



## Ladybirds Playgroup at Corscombe Village Hall September 2010

Ladybirds Playgroup has been part of the community of Corscombe since 1968 and recently celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Ladybirds staff, in partnership with parents, aim to provide a fun, friendly, caring and educational environment for pre-school children within the framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum where each can have the opportunity to develop fully in every aspect of their development.

This year we are running on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 9.15 to 1.15 in Corscombe Village Hall which, as the former village school, provides excellent facilities, including an enclosed playground, playing field and large, light school-rooms.

The village is in rural Dorset and we are surrounded by fields and trees. We have embarked on Forest School training and have a strong emphasis on learning in a natural environment with regular trips out. We are an active part of the Corscombe community and also make use of valuable learning opportunities visiting local farms and using our local environment.

We accept children from the ages of two to five years and as we undergo Ofsted inspections we are able to claim Nursery Education Grants (NEG) which can be claimed towards the cost of playgroup fees.

Ladybirds is a registered charity organized by a committee made up of parents and friends of playgroup and our Parent and Toddler Group and joined by members of the local community.

Corscombe is in the catchment area for Sticklands School in Evershot and we care for children from a wide area of Dorset. We have good relationships with Sticklands and enjoy regular liaison visits each half term and with Parrett and Axe School in Mosterton as well as with other local playgroups.

## Ladybirds Parent Committee

As a registered charity, Ladybirds have to meet certain criteria. We are required to be run by a management committee consisting of three officers and a proportion of parents and carers. We record minutes of meetings and keep accounts which are audited each year. At the same time we greatly value the input of parents into how Ladybirds is run.

Involvement with the committee provides parents with opportunities to learn both about how the group operates and to hear from staff about the activities and visits which provide play and learning opportunities to help our children develop.

Meetings take place about once per half term and times of meetings can be arranged to suit committee members and to be flexible enough to cater for those with work commitments. The meetings are friendly and informal and may either be in the hall committee room or in someone's home.

The committee and staff work together to organize playgroup and raise funds for additional equipment or special projects. We always welcome new ideas, new committee members and offers of help. If you would like to be involved and support the group your help would be appreciated and you might just find it very rewarding!

### Playgroup Committee

Vicky Harknett (Chair)

Rhiannon Raitt (Secretary)

Laurie Kingston (Treasurer)

Ann Leather

Sam Willis

Lesley Chapman

Feel free to discuss any ideas you have with committee members, we are always keen to have feedback from parents and welcome any ideas to improve our playgroup and to enhance the experience for the children who attend.

**Along with staff all committee members have to be cleared through the Criminal Records Bureau before taking up their post; they also sign a confidentiality agreement.**

### Volunteers

We are also lucky enough to be supported by a rota of volunteer staff who all undergo induction training and we have regular visits from Adele Jakeman of Mini Maestros in Halstock who carries out Music sessions with the children.

## **Ladybirds Staff**

### **Lindsay Veale (Playgroup Supervisor)**

Lindsay has plenty of experience working as a pre – school leader. She joined us in January 2010. She has a Bachelor of Education degree and up to date First Aid certificate. She has also attended the following training courses Curriculum Planning and Assessment (2001). Child Protection Awareness; Knowledge and Understanding of the World; Learning to Listen (2002). Confident Writers; Using the Outdoors; Working with Parents (2003). Top Start training; Teambuilding and Communication; Young Children Talking; Bright Ideas; Learning and Motivating; Music; Portage Support; Birth to Three Matters (2005); Safeguarding Children Update; Introducing the Early Years Foundation Stage; Positive Behaviour Management; Positive Relations (2007). Foundation Stage Implications for Leaders; Outdoor Play Conference; Enco Training (2008) Forest School Assistant (2010)

### **Sarah Girling (Playgroup Deputy Leader)**

Sarah is a former playgroup Mum who has failed to get away! She has completed a diploma in Pre-school practice. (2010) Sarah is also Chair of Governors at Sticklands School with special interest in Early Years Foundation Stage. Forest School Level I 2008 First Aid Certificate (2008) Enriching the Outdoor Environment (2009) SEF Workshop (2009) Forest School Leader (2010) Outdoor First Aid (2010) Safeguarding Children (2010)

### **Marie Childs (Playgroup Assistant)**

Marie lives in the village and has two sons, one of whom used to attend playgroup. She completed Level II Childcare course at Yeovil College (July 2010) and has now embarked on a Level III course and will attend sessions at college as well as training in the setting. She has a Food Hygiene Certificate (2010) First Aid Certificate (2010) Safeguarding Children (2010) Practical Inclusion (2010) Role of Senco (2010)

### **Vicky Reed (Playgroup Administrator)**

**Bank Staff** - We have the following ex-staff members available to act as bank staff.

Kate Bartlett                      Joanne Cox                      as well as Ruth Butler.

### **Key Person System**

We operate a key person system to enable us to help your child settle quickly and thrive within the group. A staff member is assigned to act as your child's special helper, and to build up a close relationship with you and your child from the outset. The key person is also responsible for carrying out assessments of your child's progress and to keep records updated.

## Admissions Policy

Our aim is to make our playgroup accessible and inclusive to children and families from all sections of the community.

This is facilitated by

- Advertising the group locally and on our website.
- Keeping a place vacant to accommodate emergency admissions.
- Welcoming all members including either or both parents, and any other relations or carers and including people from all ethnic, religious and social groups with and without disabilities.
- Our equal opportunities policy is available to read on the information noticeboard
- Being flexible about attendance patterns to fit in with family needs.

We are registered for full day care and are flexible in the sessions we provide. Our hours are under continuous review and we would be happy to include longer sessions if there was sufficient demand from parents.

If you need to talk to the playgroup supervisor or committee chair about any issue concerning your child/ren, please feel free to make an appointment.

As part of our policy of safeguarding all children from abuse we would also ask all parents/carers to inform us at dropping off time if your child has an accidental injury. We will then be able to record it. Please remember that all children suffer bumps and bruises as a part of an active childhood, it is the unexplained injuries that are cause for concern.

## Ladybirds Parent and Toddler Group

Our 'Toddler' Group runs in the smaller hall on Monday mornings from 10.00 until 12.00.

This is an informal group where parents with babies from birth upwards are welcome to drop in and share a cup of coffee and a snack.

The children have an opportunity to meet and socialize and there are plenty of toys and play resources set up by play group staff.

A small charge is made towards the cost of hall hire and providing a drink and snack. We do ask that you register when you first come to the group and sign in on arrival each session.

- **Settling In**

We want children to feel safe and happy when they are left with us at playgroup. We regard parents as partners with us in all that we do, we also want you to feel welcome and involved from the beginning of your child's time with us.

We aim to form a close partnership with parents between playgroup and home. We make it clear from the start that parents will be welcomed and supported by playgroup for as long as it takes to settle their child.

Parents are invited to an induction session with their child during the week before admission is planned,

Separation from the child can then be built up gradually until we are all happier for longer absences. It should be stressed that children cannot be expected to play or learn successfully if they are anxious or unhappy. We aim to help parents and children feel comfortable at playgroup, to ensure that children can benefit from what playgroup has to offer and to reassure them that their parents will be returning at the end of the session.

Similarly if you feel your child will be quite happy to be left on their first day at playgroup, staff will support whatever suits you and your child.

### **Involvement of Parents**

Liaison with parents and carers forms a vital part of playgroup. It informs our planning so that we can give feedback and extend activities and provide stimulating play.

Each child will be given a Home link book which we would encourage you to use as a family to tell us what exciting things you have been up to, which we will help your child to share with the group at circle time. This also provides input for activities we may be able to follow up at playgroup.

There is a section at the back for anything you as parent/ carer, may wish to alert us about or bring to our attention, although we would encourage you as well to have a chat with staff at drop off or collection if you have any concerns, however small.

If your child has a particular interest at home or a special book or something to bring in to show us please don't hesitate to mention it so that we can develop that interest further within playgroup sessions.

Before starting with us, we like to collect information about your child's interests and achievements to date which helps us to plan for their future development. Even when they become "old hands" please let us know if your child has any worries or things they

especially enjoy which we can incorporate into our plans to tailor play sessions to his/ her needs.

## **What do you need to bring to Playgroup?**

- **Snack Time and Packed Lunches**

Dietary allergies and intolerances should be reported when you complete your application and registration forms.

We offer a healthy and nutritious snack each morning and for this we ask that you bring in one piece of fruit, or another healthy alternative such as breadsticks, rice cakes or vegetables.

These are all cut up and shared between the children and supplemented with something like a plain biscuit or cheese and biscuits and a drink of milk, or water.

In very cold weather we may also offer the children hot chocolate. Drinking water is available throughout each session.

In the event that we do have children with dietary allergies we may have to stipulate foods which may not be brought in.

We would ask that you try to follow our healthy eating policy in the provision of packed lunches. Details and advice are available on the information noticeboard. On arrival please put their named lunch box on the tray provided and a member of staff will transport it to the kitchen where it will be stored in the fridge.

- **Clothes to play in.**

**We will be getting messy!**

Please take this into account when you bring your child to playgroup as we would hate to spoil their best clothes. The children also use physical apparatus such as climbing frames so all children should wear trousers or leggings and shoes suitable for safe play.

Please provide your child with a bag of spare clothes to be hung on their peg in case of accidents or over enthusiastic water play!

- **Outdoor Clothes**

We will be outside during every session unless the weather is exceptionally bad. Children need to have some warm clothes and a waterproof coat and wellies if at all wet or cold.

We have a few spare waterproof trousers and boots if necessary.

For trips out to the woods the children need long trousers and long sleeved tops even in summer to protect them from scratches and prickles. They will also need a back pack to carry their own drink bottle and snack.

- **Sun hats and sun cream**

When we get any summer weather we will need to protect the children from the sun, please apply sun cream before they leave home and please send in some name-labelled sun cream and a hat.

We will be keeping some Boots Children's sun cream at playgroup and there is a separate section on the consent form if you are prepared for us to top up their sun protection with this cream.

## **Funding and Fees**

All children are eligible for government funding for each three hour session from the term after their third birthday. At the present time our fees are as follows as at 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010:

Hourly rate £3.50 for non-funded and children requiring over 15 hours/week

Non-state funded children attending £10.50 per session (9.15am to 12.15 pm)

Lunch club runs from 12.15 pm to 12.45 or 1:15 pm according to parental wishes

Fees are reviewed annually.

## **Arrival and departures**

Our sessions start at 9.15. If you are early please wait until a member of staff has finished setting up equipment and is free to welcome you.

Children will have a peg with their name on to hang up their coat, and any other belongings which they have brought.

At home time, please be prompt, but if a delay is inevitable it would be helpful if you could ring and let us know. The hall is kept locked during playgroup sessions and you will be let in by a member of staff who will supervise collection of the children.

You will have been asked to list three alternative contacts who are able to pick up your child if you are unable to be there. If anyone else who is not on your list is to collect the child we will need notice in writing at the time the child is dropped off, and this person may need to show some identification.

We cannot otherwise release the child to anyone else- as you can imagine the safety of your child is of the utmost importance to us.

If your child is unwell and unable to attend a session please let us know by phone or text on the Ladybirds phone (07845 118177). Please leave a message if we are unable to answer.

If you fail to collect your child at the end of a session and have not contacted us we will follow our policy on **late collection of children (available to read on the information noticeboard)**.

## What we will be doing?

Under the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, which governs what we do, we plan and resource children's learning carefully, tailoring activities to individual children whilst still allowing scope for them to initiate their own play.

Put more simply, we provide them with as rich and stimulating environment as we can and leave them to do their own thing with guidance but not a lot of interference from the staff.

We have to be flexible but do have a basic routine for our sessions.

9.15	Arrive and self-register on the ladybird board.
9.30	Circle time
10.30	Hand wash and snack time
11.00	Outdoor play
12.00	Story time
12.15	Home time for those children not staying for lunch.
1.15	The end of session for lunch club children (or you may collect your child at 12.45 if you prefer)

During the course of the sessions, children will undergo brief observations on an informal basis and on occasions for 10 or 15 minutes at a time. This enables us to learn more about their interests so that we can plan play experiences that they will enjoy and learn from. It also helps us to record their progress; these observations are shared with parents through regular parent meetings, but are otherwise confidential.

## Forest School Sessions.

On Tuesday Mornings we enjoy our Forest School Sessions where the children learn through play in the six areas of the curriculum in a natural environment. Here they are free to investigate, explore, experience and discover in a wild but safe environment. Staff ratios are higher and great care is taken to ensure that while the children might perceive that they have more freedom to explore they are nonetheless closely supervised.

Children are transported to the site by staff and volunteers who are suitably checked and insured. We leave the hall at approximately 9.25 and return in time for lunch club. Our sessions follow a regular routine and the children practice safety and emergency procedures similar to those carried out for hall sessions.

For more details on our Forest School an explanatory leaflet is displayed on the information board. .

## Feedback

We welcome feedback from you as parents to help us ensure that your child's experience at Ladybirds is the best we can make it. We have a suggestions book in the entrance lobby please make use of it. We also send home regular questionnaires which help us to understand your child's experience of Ladybirds and to make continuous improvements.

Whilst we have a formal complaints procedure (see policies and procedures book in entrance lobby) - we also welcome your comments on an informal basis.

You can arrange to meet Lindsay to talk through any queries in private or, if more appropriate, Vicky Harknett, as chair of the playgroup committee will similarly be happy to listen to any concerns you may have.

Please also take the opportunity to familiarize yourself with the Policies and Procedures of Ladybirds which are on display in the entrance lobby during playgroup sessions together with the Operational Plan.

Our latest Ofsted Inspection Report will be available to read in the entrance lobby. You can ask for a copy or access it via the Ofsted Website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## Contact details

If you would like a chat to find out more about our playgroup or toddler group please ring one of the numbers below and make an appointment to come and visit us.

Lindsay Veale (Playgroup supervisor)  
Sarah Girling

01460 73005 / 07845 118177  
01935 891 481 / 07778 285545

We also have a website [www.ladybirds.org.uk](http://www.ladybirds.org.uk) which you are encouraged to check out and we are glad to add anything to if you wish.

## How to Find us.....

Corscombe is approximately 3 miles from Beaminster on the way to Yeovil off the A 356 Crewkerne to Dorchester road.

We are at Corscombe Village Hall which is the building which looks like an old school on the left as you drop into the village of Corscombe. The turning you need is the second turning and is signposted to Corscombe AND Halstock. The village hall post code is DT2 0NU.

If you reach the bottom of the hill you will see the Fox pub on your right and you have gone too far.