



# BENSHAM GROVE COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL

## DECEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

BENSHAM GROVE COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL AT SIDNEY GROVE  
BENSHAM GROVE COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL AT DECKHAM

Our children are confident, risk  
seeking, motivated learners.

THEY ARE ALL UNIQUE AND AMAZING!

 **Play to  
Learn**



What a busy Autumn Term at Bensham Grove Community Nursery School!



**What an Autumn term ! What a year! We cannot believe that another term is ending! It has been a busy one with so much to celebrate! The learning that has taken place at both Sidney Grove and Deckham Nurseries has been out of this world!**

Both Nurseries continue to thrive with the expertise of our committed staff team. This term we celebrated the outstanding outcome by Ofsted at our Sidney Grove site. The report recognises all the vital elements of exemplary Early Years provision. The children in our care are always our priority and this was reflected so well in the outstanding report. We are looking forward to showcasing our Deckham site to Ofsted in the Spring term! We have welcomed so many Early Years Leaders and practitioners from across Gateshead to share our wonderful nursery with them as part of their professional development. Our 'Stay and Play' was so well attended across all rooms in both sites and we always enjoy the chance to share our learning with you so thank you for your continued support.

The nursery development plan is focused on ensuring the enhancement of our curriculum overview for 0-5 with a curriculum priority on Launchpad to Literacy implementation as well as continued work on the development of both indoor and outdoor environments. We continue to ensure the Nursery school is at the centre of the community and are working on becoming the first 'Nursery of Sanctuary'. We are developing our practice to be a trauma informed school linked to enhancing SEND, communication and positive relationships throughout everything we do. A large part of our work has been designated to the DfE funding expansion and identifying areas to bid for to enable the environment and staffing to grow to reflect our growing numbers. Thank you for your continued support.  
Sue McElrue and Jill Hutton



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# PARENTS AS PARTNERS. YOUR SUPPORT IS SO APPRECIATED. THANK YOU.

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1

LOOK OUT FOR 'STAY AND PLAY' SESSIONS IN THE SPRING TERM ALONG WITH SOME CURRICULUM INFORMATION POSTS. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO BOOK A VISIT ANY TIME AS YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.



2

Due to health and safety and risk to other children can you please ensure no food/drink is left in your child's bag or taken into the nursery without acknowledgement from staff.



3

Please take care where you park. Dangerous parking has been noted and reported. Parking on the pavement is causing it to crack and is a huge cost to the nursery budget to rectify. Your support with this is greatly appreciated.



4

***FYI: Nursery is closed for staff training on Monday January 5<sup>th</sup> 2026***



**Best Wishes: We would like to wish all our families a safe and happy holiday and hope you enjoy your time together however you choose to celebrate. A Happy New Year to you all when it arrives. We hope 2026 is a healthy and happy one for all of our community.**



# OUR VISION

Care and Education with a Purpose

**A HIGH-QUALITY EARLY YEARS EDUCATION IS VITALLY IMPORTANT. CHILDREN ATTEND EARLY YEARS PROVISION AT A CRUCIAL DEVELOPMENTAL POINT IN THEIR LIVES. THE EDUCATION AND CARE THAT THEY RECEIVE AFFECTS NOT ONLY FUTURE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BUT ALSO THEIR FUTURE HEALTH AND HAPPINESS.**

**'Bold beginnings'** underpins our philosophy from birth to 5 years and is central to our developments throughout our rooms in our nursery.

We explore literature relating to early years education, drawing on a range of sources, including academic and policy literature, reflect on practice and support staff professional development to ensure a high-quality early education in present in all of our rooms.

We consider and discuss the following as a senior leadership team and staff teams in each room to ensure the best for all:

- the early years indoor and outdoor enabling environment
- staffing in each room
- early years curriculum and pedagogy

A high-quality early education can prepare children for success in their later education. During their early education, children begin to explore the building blocks of national curriculum subjects that they will go on to study. The *'Effective provision of pre-school primary and secondary education'* study found that children who attended pre-school provision, of any kind, attained higher total GCSE scores than those who did not.

Importantly to note is that your decision to send your child to a quality pre-school provision such as our Nursery, where you support us with good attendance patterns and effective partnership, is the foundation to enabling your child to fulfil their potential now and in the future.





## OUR CURRICULUM

At Bensham Grove Community Nursery School the children have a broad balanced curriculum on offer in all rooms. We underpin all we do with positive adult:child interactions where a language rich communication approach is taken at every opportunity. 'Language is learnt in the give and take of daily interactions and conversations.'

We have introduced a programme of professional development for our staff called 'Launchpad for Literacy'. This is all about children, the skills they have and the skills they need for all aspects of literacy. It is a systematic, skill-based approach, enabling staff to:

- improve outcomes in the Early Years and beyond by creating firm foundations and a broad base of Literacy readiness beyond our setting.
- identify speech, language and other developmental needs as soon as possible and to embed specific skill-based intervention into practice through play.

Our staff development focus for both our training days and half termly meetings utilises this approach to continue to embed, reflect and improve our work with our children.

## OUR APPROACH TO POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

As part of our priority to ensure all children and families feel represented in our Nursery community we are aiming to work towards 'The School of Sanctuary Award'. This is given in recognition of good practice in fostering a safe and inclusive environment, building understanding and empathy towards people seeking safety and working collaboratively to strengthen community approaches to welcoming all families. We feel it works well alongside our inclusion and diversity curriculum that we do with our children and supports the CPD of the staff team to ensure all policies and procedures are in line with our vision. We look forward to sharing the progress of this insightful nursery school improvement area.

Thank you for taking the time to complete our annual survey. The summary is as follows with more detailed feedback and evaluation posted on the website and on Family in the new year.

There was a 45% return with 100% of feedback strongly agreeing or agreeing to the following statements:

*'My child and family are welcome at nursery'*

*'The nursery is good at communication about my child's learning'*

*'The nursery is supportive of new children'*

*'The learning experiences my child has at nursery fully supports their development'*

*'I feel comfortable approaching staff with questions, suggestions or concerns'*

*'The nursery supports me, my family and my child as they move through the nursery'*

We always appreciate your feedback and reflect/act on it where suggestions and comments are shared.

# Life at BGNS

# SUMMARY OF THE AUTUMN TERM

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## BENSHAM GROVE NURSERY SCHOOL AT DECKHAM

We have had a lovely Autumn term at Deckham. In September we welcomed lots of new children into nursery, and they have settled wonderfully; exploring the environment, learning routines and forming friendships. The seasonal autumn and winter changes have provided lots of exciting learning opportunities. Outdoors, the children have been noticing changes in the environment, hunting for minibeasts, and raking leaves and then using our new wheelbarrows to transport the leaves around the outdoor area.

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We have also brought natural materials into the indoor environment to provide learning opportunities. The children used leaves to make collage pictures, inspired by the story 'Leaf Man'. They used pinecones with balancing scales to explore the concept of weight. Our older children created repeating patterns with conkers and coloured leaves. These were just a few of the ways in which children used 'autumn treasures' within their learning and play.

This term we shared special experiences through talking about how the children celebrated Halloween, and through learning about Bonfire Night and Diwali. In November we enjoyed welcoming families into nursery for our 'Stay and Play' sessions. These sessions provided a lovely opportunity for the children to work collaboratively with family members and to share some of their favourite areas and resources with them.

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Sharing books together is a fantastic way to build vocabulary, learn about rhythm and rhyme, develop imagination and enjoy beautiful stories together. We have enjoyed sharing some lovely books this term, and the children have developed their understanding of the stories through play opportunities and first hand experiences, for example, creating houses for Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and making and tasting their own porridge.

We cannot wait to welcome everyone back in the new year alongside many new children and families who will be starting their journey with us. There will also be some new faces within our expanding staff team to offer the best learning experience to all of our children.

To all of the children and families we hope everyone has a lovely festive holiday and we are looking forward to the next term together at Deckham.

From the whole Nursery Staff team at Deckham

# SUMMARY OF THE AUTUMN TERM

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## BENSHAM GROVE NURSERY SCHOOL AT SIDNEY GROVE

We started the Autumn term by welcoming many new starters across our rooms at Bensham. We supported these children helping them adjust to new routines and larger learning environments. The learning environment in each room allows for and facilitates children to take greater steps in independent learning and staff are always on hand to help children to adjust to changes in the outdoor and indoor learning environments. The transition to each new space is always well planned by the team and considerations for each child is discussed in detail to support this as effectively as possible. Our staff team cannot believe how quick this term has gone by. It has been lovely to see how the new children have settled this term and reflect back on all of the events and experiences we have explored.

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We would like to thank all of the parents and carers who were able to join us with the various events we have held this half term with 'Stay and Play' and our 'Singalong'. Within our curriculum we have explored experiences around Children in Need, Road Safety, Remembrance, Halloween, Bonfire Night, Diwali, Christmas and Nursery Rhyme Week and so many more!

In the Discovery Hub the staff team are so impressed with the all the children who are making lovely progress in learning and relationships between peers and our staff team. Over the term they have engaged with many core books and songs of the weeks which the children have loved joining in with. They have had many outdoor experiences as the weather begins to change and some love autumnal walks to the community gardens.

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Our smallest children have loved our outings in our new quadruple buggies enabling them to communicate and socialise together whilst enjoying the outdoors. The children in both the Nest and the Den have enjoyed the focus on quality story time and their sustained focus on books and rhymes is beyond expectations for this age phase! They have engaged with so many connections with the seasons often with amazing fun sensory activities where the pleasure on their face is a gift to see! The children explored pumpkins in a range of ways like painting them and feeling the pumpkin insides. Our babies have enjoyed a range of sensory activities, exploring and developing vital skills, such as fine motor skill and hand eye coordination. They have loved listening to songs, rhymes and stories, showing engagement and curiosity. They continue to amaze us with their sense of fun and curiosity; all characteristics that will enable them to be successful learners in the future!

It has been a lively and productive first term in the Investigation Hub! This year, they have implemented a slightly different timetable with small group focus time at the start of the day before our plan-do-review sessions. It has been amazing to see the children starting their days with such high engagement in their small group tasks. The children have visited forest school and the garden regularly and have observed the Autumnal changes with the falling leaves and changing weather. In the winter months they have played in the snow, observed and investigated the ice and thought about how to take care of our resident birds during this season.

We wish all of our children and families a merry holiday and happy new year. Thank you for all your continued support from the whole team at Bensham, Sidney Grove.

# OUR STAFF



## ROB SHERRINGTON

### EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONER AND SEN ASSISTANT.

Rob has been working at Bensham since 2012. He has extensive SEND experience and subject knowledge, including specialist sensory training. He has and continues to provide training to our staff and other providers and professionals delivering Makaton/inclusive practice as well as total communication training. He works across both sites. *'I strive to give every child the opportunity to achieve their full potential by up-skilling staff and supporting families to help all children reach their full potential.'* Rob is a busy dad to two boys who keep him busy when he's not at work!



## LESLEY CHESSON

### SEN CO AND EARLY YEARS LEAD.

Lesley first visited Bensham in 2013 and loved everything that Bensham is about and the uniqueness it holds in Gateshead as the only Nursery School! She has extensive experience in working with children with a range of SEN/D. She loves the specialism that is Early Years and feels really privileged to work in an environment where there is such a focus on strong early years practice; where priority is given to the holistic needs of the child and such recognition of the importance in working with families is a must. Lesley is Lead SENCO across both sites as part of a strong SEND Team, has gained the Master level NASENCO qualification and works closely with the team, families and professionals in meeting the needs of the children within our nursery. Lesley is also one of our Deputy Safeguarding Leads and a strategic member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Outside of nursery, life is busy with two young children who are growing quickly while enjoying lots of outdoor adventures along the way!

## STAFFING UPDATES

### MATERNITY LEAVE

We welcome Steph Griffiths back after maternity leave in January and wish Hannah Fagen all the best for her maternity leave starting in the new year.

### WELCOME

We have the following staff starting with us in January and look forward to getting to know them as part of the wider team:

#### At Deckham:

Hilary James, Lesley Chesson, Laura Ridley and Danielle Winter will work between both sites supporting expanding numbers in Key Person groups for the short term

#### At Sidney Grove:

The following staff will join the team across the rooms:

Lorna Smith and Susan Cairns

Georgia Coyne will join us in the office



# Safeguarding Team

We believe everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all our children to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them. We will make sure that all our children have the best protection. We have robust procedures in place for recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns. Should you wish to report a safeguarding concern please contact any of the following team members who are designated safeguarding leads.

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Bensham Grove Community Nursery School  
Jill Hutton (Headteacher)  
Sue McElrue (Headteacher)

Bensham Grove Community Nursery School @ Sidney Grove  
Hilary James (Child Care Manager)  
Kelly Keating (Deputy Child Care Manager)  
Lesley Chesson (SEN Co and Lead Teacher for both centres)  
Emma Goodrick (Teacher)

Bensham Grove Community Nursery School @ Deckham  
Claire Hardy (Deputy Child Care Manager)

If you are not able to speak with any of the above and you believe a child to be at risk please call the police or the local safeguarding team in Gateshead 0191 433 2653

## CONTACT US

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