

Trustees of Priorslee Pre-School Annual Report for year ending 31st December 2021

6th April 2022

The outline of the financial accounts for the year ended 31st December 2021 presented by the Treasurer to the AGM, and subject to verification by the independent auditor show a nett loss for the year of £27,771, accurately reflecting the devastation caused to the early years sector by the Covid-19 pandemic. There is an uncertainty running through every thread of society- uncertainty about continuity of employment, uncertainty about meeting the rising cost of living, uncertainty about continuing good health and getting treatment if your physical, mental or dental health fails, uncertainty about whether your close friends or family will give you a fatal dose of Covid-19 and you will pass away, isolated in hospital and without the support of friends and family. There has been a prolonged period when everything we held dear was snatched away and we did not know if it would return- and to some it will never return. The trust between humans, the very foundation of our society, will also be broken down for years to come as the virus mutates, evades the vaccines and seriously harms or kills at random- the young, the old, the fit and the vulnerable, both vaccinated at not so.

As predicted last year, we started the new academic year with six children on roll. We have to employ staff of a minimum qualification, and so we cannot employ on a “rise and fall” basis- qualified early years staff are in great demand. So it was, with the minimum of children attending our employment costs far outstripped our non-protected local authority funding, exactly as everyone except the Government said it would. Our £48,000 of funding only went a short way to covering our staffing costs of £67,000, and certainly did not cover our vastly increased cleaning and anti-bacterial fogging costs. Additionally we had costs of £1400.00 for extra training for our staff in mental health and wellbeing, as well as speech, language and communication- all necessitated by lockdown and a slow return to education.

That all said we did survive- mainly due to our frugality and the work of our voluntary committee members in previous years, and our enrolled numbers grew as families gained in confidence, leaving us going into 2022 with the challenge ahead of us. However the latest prediction from the Early Years Alliance is that the number of early years settings closing this year will increase from the 2000 of last year to between 3,500 and 4,000 this year- such a huge loss and a giant hole in the availability of both pre-school education and, of course, childcare. We are already hearing and reading stories of settings refusing to accept Government funded children at the paltry rate offered- some refuse totally, others charge substantial top-up fees- this is not how the Government intended it!!! We hear of settings now charging upwards of £60.00 a day for the care we charge £26.00 for. In the current economic climate families are full of uncertainty about the future and feeling the squeeze on household budgets- with rises in fuel bills, transport costs, food costs, rent and mortgage rate rises, and thus to raise the cost of childcare would serve only to increase the pressure on families. The Management Committee have made a commitment that, at whatever cost, and whilst ever our reserves remain, we will not increase the burden on families- we see this as our core value as a community based charity.

In conclusion I would like to thank both the staff and the trustees for all their efforts in the past year. They set aside, without question, their fears, their vulnerabilities, and, not least, their families to put their dedication to the children in our care at the forefront of their lives.

Whilst they often go unappreciated for their efforts by parents and guardians, without this dedication our setting would have become just another Government closure statistic.

I hope that this year will see our loyalty to the local community recognised and rewarded, that enrolled numbers grow and we return to profitability.

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Examiner's statement

We have examined the accounting records in accordance with General Direction given by Charity Commissioners. This includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes the above accounts, together with supporting books, statements and vouchers, consideration of any unusual items or disclosure in the accounts, and seeking explanation from trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

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Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Priorslee Pre School

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31st December 2021, which are set out herein.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 43(3)(a) of the 1993 Act;
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act; and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

Our examination was carried out in accordance with the General Direction given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with our examination, no matter has come to our attention:

1. which gives us reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with accounting records and comply with accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Apex Chartered Accountants
94 Moseley Street
Digbeth
Birmingham
B12 0RT

14th September 2022

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