

Welcome to



Aclet Close Nursery School

September 2026



Aclet Close Nursery School

Aclet Close

Bishop Auckland

County Durham

DL14 6PX

Telephone: 01388 603006

Email: acletclose@durhamlearning.net

Website: <http://www.acletclose.durham.sch.uk/>

Local Education Authority

County Hall

Durham

Telephone: 0191 3033000

Staff

Head Teacher & SENDCo	Mrs Suzanne Staines
Deputy-Head Teacher	Miss Sian Maddocks
Higher Level Teaching Assistant	Mrs Lianne Metcalfe
Enhanced Teaching Assistant	Miss Perri Newton
Enhanced Teaching Assistant	Miss Sarah Shepherd
Enhanced Teaching Assistant	Mrs Nicky Steggles
Enhanced Teaching Assistant	Miss Hollie Harrison
Enhanced Teaching Assistant	Miss Charlene James
Early Years Educator Apprentice	Miss Ruby Stott
Early Years Educator Apprentice	Miss Mia Jardine
Early Years Educator Apprentice	Miss Grace Mangles
Admin Officer	Miss Amy Lambton
Caretaker	Mrs Susan Barraclough
Casual Staff: Mrs Denise Hughes and Mrs Paula Barion	

We also work with local colleges and universities to provide training placements for Teaching Assistant students and Teacher Trainees.

Governing Body

Chair of Governors Chair of Curriculum, Standards and Every Child Matters Committee	Dr J Redman
Parent Governor Curriculum, Standards and Every Child Matters Staff and Children's well-being School website	Mrs R Garfield
Parent Governor SEN and Interventions	Mrs S Hughes
Co-opted Governor Chair of Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee Governor Training	Vacant Position
Co-opted Governor Vice Chair of Governors Safeguarding and Children in Care Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee	Mr T Cuthbertson
Co-opted Governor Vice Chair of Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee Early Years Pupil Premium	Mrs C Evans
Co-opted Governor Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee Health and Safety	Mrs M Charlton
Co-opted Governor Curriculum, Standards and Every Child Matters Curriculum, outdoors Progress and interventions	Miss G Hendry
Head Teacher	Mrs Suzanne Staines
Deputy-Head Teacher	Miss Sian Maddocks

The Governing Body work closely with the Co-Head Teachers on the strategic direction of the school. The Full Governing Body meet once termly, as do the two committees.

Nursery Opening Times

Breakfast Club (£2.50 per day)	8am - 8.30am
Morning Session	8.30am - 11.30am
Squirrels Lunch Club (£5 per day)	11.30am - 12.30pm
Afternoon Session	12.30pm - 3.30pm

We open our doors 5 minutes before the end of each session and ask our Parents/Carers to adhere to these timings in order for children to receive their full entitlement and to avoid unsettling the other children. If you need to collect early, please let us know and we will have your child ready for you.

Breakfast Club

Children are supervised by our own staff from 8am - 8.30am. (£2.50 per session) They can choose from cereals, fruit and yogurt and milk or water to drink. There is no need to book in advance, just turn up!

Breakfast club is available in the Baby Room and needs to be booked in advance.

Lunch Club

Our lunch club is from 11.30am - 12.30pm. We have a packed lunch policy and Parents/Carers provide a healthy packed lunch, with ice packs, if possible. We are happy to provide fresh drinking water so it is not necessary to provide a drink. We have limited space and therefore places must be booked in advance. Please note that we are an **Allergy Aware School**.

Extra sessions/Private sessions

Subject to availability, we are able to offer extra sessions that Parents/Carers pay for. Our fees for 2 year olds are £18 per session and £15 per session for 3 and 4 year olds.

Notices

Most information is shared with Parents/Carers via our online learning platform, Class Dojo and our Nursery newsletters. We also have a Facebook page and website as well as a texting service. Please keep us informed of any telephone number changes.

Snack

The children have choice of at least 2 snacks during every session, usually fruit and vegetables. We ask parents/carers for a donation of £1 a week (£2 per week for children attending over 15 hours) to cover the costs. If we have any monies left over, this is banked in our school fund which is all spent on the children. We share information about this on our newsletters.

Consumable resources

The majority of our School budget is spent on staffing and this does not leave us with much for 'extras', for example cooking and playdough ingredients. We ask for a weekly contribution from Parents/Carers (please see 'Snack' above).

Birthdays

We like to celebrate the children's birthdays and if you wish, you are welcome to bring in a 'shop bought' birthday cake that is '**Free From**' that does not contain nuts, gluten or dairy. Please note that we do not have staffing capacity to help you organise birthday parties.

Aims, Ethos and Vision

Our aim is to provide a happy, secure learning environment for all children.

We believe that young children bring with them a deep curiosity and that they learn best when they are interested and motivated. We aim to foster a love of learning by supporting children's interests through lots of first hand experiences that enable them to learn about the world, their community, themselves and each other. We consider ourselves to be life-long learners and strive to keep up to date with good Early Years' practice based on the latest research.

Our team work together to create a safe, stimulating environment for all of our children, providing opportunities for them to express themselves and to grow and develop into socially confident learners and resilient, adaptive, creative and emotionally intelligent members of our school, community and society.

We offer a rich environment full of opportunities and experiences that stimulate and extend children's learning through playing, exploring, being active, solving problems, working together, creating and being asked questions to help their thinking. The indoor environment has a homely feel – it is calm and purposeful whilst outdoor play provides different opportunities to assess risk and try new things out.

It is our job to facilitate the children's learning by planning activities based on their interests to provide challenge and to support and extend their learning. Our staff are experienced and knowledgeable about child development and play. We know that the quality of interactions in play scenarios is more important than quantity and that when adults let children take the lead, play becomes more elaborate, creative and sustained.

To begin with, we encourage and support children to move forward with their Communication and language, Physical development and Personal, social and emotional development. Without these prime skills they cannot progress onto the specific areas that include Mathematics and Literacy.

Enrichment activities provide a different dimension to the children's usual experiences and often involve the Nursery team working with partners in the community to enhance our core offer. We believe that many of these creative and imaginative activities not only develop the children's life skills but more importantly that their well-being and emotional balance is nurtured.

Lastly, but most importantly, we support the belief that successful relationships between parents and educators can have long lasting and beneficial effects on children's learning and well-being. We actively encourage parents, carers and families to get involved with Nursery life and to take advantage of the facilities and opportunities in the local community.

Starting Nursery

It is a big step for most young children to leave familiar adults and surroundings. We aim to provide a calm but stimulating environment in which your child can make huge progress in their development. We hope that their first experience of school will create a positive attitude to later school life, and that it will be a happy experience.

Learning takes place when a child feels secure and relaxed. This usually happens after a brief settling in/transition period. We use a system that works for most children; however, some children need more time, which is fine.

We ask for the children to be collected promptly at the end of their session as this helps the children with emotional stability and also helps us to keep to our Nursery routines.

Key groups

All children are allocated a 'key worker'. The children are generally in a small group of children according to their attendance pattern. The adult and children meet at least twice during each session (once when the children are settled and again at the end of the session). Your child's key worker is the best person to speak to about their development and progress and will offer you a 'consultation' to discuss this further on a termly basis.

Only people named on our collection list (over the age of 16 years) are able to collect children from Nursery. Please let us know if you wish to add another adult.

At Nursery your child will be encouraged to be independent, to put on their own coat and shoes, wash and dry hands, tidy up after themselves and complete small tasks. You can help them by encouraging them to do these tasks at home and to dress them in clothing that they can manage.

The key to independence is to let the children try and do it themselves. At this age, most children will persevere and make at least a good attempt with most things!

Suitable clothing

For children in our main Nursery and 2's room, our uniform is optional. Jumpers, polo shirts and cardigans with our school logo on are available from Cre8tive Graphics in Peel Street, Bishop Auckland. Our colours are red or navy blue. You can match these with trousers, leggings, joggers, skirts or dresses — whatever your child will be able to manage independently. **Please ensure that all of your child's belongings are named, especially coats, gloves and scarves.**

For children in our Baby Room, please dress your child in comfortable, practical clothing that will allow them to move easily. We will encourage our babies to be bare foot whilst in the Baby Room and staff will also follow an indoor/outdoor shoe routine.

If ears are pierced, small studs may be worn and a jewellery indemnity must be signed. Other jewellery should not be worn, for safety reasons.

During the warmer weather, children are provided with a Nursery sun hat and should have sun screen applied before they come to Nursery. We are able to apply a child's own sun screen to children who are staying all day. Please ensure it is clearly named and handed in to the office.

Nappies

If your child is in nappies, please provide nappies, wipes and nappy sacks in a named bag as well as a full change of clothing in a bag that can be kept in Nursery.

Your child's health in Nursery

Infectious diseases spread quickly amongst young children. We have high standards of hygiene and follow the Public Health Agency Guidance on Infection Control; we will advise you of how much time children need off Nursery when they are ill. If your child has sickness/diarrhoea, they must stay at home until they are 48 hours clear.

We ask that children are not dropped off at Nursery when asleep, as we are unable to tell if they are unwell. Please let us know if your child has had a recent injury or has been unwell and refrain from bringing children that have had medication administered without speaking to us first.

Child Protection

All staff have completed safeguarding training. If we have any concerns, we will follow the latest child protection procedures. We aim to have good working relationships with parents and carers and to work with transparency. However, children's needs and welfare are our paramount concern and it is not always appropriate to obtain consent from Parents/Carers to take matters further. Mrs Staines is our Safeguarding Lead Professional and Miss Maddocks is our Deputy Safeguarding Professional.

Mobile Phone Policy

There is a concern that mobile phones with cameras enable anyone to take photographs or video footage without the knowledge of those being protected. Occasionally, we have children that are in the care system and leaked photographs of their whereabouts could place them in serious danger. **We ask that all Parents, Carers and visitors refrain from using mobile phones whilst on Nursery property and thank you in advance for your support with keeping all of our children safe.**

Security

The safety of your children is paramount. Staff are vigilant regarding visitors to the Nursery and all contractors are required to report to the office. The main entrance door is locked outside of the main drop off and collection times. We have an intercom to speak to visitors and access is controlled by Nursery staff.

No Smoking

In the interest of children's health and safety, we ask that you do not smoke or vape anywhere on school premises.

Special Educational Needs

Aclet Close Nursery School welcomes all children as individuals. Children reach different stages of development at different times and sometimes there can be delays, for example, with speech and language, social or emotional development or medical conditions that inhibit their development.

Early identification of special needs is important to ensure that the child receives an appropriate education and we work with other agencies to ensure this, for example, health services, social services and the Educational Psychologist service.

We believe in the inclusion of all children and consider this important for encouraging and promoting tolerance and acceptance and recognition that we are all different and need to get along together. We adhere to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice which positively endorses inclusive education for all children in mainstream schools.

A child has Special Educational Needs if they have a learning difficulty that calls for Special Educational provision to be made for them. A child has a learning difficulty if he or she:

- a) Has a significant greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age;
- b) Has a disability that either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the Local Education Authority.

If you think your child may fall into the above, please speak to Mrs Staines, our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. We also have a Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs policy on our school website.

Nursery Curriculum

We aim to provide a curriculum that develops the whole child. Young children learn through first hand experiences, for example, doing, touching and seeing for themselves, through play. We plan activities that will support development and progress across all areas of learning.

We have an equality policy statement and objectives that all staff adhere to.

The Early Years Foundation Stage runs from birth up to the end of Reception Class in Primary School. The statutory document, 'The Early Years Foundation Stage' guidance forms the basis for education from birth to five years. It sets out the correct ratios and welfare requirements to keep children safe.

The Early Years Foundation Stage identifies characteristics of effective learning:

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 and what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically - thinking

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

There are 3 Prime areas of learning:

1. Communication and Language

This encompasses Listening and attention, Understanding and Speaking. Language development is very important as it is the basis for all learning. Extending their vocabulary provides children with a tool to express themselves, it is also important that they learn to listen.

2. Physical Development

This includes Moving and handling as well as Health and self-care. Large equipment and toys are used outside to encourage the physical development of young children. They have freedom and space to run, climb, skip, jump and balance on equipment. This helps to develop self-confidence and self-awareness. Small equipment including hoops, bats, balls and bean bags encourage co-ordination and skill acquisition. Fine manipulative skills are developed with construction toys, jigsaws, threading and use of one handed tools, for example, scissors. Children need to be able to manipulate and control small items to enable them to use a pencil and therefore make shapes and later on, letters and numbers.

3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This area of learning includes Making relationships, Developing self-confidence and self-awareness and Managing feelings and behaviours. This is an important area of learning, particularly in a child's first term and influences how a child learns. Children need to feel confident when making choices and concentrating on their task. This area of learning is also about how your child interacts with other children and adults, learning to share and playing co-operatively in small groups and occasionally in bigger groups. They need to be able to control their emotions and to develop respect and consideration for other people's needs. It is also about a child's ability to look after themselves, for example, going to the toilet, putting on their coat etc.

Then there are 4 Specific areas of learning:

1. Literacy

This includes Reading and Writing. Books are available throughout the Nursery and in every key worker group area. We support children with developing prereading skills using Letters and Sounds activities.

Pre-writing skills are encouraged in many areas of the Nursery. Children make marks with crayons, paint, pencils and other tools in sand, soil, dough and clay. Children need lots of access to these experiences before they are able to control a pencil well enough to 'write' a letter or number.

If you are showing children 'writing', please make sure to use letter sounds, not names.

2. Mathematics

This area of learning includes Numbers, Shape, Space and Measures. We provide opportunities for mathematical experiences throughout our Nursery, indoors and outdoors. We encourage the children to touch objects with their finger as they are counting them. They need lots of first hand experiences and handling of equipment to grasp mathematical concepts and of using mathematical language.

3. Understanding the World

This area of learning includes People and communities, The World and Technology. Children have opportunities to experiment and investigate the natural environment and objects of interest, for example, magnets, mirrors, colours and natural objects. We have a 'curiosity cube' which is a great way of getting children to talk about what they can see.

The children have the opportunity to bake and help to prepare snack. This is mainly fruit and vegetables; sometimes we have sandwiches, toast, crackers or what the children have baked.

The children here are very much 'outdoors children' and we very much encourage this. They have access to a computer, smartboard and 2 I pads. We offer an introduction to Information Technology through the use of microphones, controllable toys and real 'resources including the photocopier and microwave.

We like to get out and about in our local area as much as we can. The children love to visit the library, swimming baths, the sensory room at the children's centre, local churches and Auckland Castle... we have also taken part in Art projects at King James Academy and sang carols at Butterwick Hospice.

4. Expressive Arts and Design

This area of learning encourages children to explore different media and materials and to use their imagination. We offer experiences to paint, write, draw and make models. Crayons, pencils, paint, glue, paper, scissors and junk boxes are available every day; the children can create something that is unique to them! The process is really important and sometimes we don't see a recognisable finished product. We ask the children the children about their model and they can explain.

Music and drama involves listening to different sounds, making sounds, singing rhymes and songs. Most children enjoy role play and using puppets to act out stories.

Outside Play

Outside play provides exciting opportunities! We are very passionate about the great outdoors and believe that children learn best from first hand experiences, especially with nature. We actively encourage the children to spend long periods of time outside - please make sure they have a warm coat (with their name inside) and suitable footwear.

Our grounds are quite deceiving from the front of the Nursery. We have a long play area that includes a sunken sand pit, mud kitchen, swing, a climbing frame and fort as well as open ended materials that encourage groups of children to play together, think creatively and use their imagination.

We have a woodland area. The children can dig and grow, climb on the logs and play amongst the trees and bushes. In the Autumn we pick the apples and blackberries and make crumble. There's also a bug hotel where children can learn more about insects and creatures.

Lastly, we have our 'Sensory Garden'. This is another great space for the children to explore, investigate and be curious.

Outdoor play provides so many benefits. We see great levels of involvement and motivation when learning new skills and concepts. Being physically active is easier when the children have more space and freedom. We support national initiatives that ask us to keep children busy and therefore reducing childhood obesity and asthma.

What does the Early Years Foundation Stage say about outdoor learning?

- Children must have opportunities to play indoors and outdoors. All Early Years providers must have access to an outdoor play area which can benefit the children.
- Providing well-planned experiences based on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and outdoors, is an important way in which practitioners support young children to learn with enjoyment and challenge.
- Wherever possible, there should be access to an outdoor play area, and this is the expected norm for providers.

Swimming Sessions at Aclet Close Nursery School

Reasons why your child should learn to swim are many and varied. The most important reason is that swimming is the only sport which can save your child's life.

Drowning is still one of the most common causes of accidental death in children, so being able to swim is an essential life-saving skill. Swimming is lots of fun for people of all ages and children especially love getting in the water and enjoying themselves.

But it is not just fun, swimming also provides loads of health benefits which can help to keep your children healthy and happy at the same time:

- Swimming keeps your child's heart and lungs healthy, improves strength and flexibility, increases stamina and even improves balance and posture.
- Another great thing about swimming is that children of any age or ability can take part and it is more accessible for children with additional needs than almost any other sport.
- Swimming provides challenges and rewards accomplishments, which helps children to become self-confident and believe in their abilities.
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Your child will have plenty of opportunities to make friends and grow in confidence.

But health, fun, and confidence are not the only reasons why your child should learn to swim. Learning to swim can also open the door to a range of other water based activities. It is a skill that once learnt is rarely forgotten and it is open to people of all ages.

3- and 4-year-old children attending Aclet Close Nursery School have access to a block of swimming lessons which take place at Woodhouse Close Leisure Centre. The children walk from Nursery and are taught by a qualified swimming instructor.

School staff support the children in the water and Parents/Carers pick up their children at the end of the session and are also welcome to spectate from the viewing area. Some parents support us by walking with children and staff. Do let us know if you would like to help.

The cost of the sessions is advised prior to starting the block of lessons. If your child is entitled to Early Years Pupil Premium or Disability Living Allowance, we are able to access additional funding to subsidise swimming sessions.

Your child will need a swimming costume or shorts, towel and bag to put them in. In addition, children in nappies will need a swimming nappy. To promote independence when undressing and dressing, it is advised that the children wear sports clothes or those that they can easily remove / put on themselves. Please note that we aren't able to provide swimming nappies.

Please ask for more information at the school office.

Ongoing assessment/children's records

Ongoing assessments are completed throughout your child's time in Nursery. Staff observe the children whilst they play and document developmental milestones across all the areas of learning. We don't test the children, but this information helps us to plan opportunities that will further support and extend the children's learning and progress.

We share information with you about your child's development using our online platform, Learning Journals. You will be given password to access this. We will invite you to discuss your child's achievements on a regular basis and share information about what we can work on together. Our website also has some information that families may find useful.

Class Dojo

This is another online learning platform where we can share information and the children's information with Parents and Carers. We love Parents and families to share information and special events - you are very welcome to keep in touch through Class Dojo or by email at acletclose@durhamlearning.net

When your child leaves us to start Reception class, we are able to print the photos and observations of your child and gift them to you.

Concerns about your child's development

Please don't hesitate to speak to us if you have any concerns about your child's progress. Between us we have a lot of years of experience and work with many other professionals; we are very happy to support you or signpost you in the right direction.

School Fund

We ask our families to contribute £1/£2 per week using ParentPay. We use the money to buy daily snacks and subsidise most trips/visits/visitors. Any monies left over are spent on resources for the children. These include baking and playdough ingredients, birthday gifts, Christmas gifts and other 'extras' as we see them.

Complaints procedure

If you have any worries or concerns, please come and see us straight away.

Liaison with other schools

The children generally leave us when they are starting Reception Class in Primary School. We have very good working relationships with all of the Bishop Auckland Schools and some schools in the surrounding areas too.

We invite the teachers to come and see the children as they play and talk about their development and progress. We pass on records before the children break up for the Summer so that the new school can be fully prepared.

Managing behaviour

The children's behaviour in school is excellent. There are so many activities and learning opportunities available that the children are busy and involved for the majority of the time. Adults in the Nursery model calm and appropriate behaviour and gently remind children, if needed. On rare occasions we may ask a child to have some thinking time away from the other children. If children are struggling with their behaviour, we will work closely with you.

Toys and sweets

We acknowledge that when children first start with us they may need a comforter. Once they are settled, we ask that toys and other items are left at home so that they don't get lost or broken. Nursery are unable to take any responsibility for things being lost or damaged. Can we also ask that children don't bring sweets to Nursery.

Medicines

If your child is prescribed medicine 4 times a day, we are able to administer on your behalf. Medication must be in original packaging with the printed pharmacy label with the child's name on. Please bring the medicine to the office and we will support you with completion of the paperwork.

Accidents/First Aid

If your child has an accident at Nursery, this will be dealt with in a hygienic and sensible way. All of our key workers are paediatric first aid trained. We will inform you of what has happened and ask you to sign our paperwork. In the case of head bumps, we inform you and either ask you to collect your child or we will continue to monitor them closely for any deterioration. In the office, we have useful information from the NHS regarding signs to watch out for.

School holidays and training days

Our school holidays and training days can be accessed from our School website. Please ask at the Office if you would like a paper copy.