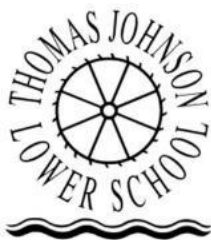


Welcome to



Thomas Johnson Lower School Preschool



Thomas Johnson Lower School
Hurst Grove,
Lidlington
Beds
MK43 0SB
Tel 01525 402377

Email: office@thomasjohnsonschool.co.uk

Website: www.thomasjohnsonschool.co.uk

Our Staff

Miss Turner	Early Years Teacher (Preschool and Reception)
Miss Greenwood	Teaching Assistant
Miss Morgan	Teaching Assistant
Miss Benson	Teaching Assistant

Our Vision

We believe that every child should have the best possible start to their education and are committed to promoting and maintaining high standards. Children are able to join our Preschool at the beginning of the term following their third birthday. Our intake includes children from outside our catchment area, subject to places being available.

We pride ourselves on being an inclusive Values school, and we welcome all children, whatever their needs. If a child has specific needs we work closely with outside agencies and parents to agree a plan to ensure every child makes the best possible progress. Working closely with parents is the key to our high achievements, and to securing the emotional well-being and happiness of our children.

The Preschool Day

Every Preschool-age child is entitled to 15 hours funded childcare (which is equivalent to 5 free "sessions" a week). These "sessions" can be taken in different combinations:

- 5 mornings a week or
- 5 afternoons a week or
- 2.5 whole days a week or
- a mix of afternoon/ morning sessions.

Parents are also able to buy *additional* sessions at £3.75 per hour.

These additional sessions are subject to availability, but we always try to accommodate your needs.

*Sessions can become fully booked quite quickly so we advise that you book your sessions as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

Our sessions comprise:

- Morning Session 9am-12pm
- Afternoon Session 12pm-3.15pm (includes the lunch hour so please provide either a packed lunch for your child, or purchase school lunches at £2.20)

If your child is staying for the whole day, they can pre-order hot school lunches for an additional £2.20.

Occasionally, parents may wish to extend their morning session to include lunch (from 9am - 1pm), at an additional £3.75 for the hour, and optionally £2.20 if ordering a hot lunch.

30 hours free funding

Some parents are eligible for 30 hours free funding. This is linked to working income. As a school we offer 15 hours free childcare within school, and the additional 15 hours as afterschool care through our Dawn until Dusk provider. Please ask our Office Manager for more details.

Payment terms and conditions

- First month's fees to be paid in advance. After that all fees must be paid in advance by the 25th of each month.
- Any payments not made by this date will incur a fee of £20 and will be considered for reducing to 15 hours.
- Fees to be paid either by cheque or online banking - no cash please.
- Parents/carers must notify the Office Manager every time they make a payment either in person, by phone or email.
- Advance notice of any holiday needs to be given in writing, either emailed or letter.
- Time off for any holiday/illness will still need to be paid for.
- No refunds will be given if the school has to shut for any reason - emergencies etc.
- Fees may go up from time to time, but advance notice will be given.
- We understand that sometimes unforeseen circumstances may result in you being unable to pay Preschool fees on time. Please speak to our Office Manager who will be happy to work with you to find a solution to suit both parties.

Settling in

We know that starting Preschool is a big step in your child's life and we would like it to be an exciting experience. It may be the first time he or she has been without you for any length of time. Working together as a partnership, we aim to make the transition from home to Preschool a happy one.

The first step of this partnership is a home visit for every family, which will take place during the summer term. We believe that this enables parents and children to meet members of the Preschool staff in the place where they feel most at ease, at home. Two members of staff from Thomas Johnson Lower, one being the class teacher, will carry out the visits. These will take place on an allocated day as the school still has to maintain child/staff ratios when members of staff are off the premises. You will receive a letter with more information regarding home visits including the set date and allocated time.

We run a parent and carer information session in early September "Welcome to Thomas Johnson" which holds a wealth of information including how we support healthy lifestyles and manage tricky behaviours. We expect all parents/carers to attend this session including those whose children are due to start in the spring and summer terms. We offer an afternoon and an evening session to accommodate all parents and carers. You will also be given the opportunity to have a tour of our lovely school.

Lastly, you will be invited to attend a one hour stay and play session (1:30 - 2:30) with your child before they start Preschool. During this session, you and your child will be able to visit the classroom and the outside learning area to allow your child to explore and become familiar with their new surroundings. This is a great opportunity for the children to meet the class teacher again and additional staff who work in our Preschool.

What your child will need

We embrace the learning opportunities that outside play can bring as well as inside, therefore please ensure your child has suitable clothing and footwear for the weather. It is helpful if they have elasticated waistbands that give freedom of movement and which also helps the children to be more independent when going to the toilet.

You will need to provide your child with the following:

- A named bag
- A named water bottle - water only please
- Spare set(s) of clothes (all named)
- Hot weather - sun cream and sun hat (all named)
- Cold weather - hat, gloves, scarf, warm coat (all named)
- Appropriate footwear - no open toed sandals/flip flops.

Snacks and lunches

Children are offered a drink (milk or water) and a snack during our morning session. This consists of different fruit and vegetables and changes daily. When you register your child you will be asked to advise us of any allergies your child has.

All children are able to access their water bottles throughout the day. We ask the children at key points in the day if they would like a drink and we do our best to keep track of water intake. During the warm weather we regularly sit down to have a drink and encourage the children to drink at least a bottle a day.

The children go to lunch at midday in the main hall with the rest of the children from the school. They will be allocated a named table. This will be the table which they sit at every time they stay for lunch. Each table has a mix of children from all year groups. This is a great opportunity for the children to interact with the older children in the school.

We follow the "Food in Schools in England" guidelines (DfE, March 2019). Therefore, chocolates and chocolate covered foods, sweets, crisps, cakes and nuts are not allowed in lunch boxes. These items will be sent back home with your child.

If you would like your child to have a hot lunch, please send money in a labelled envelope or pay at the school office. You will be given a menu to see what is on offer for lunch each day. Occasionally, we have themed lunches which you will be given details of in advance.

Behaviour

We are a Values-based Education School and are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional well-being. We encourage children to live the values we celebrate at school such as kindness, friendship and peace. We help them to understand their behaviour and name their feelings. We celebrate good behaviour using our school's reward system, and we redirect poor behaviour so that children feel confident in knowing and making the right choices. Children often start to show different and sometimes challenging behaviours at this age, and we are happy to listen and lend advice on a range of strategies to help you. If you would like some advice or support with your child's behaviour, please speak to a member of staff as most behaviours are completely normal and we are more than happy to help.

Toileting

As a Preschool setting, we are aware that children develop at different rates, including their ability to toilet themselves and hand wash independently. Whilst our expectation is that all children starting our Preschool are able to take care of their own toileting and self-care needs, we recognise that in the case of a child having additional needs, extra support and assistance will often be required. We know that occasional accidents can happen and we will support your child at these times.

If you feel your child isn't quite ready, please speak to us. We are happy to keep sessions open until they are able to join us.

Parents as Partners

You are your child's first educators, therefore we highly value your input in your child's development and progression. You are welcome to view your child's learning journey at any point and are invited to contribute to it through home observations.

The school has an active PTFA (Parent, Teachers and Friends Association) who are always looking for new members to join their fundraising efforts. As part of the school community we really value their support and generosity.

Communication with parents - handover & feedback

We know that starting Preschool can be an anxious time for you and your child. During the first term we aim to give you a brief update of how your child has been during their session as we handover. At the end of all sessions (12pm, 1pm and 3:15pm) your child will need to be collected from the Preschool door. Newest Preschool children will be handed over first, with a brief update. In the second term, when you feel more familiar with our routines, you can continue to contact us by email (office@thomasjohnsonschool.co.uk) or phone (01525 402377) to pass on a message, ask a question or book a time to speak with the class teacher.

Keeping your child safe

In line with our school's safeguarding policy we will only release your child into your care unless you have informed us of other arrangements. To ensure the safety of your child, we please ask that you collect from the Preschool door as we are unable to send children out to parents/carers who are stood by the school gates at the top of the hill.

First Aid procedures

All staff in the Preschool are First Aid trained. Should your child need first aid treatment a note will be sent home in your child's bag and it will be recorded in our First Aid book. The note will state the nature of the incident and treatment that was received. If your child receives a serious injury, including a head injury, you will be called by a member of staff. Depending on the severity, we may ask you to come and collect your child.

If your child suffers with asthma they must bring an inhaler to every session which they attend or keep one permanently in the school office. You will be asked to provide an asthma care plan, which your doctor will give you. If your child should need their inhaler whilst at Preschool, this will be recorded in our Medication book.

If your child is unwell

Please keep your child at home if they have a high temperature, sickness and/or diarrhoea (for 48 hours after their last bout). This is to avoid an illness spreading to other children, and to give your child a chance to rest and recover. We appreciate a telephone call or message if your child is not attending Preschool through illness or for any other reason. You do not need to keep your child at home for minor common illnesses such as coughs and colds - we have tissues for runny noses and lots of activities to keep your child busy!

Unfortunately, we can only administer medicines in school which have been prescribed by a doctor. If your child is prescribed medication which is to be administered at Preschool you will need to let the school office know and fill in a medicines form. This will need to be completed and signed before any medication can be given by Preschool staff.

School term dates

Preschool opens in-line with our school dates. For further information on these, including staff training Inset days, please speak to Ms Barron in the office. Our school calendar is on our website (www.thomasjohnsonschool.co.uk) under the Parents tab.

Please be aware that the Preschool will close for one day in the summer term when the rest of the school go on their school trip. You will be notified of this well in advance.

Wet weather

During bad weather (am only) please enter the school via the main playground and take your child to the school hall. The class teacher will come and collect the children at 9am.

If your child comes to school in wellies, please provide a change of shoes in their bag to wear inside. We do have lots of pairs of wellies at Preschool which the children can wear when playing outside during wet weather.

Dawn 'til Dusk Before and After School Club

We are able to provide wrap-around provision opportunities to support busy families. Our before and after school care club, run by Dawn 'til Dusk, is on-site. This is available from 7.30am until Preschool begins at 9am, then after Preschool until 6pm. Dawn 'til Dusk are independent providers and you will need to complete a separate registration form with them if you would like your child to stay for either one-off sessions or a regular slot. Please ask Ms Barron in the office for further details.

Development and Learning

We follow Government Guidelines on the Early Years Foundations stage curriculum. This comprises the following areas of learning: Communication and Language; Physical Development; Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

Our focus is on the children learning through play with access to a range of child led and adult led activities. As your child nears school age we will encourage the early reading and writing skills and help prepare them for a school day.

As a small village school, children in Preschool are as much a part of our family as those in the main school. Your child will play alongside our Reception children and will benefit from the nurturing ethos that runs through our Early Years Unit. Preschool children enjoy their own phonics and maths sessions (am), and come together with Reception for topic learning (pm). Our highly skilled teaching staff ensure learning is individually tailored to the needs of each child in their care.

Children take part in P.E sessions on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. If your child will be attending any of these sessions please ensure they wear appropriate clothing/footwear.

Finally, we wish you and your child a very warm welcome to Thomas Johnson Lower School. We look forward to seeing you soon.

