

Therfield Village Preschool
ANNUAL REPORT
1st March 2024 – 28th February 2025

Registered Charity No. 1086252

WELCOME

Welcome to Therfield Village Preschool's 23rd Annual Report. This report covers the period 1st March 2024 - 28th Feb 2025.

The purpose of this report is to provide you with information regarding the preschool, to keep you informed about its development over the past year and our future plans.

This report is divided into the following sections:

- Section 1: Reports:
 - 1.1 Chair's Report
 - 1.2 Finance & Fundraising Report
- Section 2: Aims of the Preschool
- Section 3: People:
 - 3.1 The Staff Team
 - 3.2 The Committee
- Section 4: Key Developments
- Section 5: Future Plans

SECTION 1: REPORTS

1.1 CHAIR'S REPORT – Frances Stratton

The end of spring term and summer term (2024) were strong for preschool with 35 children on roll and 15 (!) Owls graduating to their next reception class. The ladies, as always, did a fantastic job ensuring a smooth transition for all the children leaving preschool.

On the whole we had a good start to September, with a number of new families joining us. We would like to welcome all our new children and their families. The numbers of children have increased steadily over the course of the year, particularly during the spring term in 2025. So great were our increases in January and February that for a few weeks we deferred some start dates to ensure that all new children were able to be accommodated properly.

We did have lower numbers on most afternoons, particularly in the autumn term. As a result, we did not run a Tuesday afternoon session from September – the end of the period of this report.

It has been an eventful year from a committee perspective: our previous Chair, Lisa, stood down in October 2025. We are very grateful for all she did for preschool and for staying on the committee for the rest of this academic year to ensure that the handover to myself was as smooth as possible. I also want to acknowledge and thank Claire, who had been treasurer for years, for all her hard work and Tammy, who was Treasurer for the second half of the period of this report.

The committee worked extremely hard to raise vital funds for preschool. Fantastic funding efforts included: Little Recylers (April 24), Therfield Fete (June 24), pub quiz (July 24), Scavenger Hunt (October 24), Christmas Market (Nov 24), Christmas cards & gifts (Dec 24). Our fundraising has enabled Little Wiggles to come for an end of term visit, as well as leaving gifts for for the committee and Dunja.

We have had an exceptional Committee team this year and I could not have managed as chairperson without you all. Thank you.

We would also like to thank many others for their role in the life of the preschool including but not limited to:

- The parents of the children attending the preschool for all their continued support.
- Joe Bailey, our IT guru, for his continued hard work on our website.
- Therfield First School and their teachers and teaching assistants for promoting strong links between our two settings, working with us to ensure a smooth transition for our Owls.
- The Therfield residents for supporting our various fundraising activities that have been held.
- Ivan Titmass, former landlord of the Fox & Duck, who ran a very successful pub quiz for us.
- The Village Hall Committee for continuing to support the preschool, and assisting with the necessary steps to keep us running smoothly.

The staff team

Firstly, we would like to say a huge thank you to all the staff for their hard work throughout the year, to keep the preschool a happy, warm and safe environment in which our children can play and learn.

To carry out the responsibilities of Chairperson would be impossible without the support and guidance from the preschool leader, Tina Downing and her wonderfully hard working and enthusiastic team. It is astonishing what Tina and all of the staff achieve on a tiny budget and without a purpose-built building. Without our wonderful staff preschool would not exist and we are all

incredibly grateful for all their hard work. Natalie Hunn continues as Deputy Leader and Sue Hamilton as SENCo.

We have faced some staffing challenges this last year, with Dunja Starc announcing her departure at the very start of my term as Chair. We were delighted to be able to recruit Charlotte, and to take on Summer as bank staff. We now have three members of staff with level 3 qualifications and Tina with level 5. Astonishingly, Tina has also made the time to complete her degree. I have no idea how she has managed this on top of running marathons as well as our preschool. We are incredibly fortunate to have such dedicated, hardworking and well-qualified staff at our setting.

We have had many new starters and the staff have done an outstanding job of settling them in.

Our staff continue to deliver the seven areas of the EYFS curriculum to our children: personal, social and emotional, communication and language, physical development, literacy, maths, understanding the world, expressive arts and design. They do this whilst catering to the needs of the individual child and activities led by the children's interests and curiosity continue to be the strengths of our small and friendly preschool. The introduction of Little Wandles has been a real benefit and enables an even smoother transition for children moving on to the First School. The preschool continues to offer a unique, happy and homely environment in a close-knit village.

Community

The preschool is fortunate in having close links with Therfield First School and we hope to continue to work in the future together to build on the transition periods for the children as they move onto the bigger schools.

We are also very lucky to enjoy wonderful support from all the other pillars of the village community, including:

- The church, who allow us to hold fundraising activities in their building and grounds;
- The chapel, who allow us to hold our AGM in their building;
- The pub ,who ran a brilliant pub quiz for us; and
- Our partners at the village hall, without whom we would not have a home.

Committee changes and challenges

As a committee led preschool, we greatly value our committee members for giving their precious time and commitment. I do not underestimate the time you have given freely to preschool, ensuring its smooth running and current success and would like to thank each one of you. We say a sad goodbye to lots of you this year as you move on to other challenges. Thank you Abbie, Lisa, Laura and Sophie B for the hours you have given preschool this last year alone.

Any parents, family or community members that would like to join us, are able to help or want to know more about the roles that we have, please have a look at the section 3.2 Committee Members and you are always welcome to come have a chat with me or any other members. We will always be more than happy to take you through what we do and how we do it. Please do come and join us if you can.

1.2 EXPENDITURE REPORT

Therfield Village Preschool - Income and Expenditure (1st March 2024 – 28th February 2025)

Income	24-25	Income	23-24
HCC Funding	£84,489.68	HCC Funding	£63,676.01
Grants	£0.00	Grants	£0.00
Fundraising	£1365.05	Fundraising	£1,862.90
Fees	£14,459.00	Fees	£20,868.03
Current account interest	£31.37	Interest	£34.64
Savings account interest	£195.96	Other	£143.23
Petty Cash account interest	£0.30	JRS Gov Grant (Covid)	£1.28
TOTAL	£100,541.36	TOTAL	£86,441.58
Expenditure	24-25	Expenditure	23-24
Preschool Equip. resources	£1,749.37	Preschool Equip. resources	£3,002.43
Wages, Pensions, PAYE	£79115.10	Wages, Pensions, PAYE	£78,205.75
Insurance, Reg. Account.	£1,650.92	Insurance, Reg. Account.	£1,939.34
Advertising	£14.00	Advertising	£60.00
Hall hire	£7,638.75	Hall hire	£7,688.45
Petty cash	£2,732.80	Petty cash	£1,022.33
Clothing	£189.60	Clothing	£322.36
Printing	£451.64	Printing	£458.33
Phone, internet, website	£156.45	Phone, internet, website	£207.10
Bank charges	£60.00	Bank charges	£60.00
Staff training	£108.00	Staff training	£1,128.00
Other	£84.00	Other	£1,049.09
Fundraising costs	£0.00	Fundraising costs	£0.00
Student support	£0.00	Student support	£0.00
Stationary (now inc. in resources)	£0.00	Stationary (now inc. in resources)	£0.00
TOTAL	£93,950.63	TOTAL	£95,143.18
Excess of Income over Exp.	£6,590.73	Excess of Income over Exp.	-£8,557.09
Add balance brought forward	£15,538.21	Add balance brought forward	£24,095.30
Balance carried forward	£22,128.94	Balance carried forward	£15,538.21
<u>Represented by:</u>		<u>Represented by:</u>	
Balance CafCash A/C	£13,445.21	Balance CafCash A/C	£7,557.94
Balance Caf Savings A/C	£8,169.74	Balance Caf Savings A/C	£7,773.78
Balance of Petty Cash A/C	£396.45	Balance of Petty Cash A/C	£168.95
Balance of Petty Cash in cash	£87.54	Balance of Petty Cash in cash	£7.54
Cash in hand	£0.00	Cash in hand	£0.00
PayPal	£30.00	PayPal	£30.00
National lottery grant	£0.00	National lottery grant	£0.00
Difference	£0.00	Difference	£0.00
TOTAL	£22,128.94	TOTAL	£15,538.21

Treasurer: Katie Boon

Date: 15-12-2025

Independent Auditor: 

Date: 23-10-2025

SECTION 2. AIMS OF THE PRESCHOOL

- Provide quality, affordable childcare for children between the ages of two to five years.
- Help build children's early relationships with their peers, prior to going on to primary school.
- Provide a warm and friendly environment to encourage children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Offer a wide range of structured and free-play activities to develop independence and confidence.
- Encourage understanding and development of the six Learning Areas: Personal, Social & Emotional development; Communication, Language & Literacy; Problem Solving, Reasoning & Numeracy; Physical development; Knowledge and Understanding of the World; and Creative development.
- Encourage development in all skills according to the age and ability of the individual child.
- Provide a curriculum in accordance with nationally approved learning goals.
- Offer state grants to cover the cost of places for children the term after they are three years old, and grants or subsidies for younger children, where families are on a low income.
- Liaise closely with Therfield First School and all the other schools our children move onto.

SECTION 3: PEOPLE

3.1 THE STAFF TEAM

We are extremely fortunate to have a truly wonderful, dedicated team of staff who work at the preschool:

Tina Downing - Leader

Tina has been with us for over 12 years as our Preschool Leader. She holds a certificate in Early Years Practice and a Foundation Degree in Early Years Child Care and Education. Tina initiates and organises the daily programme of activities at the preschool, monitoring the quality of teaching and charting developmental progress of the children. She is responsible for short and long-term planning. She also supervises all staff including appraisals and liaises with Therfield First School and the preschool committee. Tina heads up the senior management team.

Natalie Hunn, - Deputy Leader

Natalie has been working for the preschool for over 11 years. She holds a Cache Level 3 Diploma in childcare. Natalie became our Deputy Leader in September 2018 and has had a positive impact within the team from the very start. She has introduced number of new initiatives to help streamline how the preschool works and has been working closely with Tina.

Sue Hamilton - Qualified Assistant and SENCo.

Sue has been a permanent member of staff since September 2014. She is a former preschool parent and committee member, and an experienced foster carer. She has completed an apprenticeship in her Level 3 Early Years qualification. Sue is the team SENCO and is doing a fantastic job at ensuring all children's needs are met.

Sara Walker – Qualified Assistant

Sara returned to preschool last year – to our great delight!

Charlotte Baker

We are delighted to welcome Charlotte as permanent staff, having been bank staff and a former committee member, as well as a preschool parent herself.

Harry Walsh – Preschool Assistant (Bank Staff)

Harry provides additional support to the team when he is home in the UK, in between his education in the States pursuing a football scholarship. He is much loved by the children and team alike, bringing a young and fresh dynamic with him.

Gemma Moule – Preschool Assistant (Bank Staff)

As a former preschool team member, Gemma is working as ad hoc bank staff, much to the Owls' delight – they are very excited to get to know someone from 'Big School'.

Summer Barford– Preschool Assistant (Bank Staff)

We were delighted to welcome Summer, who has been a big hit with the children this year.

All members of staff are police checked through the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service), participate in half-termly planning meetings to plan the curriculum and share ideas, and are updating continuously their knowledge and skills through additional childcare training courses. With a key worker system in operation, staff members are each responsible for observing and charting the progress of a small group of children.

3.2 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee changes:

- Myself, Chetan and Tammy/Katie have all taken on significant roles at preschool this year as Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Lisa Kingsley stood down as Chair in October 2024, Claire stood down as Treasurer in September 2024, which was also when Abbie ceased to be Treasurer.

The committee is facing a few changes in the next year, and I believe these changes ensure that we always have a committee who are fully dedicated to the current and future needs of the preschool. We ensure that the majority of members have either previously had, or currently have, a child attending the preschool.

Our current committee members:

Frances Stratton	Chairperson
Katie Boon	Joint Treasurer
Sophie Murphy	Joint Treasurer
Chetan Ladd	Secretary
Abbie Knights	Fundraising (standing down at this AGM)
Sophie Brogden	Village Hall Committee (standing down at this AGM)
Laura Hanson	Admissions Coordinator (standing down at this AGM)
Lisa Kingsley	Social media & former chairperson (standing down at this AGM)

Committee Roles

The committee is responsible for the management of the preschool and undertakes various roles including the following:

- Admissions
- Applying for any grants and researching available grants
- Attending meetings
- Budgeting, payroll and financial planning
- Carrying out Disclosure and Barring checks
- Formulating and reviewing policies, Staff Handbook & Operational Plan
- Fundraising
- Health & Safety
- Liaising with Fordham Memorial Hall Management Committee
- Ofsted liaison and compliance.
- Managing accounts & issuing bills
- Managing contracts of employment
- Marketing
- Organising insurance & licences
- Purchasing consumables & new equipment
- Responding to changing needs – e.g. facilities and supplies
- Responding to changing Ofsted, law and charity regulations
- Safeguarding
- Safe recruitment
- Staff appraisals
- Writing & circulating minutes

SECTION 4: KEY DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 Government Childcare expansion plans.

The government has rolled out its national universal childcare scheme this year. This has had a significant impact on preschool: we have increased numbers of younger children, as their parents received funding for them at an earlier age. This is excellent for the families benefiting from the scheme and for maintaining preschool numbers, but it also presents a challenge as the funding granted by the government does not stretch very far and we have no ability to increase it.

4.2 Starting age

The starting age for preschool children was reduced to 2 years in September 2013. This has continued to be a popular age to join the Preschool. We are happy to continue to offer places for children from 2 years old. The numbers of children under 2.5 years old are monitored very closely by the Leader (Tina) and Chair (Frances). If a term is forecast to have a high number of children under 2.5 years old joining the preschool, these children's start dates are staggered accordingly to ensure each child is settled in based on their individual needs.

4.3 Village hall

Thank you to the Village Hall for supporting our preschool throughout the years. The Village Hall have indicated that they intend to increase rent charges next year. As Chair I am liaising with them and Therfield Parish Council to ensure that any changes are sustainable and will not bankrupt our

preschool. I attended the village hall AGM recently and have reached out to their chair directly to arrange a meeting.

4.4 Marketing and Fundraising

We continue to spread the word about the setting via our website, leaflets, current parents and social media platforms. We have a healthy number of children attending preschool currently, and government funding continues to encourage an increase in younger children.

Fundraising events this year have raised a fantastic amount and a special thank you must go to all the people who gave their time and support in order for these fundraising efforts and fun days to go ahead.

5. FUTURE PLANS

5.1 Policies – updates and implementation

Tina has undertaken the policy updating role. The policies are in the process of being updated and will be uploaded to the website asap and in any event in advance of the start of the next term.

5.2 Increases in national living wage and national insurance

National living wage and national insurance increase in April 2024. This will have a serious impact on preschool finances, and it is something to which we are giving considerable thought.

5.3 Committee responsibilities

The committee responsibilities will be reviewed and carefully considered with the introduction of new Trustees and the departure of current members.

1.3 EXPENDITURE REPORT

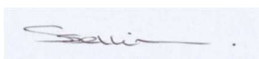
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Treasurer:

Date:

Independent Auditor:



Date: 23-10-2025



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

THERFIELD VILLAGE PRE-SCHOOL

On accounts for the year
ended

28TH FEBRUARY 2025

Charity no
(if any)

1086252

Set out on pages

1-12

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **28/02/2025**.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date:

23-10-2025

Name:

Samantha Selkirk

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

MAAT

Address:

56 Browning Close

Royston

Herts, SG8 7EY

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

N/A