

Priorslee Pre-School Annual Trustees Report for Year Ending 31st December 2023

Whilst the quality of service and level of care offered to the children of parents and guardians is acknowledged by the wider community to be of the highest quality available, and the offering to children seen to be the ideal balance between learning and play within the EYFS framework, the Government policy of offering 30 hours of free childcare to the families of three year olds where both parents are working can have limited impact upon our business as our maximum numbers allowed per session under our OFSTED registration is limited to 24 children, and our fire certification on the building restricted to 30 people at any one time. This policy, originally due to be introduced in September 2017, has, at last, been introduced, leading to the refusal of a large portion of private nurseries and pre-schools to accept children wholly funded this way, creating an early scramble for places that seems to be tailoring away.

The local demand for places for two year olds was artificially increased in December 2023, when our adjoining Academy Trust gave two weeks notice to parents of two year olds, both attending and on the waiting list for their Little Seedlings Nursery, that they would not be offering any two year old places for the term starting in January 2024, as this was not financially viable, leaving parents without places for their children.

Our annual accounts for the year ending 31st December 2023 show a healthy net surplus of £28,592, for which we are grateful, although acknowledging that this comes at a price. Of the 33 children we currently have on roll, we have two with physical disabilities and nine with Special Educational Needs, the strain on our staff shows, especially on our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, who has battled tirelessly against a backdrop of reducing specialist support from the local council, to secure the support needed to allow the children to progress to the level needed to make the transition to primary school. Whilst the financial picture looks rosy, with £64,547 available in the bank to carry forward to the next financial year, the “rise and fall” revenues of our industry probably means that this sum will drain away during the latter part of 2024, as we have 21 children leaving us to go to school. In this age where we see settings and the industry in general struggling to recruit and retain the staff necessary to open and operate, it serves no purpose to reduce staffing levels and risk losing valued, experienced and loyal staff.

It needs no highlighting that we remain solvent, of good reputation, and of service to the local and wider community.

Our staff remain loyal, supportive and dedicated to the future success of the setting, continuing to support the local community by working to the best of their ability to give the highest level of safeguarding, education and care of children, for which we send our gratitude.

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 2023, 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.

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11th July 2024

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