



Little Shepherds Kindergarten

Little Shepherds Kindergarten is a non profit, faith based preschool based in Ashford (Surrey) at the Ashford and Staines Community Centre. We aim to open between September 2015 and January 2016, upon completion of our registration by Ofsted. Our vision is to grow steadily into a primary school inshaAllah.

Although we are an Islamic school, we are inclusive to all backgrounds and faiths. It is important and healthy for all children to be a part of the diverse community we live in, and for all children to benefit from our provisions.

Our preschool is inspired by the Montessori and Steiner Waldorf approach as the philosophy supports and complements our Islamic teachings and Prophetic model of education harmoniously. It suits the needs of the child and proves as an excellent alternative model of education and homeschooling.

Little Shepherds aims to provide a warm, intimate, nurturing 'home away from home' environment which supports children to develop at their own time and pace. This well balanced, integrated, child-led curriculum follows the wisdom of Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) to "play with your child until seven". Providing this opportunity to children, not only establishes a good foundation in which children can grow into happy and healthy beings that have great purpose and innate capabilities, but also develop a disposition and love for lifelong learning.

Parents in our school community, are seen as the child's first teachers and form an integral part of their child's learning experiences through their involvement.

At **Little Shepherds** we recognize the child as a spiritual being who has tremendous purpose and innate capabilities, who grows and learns best from love and gentle support. Importance is placed on supporting children to ground and connect themselves in the world in which they were born in. Children are given time and space to learn, develop and grow into their physical bodies and are supported to develop healthy rhythms at home and at preschool.

Care is also taken to nurture and preserve the child's natural 'fitra' particularly, through protecting the child's developing senses and providing a calm but stimulating environment. Having well experienced teachers trained in child pedagogy, and using materials and activities that are beautiful and wholesome to the child's developing needs and character, will help ensure we only leave experiences and beneficial impressions worthy for the children to imitate and aspire to.

At **Little Shepherds** our responsibility is not only to provide childcare, keeping every child safe and secure, but to also understand the uniqueness of each child and support their developing needs – physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual. Therefore we provide intimate class sizes where your child will be valued, and well supported.

Our learning environment is nature based, facilitating indoor and outdoor learning through play experiences. This allows and encourages children to become connected to nature, to understand the world and appreciate the signs of God through the beauty of His creation. The name, '**Little Shepherds**', reflects that we aspire the children to develop good character and respect for each other as well as what has been entrusted to them. Encouraging stewardship, promoting peace and developing characteristics such as mercy, compassion and respect.

Our setting aspires to use both permaculture and biodynamic principles in its design where and when possible to ensure all aspects of our provisions support our ethos of spiritual ecology (working in harmony with the Oneness of God). We also follow the Government's required statutory Early Years Foundation Stage, and have fully qualified, first aid trained and DBS checked staff.

Brief Credentials of Little Shepherds' Nursery Manager & Lead Teacher:

Mrs Keesha Malcolm, mother of three, has a Montessori Diploma from an accredited institute.

She is a qualified Special Education Needs Coordinator and is Forest School Trained.

Keesha is also a Child Protection Officer and is First Aid Paediatric Trained. She has previously served as a Nursery Manager & has over five years Early Years experience.