

St Helen's Pre-school Annual Report

Children

We said goodbye to 18 children who started Reception on 1 September. We hope they are happy in their new school.

Feedback from our parent questionnaires last term was extremely positive. Our children and parents value the kind and helpful staff, enjoy the free-flow indoors/outdoors, and the large range of activities, especially forest school. Some good improvement ideas are being explored.

We welcome 21 children into the pre-school, with 5 more booked to start with us over the next few months. We are helping our new children to settle into pre-school and they are enjoying all the activities.

Sessions

We provide 6 sessions per week and 2 lunch clubs per week. We have changed our session times with effect from September 2010 so that we are able to provide 15 hours per week to those entitled to NEG (nursery education grant).

We can accommodate 24 children in each session, (currently 18 in Forest School sessions). At the end of last term we had 5 full sessions and were operating a waiting list. We started this term with 21 children attending a total of 78 sessions, (of a possible 132 maximum) which is a high number for this time of year.

Curriculum development

As we are grant funded we are working with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. This means that children must continue to have extended, free access to the outdoor environment all year round. Monday afternoon and Thursday morning Forest School sessions have been running through the last year and are very much enjoyed by the children whatever the weather.

The children have been actively involved in developing the garden throughout the year and would like to thank Len who cared for their garden over the summer holidays and comes in to help with gardening projects.

Other curriculum enrichment activities include –a visiting artist each week to support the children with arts and crafts activities; a visit from Rainforest adventure, with snakes, frogs, etc, visit from a Post Lady, a nurse, a sign language session, a rugby player father and a local library. Hannah's tortoises also visit from time to time.

We aim to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment at pre-school, for the children and their families, and welcome parents or grandparents visiting to share a session or part of a session with the children.

Staff

We have 7 permanent staff. We have had no staff leavers in the last 12 months. Staff absence is minimal. Staff training in the last year includes:

Dawn - NVQ Level 3

Yvonne - 'Understanding Children' Open University course

Tricia – Forest school leader's qualification

Hannah – Forest school skills

Staff roles and responsibilities include:

SENCO – Hannah

Child protection – Tricia

Feedback from the staff questionnaires was very positive. Staff feel valued and enjoy working with the children and parents. Some good improvement ideas are being explored. The staff look after our children wonderfully and we really appreciate all they do. We continue to operate with higher staff ratios than the minimum number prescribed by Ofsted.

Finance

The pre-school finances are healthy, due to the increased numbers on roll in the last year. Please see the annual audited accounts for details.

Fund raising

The pre-school has carried out a number of fundraising events in the last year, including hamper raffles, toy sale, tombola and smartie tubes, and raised approximately £500. We are holding a family disco in October.

Community involvement

The pre-school has worked hard to raise its profile in the community. This has been helped by the launch of the new website. Community events include –

- Thornbury Carnival parade
- Alveston Flower Show – tombola and forest skills stall
- Regular articles in the Helmet
- Leaflet drops in and around the area and signage in the car park

Ongoing projects

The committee is trying to find permanent premises for the pre-school. This will save the staff time each day in setting up/packing up. This is time that could be better spent on developing activities for the children. Having our own premises will allow us to display the children's arts and crafts on the walls and create a really vibrant environment for them.

Committee

The pre-school could not exist without the unpaid work of the committee members. Behind the scenes members of the committee keep the accounts, produce the invoices, minute the meetings, complete official paperwork, maintain the website, keep records, do fundraising, maintain the garden and much more. Thank you to everyone who has done their share this year – your contribution is really appreciated.

We need new parents to come on board, share the load and keep the pre-school going. It's fun, friendly and a good learning experience.