



St. Michael's Church Centre
 Maynard Avenue
 Norton
 STOURBRIDGE
 West Midland
 DY8 3EE

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Manager: Mrs. Sally Collins

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St. Michael's Christian Pre-school was established in 1993. It is registered on the Early Years Register and is run by a Management Committee which meets every two months.

The main access to Pre-School is via 3 steps or a gentle slope with handrails to both. The Pre-School operates from a classroom and the Hall in St. Michael's Church Centre and has exclusive use of a purpose-built toilet facility. There is also an Outdoor Area approach by a slope from the Church Hall. This has a large covered pergola and grassed area with mature trees where various planned activities are situated, including a vegetable garden and wildlife areas. A maximum of 30 children attend at any one time. From 2010 it has been open from 9:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. every day in order to provide the required 15 hours of nursery Education Funded provision each week. **In the Summer Term 2019** the setting will be able to provide the 30 hours from **9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** We admit children between the ages of 2½ and statutory school age from all cultures and beliefs. From the beginning of the Summer Term 2019 the cost will be £20 per session for those children not claiming Nursery Education Grants. *(Please contact the Pre-school for an up-to-date 2019 prospectus.)*

Our aim is to provide a loving, Christian environment in which we can provide high quality care and education. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. Children from a variety of cultures and backgrounds attend from a wide area including Dudley, Sandwell and Hereford and Worcestershire. We support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

We have a fantastic staff team working together. It is a wonderful environment in which to work, and all the children benefit from the guidance and encouragement provided by the staff. Every session up to 6 staff work with the children; all hold appropriate qualifications or more. At appropriate times e.g. staff training, a small bank of cover staff is available. The Pre-School also employs an administrator. God has blessed each one of us and continues to meet our individual needs. We have very low turnover of staff and do not have difficulty in recruiting or retaining staff. This helps with the smooth running of our setting. All staff attend training regularly sometimes as

a whole setting as well as in groups of two or three. Where possible our training takes place when Pre-School is not in session – e.g. afternoons or evenings. The Pre-School receives support from Dudley Early Years team and the Early Years Alliance.

The classroom is a great asset to Pre-school and was opened by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Peter Selby, former Bishop of Worcester, in March 2005. It was an emotional moment as God’s presence was very evident. Our Ofsted Inspection report in December 2007 was better than we dared hope for. We gained the highest rating available, that being ‘outstanding’ in all areas. Inspectors praised our Management Team and staff. They noted our close relationships with families and how we make each child feel valued as an individual. Our teaching and planning was also praised in the report. Other inspections took place in July 2011 and March 2015 – both ‘Good’ with some elements ‘Outstanding’. The latest inspection took place in June 2017 - “This provision is OUTSTANDING”.

(To see the full report go to www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)
(Our Ofsted reference no. is 253939)

We are supported by volunteers who help with refreshments and prepare food for the Pre-School Café. All volunteers are DBS checked and receive appropriate, up-to-date training on Food Hygiene, First Aid and Safeguarding matters.

Parents/carers are made extremely welcome and can come into the setting at the beginning and end of each session. We operate an open-door policy and key people are available every day to talk about any concerns or other issues that may arise. The Manager and Assistant Manager are both available to speak to parents, and if confidential matters need to be discussed we have a room set aside for this. The staffing ratio is above that required so that we can have time to discuss matters as they arise which prevents delay in responding to, and, resolving issues. Parents/carers are regularly asked for comments on all aspects of the provision by use of questionnaires. Parent/carer pop-in sessions are held once a term and all staff make themselves available in the morning and during the evening to enable all to access time with their key person. Also, we encourage parents to make their views known to the parent and church representatives on the Management Committee or the Chair if they so wish.

In Autumn 2014 the Parents & Friends of Pre-school group was set up by the Parent Representatives on the Management Committee – past and current parents, carers, grandparents and other friends of Pre-school - all with the common goal of helping St. Michael’s Pre-school to improve the facilities and raise funds for new equipment and resources. In the Spring Term 2015 the Garden Project was begun to improve the outdoor facilities and numerous Garden days have been held. An Auction Night at the Talbot Hotel in Stourbridge raised over £2000 for the project and a night with ‘Rocksalt’ contributed more funds. Further ‘Swap Shops’, a ‘Toy Sale’, Nativity/Brunch and a donation from MidCounties Co-op brought the amount raised in 2015 to over £3500! The work on the Garden project continues – weather and person power permitting. Essential fundraising has continued with a very successful ‘Easter Fun Day’ in March 2016 repeated in the Spring Term 2017. Furthermore in 2017 Pre-

school received Community Forum Funds to decorate the Church Hall year and purchase furniture, and benefited from substantial contributions from the 'All About You' Charity for much needed new equipment. There was also funding from the final Rocksalt, Christian Rock group performance and Midcounties Co-op, and Co-op Travel (Stourbridge). In 2018 the Parent Representatives and other parent volunteers and the Pre-school Team helped to raise over £2,700 with an exciting Auction Night at Harleys Smoke House and £600 at Santa's Brunch. This has financed outdoor play equipment and other resources for the 30 hours provision. Already in 2019 fundraising began with a Disco in church, and a donation from the John Porter Community Fund. The Church supports Pre-school by not charging for the cost of utilities or room hire. Pre-school also benefits from regular donations and other gifts from former and current Pre-school parents, carers, grandparents and so on. This additional financial support is so important as the funding for Early Years has been frozen until 2020 and the Living Wage and other costs will increase over that time. Indeed, this issue was discussed with Margot James M.P. when she visited the setting in July 2018.

As ever, we can achieve nothing in our own strength. We look to God for guidance and we receive so much from Him and give the glory to the Lord for all that has been achieved.

Your prayers in the following areas would be appreciated:

Our staff: that God will provide for all their needs and anoint them afresh for the ministry they have been called to. Pray that, as they juggle family, work and home commitments, they will find time to rest in the presence of God.

Our Pre-school: that we will continue to develop our facilities; that God's vision will be followed and the finances released to enable us to continue this important outreach here in Norton.

Our children: that seed will be sown during their time with us will bear fruit. Also, that their families will see and feel the touch of our Lord's love on themselves and their children's lives.

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**The Midcounties Co-operative**

