

Trustees Report for Financial Accounts for year ending 30th June 2023

Ahoghill & District Community Preschool Playgroup

80 Cullybackey Road, Ahoghill, Ballymena, BT42 1LA

Charity Number – 100885

Principle Activity of the Charity

The aim of the group is to enhance the development and education of the children under statutory school age in the local community.

Charity Trustees:

Mrs Laura Nelson

Mrs Kathy Reid and Mrs Sarah-Jayne Park have stepped down as Trustees.

Trustees will be discussed and agreed at the next committee meeting in November

Ahoghill playgroup is a voluntary organisation managed by a group of parents elected annually and who meet on a monthly basis to discuss issues concerning the group.

The playgroups main purpose is to enhance the development and education of the children under statutory school age by encouraging parents/guardians to understand and provide for the needs of their children. a) offering appropriate play facilities, with the right of parents/carers to take responsibility for and to become involved in the activities of the group, thus ensuring that the group offers opportunities for all children, regardless of culture, race or means and b) encouraging the study of the needs of the children and their families and promoting public interest and recognition of the needs of the children and their families in the local area c) support the values and principles of Early Years-The Organisation for Young Children.

Our Public Benefit statement is as documented on the Charity Commissions register and has remained unchanged since our registration on 12/12/14. The Committee Members/Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission public benefit for this financial year ending 30/06/23.

We are registered for a maximum of 26 children per day to attend the playgroup. For the academic year ending 30/06/23 we had 18 full time preschool children whose places were funded by the Education Authority. We had 9 pre-pre fee-paying children on our register.

All of the children were provided for with age/stage appropriate toys, activities and experiences in a stimulating environment. We promote free play where children can choose and play at their own pace, develop friendships and gain independence. Our provision/activities are carefully planned to incorporate the six areas of learning- Personal, Social & Emotional, Language Development, Physical Development, Early Maths Experiences, The Arts & The World Around Us.

The following are some of the activities we offered this year to provide for the above-named areas of learning-

- We created weekly plans of age-appropriate play-based activities to cater for all ages and stages of development of the children within our group.
- Having all covid restrictions lifted meant we could resume normal service and have visitors back in the building. We had a puppet theatre, Jo Jingles, Pyjama Day, World Book Day Dress Up, Yoga Sessions and a Yoga Instructor, a scientist and nurse visit.
- We continued to use the Lending Resources- Library and Physical Packs with some additional funding from Getting Ready to Learn, we purchased some new resources to be able to make up other packs.
- We share any available/relevant information to the parents via seesaw about The Getting to Learn Programme. The importance of reducing screen time and a good bed time routine. We held 3 parent stay and play sessions, these offered the parents an opportunity to see what their child does at playgroup and hear about the learning potentials within these activities. These were well supported and parents expressed how they enjoyed them and asked for another session.
- We encourage parents to get involved and share their children's learning through becoming a committee member, assist with fundraising, and coming into the group to talk to the children about their job e.g. nurse, scientist, postal worker.
- We had made the decision to let the parents back in the building in September and this was working well at the start but we had some issues with parents not following the rules and had to introduce a new system to make sure they adhered to the rules even with the new system it was proving difficult for parents to adhere to them. An incident took place with a parent so the decision to use the door policy again was necessary to safe guard staff and children in the building. We the staff think this works best as we know who is the building at all times this helps us keep safety for everyone a top priority.
- We encourage parents to use the playgroup mobile number if they want to discuss any concerns so we can arrange a suitable time and date to talk as this keeps within our confidentiality policy. It also helps with a smooth drop off and pick up if parents have already messaged ahead. We provide newsletters and any relevant updates through seesaw.
- We are still waiting for the internet to be put into the building so we are running off the mobile data which can be slow at times. So, seesaw gets updated as soon as the internet is available to let us do it.
- We minimised how many photos we uploaded on See Saw as this was taking up a lot of the leaders' time especially when the internet isn't working. We will continue using See Saw as what it was set up for which is just to send out group updates, newsletters and any relevant information from other sources e.g. getting ready to learn or RiseNI. We sent photos out when we had special events taking place.
- During June we had visits from Primary One teachers from our local schools. We found these visits very beneficial to the children as they get to know their new teacher for the year ahead.
- We are also doing shared links with our local primary school where they invited us to a stay and play session at the school. The children really enjoyed this and it helped them get familiar with what will be some children's new surroundings.
- We held parent/teacher feedback meetings to keep parents in touch with how their child was developing. This provided the parents/carers with an opportunity to discuss any concerns they have about their child.
- This year we again took part in the 3+year review. Parents/carers completed a questionnaire and could make an appointment to speak to the Health Visitor.
- We had cooking days for special occasions which offered children an opportunity to explore simple recipes and cooking.
- We did some fund raising this year we did a Christmas raffle, a spring quiz sheet and summer raffle. Funds was raised by getting parents to donate items for the hampers, selling raffle tickets and quiz sheets. The money raised was used to purchase new toys and resources for the children.
- With funding from the engage programme we were able to avail of an extra member of staff and bring in a yoga instructor.
- We continue to review our policies and procedures and adhere to these. We have policy file with all policies available to parents daily if they need to read these.

Staff continued to develop their personal development by availing of online courses. These included RiseNI, Northern Childcare Partnership, First Aid, Fire Safety Awareness, Safe Guarding/Child Protection training.

Our annual inspection by Social Services took place in in October 2022 and no concerns were highlighted.

Our last ETI Inspection took place in June 2016. The parental responses were 'wholly positive'. 'Parents' indicated a high level of satisfaction with the work of the playgroup. In particular, they commented on the friendly staff and the children's enjoyment during the session'.

We continue to seek parent's comments/feedback during parent meetings/events/at arrivals times and these have been very positive. Parents showed their appreciation to the staff at the end of the year with numerous comments made about the high standard of care, dedication and commitment of the staff during their child's year with the group.

This would suggest that we are meeting the needs of both the children and the parents who use our playgroup as outlined in our purpose.

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L Nelson

(Trustee) LAURA NELSON

Report dated: 25.09.23