers are happy to drop their children off at St George's, because they know that they are receiving the very best possible care in a loving and safe environment.

St George's gives family members who are facing challenges at home, the space they need to meet with social care professionals or attend counselling or support networks. With their children at St George's, parents and carers can return to work, attend interviews and even retrain.

The Manager of the local women's refuge commented, "One thing that they all need (residents who arrive at the refuge) is to feel some normality in their lives. ...St George's offers an opportunity for children to play with other children and to be away from the refuge for a few hours.

St George's also gives the mums time to attend counselling sessions which helps to build their self-esteem and come to terms with what has happened to them. We would really miss this resource for our residents and their children and the support that St George's offers our families."

## **Measuring success**

To track the impact of subsidised places, our Childcare Team use the EYFS standards to chart every child's progress in their 'Learning Journal'. These measures social, communication and motor skills, recognition of shapes, letters and numbers and their creativity and behaviour. It provides a detailed record of their journey and development during their time with us.

We also organise questionnaires and interviews with family members, so that they can tell us about the behaviour of their children and how their family life is improving.

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