

Pre-Preparatory School Information Book

September 2023



DEAN CLOSE
PRE-PREPARATORY SCHOOL
CHELTENHAM

#DeanCloseSquirrels

#DeanCloseContribution
#DeanCloseFlourishing
#DeanCloseWOW
#DeanCloseForestSchool



#DeanCloseCourage
#DeanCloseEYFS
#DeanCloseSquirrels
#DeanCloseLove



Welcome

I am delighted to introduce you to Dean Close Pre-Preparatory School, fondly known as the 'Squirrels'. We are proud to be part of the Dean Close family of schools, providing excellent education for boys and girls from 3 to 18 years.

The School is set in 50 acres of beautiful grounds, close to the centre of Cheltenham, which provides a stimulating environment for our pupils. With a modern, purpose-built building, we have excellent facilities and resources and also benefit from being able to share in the outstanding Preparatory and Senior School facilities on site.

As the Head of the school, I have the distinct privilege of collaborating closely with our dedicated staff, engaged parents, spirited children, and the broader Dean Close community to create an atmosphere where every child can flourish.

The adage "a happy child learns best" is one that education professionals universally agree upon. However, with over three decades of experience, I am confident in taking this principle a step further: "a joy-filled child learns even better." Achieving joy in children is a great aim; it comes from a balance of them feeling valued, forming strong friendships, having their basic needs met, and benefiting from a bespoke, vibrant curriculum that plays to their unique interests and developmental needs. Our aim is not just to educate but to infuse our activities with joy, making the learning process a delightful experience for everyone involved.

At the 'Squirrels', a high teacher-to-pupil ratio enables our dedicated and caring staff to meet each child's individual needs and provide a safe and happy learning environment. As partners in your child's education, we maintain an open door policy at all convenient times, welcoming you to discuss your child's progress and day-to-day issues.

We understand that a child's first experience of school is a vital step in their learning journey, developing the knowledge, skills and self-confidence which lay the foundations for their lives. Our aim is to provide a broad and exciting, child-centred curriculum which will ignite a love of learning, enabling your child to develop and flourish as they take their next steps in education.

My colleagues and I look forward to welcoming you to the 'Squirrels' soon.

Mr James Cowling
Head

Aims & Ethos

Dean Close is a Christian school and community which aims to uphold the Christian faith as a positive force for all, including those who do not share this faith. The School seeks to treat every member of its family as unique and equally valuable. The ethos challenges selfishness and holds community, respect for others, relationship and service at the heart of the School.

Dean Close welcomes pupils with a broad range of abilities, aiming to give each and every one a well-rounded education, blending good academic performance with real achievement in their individually-discovered talents. The School encourages independent thinking and the self-confidence to challenge the status quo.

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THE STRUCTURE WITHIN THE 'SQUIRRELS'

Classes are organised to provide for each significantly different stage of pupil development. The timetabled activities for each age group are carefully and appropriately thought-out, providing a vibrant and stimulating wealth of learning opportunities. There are two parallel classes in each year group, except the Nursery.

Nursery	2 years 9 months to 3+ years (3rd birthday during the term) either part-time or full-time basis.
Kindergarten	3+ to 4+ (4th birthday during the academic year) either part-time or full-time basis.

N.B. Dean Close Pre-Preparatory School is part of the Early Years Partnership and the Government Nursery Grant Funding Scheme for 3 and 4 year olds.

Reception	4+ to 5+ years (5th birthday during academic year) full-time attendance only
Year One	5+ to 6+ years (6th birthday during the academic year)
Year Two	6+ to 7+ years (7th birthday during the academic year)

THE 'SQUIRRELS' DAILY ROUTINE	
8.15am	Before-school crèche opens
8.45am	The School day begins
10.25 – 10.45am	Break time (fruit and a snack are provided).
12.00noon	Lunch time (Meals are freshly prepared on the premises, with an emphasis on healthy eating. Special dietary needs are catered for.)
12.30pm	Part-time children go home
12.30 – 12.45pm	After-lunch story time (a short time to let lunch settle!)
12.45 – 1.15pm	Play time (Children enjoy outdoor play in safely enclosed play areas, equipped with a variety of play equipment and climbing apparatus.)
3.25pm	End of School day – Nursery, Kindergarten and Reception
3.30pm	End of School day – Years One and Two
3.30 – 5.00pm	After-school crèche (Children may be collected at any time between 3.30 and 5.00pm. During the crèche time, children enjoy a drink, fruit and a snack, such as a sandwich.)

The 5 o'clock Club

The '5 o'clock club' is an after school provision between 5 and 6pm and is a paid extra activity. Children from Nursery class to Year 2 can be accommodated, and the club is split into two half hour blocks, with the first running from 5pm to 5.30pm and the second 5.30 to 6pm. In addition, there is an option for children to

have supper at 5.05pm. The club is charged at £8.00 per half hour, £11 with supper. Therefore if your child is booked in for the whole hour the charge would be £16, £19 with supper. Sessions should be booked in advance using the booking form available from school. There are reductions for parents booking termly or half-termly. Children can be accepted in the morning if space is available, but need to be booked in by 11.30am.

Part-time/Full-time Attendance

Part-time attendance sessions are mornings, arriving between 8.15 – 8.45am and departing between 12.30pm and 12.45pm (lunch is included in these sessions), or afternoons from 12.45 – 5.00pm. Minimum attendance is two sessions per week. These may be increased at any time with prior arrangement with the class teacher.

Full-time attendance is until 3.25pm, with optional after-school crèche attendance, ending at 5.00pm.

N.B. The academic year is taken as 1st September to 31st Aug.

THE 'SQUIRRELS' CURRICULUM

The curriculum within the Pre-Preparatory School offers a wide range of learning opportunities, aimed at stimulating and nurturing your child's development and interest in an intellectual, physical, spiritual, social and emotional sense.

Progress is encouraged through immediate positive praise (stickers) and through certificates celebrating achievements, either academic or personal skills, e.g. being kind or helpful.

- **Forest School** – All children regularly have opportunities to visit our Forest School, which extends the curriculum into the outside environment.

NURSERY, KINDERGARTEN AND RECEPTION

During these early years, the curriculum follows the Early Years / Foundation Stage statutory framework across seven key learning goals:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – promoting self-esteem, social competence and a positive disposition for learning.
- **Communication and Language** – promoting speaking and listening skills through varied opportunities throughout each day.
- **Literacy** – reading, writing and comprehension skills. The Sounds and Letters and Little Wardle schemes are used to help children learn the sounds of their letters and develop literacy skills.
- **Mathematics** – promoting key skills in numeracy and mathematical problem solving, initially through language, practical and written activities.
- **Understanding the World** – promoting crucial knowledge, skills and understanding that help children make sense of the world. Children in Kindergarten and Reception also have timetabled sessions of French and ICT each week.
- **Physical Development** – promoting the growth of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement, including fire motor and gross motor skills, alongside an understanding of the importance of staying healthy and active. Children in Reception have a swimming lesson each week in the School's 25m indoor pool, as well as tennis lessons.

- **Expressive Arts & Design** – promoting creativity through art and craft activities, music, dance, role play and imaginative play.

YEARS ONE AND TWO

The curriculum offers a broad content of study, using the National Curriculum (Key Stage One) as a basic framework. The combination of group work activities and high individual attention promotes appropriate learning for all children across levels of ability.

- **English** – developing concepts and independent skills in Speaking and Listening (including Drama), Reading and Writing.
- **Mathematics** – developing concepts and independent skills, understanding numbers, using and applying skills to solve problems, and shape space and measure.
- **Science** – activities organised to stimulate children's curiosity through opportunities for investigation, discussion, prediction, practical and written work.
- **Cross-Curricular Topic-Work** – developing and understanding of concepts in History, Geography, Art and Design Technology, through a stimulating, thematic programme of study.
- **French** – taught by specialist teaching staff, incorporating a range of interactive activities, progressing to some written work for the Year Two children.
- **Information and Communication Technology** – all classes have computers, IWBs and iPads which children use to support their learning. Each week the Kindergarten to Year Two classes have ICT lessons and use Chromebooks to develop their skills.
- **Religious Education** – promoting the Christian Foundation of the School, as well as promoting British values, cultural understanding, moral and social values.
- **Personal, Health, Social and Citizenship Education (PHSCE)** – aimed to equip children with the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need to lead confident, healthy and independent lives.
- **Physical Education** – developing co-ordination skills, manipulation and movement, through appropriate physical challenges, both indoors and outdoors, using a range of equipment. All children in Reception, Years One and Two have a swimming lesson each week in the School's 25m indoor pool and also receive tennis lessons.
- **Music** – taught by specialist teaching staff: developing appreciation and enjoyment through a variety of musical opportunities, e.g. percussion instruments, singing etc.

LEARNING SUPPORT

The curriculum throughout the 'Squirrels' is differentiated within the classroom to meet individual pupils' needs. Learning Support teachers assist in targeting the individual needs that your child may have, within the boundaries of the School's academic environment. This provision ranges from additional small group tuition, which is fee inclusive for one session per week, to individual tuition which may carry an additional charge. Class teachers are very happy to support pupils and parents with additional home activities and strategies, should this be appropriate.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Within the 'Squirrels' there are a variety of activities, some charged, in which pupils may participate, enhancing their educational and recreational development.

- **Speech and Drama** - developing a child's individual creativity and imagination, and confidence in speaking and listening
- **Dance ballet & modern** - taught by The Janet Marshall School of Dancing in our School hall
- **Tennis** - extra tennis lessons taught by experienced tennis coaches
- **Gymnastics** - taught by staff from Happy Days Gym
- **Music** - individual lessons for piano, flute, violin, viola and cello
- **Squirrel Strings** - the Pre-Prep 'orchestra' for all learning stringed instruments (free of charge)
- **Singing Squirrels** - the Pre-Prep choir group (free of charge)
- **P.E. Club** - physical education club encompassing a wide range of skills (free of charge)
- **META Club** - thinking skills club to challenge and inspire (free of charge)
- **Art & Craft Club** - a club to stimulate creativity (free of charge)



SCHOOL POLICIES

The following policies are available to both prospective and current parents upon request. They can either be emailed or posted as a paper copy. Copies are also available for either collection or perusal in the School Office. Additionally, some of these policies are available to download from the website.

- Admissions Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Policy for English as an Additional Language
- Curriculum Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Sanctions Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Information on academic performance within the Pre-Preparatory School for 2020-2021
- Student and Parent Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

COMMUNICATION AND LINKS WITH PARENTS

The Pre-Preparatory School operates an 'Open Door' Policy, whereby parents can approach staff, at convenient times, regarding any aspect of their child's academic progress or pastoral welfare. At the beginning of the year we hold a Parents' Curriculum Evening.

In addition, formal Parents' Evenings are held in the Michaelmas and Lent Terms and written reports are sent home twice a year.

- End of the Michaelmas Term – Progress report
- Trinity Term – Full Report

Prior to entry, children are invited to spend a 'taster session' in their prospective year group, during which informal assessment will take place. This provides an opportunity for the children to get to know their peer group and class teacher. Parents also receive a comprehensive welcome pack, detailing every aspect of life within the Squirrels.

Four publications are sent home regularly through the School year, informing parents of the wide variety of activities that pupils within our care enjoy.

- Half Term Mailing - providing information at the end of each half term about the term ahead
- Squirrel Snippets - a weekly newsletter
- The Youngest Decanian - an end of year School magazine

In addition, a photo and information diary on recent events in school can be found on the Pre-Preparatory area of the school website together with further information about the School: www.deanclose.org.uk. There is also a Parents' Portal which provides a wealth of day-to-day information.

All parents are part of the 'Parents' Society'. A Parents' Social Group organises various events throughout the school year, providing the opportunity to meet other families within our school

community. In addition, there are Parent Representatives for each year group to co-ordinate activities and welcome new families, these representatives also form the Parents' committee group.

Pre-Prep Events

Each term, parents are invited to entertainments and events presented by the children, including some class assemblies and informal concerts.

Michaelmas Term

- Harvest Festival
- Christmas Performance
- Christingle Service

Lent Term

- Spring Festival

Trinity Term

- Sports Day
- Summer Performance
- End of Year Marquee Celebration



FEES 2023/24

	Monthly	Termly
Kindergarten	£831.25	£3,325
Nursery	£834.75	£3,375
Reception	£781.25	£3,125
Year 1	£818.75	£3,275
Year 2	£850.00	£3,400

All three and four year old children are eligible for 15 hours of Nursery Funding and some may be eligible for 30 hours. Charges will be made for non-attendance due to illness or other reason. If you would like more information about Funding and Fees for our Kindergarten and Nursery children, then please contact the School Office on squirrels@deanclose.org.uk or preprepadmissions@deanclose.org.uk

Details on paying in monthly instalments and for the capital payment for these fees in advance may be obtained from the Financial Controller, as may details of part-time rates and Early Years funding information.

Our fees are all-inclusive, except for extra individual lessons.

1. What is included?

- All course text books and stationery
- Games equipment not listed as an optional extra
- Entertainments in school
- Travel on strictly educational expeditions
- Lunches for day pupils
- Before and after-school Crèche until 5.00pm

2. What is not included?

- All fees for external exams/assessments
- Individual learning support tuition
- Some co-curricular activities, eg instrumental lessons

3. Optional Extras

Please note that a full term's notice is required in writing to discontinue any optional extra.

a) Music - Charges per term

- £300 for individual tuition in any instrument
- £250 for second and subsequent instrument
- £185 for shared lesson
- £48 for the use of a School instrument

b) Sport - Charges per term

- £98 for Tennis
- £98 for Gymnastics

c) Incidentals

- extra private tuition
- visits to plays, concerts, etc outside the curriculum

d) Speech and Drama

- £60 for Speech and Drama per term shared lesson

e) Dance

- £127 for Ballet or Modern per term shared lesson
- £205 for any combination of two per term shared lesson

f) Learning Support

- £10 per shared lesson
- £90 per term (10 lessons)
- English as Additional Language £53 per hour
- English as Additional Language £320 per term (10 lessons)

g) Learning Support Assessment

- £78

4. Insurance

The following pupil insurances are available on an opt in basis:

1. The School Fees Refund Scheme (loss of fees through sickness) at 0.97% of fees
2. The School's group membership of AXA PPP Healthcare, at £126.00 per term
3. The Dean Close Foundation has arranged for all pupils from Reception Year upwards to be covered by the Pupils' Personal Accident Insurance Scheme (incorporating dental injury) at no additional charge.
4. Personal Effects Insurance Scheme at £7.80 per term

Please note that your son's/daughter's personal possessions will not be covered by the school insurance. You may wish to check whether your own insurance covers these or take advantage of the Pupils' Personal Effects Scheme. The School cannot accept liability for the loss of (by theft or negligence), or damage to, pupils' personal property, or property on loan to them.

5. Payment

a) All fees and monies due from parents and guardians of pupils are required on or before the first day of the relevant term. If payment is late without just cause an administrative charge of £50 will be made, in addition to a 4% a year above base rate increase on the outstanding balance.

b) A charge of £50 will be made for each re-presented cheque or payment. The Governors reserve the right to request the withdrawal of a pupil if the bills are not paid on time.

6. Leaving

a) A full term's notice in writing (or a term's fees in lieu) must be given by parents or guardians before a pupil is withdrawn. This notice should be received by the Headmistress on or before the first day of term. This also applies to Year Two pupils of DCPPS who are presumed to be going up to DCPS, unless notice is received.

b) The Governors will endeavour to give at least one term's notice of a rise in fees; however, they reserve the right to impose a surcharge at any time in the event of a sudden and unpredictable rise in school running costs.

7. School Bank

HSBC Bank plc,
109 Bath Road,
Cheltenham, GL53 7RA

Account:	Dean Close School
Sort Code:	40 17 09
Account No:	10292443
Swift Code:	MIDLGB2125K
IBAN:	GB76MIDL40170910292443



LOCATION



Dean Close School is situated in the Southwest of England in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, in the midst of the picturesque Cotswolds.

It is easily reached from Junction 11 of the M5 motorway via the A40, or from the nearby Cheltenham Spa railway station. The School is a five minute taxi ride or a ten minute walk from the station. Train times can be found on www.nationalrail.co.uk

The nearest international airports are Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff which are all about one hour away by car. There is a local airport at Staverton.

The School sits on the largest plot of privately owned land in Cheltenham, just off the outskirts of the Regency town. The Pre-Prep School is located on Lansdown Road, and for SatNav purposes, visitors should enter the postcode GL51 6QS. Visitors should come through the iron gates into our Visitors' Car Park located at the front of School. The Pre-Preparatory School is on the far right as you enter the car park.

On the School website (www.deanclose.org.uk) you will find links to Google maps as well as a range of downloadable site maps. When on the homepage, go to the section ABOUT US – HOW TO FIND US.

Local Taxi companies:

727 Car Co: 01242 523523

Star Line taxis: 01242 250250



DEAN CLOSE

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