Welcome to Sparkles. We are sure your child will have a happy time with us here. We have created a warm and friendly environment where children can learn through dynamic play activities.

The staff are committed to making your child feel safe and valued as part of our community.

Sparkles Mission Statement

At Sparkles Pre-School we aim to create a safe and caring environment where each child reaches their full learning potential through dynamic and well planned activities, which take account of individual needs and interests. We recognise parents/guardians as the child’s primary carer and educator and in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage treat them as partners in Sparkles care and education of their child. Sparkles staff will treat every child as a unique individual and a valued member of our community.

January 2012
Outstanding!

We have an outstanding Ofsted Report. Very few Pre-Schools achieve such high status, so we are particularly proud of our achievement. Here are a few of their comments:

“The motivated and ambitious leadership has a clear vision for the pre-school and has successfully created an inclusive, friendly and professional environment.”

“The pre-school places the promotion of equality at the heart of all they do.”

“Parents find the staff approachable, caring and professional...”

“The knowledgeable and skillful staff...are highly effective in supporting children to make very good progress.”

“High quality and warm adult interaction.....with good insight into children’s individual needs, caring relationships and consistent routines ensure the children feel safe and secure.”

“Children are very imaginative and work extremely well independently making choices in play, using the exceptional range of play props.

To see the full report here’s the link:
http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/full/%28urn%29/EY330155

Then click on 2010 inspection.

Sparkles Pre-School Hours

Because of popular demand, our hours change from year to year, at present they are:

Monday –Friday 9.30–2.30

This can be 2 separate sessions 9.30–12.00 and 12.00–2.30 or the whole day when children are settled
The Manager

My name is Kim Benham, and I manage Sparkles Pre-School. We have been here since 2006. I am passionate about providing a caring environment where children can learn through play. I choose staff who are committed to continuous improvement and dedication to the setting. I have a Degree in Early Years Education and have the Early Years Professional Status (a Post Graduate course).

The Staff

The current staff list is on the notice board. Staff usually stay at Sparkles because they are dedicated and have great job satisfaction.

All staff are qualified in child care or are undergoing training; we believe in high quality child care and education.

All staff are police checked.

Key person

Your child will be allocated a key person from the staff team. That member of staff will take a special interest in your child’s development filling in a learning journal that you can access securely online.
The Planning.

Planning activities are based on children's interests, and adding new dimensions to learning through play. We work from The Early Years Foundation Stage ensuring all areas of development are covered by careful and thoughtful planning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

We offer a full range of equipment to meet the educational and developmental needs of the pre-school child and emphasis is put on sharing and mixing in a happy and stimulating atmosphere. We aim to prepare the children for primary school, by using The Early Years Foundation Stage 2012 in order to meet the needs of each individual child.

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the five Every Child Matters (2004 Children's Act) outcomes: -

• Be healthy
• Stay safe
• Enjoy and achieve
• Make a positive contribution
• Achieve economic well-being

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2012 gives us the following guidance for planning activities at Millies...

“The areas of learning and development

1.4 There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly
crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- communication and language;

- physical development; and

- personal, social and emotional development.

1.5 Providers must also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy;

- mathematics;

- understanding the world; and

- expressive arts and design.

1.6 Educational programmes must involve activities and experiences for children, as follows.

- **Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
• **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

• **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

• **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

• **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

• **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

This approach ensures that the EYFS meets the overarching aim of improving outcomes and reflects that it is every child’s right to grow up safe; healthy; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and with economic well-being.
Settling In

A happy introduction to the pre-school is important and parents of new children are welcome to stay for the first few mornings or until such a time that the child has settled in. We aim for the child to settle as quickly as possible. As the child’s parent we will be asking for information on your child’s favourite toys, or what comforts them should they become unsettled. At first the surroundings may seem noisy and unfamiliar to them. Let your child take his/her time to establish contact with other children and adults in the group. They will soon gain confidence and be ready to attend on their own.

We encourage parents/carers to visit the pre-school with their children before the starting date.

We recognise that some children adapt more quickly than others, so we encourage parents, where appropriate to separate from their children for a brief period at first, gradually building up to longer absences.

Remember each child is an individual and will settle in at his/her own pace. Please be patient, don’t rush your child and never leave without saying goodbye.

Children cannot play or learn successfully if they are anxious or unhappy. Our settling procedures aim to help parents to help their children to feel comfortable in the pre-school and benefit from what is on offer.

Before you Start

Please take your child to the toilet or put them in a clean nappy prior to preschool. If your child wear nappies we need changing supplies and nappies.

Please bring a spare set of clothes in a labelled bag.

Please bring your child’s birth certificate as we need to verify this on admission.
Collection of children

A responsible adult must collect the children. No one under the age of 16 is allowed to collect children.

We expect parents and carers to be prompt picking up their children.

If you are likely to be late collecting your child, please notify the leader. Repeated lateness will incur a fine.

We have a password system for when somebody else picks up your child. If you ask somebody else to collect your child, you must tell them the password you set on the admission form for them to do so.

Please could you let the staff know if your child is going away on holiday or is going to be away from the group so we can record it on the register.

Safeguarding Children

Our priority is the welfare of the individual child.

As a professional establishment, we are legally bound to report any form of suspected abuse that may become apparent whilst the child is in our care. If we feel a child is unsafe we are bound by law to report it and this will be the only reason for breach of confidentiality.

The Fees

Fees are payable at the beginning of term for the whole term. This cuts down administration time, however, if this is a problem please see Kim as we can usually sort out a pay plan.
Funding

Funding is available to children the term after their third birthday. Beware of the Easter dilemma, where the cut off date for summer funding is the 31st March. If you have any queries please see Kim.

Any child who becomes 3 between 1st of January and the 31st of March will be funded from the start of term beginning on or following 1st April. If Easter is late these same dates apply...sorry.

Any child who becomes 3 between 1st of April and the 31st of August will be funded from the start of term beginning on or following 1st September.

Any child who becomes 3 between 1st of September 31st of December will be funded from the start of term beginning on or following 1st January.

At present three year old funded children are entitled to 15 hours (6 Sparkles sessions) per week, for 38 weeks. At present Sparkles runs for 36 weeks of the year.

Two year old funding is available for some children. Please see the manager for details to apply.

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical washable clothes. We get messy at Sparkles! We encourage children to wear aprons, but can’t force them, but even with the best of intentions we can’t guarantee to keep clothes clean. We use messy play daily and expect children to access all activities, unless the child has a medical reaction to the resources. Sparkles sweatshirts and T shirts are available for purchase on request...and look very smart!

When you start please provide a spare set of clothes in a clearly named carrier bag.
Outside.

We use our lovely garden most days, so please provide a NAMED coat for your child to be warm and comfortable. Shoes need to be well fitting and practical for physical play and suitable for the weather.

In the summer please ensure your child has suncream on, a sunhat (named) and a tee shirt that covers their shoulders.

Parents as Partners

We recognise parents as the main carers and educators of their children, so we welcome you here. We would like to get to know your child well so please tell us what is happening in their lives. Feel free to talk to us at any time.

We carry out coffee chats for parents and careers, to share information with each other about your children and Early Years development. They are very popular and give us a chance to informally discuss what your children enjoy at Sparkles. Christmas and Summer fayre said are held for us to have fun together and raise money for resources.
We have a parent representative who attends Staff meetings and is in regular contact with the staff. This has proved to be a very effective way for you to pass on your ideas and comments to us. Any volunteers for the role (as more than one makes it a lighter load!)

Your key person will be happy to show you your child’s journal and discuss their development with you.

We welcome volunteers so don’t hide your talents! Share them with us. Children love it when parents come in to play with us so don’t be shy!

Ethos of the group

Our aim is to provide high quality, educational pre-school provision for all children and families within our group.

The values of the group are to treat each other with respect and politeness. Staff parents and carers will work together to create a harmonious atmosphere. Any negative attitudes and discriminatory behaviour will be challenged.

What is the difference between a nursery and pre-school?

Both offer care and education to children under five years old and are inspected by Ofsted (The office for Standards in Education). These inspections ensure that the quality of care and education falls within the recommended guidelines.

All pre-schools and nurseries validated by Ofsted follow The Early Years Foundation Stage discussed later in this document
One of the most obvious differences between a nursery and our pre-school is the staffing ratio. The National Standards stipulate that in a pre-school the ratio of staff to children should not be less than:

1:4 for 2-3 years old
1:8 for 3-5 years old

At Sparkles we operate a staff to child ratio of:

1:4 for 2-3 years old
1:5/6 for 3-5 Years old

(Outings at Sparkles are operated on a 1:2 Staff to child ratio)

However, at a nursery school the ratio of staff to children can vary from 1:10 to 1:13 depending on the setting.

Our staff are trained and qualified in the care and education of under-5s. Remember that the amount of individual attention given to each child by a trained adult will ultimately benefit his/her learning.

Additional and Special Needs

Any concern you may have regarding the development of your child will be taken seriously by us. As part of our ethos we respect children as individuals. If, for any reason your child requires extra support, we will work with other agencies and where possible, accommodate the child's needs.
Any arrangements would be made in close discussion with the parents/carers in complete confidence.

**Behavior policy**

We promote positive behaviour and help children to regulate their own behaviour with skilled adult support. We use the successful HighScope theory for helping children to negotiate and behave well. This involves a calm approach, listening to children and encouraging children to negotiate with each other. Time out is only used to calm a child down, and de-escalate a situation and they are supported by a qualified member of staff.

**What should I do if my child is unwell?**

To prevent the spread of illness e.g Vomiting or diarrhoea, please keep your child at home until they are fully recovered (USUALLY 24 HOURS after their last bout of sickness) before allowing them to return to the group.

If your child has had a temperature within the last 12 hours please don’t bring them to Pre-School.

**Accidents**

Minor accidents occasionally happen while your child is in our care. We do not use cream or disinfectant in case of allergic reaction. You will be notified when you return to collect your child and asked to sign an accident book.

If any accident requires medical attention, every effort will be made to contact you. However, a consent form will need your signature to enable staff to take appropriate actions in case of an emergency.

The staff in the group hold current First Aid qualifications.
Helpful Ideas for New Parents from Our "Old" Parents

I asked the present Parent Representative to ask parents what would be helpful for new parents to know? They said:

• **A brief outline of the day**- We start with Plan Do Review, which is from the HighScope theory. Children can plan their session which encourages language and communication, carried out on the whole by the child key person. The children partake in activities inside and out, supported by skilled staff, so that children learn through play. We come in for review time in key groups and finish with singing.

• **Themed snacks**- There are themed snacks on Tuesday (cheesy Tuesday) and Friday (fruity Friday) We ask you to bring in fruit to share on Friday please. Other days we vary the snacks to provide a balance diet.

• **What to bring**- Outdoor clothes, sensible shoes and a named coat, sunhat, jacket etc. If your child has just potty trained you may want to bring their potty and a change of clothing in a named bag. We do keep some clothes on the premises. If your child uses pull ups or nappies, please supply them in a named bag.

• **Reminder about car park safety**-

• **Lunches**- If your child attends in the afternoon please bring them a packed lunch with an ice brick to keep it fresh. Suggestion of what to put in your lunch box- I don’t dictate what you can and can’t put in your child’s lunch box. A few pointers though, don’t make it too huge, some lunches are amazingly big for the size of the child. Bring them what they will like to eat. You’d be surprised when we’ve commented that a child doesn’t eat their lunch how many parents/carers say the children don’t normally eat what they have given them, so if they don’t like sandwiches, give them something they do like. If you pack chocolate, remember the other children who don’t! Rather than sweets, if you must pack chocolate make it a biscuit. Fruit, chopped cheese, breadsticks yoghurts, are great for lunch boxes. Please name your child’s lunch box as another child may have the same design.

• **Email contact**- If you email me with your child’s name I will email you with news and reminders. This has proved very popular with parents this year. I may send you the odd photo too. Remember if you’re a
childminder, grandparent or carer or are sharing Sparkles dropping off and picking up to add your name to the email list too.

- **The parent Rep** - As discussed earlier, we have an active parent representative who will help you with any questions and she can't wait to hear if you have any ideas or suggestions.

- **Password for pick up** - On your admission form will be a space to put a password for other people who pick your children up, if they don't have the password, we won't let the child go home with them! So be thinking of something you can remember that's not too obvious to others.

- **Outings** - Our outings are usually local, we will need plenty of parent volunteers to get the children safely there as ratios for any outing with this age of children is one adult to two children.

- **Totstars and musical bumps** - We have regular extra curricular activities regularly within the sessions. These will incur a small fee if your child does these sessions

**Comments, Suggestions and Complaints.**

We have had some very good suggestions from parents. One suggestion was to have an all weather outdoor area, and when grant money became available it became a priority! So if you thinking of making a suggestion or comment please do, either to me or the parent representative, as many good changes occur from parent observation.

Policies and Procedures are kept on the Parent Information table. These inform our practise and encompass how we work with children parents and how we work as professional child carers and educators.

The complaints procedure can be found in the 'Policies and Procedures' folder, but should you be unhappy at any time please see me or one of the staff members. We like our families to be happy with what we do. The Parent Representative is also happy to help.
The Facebook Group

You will be invited to the our Facebook Group which we keep you informed of what goes on at Pre-School. The group is secret and therefore only by invitation. Please don't ask for permission to tag children! You will be asked to sign a Facebook agreement. The page is upbeat and newsy, and has some useful links to other things that you may be interested in.