



Company number: 5055356

Charity Number: 1102887

The Children's Workshop

Report and financial statements

For the period ended 31st August 2023



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The Children's Workshop Trustees' Annual Report

For the period ended 31st August 2023

Company number	5055356
Charity number	1102887
Registered office and operational address	Environmental Park, Buckhurst Lane, Sevenoaks, TN13 1FE
Trustees	Trustees, who are also directors under company law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows: Andrew Scrace (Chair) Catherine Burgess (Treasurer) Kathryn Preedy (Secretary) Kristina Brockington Mark Cheeseman Katie Garman Nicola Mackert Kinvara Rogers Dr Jocelyn Walbridge
Key management Personnel	Nicola Mackert (Preschool Manager)

The trustees present their report and the financial statements for the period ended 31st August 2023.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the memorandum and articles of association and the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.

The Children's Workshop's Purpose and Ethos

The purpose of The Children's Workshop is to enhance the development and education of children primarily under statutory school age. This is achieved by offering appropriate play, education, care facilities and training courses, together with the right of parents to take responsibility for, and to become involved in, the activities of The Children's Workshop. Thereby ensuring opportunities for all children whatever their background race, culture, religion, means or ability. The ethos that guides our work is:

OUR ETHOS

At The Children's Workshop Preschool, we believe all children have an innate desire to learn and explore and that each child is a special individual. At our preschool we work together – children, staff, parents, carers and the wider community to ensure ALL children learn and have FUN in a safe, nurturing environment that supports them to develop their individual potential whilst building HAPPY FRIENDSHIPS and MEMORIES.

OUR AIMS

We aim to provide an environment where children can:

Develop a 'can do' attitude:

- We nurture our children's sense of self and belief
- We foster Self-Involvement, Engagement, Motivation, Risk Taking and Assessing
- We encourage exploration, investigation and problem solving

Develop a sense of 'wonder of the world':

- We stimulate our children's interest in their community, the world we live in and its sustainability
- We love to learn outdoors; we have a special focus on forest school inspired activities
- We strive to enthuse our children with a love for learning

Grow to be 'their very best':

- Developing skills for life such as listening, learning, manners, teamwork and building friendships
- Developing a strong sense of self as individual within a tolerant community built on respect for others
- Developing children's resilience, independence, and confidence to move towards each next step in life
- Develop creativity and celebrate and listen to each other's successes and ideas.

Aims and Objectives

The charity's main activities and who it tries to help are described below. Annually, the trustees review the aims, objectives, and activities of the charity. These are set against 3 key areas:

1. ***Children's Learning and Development*** – to provide an exciting, high quality and varied learning programme for all children attending.
2. ***Management of Setting*** – to run the setting effectively and efficiently.
3. ***Partnership Working*** – to create and sustain positive and mutually-beneficial partnerships with organisations in the community.

This report looks at what the charity has achieved and the outcomes of its work in the reporting period. The trustees report the success of each key activity and the benefits the charity has brought to those groups of people that it is set up to help. The review also helps the trustees ensure the charity's aims, objectives and activities remain focused on its stated purposes.

The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been set.

2022–2023 Aims and Objectives

Children's Learning and Development – *to provide an exciting, high quality and varied learning programme for all children attending.*

This year our focus was aimed towards:

- I. **Educational Programme** – To review the setting's environment and approach to the prime areas of learning (Language and Communication, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development) to maximise the opportunities to deliver an inclusive and supportive programme.
- II. **Forest school development** – To build on last year's achievements and develop the setting's forest school pedagogical approach across the setting.
- III. **Curriculum planning and approach** – To review and adapt the setting's approach to and planning of the curriculum to ensure delivery of an inspirational curriculum which evolves and adapts in response to children's needs.

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- IV. **UN Sustainable Development Goals** – To develop the setting's commitment to the goals within everyday practice at the setting and develop specific activities around the goals.
- V. **Safeguarding and Welfare** – To continue to revise practice for the health and well-being of each child at the setting.

Management of the Setting – *to run the setting effectively and efficiently.*

This year our focus was aimed towards:

- I. **Staff Development** – To invest in training that supports the development of staff skills, informs their practice, and subsequently positively impacts the setting. Cascading learning to other practitioners will also be key.
- II. **Staff Well-Being** – To continue to effectively support staff well-being.
- III. **Setting Administration** – To review database platforms currently used across the setting and with families, with a view to streamline the system, improve efficiency and reduce paperwork.
- IV. **Committee Management and Governance** – To build on the strong partnership between the Committee and setting and identify opportunities to build in succession planning of Committee roles.

Partnership working – *to create and sustain positive and mutually beneficial partnerships with organisations in the community.*

This year our focus was aimed towards:

- I. **Local Community** – To extend partnerships within the local community.
- II. **Parental Engagement** – To continue to engage parents in supporting their child's development in partnership with the preschool.

Achievements and performance

All its charitable activities focus on providing a quality preschool education for children aged 2–4 and are undertaken to further The Children's Workshop charitable purposes for the benefit of the public. Detailed in this report are the achievements and performance of the organisation reflecting the 2022–2023 aims and objectives that had been set.

With the backdrop of continued challenge within the Early Years sector, the team worked tirelessly to create an inspiring curriculum and, in the process, achieved a wide variety of diverse, challenging, and fun programme of activities. One of the highlights during the year was the programme developed through the theme "All About My World". Each week throughout the Spring and Summer terms the children celebrated a different country around the world. Each country chosen reflected the countries that children and their families were from. We were delighted and proud that over 16 countries were explored and celebrated with the children, demonstrating the diversity of the families at the setting and how the preschool is one in which all cultures are celebrated and welcomed.

Children's Learning and Development:

1. Educational Programme – To review the setting's environment and approach to the prime areas of learning (Language and Communication, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development) to maximise the opportunities to deliver an inclusive and supportive programme.

Whilst the preschool operated throughout the COVID pandemic, research reports being published in early 2022, provided evidence of the impact of the pandemic on children, and confirmed that it was being felt among children born during the pandemic i.e. children that would be 2yrs old and starting preschool in September 2022. Research on the impact of Covid identified it as a significant disruption on children. Speech and language delays were reported across all age groups as children had fewer opportunities to develop their communication skills at home. As children may have spent less time outdoors and more time in sedentary activities, their physical development, including their motor skills, were negatively affected. Other research highlighted that due to severely restricted social circles during lockdown, this was likely to have led to babies hearing fewer words and conversations with those outside the family home, and if they did it was likely to be between masked adults. It was reported that infants born during the pandemic heard just 20–70 words per hour compared with between 100 and 140 words in babies sampled 3 years before the pandemic.

Faced with evidence such as this, alongside discussions with other preschools and Early Years Collaboration Leaders forums across Kent, the manager and practitioners determined that for the year ahead, the focus of the 3 prime areas of learning within the EYFS – (1) Language and Communication; (2) Personal, Social and Emotional Development; and (3) Physical Development, whilst already a central part of the curriculum was to be given even more of a pivotal and deliberate focus throughout the planning for the year.

To ensure the curriculum and programme of activities planned and delivered across the setting reflected this commitment and identify what else as a preschool we could do to support each child, the manager felt it important that an external review was undertaken to audit the setting's provision and practice. Therefore, through a grant secured with Marks and Spencer, the preschool was able to fund a representative from Kent County Council to undertake a Strategic Improvement Visit to review the setting with a particular focus on the prime areas of learning. The advisor also undertook an internal and outdoor audit of the environmental space and provided ideas and prompts to extend learning and support for children. The advisor identified that the resources sourced through Covid grants were effective for both cohorts and had the tools to support these children effectively; but that the impact would only be truly seen if effectively utilised by the team

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with the children. The advisor therefore explored both rooms from a child's perspective to understand how "accessible" and "understandable" resources around the room were as well as what we had on the walls and why. The advisor provided vital feedback and assessment along with several recommendations of books and additional resources to continue to inform practice.

During the visit, an area specifically identified for input and support was the area of "transition". The transition points covered were:

- Transition from home to preschool – having noted the increased emotions of the 2yr cohort when starting the preschool this academic year.
- Transition between activities – how to best manage and create learning opportunities during times of transition e.g. from activity to snack time, or from snack to preparing for outdoors.
- Transition from preschool to Reception – the Saplings cohort would be, in the terms ahead, preparing for school.

The advisor again provided suggestions, ideas and resources to support the different transition stages to better support children. The strategic visit was informative and helpful, and a number of different recommendations were implemented over the year.

As part of the delivery of the curriculum, the setting plans a different workshop each morning throughout the week with all children encouraged to take part. The aim and outcomes of these workshops focus on all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage delivery. The previous academic year, we were fortunate to have "Rhymes with Rosie" where Rosie, a retired schoolteacher came to the setting to sing a wide variety of nursery rhymes with the children. Having clearly seen the positive impact of this rhyme time with the children with their speech, language and levels of engagement, we hoped that Rosie would be able to continue giving her support, which she did for the duration of the Autumn Term. Seeing the impact on all the children, the team agreed that this special time should be developed further and therefore a dedicated literacy workshop was created.

Building on the rhyme time, two members of the team attended the training programme "I CAN TALK". The programme is aimed specifically at accelerating children's progress in language and communication over a period of 9–10 weeks. The programme uses several stories of "Jake and Tizzy" with specific language and communication aims and activities to support the story each week. The programme whilst usually delivered with an identified small group of children, was tested across both rooms of the setting, and found that the programme positively impacted all children. The impact demonstrated both a growth in language and conversation as well as confidence in contributing to a group discussion. An additional benefit was increased confidence by practitioners to lead the programme having seen the demonstrable and measurable impact with the children using the stories and relevant activities. Moving forward in the next year, the programme

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will continue to be used, but in addition more specific activities will be selected reflecting identified children with language and communication challenges to maximise the support for each child.

Our commitment to support the physical development of the children meant we identified that following Covid, having removed all the wooden barriers in the garden in place during the pandemic, we needed investment in the outdoor space for the children to enjoy a variety of opportunities to build on their gross motor skills. The strategic review at the start of the year had also highlighted this need. Apart from a tyre hill with slide and a teepee to sit in, it was a spacious area, but relatively empty.

A successful application for a grant from Sevenoaks Town Council meant we were able to purchase a rope climbing crest and obstacle course. Unfortunately, the cost of the items had increased, so we fundraised for the remaining funds and purchased a pulley system. The children were shown how to use the equipment wisely, and the equipment now forms an integral part of our outdoor activities. The impact of the equipment at the setting has been significant and has been specifically recognised in two principal areas:

- (i) *Increased confidence of children* – EVERY child that first came across the equipment, showed a sense of nervousness. Through support from practitioners, the children learnt how to climb the rope crest to the top, go over the top and down the other side and to learn how to use the obstacle course. The children have also learnt how to pull the ropes with the pulleys, to physically lift a box into the air. This curiosity and this level of comprehension to learn how to use the equipment is all part of increased confidence and as a setting, we recognise that engaging outdoor activities is crucial to this build in confidence.
- (ii) *Increased stability, balance, coordination, and agility* – for several children, negotiating steps was a particular challenge and the obstacle course equipment has been significant in negotiating up and down steps. For the older children, balance and coordination was developing, but building resilience was key, that it was not just about negotiating the equipment at speed, but to learn that it's ok to fall off and get back on and keep going. Using the ropes and pulleys also worked on coordination to move the boxes on the ropes and pulleys, up, down and across the outdoor space. The children are now so confident with the rope climbing crest and obstacle course, that they try to see how quickly they can get up, down and round. They enjoy role-modelling how to use it with the younger and new cohort.

II. Forest school development – To build on last year's achievements and develop the setting's forest school pedagogical approach across the setting.

With the large outdoor space and Knole Park surrounding the preschool, the focus on outdoor activities has always had a significant priority in planning and delivery of our ethos. Over the last few years, the preschool has reflected and modelled this through

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exploring the Forest School approach. Last year, the Committee of Trustees approved the investment of the Deputy Manager to complete a Level 3 Forest School Leader qualification. During the first term of this academic year, the Deputy Manager completed and passed her Level 3 course enabling a variety of specific Forest School skills activities to be planned with the children including whittling, sawing, making a fire and of course cooking on the fire.

However, what the Forest School Leader and Manager identified is that whilst the opportunity to undertake specific Forest School skills has been impactful with the children, it is the Forest School pedagogical approach and principles that have provided the greatest impact with the children and the practitioners. The principles of Forest School* are:

- (i) Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment.
- (ii) Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to develop a relationship between the learner and the natural world.
- (iii) Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved fostering resilience confidence, independence and creativity of all learners.
- (iv) Forest School offers learners the opportunity to be risk-takers appropriate to the environment and themselves.
- (v) Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who maintain and develop their professional practice.
- (vi) Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.

*Forest School Principles agreed by Forest School community in 2011

This year we have therefore been working overall on implementing and role-modelling consistently the Forest School approach to the children along with the practitioners. To support the approach for practitioners, during an INSET day, the Forest School Leader led a session for all practitioners in Knole Park, using the woodland area to support the practitioners in further understanding the approach and the activities from the child's perspective. The practitioners enjoyed learning more about the approach and their role in supporting children in Forest School. The end of the session saw the team build a fire and cook lunch together which demonstrated the teamwork approach, a vital component of Forest School. The Forest School Leader throughout the year consistently role-modelled the Forest School principles, in order that on her non-working days, other practitioners were able to model and continue using the Forest School pedagogical approach together with the children.

For the children this year, the Forest School-inspired activities, as part of our outdoor classroom, were prepared for every afternoon supporting the principle of a Forest School programme being frequent and regular. Whilst much of the programme from the outset was located within the outdoor space of the preschool, opportunities to explore the

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natural environment of Knole Park were taken as well as observing the park's wildlife animals. The children at the outset, were guided by the Forest School leader in planned and organised activities, however as the children's confidence grew and they became familiar with the surrounding areas and resources they could use, many more child-led activities started to emerge. All these changes demonstrated the build in confidence of the children with the outdoors and led to much more risk taking when being invited to take part in Forest School skills.

Forest School skills that the children were invited to take part in included: whittling of wood with peelers, sawing wood with a bow saw and learning how to use different tools e.g, trowels or using string to tie sticks and wood together. The children learned how to prepare a fire, the different elements from the outdoors to build it, and then how to use flint and steel to light a fire. Additional skills explored included having the children create pictures using charcoal used from a previous fire. A popular Forest School activity throughout the year and in all weathers was den building. Using sticks, tarps and ropes the children were invited to create different dens to take shelter in, or to use in imaginary play or to create a "tent" to live in! These activities were repeated numerous times throughout the year in order that the children built up their confidence in using tools and building dens. Over time, the children then began to lead the choice of activity knowing the materials that would be needed.

Activities across the year were wide and varied, and whilst there was a clear plan each week – to ensure materials were sourced and practitioners prepared – there were many times that plans were changed altogether or adapted, based on the learner-centred process in which the children were able to direct how an activity developed.

In addition to the Forest School skills, the outdoor programme over the year covered the following: hibernation and the building of both hedgehog houses, bug hotels and learning how a bird's nest is made, making bird feeders to hang in the trees, as well as investigating mini beasts and where they live (worms are a particular favourite!), leaf identification and leaf printing. Learning about the trees in the surrounding area was explored, and books such as "Leaf Man", "Tree: Seasons Come and Seasons Go" and "The Giving Tree" were all used to reinforce the natural landscape in all elements of the curriculum. Ropes were looped around the trees with the pulley system set up to lift and move wooden boxes of different materials around the outdoor space. Finding different ways to explore the outdoor space using the pedagogy of Forest School has been a continuing learning curve. Sticks were even used to create Chinese characters during Chinese New Year to reflect how all parts of the curriculum can be reflected both indoors and outdoors. This will continue and be built on in the next year.

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III. CURRICULUM PLANNING AND APPROACH – To review and adapt the setting's approach to and planning of the curriculum to ensure delivery of an inspirational curriculum which evolves and adapts in response to children's needs.

The preschool has 3 main term headings to provide an umbrella guide to structuring learning activities throughout the year, as well as mini topics and workshops. The Autumn term is "All About Me" where we learn about the children – their families, their likes and dislikes, their strengths and those things they find challenging – and how we can support them. The Spring term is "All About My World" learning about the wider world in which we live and the Summer term is "All About My Community" learning about the area in which we live with our families and the different parts that make up our community.

This academic year, we identified an increase in separation anxiety from children with many attending the preschool having never attended play groups or toddler groups or activities as children did pre-pandemic. This meant that the curriculum was adapted to ensure the settling of all children at the setting, e.g. children initially attending shorter sessions to build up to a full session away from the parent. Lots of pictures of families and loved ones were visible throughout the setting to encourage conversation about families. Exploring activities using resources reflecting those that children enjoy at home was a key element to settling all new children. Through this exploration, all children settled and engaged in the activities and programme of the preschool.

Following the term of "All About Me", we identified that we had children attending with English as an Additional Language (EAL), and rather than have a few survival words to use with the children, we wanted to explore a deeper way to engage each family. We therefore decided for the Spring term to dedicate the term to exploring the countries from which the children and their families originate. We wanted to learn about the culture and traditions, what the country is known for, what food dishes are from the country and invite a member of the child's family into the setting to share something of the country, even hear the language of that country spoken. We had no idea of the explosion of learning for children and practitioners it would create, as well as the importance of recognising a country and all its variety, together with the significance for every child to have a member of their family coming into the setting to talk to all the children. Whilst we had planned a few countries, we discovered that from the children at the setting, more than 16 countries were represented. The planning for the countries therefore extended beyond the Spring term into the Summer term in order that all children felt that their family and country had been represented.

The countries explored were: China, Sweden, Russia, Poland, Brazil, Japan, Romania, Ireland, South Africa, England, Italy, France, Benin, Turkey and Mauritius. We had parents and/or grandparents visit who shared well-known stories in the language of their

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country. Some parents shared traditional dress, some shared food detailing the meaning behind the food and many shared music and dance local to the country. The workshops for the term were also linked to the country being explored. The children started the week learning where the country was in the world by being shown the location on a world map and the continent. Each child was able to then create the flag of that country, and this was placed inside an individual "passport" that was then filled with the countries explored over the weeks.

Workshops included making dishes local to the country e.g. Kanelbullar from Sweden, Bhajas from Mauritius, learning about scientists from the countries and the breakthroughs that were made, e.g. the first heart transplant was performed in South Africa, in Poland learning about Marie Curie and her contribution to the scientific world and the x-ray. The arts or music workshop meant that many vibrant and engaging works were explored and listened to, e.g. making amazing masks to celebrate Brazil carnivals, creating origami reflecting Japanese paper folding. Every week, the children marvelled and learnt about countries near and far and families were excited to find out each week the next country they would explore. Children were excited by parents visiting the setting, with those children with English as an Additional Language lighting up with family members sharing many cultural experiences from their country with their friends at preschool. The excitement and learning were not just experienced by the children and the families, but also all the practitioners. By the end of the Summer term, all the practitioners found it invaluable to have learnt about countries their key children were from, to observe and track the build in confidence and engagement of their key child over the weeks particularly when exploring their country. At the end of term celebration, the children, unprompted, were able to name all 16 flags of the countries and share information about each of them. The programme was a great reflection of a truly "inspirational and inclusive curriculum".

IV. UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS – To develop the setting's commitment to the goals within everyday practice at the setting and develop specific activities around the goals.

On reflection of the academic year, we recognised bringing to life the UN's 17 Sustainable Development goals through specific programme activity was a significant undertaking for the children. We therefore had actively explored goals that we could reflect in everyday practice at the setting. At times we were not explicit in explaining they were UN SDG goals, but we were able to explore the following:

Goal 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing for people – the health and wellbeing of all children at the setting is paramount. Every year we encourage healthy eating with the children through using the Eat Well Wheel demonstrating different food groups that we should be trying to eat throughout the day. The team regularly discuss food we enjoy that is good for our bodies and those foods we should have sparingly. Over the academic year, as we

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encouraged the children through snack time, our cookery workshops and at lunchtime, the children began to recognise and talk about foods that were healthy, were encouraged to taste new foods and to recognise on food packaging what is healthy and what is not healthy to eat. Parents were hugely supportive of the topics discussed, recipes used in the workshops and the sensitivity and inclusion around food intolerances and other food sensory concerns. This focus also included a specific approach to oral health, how to take care of our teeth, how to clean our teeth and what foods may cause problems for teeth growing up.

Through the focus of our Forest School pedagogical approach, we know that exploring the outdoors and activity is good for well-being. The children over the year continued to demonstrate the benefits of the outdoors for their well-being, through improvement in levels of concentration, coordination, and confidence. Children also began to play together and develop friendships and learn teamwork, all vital for ongoing well-being. Using a small pod in each room, as well as the outdoor teepee, quiet areas were also provided to ensure that children, if they were feeling sad, or frustrated, would be able to have some quiet area to be. The children over the year began to recognise their emotions with lots of discussions about how we feel, how others might feel and how we can help others feel better. Having health and wellbeing as a priority within the setting is key to ensuring the positive development of every child.

Goal 5 – Gender Equality – in all activities, we consistently tell children that they can all achieve their potential and their dreams. An activity at the start of the year was to ask children who would do a list of named jobs e.g. fire fighter, nurse, doctor etc. At the outset, children would regularly reflect that boys are footballers, doctors and firemen. That girls are nurses, work in a shop and are teachers. Through lots of discussion, we discussed that whilst yes, many do those jobs, but that there are footballers, doctors and fire fighters who are girls, that boys can be nurses, work in a shop and be teachers. Throughout the year, we encouraged the children to talk about the careers of their parents and wider family who are their role models, and the importance of work and how we want to have the best person to do jobs well and to encourage children to want to take part in all activities.

Goal 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production – The children learnt at the beginning of the year the different recycling bins that we have, the signs on them, what materials are put in each and what happens to these materials. Throughout the year, children enjoyed opportunities to do recycling, repurpose and re-use, and thoroughly enjoyed re-using plastic and card items from the recycling bins and from home to create fantastic models. With the focus on outdoor, the children were also taught to use the indoor compost bin for food leftovers. During the afternoons the children emptied these bins into our outdoor large composting area and in the spring term, the children were then shown how the lower part of the composting area contains wonderful soil. They discussed how this soil was created from the leftover food from the compost bin and placed the soil in the gardening trugs where we grew flowers and supported the growth of small elder trees.

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The children were also taught to turn off lights before going outdoors so that energy was not wasted and we were protecting the planet, but also that with the natural light throughout the preschool, we didn't always need all the lights on. We explained that even turning off the light for a short time helps our planet.

Goal 14 – Life Below Water – during the Summer term, the children asked to explore the topic of animals and so we chose to use 2 of the SDG goals to discuss animals both below water as well as on land. Using the water tray daily, the children shared their knowledge of creatures below the water as well as learning about other mammals, fish and other wildlife. These discussions were child-led as many of the children know lots of information about different animals and where in the world they have travelled to see them. Extending this learning, the children were asked about all the rubbish that can sometimes be seen on the water, and how this impacts the creatures. Further exploration of this topic will continue in the following year.

Goal 15 – Life on Land – the children love to discuss animals, particularly when they have experienced seeing them in their habitat, from worms and other mini beasts in the garden, to pets at home, visiting farms, safaris and other holidays in which animals have been seen. Particularly through Forest School, the children learnt about different habitats of animals and created hibernation boxes. In addition, the children enjoy learning about trees and their importance. With the risk of ash dieback on some of the trees at the setting, discussions about taking care of trees and the different trees at the setting, prompted the children to ask if we could grow trees. We were donated 6 elder trees saplings which have been planted in the trugs and once they get bigger will be transplanted around the outdoor area in the following year.

V. SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE – To continue to revise practice for the health and well-being of each child at the setting.

The significance and priority of safeguarding will never be underestimated at the setting and our safeguarding policy highlights that we recognise that safeguarding concerns “can happen here”. Therefore, the Manager as Designated Safeguarding Lead undertakes an annual refresher of the Kent specific Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training course and ensures that both Deputy DSLs remain up to date with the latest information in between their training (every 2 years). The safeguarding priority also extends to the Committee of Trustees, by having a nominated representative on the Committee for Safeguarding who provides governance and oversight of our safeguarding procedures. This trustee prompts and questions us to ensure that we maintain a high level of commitment to safeguarding.

The Deputy Manager undertook termly audits of accidents, incidents and existing injury reports to identify any patterns over the year. These audits explored whether it was a certain day, time of day, location indoors or outdoors and whether a pattern emerged for these to occur. It was recognised that with the significance of the outdoor programme,

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more accidents were recorded outdoors, and therefore more specifics were added to the audit to understand if there were any patterns in incidents arising in specific areas outdoor. The audit results were shared in staff meetings and any amends to practice, or recommendations of activities or equipment were then taken on board and actioned.

The Annual Conversation visit in March 2023 by a representative from Kent County Council ensures that we are regularly reviewed regarding Safeguarding and Welfare, both in practice and procedures. This is hugely beneficial to ensure we continue to remain responsive and with a high focus on safeguarding. The resulting report following the visit reflected the high level of safeguarding that the setting holds, which was an encouragement to the team.

Whilst the EYFS details the minimum requirements for the number of First Aid trained members of staff, we have adopted a requirement that all staff members involved with children have a current paediatric first aid certificate. We maintain the staff certificates in the hallway of the setting and ensure that we track when retraining is required. This has remained in place for this academic year. We also have a staff member sitting at each small table at lunchtime with the children to monitor safeguarding whilst eating. We recognise the choking hazards of children during snack and lunch and ensure that staff members are specifically aware of this and how to deal with the situation.

Throughout the year, safeguarding was a standard discussion point within the staff meeting agenda to ensure that any concerns were raised promptly, and all staff members were able to contribute and make suggestions to keep the levels of safeguarding high and front of mind.

Management of the Setting:

1. STAFF DEVELOPMENT – To invest in training that support the development of staff skills, informs their practice and subsequently positively impacts the setting. Cascading learning to other practitioners will also be key.

Whilst the struggles of recruitment and retention in the Early Years sector is widely known, as a setting we are committed to investing both in our practitioners, as well as encouraging other individuals who may consider a career in Early Years. At the start of the year, one of our practitioners had been studying for her Level 3 qualification and we were delighted that she passed with distinction. Towards the end of the academic year, we were approached by Trinity School to offer a work experience placement for a Year 10 student. The student worked at the setting for 2 weeks with an overall view that working with the children was “brilliant” and told other members of her year group to consider a

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career in Early Years. In the next academic year we will be building on this commitment to encourage more people in to Early Years.

With an increased need for support for the children at the setting, the SENCo recognised that to continue to give the best support to children and their families, it would be beneficial to undertake the new Level 3 SENCo qualification in Early Years. The aim of the learning was to explore the role and responsibilities of the SENCo specifically in an Early Years setting, to understand the strategies and techniques for supporting children and their families and to increase their knowledge of SEN codes of practice.

The training took place over 4 months and the impact was seen in the following ways:

- (i) The SENCo felt better equipped and more confident progressing through each stage of the SEN process.
- (ii) The SENCo was provided with strategies and techniques to support the process so enabled a more targeted, focused and clear application completed for every child needing support, thus ensuring that at SEN meetings e.g. LIFT, productive input and support was sourced, and secured.
- (iii) Other practitioners who were the key person for a child needing support were able to develop more focused and clear targeted plans through support from the SENCo, who explained to the practitioners how to develop SMART targets for these plans.

Our Forest School leader, having taken a year to complete the Level 3 leadership qualification, attended a refresher course mid-way through the academic year. This enabled the Forest School Leader to meet up with other leaders, discuss, exchange ideas, build her network and gain inspiration to bring back to the setting to share with the practitioners. The impact of the refresher course was reflected in the following:

- (i) The Forest School leader demonstrated more confidence in leading activities, particularly more adventurous ones e.g. developing and creating a fire, teaching the children to use flint and steel, children using a bow saw.
- (ii) The Forest School leader led new or adapted activities for the Forest School programme.
- (iii) More confidence in tool-based activities.
- (iv) With the increased confidence of the Forest School leader, the practitioners were able to observe and role-model some of the activities either alongside the leader or on another day when the leader was not working at the setting.

Two practitioners undertook the "I CAN TALK" course focusing on language and communication. The course and its impact within the setting has been documented under the Education Programme objective highlighting the impact on language and communication with the children as well as the practitioners.

For the period ended 31st August 2023

In addition, the SENCo also attended the "Let's Talk Communication" and "Behaviours and Communication" training to continue to support the commitment of the setting to language and communication. In the staff meeting, the SENCo provided feedback and notes regarding key points for the practitioners to identify and observe in their practice to ensure that a child is being supported correctly. Rather than just looking at the behaviours, we were encouraged to look at what may be triggering the behaviours. This impacted the practitioners as they reflected on practice and how they manage behaviour.

II. STAFF WELL-BEING – To continue to effectively support staff well-being.

During the previous year, 7 strategies were implemented to support practitioners' well-being. These continued through this academic year:

1. Flexibility for the staff rota to cover one another during appointments or key meetings.
2. Manager covering lunchtime to ensure practitioners took lunch breaks.
3. Paperwork given during working hours to enable observations and tracking of key children.
4. New tablets for recording observations rather than outdated Kindles.
5. Structure of staff meetings to maximise all staff input.
6. Star of the week in the newsletter to recognise the hard work of staff members.
7. Discussions with the Committee of Trustees on staff well-being.

During this year, the Deputy Manager took the lead using the Forest School approach, to explore and share with the practitioners, well-being practices. The Deputy Manager therefore led a mindfulness activity at the beginning of each staff meeting. This enabled the busyness of the day to be put to one side whilst having a few minutes to stop, to rest and clear the mind. Staff members recognised the importance of those few minutes to focus on quiet before staff meetings and recognised that children also need these times of quiet. Positive feedback was given by the team so that it has continued at staff meetings, but also through the busyness of an Early Years setting, the team have used the same techniques with the children to support their well-being as well as their own.

Following the "all about my world" theme during the year and engaging each week around a different country, by inviting parents and other family members into the setting to share, it brought a sense of energy and lifted the practitioners. The energy generated by parents who shared activities and information with the children inspired practitioners who said they were as excited as the children as each week we learnt about a different area of the world. Having different people, voices and activities created at the setting, giving the practitioners the opportunity to learn themselves as well as observe their key children learning, ensured that the engagement throughout the term and well-being was very high.

For the period ended 31st August 2023

III. SETTING ADMINISTRATION – To review database platforms currently used across the setting and with families, with a view to streamline the system, improve efficiency and reduce paperwork.

Historically, the software for learning journals used at the setting has been Tapestry, providing observations demonstrating each child's learning during sessions. It was noted through using the Kindles that the link between Tapestry and the photo platform was not efficient, causing staff members to download and upload each image that took time to complete meaning limited observations during paperwork time. A review to explore both storage of images and learning journal software was therefore undertaken.

In addition, maintaining relevant safeguarding records was very paper driven, creating large volumes of photocopying of forms and files required to hold the paperwork. The daily register was completed on paper, with no room to provide notes, creating additional administrative paperwork to record. Each accident, incident and injury required a separate page on a booklet completed and then signed by the parent. The signed form would then be at the setting, and the parent would not have a record. In addition, all audits were then manually created, requiring significant amounts of time and work. A review was conducted to explore a software platform that may provide a more efficient and effective way of working.

Through the review of 3 different software platforms, the decision presented to and approved by the Committee of Trustees was to use one platform – Blossom Educational – for all record keeping as well as observations. The software platform was approved at the end of the academic year, ensuring that all current and relevant information was transitioned over to the new system ready for the new academic year. The impact and savings using this new software will be reviewed over the next academic year.

IV. COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE – To build on the strong partnership between the Committee and setting and identify opportunities to build in succession planning of Committee roles.

The Committee of Trustees reappointed at the AGM in November 2022 have predominantly remained the same for the academic year, except for the Chairperson.

At one of the first meetings of the academic year, it was noted that the Committee wished to continue to provide strong governance. Therefore, the Committee undertook the training "A Successful Charity" in December 2022 provided by Kent County Council. Through this, the committee recognised that knowledge about the organisation could be improved as well as better understand the financial position of the setting. In the following months, the trustees developed a list of action points to follow up, including succession planning.

For the period ended 31st August 2023

The role of Chair is traditionally a significant one, together with the Treasurer and Secretary. These roles typically cover the main responsibilities and workload for the Committee, so if any of the individuals holding these roles resigns, this can significantly impact on the Committee to replace and train up a new trustee. The current Chair, who works in architecture and building, has brought valued project management experience and continues to challenge the Manager to manage her workload using the strong leadership team and experienced practitioners to support. The importance to build trustee support around the key roles to avoid overload of work and reliance on the Chair and Manager, was a key aim also achieved through the development of sub-committees. The Finance sub-committee has been embedded to provide strong financial governance and has been led by the Treasurer who has a background in investment banking and has provide governance and oversight of the finance of the charity.

Two further sub-committees were established this year. An HR sub-committee was created to support the Manager leading the team of practitioners, providing guidance and support on HR matters throughout the year. The Chair of this committee is a senior leader in HR at a large corporate firm, who has brought valued expertise for the Manager and committee. A fundraising sub-committee was also created to raise much needed funds for resources at the setting, where budgets are tight. This committee is chaired by a parent who has experience in Marketing and Events, so has ensured that the fundraisers were varied, fun and raised valued funds.

Identifying skill sets that would be a support to the Manager and to challenge, was another way to explore maintaining a strong oversight, as well as identifying committee members who would be able to commit to being a trustee for a sustained period. As detailed above, our current Committee of Trustees provide an outstanding level of expertise due to the sector in which they work. The Chair of Trustees In addition to the chairs of our sub-committees, our safeguarding representative is a Doctor in clinical research and has been valuable in reviewing and supporting our safeguarding approach. We have a longstanding governor from Lady Boswells School who continues to provide experience for the whole committee, and two further trustees providing both public and private sector experience who together continue to support and challenge the Manager to continue to review and adapt to different challenges and opportunities for the preschool.

We continue to explore how to manage the ongoing issue of training up trustees before they move on as their child transitions to primary school. During this year, the Committee demonstrated their support through meetings, financial reviews, fundraising and other ways to provide support to the Manager. Moving forward, the Committee will continue to explore continuity and succession planning.

Partnership working:

I. LOCAL COMMUNITY – To extend partnerships within the local community.

Continuing to build on the partnerships with many of the primary schools around Sevenoaks, the setting supported more involved transition programmes with the schools, to lessen the anxiety of starting school for the children. One school sent their Head of Early Years to spend time with children that were joining them in the September. Another school created a 3-week transition programme, enabling the children to experience assembly, lunch and outdoor play. A further school invited a practitioner to join a visit to the primary school with the children, enabling the practitioner to support the children who attended to discuss this in the circle time at preschool. The SENCo of the preschool also worked with the SENCo for each primary school, where further support for specific children had been identified. All the practitioners are committed to supporting the children through this key transition to the next stage of their education and we will continue to build on these partnerships.

The preschool also signed up to the Neighbourly programme and have benefited from local grants and food collection which has been an important link with the community, as well as a valuable way to manage costs and secure further income. We aim to build on our engagement in this programme in the year ahead.

Through Forest School and proximity to Knole Park, the children have engaged in trips to the park, as well as litter picking projects in the Environmental Park close near the setting. Extending our footprint in the community to the market, leisure centre and library is in the plan for the year ahead.

II. PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT – To continue to engage parents in supporting their child's development in partnership with the preschool

The engagement of parents is a vital factor in the success of the preschool, particularly as without any advertising, the reputation of the setting is built on the recommendation of parents in the community. Parents engaged significantly with the preschool over the last academic year, which impacted positively for the setting. Opportunities to engage included:

- Parents from different countries visited the setting as part of the "All About My World" programme and shared stories, food, traditions, dress, dance and facts about the country they are from. This engagement of parents profoundly impacted the children, particularly those whose parents took part, as well as other children learning more about the families of the preschool community and sharing their experiences at preschool.

For the period ended 31st August 2023

- Parents on the Committee of Trustees – who through their valued engagement were able to understand the significant input required to work in Early Years, the lack of funding and support, and provided their skills and time to support the ongoing success of the preschool.
- Parents who were unable to attend the setting during the weekday, volunteered time and resources on weekend volunteer days. Parents built equipment in the outdoors, painted the walls of the rooms at the preschool and undertook tips runs and cleared rubbish. Through these days, parents got to know other parents and the children were proud that their parents were involved, making parents feel invested in the setting.
- Parents also supported the setting through voluntary contributions. With the significant shortfall of funding within Early Years, parents committed to giving financially ensuring that we continue to have a secure financial position.
- Parents attended our fundraising activities, like the summer fete ensuring that over the year almost £2k was raised through activities created by the fundraising sub-committee. The fundraising monies enabled the purchase of resources for Forest School contributing to additional learning opportunities for the children.
- The Manager sent a weekly newsletter to parents sharing about “the week that was” and then about “the week to come” that provided an overview of all activities, any donations from home that could be brought in, notices and up to date information about the setting. These communications ensured that the number of email communications were kept low and that parents had a central hub of information and were clearly aware of the activities each day that their child would be involved in.
- Towards the end of the academic year, parents were invited to take part in a parent survey about the preschool. Through 10 questions which included safety and care of every child, Forest School, management of the setting, communication with parents and any suggestions for improvement. Parents were asked to give either a yes or no answer or whether they agreed or disagreed on a sliding scale. Over half the parents responded and headline feedback included:
 - Everyone would recommend the preschool
 - Everyone strongly agrees their child is safe & well cared for
 - Everyone agrees the CW is well led and managed
 - Staff are thought to be warm, friendly, nurturing, caring
 - Forest school is a real asset
 - Transition to primary school is considered well managed and is greatly valued

Beneficiaries of our services

The key beneficiaries of our services are children aged 2–4 (rising five) who are part of The Children's Workshop with their parents and carers. The children who attend the setting are from diverse backgrounds and inclusion is at the heart of the preschool's approach. Amongst the children in our care are children from challenging homes, children from families whose first language is not English and children with special educational needs. This year we had 50 children on our register who attend different

For the period ended 31st August 2023

sessions over the week. Following on from last year we continue to allow up to a maximum of 36 children per session. Of these 50 children, 8 have English as an additional language and 1 is in receipt of extra funding (SENIF) for learning support.

The children's progress is monitored throughout the year using the revised Kent Progress Tracker system and evidence from this shows that this year, all children have made average or above average progress. Children who display more specific needs were monitored using a targeted plan and parents and the setting work closely together to support the child to progress. Building on last year's success with the younger cohort of children, the first term's theme was titled "all about me" to contribute to the settling-in process was used and again, parents were supported to potty train their children and encourage them to put on their own shoes and coats. The tracker has shown this year that the children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and with English as an additional language have made great progress. Children attending The Children's Workshop display an eagerness to learn through the activities on offer, and happiness and confidence in communicating with others both familiar and unfamiliar.

Financial review

The Children's Workshop made a loss of £4,000, for the year ending 31 August 2023. This compares with a loss of £5,000 in the previous period. Total income for the year ending 31 August 2023 was £180,000, an increase of £21,000 from £159,000 in the previous period.

The majority of income, £171,000, was generated through pre-school fees and government contributions. The increase in both was underpinned by a number of factors; including children doing more hours (opting for full, as opposed to half days) particularly with the Forest School provision, a 5% increase in the pre-school fee rates from September 2022 and a full year of the Quality Teacher Supplement (which was effective from January 2022, i.e. just two terms, in the previous financial period).

Other sources of income include grants, voluntary contributions and fundraising. These all declined in the year to 31 August 2023.

Total expenditure for the year ending 31 August 2023 was £184,000, up from £164,000 in the previous period. Staff costs accounted for £146,00, up from £130,000 in the previous period. The increase in staff costs was driven by one additional practitioner starting in September 2022, having an Officer Administrator in place for a full year (starting January 2022) and a salary increase for all staff from April 2023 (at the point the National Living Wage increased by nearly 7%).

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For the period ended 31st August 2023

A marked increase in utility costs also contributed to higher expenditure in the year ending 31 August 2023. Utility costs increased to £4,600, up from £1,800 in the previous period.

As at 31 August 2023 cash at the bank was £83,000, down from £90,000 in August 2022. Cash flows from operating activities were positive and there was no investment spending (i.e capital expenditure on the building) during the period.

It was the final repayment of loan capital, £10,600, which weighed on the cash at bank, reserve position. The Children's Workshop obtained the seven-year loan in 2016, in order to purchase the pre-school building. The final repayments on the loan, of £10,600, were made during the financial year and as a result the Charity Bank loan was fully repaid as at 31 August 2023. The repayment of the loan means that, going forward, the cash reserves will no longer be impacted by the repayment of loan capital and that annual expenditure will no longer be impacted by loan interest payments.

The net asset balance was £221,000 as at 31 August 2023, down from £225,000 at 31 August 2022.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The Children's Workshop's ownership of a building forms the basis of most of the financial risks undertaken by The Children's Workshop. Principal risks and uncertainties have been identified as follows:

- Continuing increase of the National Living Wage on the salary structure.
- Sector wide challenges on the recruitment and retention of practitioners.
- Introduction of further Government initiatives, which may not provide sufficient income per child to maintain the current service.
- The cost of ongoing building and maintenance work, as well as ad hoc capital expenditure to ensure that the quality of the building is maintained. Some of these costs can be relatively high and some may be unanticipated.

Reserves policy and going concern

The Children's Workshop policy is to have three months running costs as a general fund. Due to prudent budgeting, general reserves as at 31st August 2023 were £83,000 which means that The Children's Workshop has built up specific reserves to cover three months running costs. The aim is to continue to maintain this three-month reserve fund over the next financial year.

Plans for the future

For the development of a more strategic approach for the sustainability and growth of The Children's Workshop, the following aims all work towards this overall goal:

Aims for 2023–2024

Children's Learning and Development – *to provide an exciting, high quality and varied teaching programme for all children attending.*

This year our focus will be aimed towards:

- I. **Educational Programme** – To identify and adapt inspirational programmes and activities that reflect the needs of the children at the preschool, and supports delivery of the EYFS curriculum
- II. **Forest school development** – To develop a gardening approach to the outdoor programme including sustainability, building on the forest school principles and outdoor focus.
- III. **Curriculum planning and approach** – To build on the achievements of last academic year and explore different teaching and learning approaches to better understand and meet the needs of the children at the setting.
- IV. **UN Sustainable Development Goals** – To build on the initial programme around the goals and develop intrinsic practices in the setting.
- V. **Safeguarding and Welfare** – To continue to review and revise practice for the health and well-being of every child at the setting.

Management of the Setting – *to run the setting effectively and efficiently.*

This year our focus will be aimed towards:

- I. **Staff Development** – To continue to invest in training for staff members, promote working in the Early Years sector and provide opportunities to experience working in Early Years to encourage more practitioners into this sector.
- II. **Business Administration** – To evaluate and identify learnings from new administration and learning journal software.
- III. **Financial Planning and Management** – To explore efficiencies and processes to streamline finances at the setting
- IV. **Committee Management and Governance** – To explore further opportunities to build the strong partnership between the Committee and setting that has been developed and identify opportunities to streamline processes for Committee members.

The Children's Workshop Trustees' Annual Report

For the period ended 31st August 2023

Partnership working – *to create and sustain positive and mutually beneficial partnerships with organisations in the community.*

This year our focus will be aimed towards:

- III. **Local Community** – To identify and build opportunities for the children to engage within the Community.
- IV. **Parental Engagement** – To continue to engage parents in supporting their child's development in partnership with the preschool.

Structure, governance and management

The Children's Workshop is a charitable company limited by guarantee and governed by a committee principally comprised of parents of children at the Children's Workshop who are elected at the AGM. The committee meets at least four times a year as a full committee and in between as necessary as sub-committees (finance and fundraising). Named roles include the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The committee also comprises of a member appointed by Lady Boswell's School and the preschool manager.

Following election at the AGM, Ofsted is notified immediately of each new Trustee, they are then DBS checked and formally registered with Ofsted. There is then an induction programme which introduces the work of the Charity, its employees and volunteers. This provides trustees with an understanding of the rules outlined in its governing document, its financial situation, how the preschool operates and the roles of all those who work and volunteer within the charity. Trustees must sign a code of conduct, confidentiality document and agree to a conflict-of-interest policy.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, 'Charities and Public Benefit'. That guidance addresses the need for all charities' aims to be, demonstrably, for the public benefit.

Trustees

The Trustees are also Directors for the purposes of company law. The Trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Committee members who resigned during the financial period.

Date of resignation

Dr Anneen Aucamp
Katalina Bateman

November 2022
November 2022

The Children's Workshop Trustees' Annual Report

For the period ended 31st August 2023

Gillian Bragg	November 2022
Rebecca Rushton	November 2022
Ursula Spindler	March 2023
Claire Icel	April 2023
Claire Charlton	July 2023

Current committee members

Date of appointment, election or re-election

Andrew Scrace (Chair)	November 2022
Catherine Burgess (Treasurer)	November 2022
Kathryn Preedy (Secretary)	November 2022
Nicky Mackert (Preschool Manager)	November 2022
Kristina Brockington	November 2022
Mark Cheeseman	November 2022
Katie Garman	November 2022
Kinvara Rogers	November 2022
Dr Jocelyn Walbridge	November 2022

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 25th February 2004 and registered as a charity on 26th March 2004.

The company was established under a memorandum of association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its articles of association.

Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity for their work as trustees. During an extraordinary meeting on March 21st, 2023, Ursula Spindler resigned as Chair from the Committee. Andrew Scrace, having consented to act as Chair, was appointed and approved. Due to several factors, Claire Icel required to tender her resignation from the committee in April 2023. Claire Charlton also resigned her post on the Committee, effective immediately, following an interview process for the position of Office Administrator at the preschool and securing the position.

Our volunteers contribute in many important ways to The Children's Workshop's success and achievements. Volunteers include our Trustees.

Statement of responsibilities of the Trustees

The Trustees (who are also directors of The Children's Workshop for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' annual report and the financial

For the period ended 31st August 2023

statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- There is no relevant financial information of which the charitable company's independent examiner is unaware
- The trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant financial information and to establish that the independent examiner is aware of that information

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charity guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31st August 2023 was 49 (2022: 49). The trustees are members of the charity, but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

The Children's Workshop Trustees' Annual Report

For the period ended 31st August 2023

The trustees' annual report has been approved by the trustees on 30 April 2024 signed on their behalf by:



Andrew Scrace
Chair of Committee of Trustees



Catherine Burgess
Treasurer

Independent Examiners Report

To the trustees of The Children's Workshop

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Children's Workshop Financial Year Ended 31 August 2023

I report on the accounts of the Registered Charity, number 1102887 and Company Limited by Guarantee, company number 5055356, for the period from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 which are set out on the following pages.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. 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 disclosed 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 I do not express an audit opinion on the view of the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

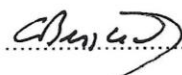
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act); and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with accounting requirements of the Act have not been met; or

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

Signed



Name

GRANT BENSTED FCA

Address

19 MEADOWLANDS, SEAL, SEVENOAKS, KENT TN15 0DH

Date

2/5/25

The Children's Workshop

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

		Year to 31/08/2023			Year to 31/08/2022		
	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
Income from:							
Donations/legacies/Grants	2	5,674	3,595	9,269	9,063	6,188	15,250
Charitable activities	3	170,387	300	170,687	141,985	1,473	143,458
Investment income	4	239	-	239	6	-	6
Total income		176,300	3,895	180,195	151,054	7,661	158,715
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities							
Pre-school	5	180,236	3,895	184,131	155,803	8,211	164,013
Total expenditure		180,236	3,895	184,131	155,803	8,211	164,013
Net income / (expenditure) before net gains / (losses) on investments		(3,936)	-	(3,936)	(4,749)	(550)	(5,299)
Net gains / (losses) on investments		-	-	-	-	-	-
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	15	(3,936)	-	(3,936)	(4,749)	(550)	(5,299)
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-	-
Net income / (expenditure) before other recognised gains and losses		(3,936)	-	(3,936)	(4,749)	(550)	(5,299)
Gains / (losses) on revaluation of fixed		-	-	-	-	-	-
Other gains / (losses)		-	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		(3,936)	-	(3,936)	(4,749)	(550)	(5,299)
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		225,352	-	225,352	230,101	550	230,651
Total funds carried forward		221,416	-	221,416	225,352	-	225,352

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 14 to the financial statements.

The Children's Workshop

Balance sheet

As at 31 August 2023

	Note	31/08/2023 £	31/08/2022 £
Fixed assets:			
Tangible assets	8	141,631	152,973
		141,631	152,973
Current assets:			
Debtors	9	1,782	-
Balance at Bank		83,086	89,862
Cash in hand		-	-
		84,868	89,862
Liabilities:			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	5,083	17,483
		79,785	72,379
Net current assets / (liabilities)			
		221,416	225,352
Total assets less current liabilities			
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	12	-	-
		221,416	225,352
Net assets excluding pension asset / (liability)			
Defined benefit pension scheme asset / (liability)		-	-
		221,416	225,352
Total net assets / (liabilities)			
		221,416	225,352
Funds:	14		
Restricted income funds		-	-
Unrestricted income funds:			
Designated funds		141,631	142,381
Revaluation reserve		-	-
Pension reserve		-	-
General funds		79,785	82,971
Non-charitable trading funds		-	-
		221,416	225,352
Total unrestricted funds			
		221,416	225,352
Total funds			
		221,416	225,352

For the year ending 31 August 2023 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies'

Approved by the trustees on 30 April 2024 and signed on their behalf by :



Andrew Scrace
Chair



Catherine Burgess
Treasurer

The Children's Workshop

Consolidated statement of cash flows

For the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

	Note	Year to 31/08/2023	Year to 31/08/2022
		£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by/ (used in) operating activities	15	3,817	(8,471)
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Dividends, interest and rents from investments		-	-
Proceeds from the sale of fixed assets		-	-
Purchase of fixed assets		(8,589)	
Proceeds from sale of investments		-	-
Purchase of investments		-	-
Net cash provided by / (used in) investing activities		-	(8,589)
Cash flows from financing activities:			
Repayments of borrowing	(10,593)	(5,548)	
Cash inflows from new borrowing	-	-	
Receipt of endowment	-	-	
Net cash provided by / (used in) financing activities		(10,593)	(5,548)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(6,776)	(22,608)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		89,862	112,470
Change in cash and cash equivalents due to exchange rate movements		-	-
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		83,086	89,862

The Children's Workshop

Notes to the financial statements

For the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

1 General information

The Children's Workshop is a Charitable Company established on 25th February 2004 by memorandum and articles of incorporation subsequently amended on 29th September 2016.

2 Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy or note.

b) Public benefit entity

The charitable company meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

c) Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern.

The trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

d) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and that the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Income received in advance of the provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

e) Donations of gifts, services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item or received the service, any conditions associated with the donation have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised so refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

On receipt, donated gifts, professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

f) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the institution with whom the funds are deposited.

g) Fund accounting

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund.

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources received or generated for the charitable purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

The Children's Workshop

Notes to the financial statements

For the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

1 Accounting policies (continued)

h) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

Costs of raising funds relate to the costs incurred by the charitable company in inducing third parties to make voluntary contributions to it, as well as the cost of any activities with a fundraising purpose

Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of running the preschool and its associated support costs

Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

i) Allocation of support costs

Resources expended are allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates directly to that activity. However, the cost of overall direction and administration of each activity, comprising the salary and overhead costs of the central function, is apportioned on the following basis which are an estimate, based on staff time, of the amount attributable to each activity.

Where information about the aims, objectives and projects of the charity is provided to potential beneficiaries, the costs associated with this publicity are allocated to charitable expenditure.

Where such information about the aims, objectives and projects of the charity is also provided to potential donors, activity costs are apportioned between fundraising and charitable activities on the basis of area of literature occupied by each activity.

Pre-school	68%
Support costs	16%
Governance costs	16%

j) Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £1,000. Depreciation costs are allocated to activities on the basis of the use of the related assets in those activities. Assets are reviewed for impairment if circumstances indicate their carrying value may exceed their net realisable value and value in use. The Tangible Fixed Asset on the Balance Sheet represents the new preschool building and computer equipment.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life, once the fixed asset has been brought into use. The depreciation rates applied are as follows:

Modular Building	20 years
Computers & equipment	3 years

k) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

l) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account. Cash balances exclude any funds held on behalf of service users.

m) Creditors and provisions

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the Balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably.

Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the Charity anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide.

Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as a finance cost.

The Children's Workshop

Notes to the financial statements

For the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

1 Accounting policies (continued)

o) Financial Instruments

The Charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

p) Pensions

The Charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the Charity to the fund in respect of the year.

2 Income from donations and legacies

			Year to 31/08/2023	Year to 31/08/2022
	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £	Total £
Donations	4,708	-	4,708	7,294
Grants	-	3,595	3,595	6,188
Fundraising events	966	-	966	1,769
	5,674	3,595	9,269	15,250

3 Income from charitable activities

			Year to 31/08/2023	Year to 31/08/2022
	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £	Total £
Pre-School Fees	81,178	-	81,178	64,651
Government contributions to fees	88,547	300	88,847	78,187
Contribution to school trips, uniform etc	662	-	662	620
Total income from charitable activities	170,387	300	170,687	143,458

4 Income from investments

			Year to 31/08/2023	Year to 31/08/2022
	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £	Total £
Bank Interest	239	-	239	6
	239	-	239	6

The Children's Workshop

Notes to the financial statements

For the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

5 Analysis of expenditure

	Cost of raising funds £	Charitable expenditure: Pre-school £	Governance costs £	Support costs £	Year to 31/08/2023 £	Year to 31/08/2022 £
Staff costs (Note 6)	-	116,254	8,985	20,676	145,915	105,565
Equipment	-	2,343	-	-	2,343	5,566
Pre-school Supplies (incl snack)	-	1,652	-	-	1,652	1,206
School activities	-	558	-	-	558	633
Recruitment	-	87	-	-	87	45
Rent	-	554	-	-	554	-
Ground Rent	-	2,268	-	-	2,268	2,600
Utilities	-	4,577	-	-	4,577	1,821
Maintenance costs	-	1,771	-	-	1,771	2,389
Cleaning costs	-	1,695	-	-	1,695	2,010
Other premises costs	-	701	-	-	701	1,664
Business Rates	-	1,019	-	-	1,019	685
Insurance	-	1,686	-	-	1,686	1,739
Professional costs	-	790	60	-	850	(3,426)
T-shirts and book bags	-	740	-	-	740	480
Training costs	-	1,924	-	-	1,924	2,477
Fundraising costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Office supplies	-	1,598	-	-	1,598	1,420
Depreciation	-	11,342	-	-	11,342	10,352
Phone	-	1,299	-	-	1,299	996
Other administration costs	-	725	-	-	725	-
Bank charges	-	87	-	-	87	91
Loan financing - interest	-	446	-	-	446	1,201
Event costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transportation costs	-	250	-	-	250	-
Other Volunteer Expenses	-	44	-	-	44	15
	-	154,410	9,045	20,676	184,131	139,529
Support costs	-	20,676		(20,676)	-	16,991
Governance costs	-	9,045	(9,045)		-	7,493
Total expenditure 2023	-	184,131	-	-	184,131	164,013
Total expenditure 2022	-	164,013	-	-	164,013	

Of the total expenditure, £180,236 was unrestricted (2022: £155,803) and £3,895 was restricted (2022: £8,211).

Notes to the financial statements

For the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

6 Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel

Staff costs were as follows:

	Year to 31/08/2023	Year to 31/08/2022
	£	£
Salaries and wages	136,630	119,618
Redundancy and termination costs	-	-
Social security costs	4,227	5,995
Pension contributions	5,058	4,376
	145,915	129,989

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year (2022: £ nil).

The charity trustees were not paid or received any other benefits for their duties as a trustee in the year (2022: £ nil).

One trustee was employed by the charity during the year.

Nicola Mackert was paid under a contract of employment an annual salary of £26,551 in the period September 2022 to April 2023 and an annual equivalent salary of £30,240 from April 2023.

7 Staff numbers

The average number of employees (head count based on number of staff employed) during the year was as follows:

	Year to 31/08/2023	Year to 31/08/2022
	No.	No.
Raising funds	-	-
Pre-school	8.7	7.9
Support	1.8	1.8
Governance	0.6	0.6
	11	10

8 Tangible fixed assets

	Pre-school building £	Fixtures & fittings £	Computers & equipment £	Total £
Cost				
At the start of the year	209,717	-	5,427	215,144
Additions in year	-	-	-	-
At the end of the year	209,717	-	5,427	215,144
Depreciation				
At the start of the year	59,025	-	3,146	62,171
Charge for the year	10,472	-	870	11,342
At the end of the year	69,497	-	4,016	73,513
Net book value				
At the end of the year	140,220	-	1,411	141,631
At the start of the year	150,692	-	2,281	152,973

All of the above assets are used for charitable purposes.

The Children's Workshop

Notes to the financial statements

For the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

9 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	-	-
Prepayments	1,782	-
	-	-
	<u>1,782</u>	<u>-</u>

10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Creditors (loans due within 1 year)	-	10,593
Trade Creditors	-	4,290
Accruals	-	-
Deferred income	5,083	2,600
	<u>5,083</u>	<u>17,483</u>

11 Deferred income

	2023 £	2022 £
Balance at the beginning of the year	2,600	12,124
Amount released to income in the year	(2,600)	(12,124)
Amount deferred in the year	5,083	2,600
	<u>5,083</u>	<u>2,600</u>

12 Creditors: amounts falling due after one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Bank loans	-	-
Amounts due under finance leases	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

Bank loans totalling £0

13 Analysis of group net assets between funds

	General unrestricted £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	-	141,631	-	141,631
Net current assets	79,785	-	-	79,785
Long term liabilities	-	-	-	-
	<u>79,785</u>	<u>141,631</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>221,416</u>

Net assets at the end of the year

The Children's Workshop

Notes to the financial statements

For the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

14 Movements in funds

	At the start of the year £	Incoming resources & gains £	Outgoing resources & losses £	Transfers £	At the end of the year £
Restricted funds:					
Funding for specific pre-school activities	-	3,895	(3,895)	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	3,895	(3,895)	-	-
Unrestricted funds:					
<i>Designated funds:</i>					
New pre-school building	142,381	-	-	(750)	141,631
Total designated funds	142,381	-	-	(750)	141,631
General funds	82,971	176,300	(180,236)	750	79,785
Total unrestricted funds	225,352	176,300	(180,236)	-	221,416
Total funds	225,352	180,195	(184,131)	-	221,416

Purposes of restricted funds

Restricted funds have been received towards funding for specific pre-school activities.

Purposes of designated funds

New pre-school building

Funds raised over many years were designated by the Trustees to construct a new purpose-built pre-school building which is now completed. The designated fund now represents the net book value of the charity's fixed assets less the amount owed on the bank loan.

15 Reconciliation of net income / (expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	Year to 31/08/2023 £	Year to 31/08/2022 £
Net income / (expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	(3,936)	(5,299)
Depreciation charges	11,342	10,352
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(1,782)	-
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(1,807)	(13,524)
Net cash provided by / (used in) operating activities	3,817	(8,471)

16 Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	At 1 September 2022 £	Cash flows £	Other changes £	At 31 August 2023 £
Cash in hand	-	-	-	-
Cash at Bank	89,862	(6,776)	-	83,086
Overdraft facility repayable on demand	-	-	-	-
Total cash and cash equivalents	89,862	(6,776)	-	83,086

17 Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The liability of each member in the event of winding up is limited to £1.