

Little Stars Christian Preschool is volunteer led Charity, governed by a constitution, whose main objective is to provide early years education of the highest quality in a Christian environment.

2020-21 was yet another challenging year due to COVID-19, we are grateful that despite many lives being disrupted, and our setting facing many challenges when children or staff were off sick due to Covid, we were able to continue offering services to children for many days. We learnt to rely on and trust that God would give us the strength to cope each new day even though things were scary and stressful sometimes. We are grateful that He was with us the whole way through to the end of the Academic Year.

Board of Trustees

We had a minimum of five board of trustees throughout the 2020-21 academic year. Simon Archer, who was the chair for the past years resigned in February 2021 to continue serving the Lord in another role at LSBC. We are thankful for all his help on strategic planning, always availing himself to assist the management team and leading us during his tenure. As Simon was departing, we welcomed Ian Doncaster to the Board in February 2021. He joins us with a wealth of experience from running his SME.

Constitution and Policies

All our Policies and Procedures are up to date, ensuring compliance with the Ofsted and Early Learning Years Alliance Guidelines. We believe in continuous development and continue to evaluate and update our policies and procedures to make Little Stars a better and safe place for both children and employees. We developed a thorough COVID-19 guidance document and risk assessment which is regularly updated in line with government and other regulatory bodies' guidelines.

Inline with our Business Plan, we started improving our visibility by publicising our preschool and posting updates regularly on the different social media platforms like Facebook.

Finance and Fundraising

The primary source of our income continues to be the Early Years Funding from Warwickshire County Council and the fees charged to parents and carers.

Our numbers after the initial lockdown were extremely low which had a negative impact on our finances. The Council supported us in the Autumn Term by basing their grant on the number of children we had the same period in the last academic year (2019-20).

We benefited from the Job Retention Scheme from September 2020 to May 2021 when we could not fully open the setting to all children. We continued furloughing some of our staff to minimise costs as we had a limited number of children during this period.

Our fundraising activities were restricted to non-contact activities like Easy Fundraising online shopping platform, Bags 2 School, Photos and Guess the sweets. We raised £506 which will help us in replacing old playing equipment for the children.

We are grateful for the generosity and continued support from all our parents and staff who helped us raise these funds.

Our friends and supporters made philanthropic donations of £1000 during this academic year, we are ever grateful to for their generosity and continued support even in these challenging times.

Reserves policy

Our Reserves Policy requires that we hold an estimated contingency of funds for expenditure for a period of 3months (currently amounting to £23,000). These will be used for the following purposes:

- Payment of staff salaries and essential running costs for a period of three months, to be able to meet expenditure obligations before the Grant Money from the Council is received and or remittance of funds is delayed.
- To meet unexpected staff training requirements that is not funded
- To provide funds in instances when the Early Years Funding Money is not adequate to cover operational expenditure
- To have adequate funds in periods when there is a reduction in the number of children on the register

This policy is reviewed annually to reflect the needs of the Preschool and adjustments made for inflation.

Staffing

We started the year with one staff member on furlough due to family circumstances until November 2020 when she returned on a part time basis. She worked in both classrooms, and gradually increased her hours by the end of the summer term. The financial administrator was also on furlough until March 2021.

Other staff members were a stable and a happy team, three to each classroom with the manager covering their days off. We were unable to use bank staff due to concerns about Covid infections, so a decision was made to work with no outside help or volunteers.

Children on Roll

By the end of the academic year there were 20 Sunshines and 10 Rainbows, but it took many months to get to this total due to Covid – many of whom were just 2 year olds.

The number of Rainbows was incredibly low as twelve families had to move back to their home country having been relocated due to work – which had a huge impact on Little Stars.

It took some families many months to build up the confidence to send their children back to preschool throughout this Covid year with only three families returning in March. We provided home learning and doorstep visits to ensure the families were well and supported.

Fifteen out of the twenty Sunshines and six out of the ten Rainbows had English as a second language – which made the classrooms more challenging. Many of the children had no prior experience of an English speaking environment, having been in lockdown, isolating and had never left their parents – all of which added to the time and support needed to help them settle in a new environment.

Some of our families struggled financially during lockdown so we supported them with food and clothes parcels and arranged for them to receive weekly food parcels from a local charity. We are grateful to the trustees and our friends for their donations of food and clothing for these families.

We noticed that many families only used the free fifteen hours, not paying for any extra hours which was a direct effect of Covid 19, family finances and home working.

We are pleased that we had children from many faiths throughout the year.

Next Steps

Our priority is to get more children into the Preschool by advertising through social media which we hope will help build our numbers up to pre pandemic totals.

With the number of children in our setting still low, we have to constantly monitor our finances by balancing staff wages and hours against children's places.

We will also do our best to support our wonderful staff, who have remained loyal and worked well together through particularly challenging times. We will help with managing the high workload due to the high Special Educational Needs of some children, curriculum changes and impact of cleaning and setting up enabling learning environments.

They have been a marvellous team and we are humbled by their commitment.

Training and Development

We had a lot of capacity challenges due to the additional cleaning requirements and need to furlough staff to manage our overheads. In spite of these challenges, we continued supporting our staff's continuous development and they updated their First Aid skills and did Early Years Learning courses and safeguarding updates. All staff completed their food hygiene qualifications in line with the changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Staff attended some online training courses about the new curriculum and are working through the changes in assessing children's developmental progress.

We continued to have half termly inhouse staff training and fortnightly staff meetings.

Community Engagement

Community engagement activities were non-existent in this academic year due to restrictions caused by Covid 19. Our focus was on keeping our staff and children safe, so we maintained our safety bubbles at Stars.

We were unable to have parents in during the year, but as the rules relaxed in the last few weeks of the year, parents came in for the leaving ceremony which ended with an outside party. It was lovely to mix with them more freely.

The new minister visited us a few times and joined in our leaving ceremony.

We engaged with the Church and the Toddler Group, working together to offer a Summer Stay and Play Sessions on Wednesday mornings in the summer holidays to give families something free and safe to do.

We are ever grateful to our manager and staff who worked together as a team and courageously remained open to offer children a place to go and learn and play throughout the peak of the pandemic.

Finally, we want to thank Leamington Spa Baptist Church, Parents, and our friends for their continued support during these challenging times.

Trustees

Little Stars Christian Preschool

Littlestars Christian Preschool
Income and Expenditure Statement
for the Period 1 September 2020
to 31 August 2021
Charity Number : 1070709

2019-2020	Receipts	2020-21
70,764.60	Grants Warwickshire CC	58,659.75
5,270.78	HMRC Job Retention Scheme Grant	4,253.16
13,219.40	Fees	17,716.21
2,097.27	Fundraising	506.20
848.00	Donations	1,038.60
1,503.78	Other	941.94
93,703.83		83,115.86
	Expenses	
79,097.88	Salaries	73,753.34
5,270.78	HMRC Job Retention Scheme Expenditure	4,253.16
2,396.17	Administration	3,144.66
463.38	Cleaning	578.04
773.56	Insurance	782.45
1,917.50	Playgroups Materials & Equipment	1,261.12
562.29	Printing, postage Postage & Stationery	483.39
3,900.00	Contribution to Church	3,300.00
729.60	Training & Development	460.55
4,033.55	Other Costs	938.01
99,144.71		88,954.72
- 5,440.88	Net Deficit	- 5,838.86
48,253.50	Balance b/f	42,812.62
42,812.62	Balance c/f	36,973.76

Signed by: K.B Simango
On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Littlestars
Christian Preschool



Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name

Little Stars Christian Preschool

On accounts for the year
ended

31st August 2021

Charity no
(if any)

1070709

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

**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 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent
examiner's statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a 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 the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or

1. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached..

Signed:

Graham Howe

Date:

31st May 2022

Name:

Graham Howe

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

Retired Independent Financial Consultant

Address:

Flat 7 Grosvenor Court