



## **Orchard Preschool & Playgroup Charity Number: 1036897 Trustees Annual Report**

**Financial Year Ending 31st August 2020**

We are a parent-involving community based group providing a safe, secure and stimulating environment for children. The pre-school offers a tailored curriculum promoting the importance of play in the development of the child. Session themes centre around the natural environment with regular sessions held in our purpose made nature garden.

### **Objectives and Activities**

The aims of the Pre-school, as set out in our constitution, are to enhance the development and education of children primarily under statutory school age by encouraging parents to understand and provide for the needs of their children through community groups and by:

offering appropriate play, education and care facilities, family learning and extended hours groups, together with the right of parents to take responsibility for and to become involved in the activities of such groups, ensuring that such groups offer opportunities for all children whatever their race, culture, religion, means or ability;

encouraging the study of the needs of such children and their families and promoting public interest in and recognition of such needs in the local areas;

Instigating and adhering to and furthering the aims and objects of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

In planning our activities for the year we kept in mind the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit at our trustee meetings. The focus for our activities remains centred on delivering the early years foundation stage with a special emphasis on nature inspired learning through play. This benefits the children as they develop their social and emotional skills in an exciting and engaging environment, exploring the natural world through play.

We have no religious affiliation and are open and welcome to all children and their families. We have excellent facilities and can accommodate children with disabilities and special educational needs. We seek to involve parents, carers and the wider community in the pre-school and playgroup, and hold termly activities directly involving the local community.

We are very grateful to our parent volunteers who work very hard and make a big contribution to the overall running of the pre-school and playgroup. The pre-school and playgroup are overseen by a management committee made up entirely of parent volunteers. The management committee are responsible for the recruitment and retention of staff, the pre-school and playgroups finances and equipment, and ensuring the welfare of all children in attendance. The committee forms the 'registered person' for Ofsted and has overall responsibility for ensuring all legal requirements are met. Parent

volunteers are involved in the pre-school and playgroup in many other ways, from organising fundraisers, sharing hobbies and interests with the children, clearing out the cupboard to helping in the garden.

## **Committee and Management Report**

Orchard Preschool & Playgroup commenced the 2019-20 academic year on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September, with sessions running every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8.30am until 16.00pm.

Katie Weller remained in the position of Manager until 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019. Following this date, Gemma Houghton was appointed as Manager of Orchard Preschool and Playgroup.

Following her initial observations setting's practices and procedures, and taking advice and feedback from parents, Early Years Consultants and the Ofsted guidelines, Gemma formulated an action plan with the aim of improving the charity's provision by:

- Developing adequate provision for our youngest children
- Ensuring all statutory requirement of the early years framework were met
- Ensuring adequate supervisions and appraisals of staff were carried out
- Ensuring all staff had completed safeguarding training
- Development of 'the yard' into the 'the nurture garden'
- Review all policies, procedures and risk assessments
- Ensuring sustainability of the preschool going forward
- Ensuring the website was up to date and fit for purpose
- Better communication to parents about children's progress - Tapestry
- Ensure the indoor provision reflects the quality of our outdoor provision

This action plan was implemented throughout 2019-2020.

It was observed that in the period leading up to Gemma Houghton's appointment, staff moral had been low and staff turnover high. By working closely with the staff, highlighting their strengths, boosting morale and confidence, implemented staff Inset training days and supporting staff in their training and development, Gemma has been able to retain staff and develop a positive working environment.

To ensure the sustainability of the preschool, provision for our younger children needed to improve. New groups were formed - Oaks (aged 3-5), Saplings (aged 2-3) and Acorns (8 month to 2). Each group were offered their own dedicated staff and play space, specifically development to meet the needs of their age and development stage.

As the country went into lockdown due to Covid-19 in March 2020, Orchard Preschool followed the Government Guidelines and remained open only to 'Key Worker' families. However, after close consultation with our families and staff, it was felt that in order to sustain the Preschool for the future was to close all together.

During this period of uncertainty, the Management, Committee and Parents all worked together to ensure the best outcomes for the children. Home learning was sent out virtually where appropriate and the staff made themselves available for families when needed. Gemma continued her work as Safeguarding Lead to support our families deemed at risk. Policies and Procedures were reviewed and rewritten where needed, preparation was done for the potential reopening during a pandemic and risk assessments were revisited with this in mind.

We received financial support from the government during lockdown as we continue to receive central funding for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and Job Retention Scheme grants for staff

who were furloughed.

We were fortunate enough in May 2020 to receive a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund of £9351. Half of this grant was ringfenced for training and activities to support the community during and after the Covid-19 induced lockdown, which the other half of the grant was allocated to purchasing the equipment required to support the community through these activities. After consulting the National Lottery Community Fund, we went ahead with purchasing the equipment in preparation for the sessions, when the government guidelines would allow.

As the lockdown was eased in the summer the situation, we were able to open our Summer Holiday Club welcoming our Preschool Families back to the setting for two days per week, in strict bubbles to protect everyone accordingly.

In September, we reopened the provision completely implementing all of the new health and safety guidelines for working in the Early Years sector.

During the 2019-20 period, we were delighted to welcome Robyn Harvey as Play Leader for Acorns.

Whilst this was a challenging year for Orchard Preschool and Playgroup, though the incredible hard work and dedication of our Staff, Management and Committee and the loyalty of our family Members, we ended the 19-20 academic year feeling hopeful for the following year. The setting was in fantastic shape, the team motivated and engaged, and Covid was driving more and more families into the South West. We had every opportunity to grow and develop our provision and support more families with young children.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Total receipts	£87772.25
Total payments	£84933.89
Surplus/deficit	£2838.36
Outstanding Payments	£3675.31
Outstanding Income	£3339.07
<b>Year End Position</b>	<b>£2502.12</b>

Autumn term panned out as projected, operating at a slight loss as is generally expected during this term as child numbers tend to be lower due to school leaver graduating in July. We typically see an increase in child numbers in the Spring term and again in the Summer term.

Spring term was affected by Covid restrictions, which forced us to close to all non 'Key Workers' families from the middle of March. We continued to receive funding for the children that would have attended but lost all income from private parent fees.

Staff who served our private fee paying children were furloughed and we were able to claim 80% of their wages through the Government Job Retention Scheme and received grants from the scheme totalling £7368.47. We adhered to the guidelines for the scheme and paid all furloughed staff 80% of their wages.

We raised £736.50 through fundraising before restrictions were put in place, this was £486.50 from a Pancake Pop-Up event and £250 other activities.

The Lustleigh Show committee also kindly donated £983.37 to the charity which we used to cover the costs of new furniture and room dividers for the hall.

We remained closed throughout the summer term but were able to run the Summer Holiday Club, although at a lower capacity than planned, which gained us an income of £6654.

In May 2020, we received £9351 after applying for a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund. This grant awarded for us to deliver our 'Wellness Wednesday' programme where we would support families with young children throughout our community with a series of activities to promote mental and physical wellness. Equipment for these activities was purchased in 2020 ready to implement the activities post Covid.

After a very difficult year during this unprecedented time we have managed to close the financial year in a really strong position with a surplus of £2502.12. We hope that if we are able to open and operate as normal we should go from strength to strength as we welcome children back into the setting.