



Starting at
Ilchester Early Years
Department

Prospectus 2025-2026

Welcome from the Headteacher

We recognise that for many of you this will be your child's first experience of leaving their adult; it may even be the first time that you will leave them. We feel privileged that you have chosen our setting to care for your most precious family member. At Ilchester we provide a caring, nurturing, unique experience and we are really looking forward to working with you and your family.

We welcome all children, from all areas of our community, embracing everyone's varied backgrounds and we strive to provide for each individual's needs. Children can attend our Pre-School from age two, until they start school in the September following their fourth birthday.

Our professional and well qualified staff team work tirelessly to ensure that your children feel safe and happy in their environment. They provide a play-based learning experience and enjoy indoor and outdoor play on a regular basis.

Our Vision, Values and Aims

'Making learning irresistible for all'

Belief

Bravery

Equity

Curiosity

Kindness

Belief: We believe that every child can succeed and we encourage them to believe in themselves.

Bravery: We promote bravery by encouraging the children to try new activities and experiences.

Equity: We provide equity for all of our children; ensuring that no matter what their starting point, background or experience they all have access to the opportunities that they need to succeed.

Curiosity: We encourage our children to be curious and fully involved in their learning. Wherever possible we opt to follow the children's interests in play and learning.

Kindness: We encourage the children to be kind to others and themselves in all that they do.

Settling In

During your 'stay and play' session we will give you paperwork to complete and a welcome booklet for your child. We will ask you to complete a registration form which will outline everything that we need to know about your child: **They cannot be left with us until this is complete.** Alongside this we will ask you to complete a 'starting points' document. This document asks you to identify the skills that your child has and hasn't yet achieved in order to give us a starting point for their learning.

When all of your paperwork is complete and your sessions are booked in, your child can attend the setting. We want the children to feel safe and happy in the setting and as a result we recommend that for their first visit an adult stay with them until they feel confident to branch out and play. We recognise that each child is different and they will require a different transition when separating from their adult therefore we will work with you to make this as seamless as possible. Your child will be allocated a Key Person who will become your 'go to' member of staff within the setting. This member of staff will actively build a relationship with your child and, wherever possible, will address all of their care needs including nappy changing. If your child's Key Person is absent a secondary Key Person, who is also familiar with your child, is allocated.

Opening Hours and Fees

Breakfast Session	Monday – Friday	7.45 a.m. – 9.00 a.m.
Morning Session	Monday – Friday	9.00 a.m. – 12.00 mid-day
Afternoon Session	Monday – Friday	12.00 mid-day – 3.00 p.m.
Tea Time Session	Monday – Friday	3.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.

The office is open between 8.45 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. Please leave a message on the answerphone outside of these times and your call will be returned. If you are ringing regarding the late pick up of your child outside of these hours, we will contact you as soon as possible. Rest assured your child will be kept safe with a member of Pre-School staff until you arrive or arrange alternative collection arrangements.

For our current prices please see our 'Fees Policy' which is available on the school website. Fees are payable always in advance and must still be paid if children are absent. We are in receipt of nursery education funding for two, three and four-year-olds; however, where funding is not received fees do still apply. **For your child to keep their place at the setting, you must pay the fees.**

Snacks and Meals

During our breakfast session we provide the children with a hot and cold food option such as crumpets, toast or cereals.

We provide a healthy mid-morning snack for the children, where possible the children are involved in the preparation of snack in order to encourage them to try and taste everything on offer. Whilst the children are participant in the process their Key Person ensures that snacks include a mixed variety of fruit, vegetables, dairy and carbohydrates.

We ask parents to provide a clearly labelled water bottle regardless of the session(s) they attend.

At lunchtime there is a option for the children to be provided with a hot meal from our outsourced caterers, FIGS of Somerton.

Menus are sent out termly and children do not need to make meal choices before the day. There are meat and vegetarian options for the children to choose from.

At tea time, the children are provided with a small hot meal such as a toasted sandwich or beans on toast.

We are vigilant with dietary requirements and are keen to work with parents to provide alternative options to suit any allergies or intolerances. Please ensure that you share any dietary requirements with us and indicate them on your child's registration form.

Uniform and Clothing

Although uniform is not a requirement at Pre-School it is encouraged to help with the children's progression into school. Jumpers with logos are available to purchase from South West School wear in Yeovil. Cheaper, pre-loved jumpers can also be sourced from the school's Parent Teacher Association, (Friends of Ilchester School, FIS).

Whilst we will always support the children, we do encourage them to be as independent as possible when dressing and undressing. Therefore, any clothing choices need to be easily put on or removed by your child, particularly if they are toilet training. Please provide a waterproof coat during the colder months because we do go outside come rain or shine.



At Pre-School, we do encourage messy play and will often be found in the mud kitchen, at the forest or painting independently. Whilst aprons and suitable waterproofs will be provided and encouraged, we cannot always keep the children clean. With this in mind we recommend the children dress in clothes that you are happy to get dirty. Please also provide a change of clothes for these occasions.

Footwear needs to be practical and comfortable. It must be suitable for messy play and energetic activities. Open-toe shoes must be avoided. Please provide a pair of wellies for walks and outdoor activities that your child can change into when needed.

Please ensure that all items are clearly named and put into a bag on your child's peg. We do ask that you take this bag to and from Pre-School daily.

During the hotter weather we do ask for the children to bring a clearly labelled sun hat and sun cream. Staff will apply sun cream periodically throughout the day.

Our Learning Environment

We are located in the wooden building on the Infant Department Site in Illustrious Crescent. Unfortunately, there is no parking available therefore parents must park along the road and walk to the setting. The Pre-School has two rooms, 'Puddleducks' for our two-year-old children and 'Tiggywinkles' for our three and four-year-old children. After a child's third birthday we will begin a transition between the two rooms.

The setting offers a variety of play opportunities and dedicated areas such as:

- Large play rooms for imaginative and topic related activities
- Cosy reading corners
- Writing, reading and maths activities incorporated throughout the space
- An indoor wet area for messy play and craft activities
- A low-level worktop at the kitchen for cooking activities and snack preparation
- Plenty of table space for the children to eat their lunches
- A fully interactive computer screen that all of the children can see and engage with. We embrace the use of technology at our setting in moderation.
- Child sized toilets and nappy changing facilities with walk-up changing units.
- A secured outdoor area to the rear of our building provides a safe place to play. It has been landscaped to include sand play, a slide, water play and a track for scooters and other ride-on toys.
- Access to the library at the Junior Department
- Access to the forest school area on the Junior Department Site
- Access to the field at the back of our outdoor area as well as the playground and equipment within the Infant Department Site.



Our Approach to Children's Learning

As a school we recognise that the early years of a child's life should be spent learning through play and enjoying their childhood. As a result, the children will have access to a stimulating environment that enables them to explore and be curious. The large majority of the children's learning will be



play based and will revolve around their own interests. We are keen as a setting to make their learning irresistible. We aim to achieve this by inviting visitors in, going on regular walks around the local environment, visiting our forest area and going on trips out. The children will be given regular opportunities to try new things, socialise, collaborate and express their interests. The staff aim to facilitate all of this learning by offering a safe, caring and attentive relationship where the children can be independent and confident to explore. A small proportion of the

children's learning will be spent as a group where they will listen to stories, find out about their topic, talk about the day ahead or to show and tell their own news. When sharing their news, we actively encourage them to share their own cultural backgrounds and we often invite parents and carers to do so too. If you are keen to get involved, please do let your child's Key Person know.

The Curriculum

The Early Years Department follow 'Birth to Five Matters' which is the non-statutory guidance used to support the statutory document as their curriculum driver. 'Birth to Five Matters' is available to download at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/971620/Development_Matters.pdf This clearly defines what is taught.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected. The first three areas are known as the prime areas and are described as the 'universal core aspects of early child development' (DfE, 2021, Birth to Five Matters).

The prime areas are:

- **Communication and Language**
Listening, Attention and Understanding
Speaking
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
Self-Regulation
Managing Self
Building relationships
- **Physical Development**
Gross Motor Skills
Fine Motor Skills

The specific areas of learning help children to 'strengthen and apply the prime areas' (Julian Grenier, 2021, Working with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage: Principles into Practice). The specific areas are:

- **Literacy**
Comprehension
Word Reading
Writing
- **Mathematics**
Number
Numerical Patterns
- **Understanding the World**
Past and Present
People, Culture and Communities
The Natural World
- **Expressive Arts and Design**
Creating with Materials
Being Imaginative and Expressive

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning which weave throughout all of the areas of learning. The Teachers and Early Years Practitioners plan activities with these in mind. The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and Exploring - Engagement**
Finding out and exploring
Playing with what they know
Being willing to 'have a go'
- **Active Learning – Motivation**
Being involved and concentrating
Keeping trying
Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
- **Creating and Thinking Critically – Thinking**
Having their own ideas
Making links
Working with ideas



As a part of the school we encourage the children to recognise these characteristics in themselves. We recognise that at Pre-School the children find it harder to express themselves therefore we encourage them to always give new things a try.

Assessment

Your child will have a Key Person who is responsible for monitoring the progress of your child and in supporting them to achieve their developmental milestones. The Key Person will assess your child's learning and progress by observing them frequently. They will document their observations using photos and captions on the EY LOG. Your child's Key Person will also evidence their learning through the work that they produce themselves; this will also be documented in their learning journey.



On entry to the setting, children's parents and carers complete a 'starting points' document. This is vital as we need the people who know them best to tell us all about them. The starting points are then followed by a more detailed baseline assessment carried out by their child's Key Person six weeks later. As a setting we make termly assessment summaries of children's achievement based on our on-going development records and will invite you in for parents' evenings twice yearly to discuss further. In the summer term you will receive an end of year report.

The Progress Check at Age Two

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires that each setting supplies parents and carers with a short, written summary of their child's development in the three prime areas of learning. Your child's Key Person is responsible for completing the check using information from their on-going observational assessments carried out as part of our everyday practice, taking account of the views and contributions of parents and other professionals.

A Typical Day

07.45 – 09.00	Children have their breakfast, read books, complete puzzles or games for a calm start to their day
09.00 – 10.00	Children play independently both indoors and outdoors with no adult interruptions
10.00 – 10.30	Snack time
10.30 – 11.00	Reading time or colouring
11.00 – 12.00	Indoor and outdoor play with adult directed tasks
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch
13.00 – 14.00	Children play independently both indoors and outdoors with no adult interruptions.
14.00 – 15.00	Indoor and outdoor play with adult directed tasks.
15.00 – 17.00	Children have their tea and have a calm end to their day, using technology, reading books, singing and playing games.

The adult directed tasks are differentiated and carefully timed for our varied age range.

Staffing

The setting always maintains the ratio of adults to children outlined in the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Requirements'. We also appoint college students who are training for their Level 2 and Level 3 childcare qualifications. In addition, we welcome volunteers and parent helpers where possible to compliment these ratios. As our Pre-School is very much a part of the school you will often see the Headteacher, Early Years Leader and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-Ordinator (SENDCo) within the setting too. All of our Pre-School staff are paediatric first aid trained.



Special Needs

Within our setting, everyone is welcome and we embrace and support children's individual needs. The setting follows all legislation and statutory requirements within this area and documents its practice within its Inclusion Policy. We have a named Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-Ordinator (SENDCo) within the setting who works closely with the School SENDCo and local Area SENDCo. If you require further information regarding special needs and how we cater for them please do not hesitate to ask.

Links with the Local Community

The children have a link with the elderly members of our community via the community coffee mornings. The children are able to visit them and often write to them, needless to say when they receive a reply it is all very exciting!

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents are the first and most important educators in their children's lives. The staff consider themselves as partners with you when providing care and education for your child. We value your contributions and regularly offer you consultation regarding major policy changes or points for discussion via parent parliament sessions with our Headteacher. Our door is always open at Ilchester. Parents and carers are actively encouraged and welcomed to visit the setting and meet our staff regularly. At drop off and pick up times there are opportunities to exchange information with your child's Key Person, meetings can be arranged to discuss their progress and more formal parents' evenings are scheduled throughout the year too. We welcome parent helpers and if this is something that you are interested in please do not hesitate to contact your child's Key Person.

A weekly newsletter is produced to inform parents of all that is going on at the Pre-School. Within the newsletter we will inform you of up and coming events or topics that you can get involved with and we may ask for your participation too. As our partnership is a two-way relationship we ask you to keep us informed of the children's own special interests and significant changes in their lives. Whilst we encourage our three and four-year-olds to communicate with you about their day we recognise that it can be a big ask for our two-year-olds therefore home communication books are used as a stepping stone.



As a school we have a Parent Teacher Association who fundraise for our setting. If you are interested in getting involved, information can be sort from the FIS (Friends of Ilchester) noticeboard outside of the setting or from the Manager. FIS will ask for support and advertise events regularly via flyers and newsletters.

The children's learning journeys have to be kept in a secure place in order to be General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant however they can be viewed on request anytime. We do however ask that all of the children's work remains within the setting. When your child leaves the setting all of their work will be sent home for you to keep forever.

Safeguarding Children

As with any educational setting, we have a duty of care to safeguard our children. In order to keep the children safe all staff and volunteers are DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked, mobile phones or camera devices are kept in a locked cupboard and appropriate ratios are adhered to. We promote open and transparent relationships with our parents and where necessary we can offer support and referral to appropriate agencies if you are experiencing difficulties. The setting has procedures in place for managing disclosures, complaints and allegations which are all outlined within our policies.



School Readiness

Whilst school readiness requires much more than just the academics and every year from birth builds toward that moment the staff will begin preparing the rising five-year-old children more formally for school during their last summer term at Pre-School. The children will have the opportunity to visit their local school wherever possible and opportunities for their teachers to meet them within the setting will be provided. The children will begin small group activities during this time focussing on all manner of things including turn taking, mark making, counting, drawing, colouring and much more.

**We hope that this has given you a flavour of our setting.
Please feel free to contact us or arrange a visit if you require any
further information. We look forward to working with you
and welcoming your children soon.**



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ILCHESTER COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL
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Please note: All information in this prospectus is accurate at the time of print. From time to time changes will occur, on these occasions parents will be notified. More detailed information can be found in the school's Policies and Procedures. These can be found on the school website: www.ilchestercommunityprimaryschool.com

Parent Checklist

- I have booked a 'Stay and Play' session
- I have completed the 'Starting Points' document
- I have completed the registration form and have made any allergies or important information clear
- I have read and understood the 'Fees Policy'
- I have completed the 'Guinea Pig Permission Form'
- I have provided a clearly labelled bag or box for their lunch
- I have provided a clearly labelled bottle with water
- I have purchased a school jumper (not compulsory)
- I have provided a clearly labelled bag with spare clothes that I don't mind getting dirty
- I have provided a pair of labelled wellies
- I have provided a labelled waterproof coat
- I have provided a labelled bottle of sun cream and a labelled sun hat for the hotter weather
- I have registered my interest in helping with 'Friends of Ilchester School' – FIS (not compulsory)