

## **Lindale Muddy Boots Nursery 2023/24 Report**

### **Chair's Report**

#### **Overview**

The 2023/24 academic year has been a good year for our nursery. There have been challenges, both personal and organisational, but Claire, Lucy and Amy have overcome them and reinforced their cohesion as a high performing team. This is amplified by the calmness and purposeful business of the kids when any member of staff is absent; clearly unphased or overly dependent on any single adult.

At a macro level, challenges still exist with the disparity between political rhetoric and funding, with many preschools around the country having to close their doors. With regard to the extended hours being proposed, staff have decided they would like to leave things as they are. I am in agreement (not that I have any choice) as this would adversely affect our financial position.

#### **Staff**

Claire maintains her unflappable calm, leading us all, and developing new ideas to stimulate and grow our children. Shre remains flexible, filling in for gaps in staffing or the need for extra support.

Lucy continues to show her deep care for the children and provides a beacon of stability throughout the week for the children. When Claire is absent, Lucy steps up and deputises for her in the nursery.

Amy continues to be an increasingly important member of the team. She is quiet, but has an unassuming efficiency that ensures no-one is left behind or misses out on opportunities to learn.

When you put them all together, we can see how lucky we are to have them. This is something we should be championing to existing and prospective parents as many nurseries struggle to secure top quality staff in their settings.

#### **Finances**

Finance is an ongoing struggle. We have had years of under investment, despite this we have managed to maintain a reasonable level of financial stability and resilience. However, our reserves are going down at a steady and unsustainable pace, if we do not address the imbalance between costs and revenue.

Given recent changes in taxation, namely the increase in national insurance for employers, the burden on preschool grows further. This is going to necessitate a rise in fees. Clearly, we will keep this to a minimum, but we have to absorb the rise of staffing and tax costs somehow.

The so-called 'Toddler Tax', 20% VAT on preschool fees, does not apply to us as we do not take any school-age children.

#### **Looking Ahead**

We are good at looking after our children and, given our community focus, treat them as our own. Our other strength is in looking after the parents, who often get forgotten, yet face many struggles themselves. Rarely does anyone fall through the gaps.

As we face the potential of a new government and approach next, we must hope that those starting out in life become a true priority and the funding reflects this. In the meantime, a focus on numbers and balancing the books as best as possible remains our secondary priorities.

## **Leader's Report**

### **Overview**

September 2023, we started off with an average of 9 children per day.

Still carrying on with greeting parents and children at the gate and outside play for the session, just going in for lunch, our woodland walk is still very popular, helping the children to walk on rough terrain, manage their own risk and keep safe. In April we painted pictures of Blue Bells, lots of wonderful art work. We have had lots of trips to the park and round the village.

Lots of physical play and following the children's interests – Exploring and Learning through play.

### **Recruitment**

We started having Open Days every term, this have proved to be beneficial in recruiting more children, also current parents are invited to come along and see what we do.

### **Communications**

Amy has taken over Facebook for us, putting Chat, Play and Share session on from County which is a good link for nursery/home learning plus any information we need to share with parents.

We have found that more parents aren't wanting their child on Facebook so to ensure we keep the communication open we are using Tapestry online for messaging and asking parents which is the best way of communicating with them.

### **Calendar**

At Easter we did a raffle and sing-a-long which was very well attended by parents/carers, another link to involve parents in the setting.

March 24 we had a trip to Greenland's Farm to feed the lambs, again all parents/carers where invited. We also had a visit to the dentist in Grange, they let the children sit in the chair, we had a little quiz about what foods and drinks are good or bad for teeth. This was then followed by a trip to Fletchers to buy some fruit for snack.

May 24 we went exploring on the prom at Grange, playing on the park and then having ice creams.

July 24 we celebrated all the children with a trip to Fellfoot.

We keep our link with School strong, taking the children over to their open mornings and let parents know about the afternoon sessions.

### **Ofsted**

We were still waiting for Ofsted to come and inspect us. Not this school year. They did come September 2024, three weeks into term, the inspector was great, very supportive and giving us all the opportunity to expand on what she wanted to know, she kept checking if I needed a break when we did the learning walk and management and safeguarding meeting.

[Lindale Muddy Boots Nursery - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted](#)

### **Staff**

Lucy full time.

Amy - Monday, Wednesday, Thursday Friday,

Claire - Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

As staff we all support each other, cover for each other when needed, we work well as a team, all with different skills and approaches.

I would like to say a big thank you to Lucy and Amy for all their hard work and support to enable Lindale Muddy Boots to be what it is.

### **Attendance**

We have 14 families on the books this year, with only 8 places available over the week and numbers are filling up for September 2025.

## Summary

1. We are currently running a deficit of approximately £6,000 per year. You will notice that the actual figure is £9k, but £3k is maintenance that used a grant from the Diocese. That grant is now exhausted, but maintenance is the responsibility of the landlord, not preschool.
2. The key cost drivers are:
  - a. Salaries £33k (Money well spent)
  - b. Rent £5k (Paid to The Primary School)
  - c. Maintenance £3k (See above)
  - d. Reimbursement £2k (Staff spending their own money and then claiming it back)
  - e. Hot Dinners £2k (Funded separately)
3. As such, you can see that we run an incredibly lean operation with very little room for removing cost. Revenue growth – number of kids and the hourly rate, are the only variables we are able to influence.
4. A massive thank you to everyone that volunteers their time for free, it really is a game changer for us and keeps the wheels turning.

[illegible]

**Fundraising.**

Councillor Jenny Boak wants to donate £500 to Lindale Muddy Boots, she has gone through the school - Claire will contact Westmorland and Furness Council and give them our bank details to sort out payment to us.

Amy suggested that we contact someone who is doing the Keswick to Barrow sponsored walk, last year we received £350 from the organisation. Claire knows someone who is doing the walk and will ask if they are happy to nominate Lindale Muddy Boots Nursery on their application.

Before the village church closed, people in the village made donations to repair the church roof, this has never been done. Lucy will talk to Niki and ask who is on the committee and then ask if people would like to support Lindale Muddy Boots Nursery.

Taylor Hibbert charity: Claire will ask if she can attend a meeting and ask for funding for new windows and repairs of the nursery.

**Election of committee**

Ian George - Chair

Helen Entwisle - Treasurer

Caroline Wood - Secretary - (Caroline wasn't at the AGM as she is new to the role and wasn't able to adjust her schedule for this meeting.).

# Lindale Pre School Playgroup

Annual Accounts for the year ended 31/08/2024  
Income & Expenditure Summary

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Fees	16,137.25	Wages	34,100.03
Free entitlement	26,393.89	Er's Pension	400.14
Grants	0.00	Er's NI	1,061.96
Fundraising	163.22	Emp allowance	- 1,061.96
Computer Refund	36.66	Rent	5,225.50
Small Refunds	80.00	Insurance	984.95
		Equipment	847.93
		Licence	354.95
		Sundries	787.18
		Dinners	2,094.84
		Accountancy	864.00
		Repairs & renewals	3,234.00
		Courses	14.95
		Broadband	735.71
		Deficit	-6,833.16
	<u>42,811.02</u>		<u>42,811.02</u>

## Represented by:

### Cash at bank

Barclays Comm Acc	14,035.12	Retained Funds b/f	21,480.97
Santander Acc	612.69		
Petty cash	0.00	Surplus/(deficit)	- 6,833.16
Net assets/(liabilities)	<u>14,647.81</u>	Closing	<u>14,647.81</u>

I hereby certify that I have examined the above financial statements for Lindale Pre School Playgroup for the year ended 31 August 2024 and found them to be in accordance with the information and explanations provided to me.

  
T R Clarke F.C.C.A.  
Clarke Jefferies  
Chartered Accountants  
Unit 9  
Moss End Business Village  
Crooklands, Milnthorpe  
Cumbria  
LA7 7NU

Date  
18 March 2025

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