

Blues Preschool & Nursery
Charity Number 1156613
Report and Accounts
For the Year Ended 31/08/2024

Blues Preschool & Nursery
Report and Accounts
For the year Ended 31/08/2024

Trustees

K Craythorne (Manager)

G Varnam

R Eves

S Eves

Registered Office

Cox's Gardens

Bishops Stortford

Hertfordshire

CM23 3GX

Charity Number

1156613

Independent Examiner

Ascott Blake

11 Ducketts Wharf

Bishops Stortford

Hertfordshire

CM23 3AR

Blues Preschool & Nursery

Report and Accounts

For the year Ended 31/08/2024

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Report and Accounts

For the year Ended 31/08/2024

Trustees Report

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the period ended 31/08/2024

Structure Governance and Management

The charity is registered as a CIO and our constitution is based on the Pre-school Learning Alliance Model CIO Constitution for Childcare Providers 2013.

Membership of the CIO is open to all Parents/Carers of pre-school children but they are not automatically Members of the Charity. Parents/Carers sign a declaration if they wish to join. Affiliate membership is also open to anyone interested in furthering the purposes of the charity. The Trustees (min 3, max 12) are all Members of the Charity. Their function is to manage the affairs of the CIO and meet monthly to fulfil this function. They are appointed at the AGM and serve for 2 successive years. Every year one-third of the trustees shall retire from office but can be re-appointed for 5 successive terms. After a break of one year, the trustee may re-stand.

As of the end of August 2024, there were 4 trustees at Blues. This includes one staff member, the General Manager. The 4 trustees, along with 3 other staff members form the Management committee which oversees all business aspects of the CIO.

Objectives And Activities

The Pre-school aims to enhance the development and education of children primarily under statutory school age and to encourage parents to understand and provide for the needs of their children by:

- offering appropriate play, education and care facilities, family learning and extended hours groups, together with the right of parents to take responsibility for and to become involved in the activities of such groups, ensuring that such groups offer opportunities for all children whatever their race, culture, religion, means, or ability;
- encouraging the study of the needs of such children and their families and promoting public interest in and recognition of such needs in the local area;
- instigating and adhering to and furthering the aims and objectives of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

The Preschool is open for 10 sessions (5 mornings and 5 afternoons) a week. The Pre-school can cater for up to 24 children in the morning and 16 children in the afternoon session.

The Blues offers the 15-hour Government-funded entitlement to 3 and 4-year-olds and the 'additional entitlement' of a further 15 hours to eligible children. We offer flexible attendance with five 3-hour sessions being popular. We have staffed provision for up to 12 children to stay for a full day (6 hours) by providing a lunch club. Families requiring additional hours can pay per session, subject to availability and suitability.

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We also offer the 15-hour funded entitlement to eligible two-year-olds who, mainly, attend the afternoon sessions. At the start of the summer term 2024, 41% of all children attending aged 2 years were funded.

Nursery year children who start at Blues form the 'yellow group', which gives them a sense of identity; and they can use a small group room to extend their learning approach supported by members of staff.

We receive funding for children eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). This money must be used to further the development of the child which it relates to, and we ensure that all funding is spent while the child is in attendance at Blues.

The Pre-school provides care and education as laid down by Ofsted - Office for Standards and Education - with children working in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. The pre-school was last inspected in February 2018 by Ofsted and received an "outstanding" rating for 'Personal development, behaviour and welfare' and a "good" rating in all other areas.

Parents/Carers were invited into sessions for face-to-face chats with their child's key person and most Parents/Carers were able to attend. Alternatively, the key person arranged a phone call for a catch-up. This is positively received by our families. Induction visits to look around the setting took place throughout the year.

Tapestry is successfully used across the Pre-school. Observations and photographic evidence are collated using this online learning journal. Evidence is used to moderate the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's work is collated in their 'Special Book' and each child's progress is recorded and monitored regularly. This online learning journal is accessible to both Staff and Parents/Carers, and a key aim for the coming year is to ensure more regular journal entries are posted.

Keyworkers were able to meet face-to-face with Parents/Carers to discuss their child's two-year progress check in the Summer Term. Termly progress reports were sent home and added to Tapestry online journals along with an end-of-year report. Transition data and reports were sent to 12 local schools for our Summer Leavers. The Preschool has a website and a Facebook page which continues to be an invaluable information and communication platform over the year.

The Pre-school is well-known throughout the town and has a good reputation. Many parents travel a considerable distance to Blues because of very positive verbal recommendations.

The Trustee Management Team carried out measures to advertise and raise the profiles of the Blues by displaying flyers/posters in the local shops and supermarkets, putting eye-catching posts on the Blues Facebook page as well as other Facebook sites that Families/Carers would be looking at, and also carrying out a flyer drop in new estates of houses close to the Blues. It is hoped that these measures will increase applications for places for new children. Increasing numbers of requests for full-day sessions were noted and the Management Committee are discussing how to facilitate this, whilst maintaining high standards of education and care. Advice and support were also sought from Hertfordshire County Council Early Years Advisors. This is an ongoing discussion.

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In January, the possibility of closing down the 'Stay and Play' sessions to open up a tenth session was discussed. The Management Team received a positive response from the staff to open up another session on a Thursday afternoon as we did not generate enough interest from the 'Stay and Play' sessions. We found that due to a lack of interest, it was no longer cost-effective to keep the 'Stay and Play' sessions open and that we would generate more income from an additional session for the nursery children.

The Pre-school keeps in touch with the Early Years Alliance through its publications and can seek advice from the Head Office when required. Online information such as training courses are offered to all staff and these are an invaluable source of support and upskilling.

Public Benefit

When planning Blues activities for the year, the Committee has considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and is satisfied that the pre-school's activities continue to meet the principles laid out in that guidance. This matter was very carefully reviewed as part of the process of applying for CIO status. The children who receive care and education are the main beneficiaries of our charity. We work closely with families, offering support and information regarding the developmental progress of their child and signposting/help with social and financial matters e.g. some families may need to pay fees in instalments.

Achievement And Performance

We have had another exciting year at Blues. Following on from our move into Cox's Gardens in October 2022, we have continued to have Boyntons attend the nursery to deal with any snagging issues that needed to be done to the building.

At the start of Term and during our first INSET day, all Risk Assessments, and health and safety checks were completed. This also included having our heating, fire equipment and Air Conditioning checked as well as, all equipment PAT tested. Our Policies have also been reviewed. The start of the summer term saw more children start compared to 2022-2023.

Staff appraisals were completed at the beginning of the year and staff supervisions are undertaken regularly.

The Autumn Term included the Walk to Work week in October which encouraged staff to walk to work wherever possible. All staff undertook a Paediatric First Aid Course during the INSET day. We received visits from Herts For Learning Early Years Consultant. These visits focused on the new building and settling in, funding for the 2-year-old children as well as Safe Guarding review and audits.

The children enjoyed a free sports session during the Autumn Term. This led to further sessions being booked for one child using EHCP funding.

We organised some fundraiser events during the Autumn and Winter Terms. These included a sponsored Treasure Hunt, a Family Photography Session and the Christmas Bazaar. The Christmas

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Bazaar was put temporarily on hold until we could get more parental help. We raised a total of £2995 for these events.

We continued to have the 'Stay and Play' sessions open on Thursdays during the Autumn term. Each week saw the number of families attending fluctuate. It was at this time that we considered closing down the 'Stay and Play', to add an afternoon session on Thursdays. No decision was made at this time.

During December we opened the nursery to parents/carers for our Nativity play. This included one morning session and an afternoon session on an alternative day. We ended the term with a Christmas Party that was enjoyed by the children and staff.

In January, further discussions were held in regards to holding an additional session open in place of the 'Stay and Play' session. Again positive responses were received from staff and the Management Team to closing down the 'Stay and Play' sessions.

After the February Half Term, we organised another Recycling Clothes collection. We had a great response from this and raised £140. We were also able to obtain some new resources this term including our new playhouse in the garden, Water Wall, and musical instruments as well as donations of bags of sand for the new sand pit. Our Easter Raffle this year raised £165.

Sadly, at the end of the Summer term, we said goodbye to a longstanding staff member who moved on to new ventures. We thanked them for all their hard work and dedication to Blues over the years and wish them well in the future.

In July we held our Summer Fete. Despite the heavy rain, we had a good turnout of parents and children. We had lots of games, prizes and plenty of food on offer. We received a most generous offer from a child's parents to cover the cost of the bouncy castle which was very appreciated. We raised a total of £440.

Fundraising money is a vital part of our funding stream for the general running of the preschool. The rise in the cost of living has adversely affected the budget.

Staff used the summer term INSET days to write end-of-year reports for all children attending the Blues. Transition reports for children moving on to school nursery or reception classes were also prepared. The SENCO oversaw and collated all reports and information required by families of children with SEND who were moving to new settings. This is a huge piece of work, with some documents requiring extensive information from Blues and other professionals, in addition to meeting with teachers and professionals for these children to ensure a smooth transition into their next settings. Many thanks to Christine for carrying out this task so competently and supporting all staff.

The last week of term saw us saying goodbye to another group of children, graduating to start reception in September but also goodbye to Christine our deputy and SENCO. Christine helped to do a handover with our new deputy Jorden to take over in September.

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The Blues remained fully staffed over the year with all staff members being appropriately qualified and experienced. Annabelle has now completed her apprenticeship and is now a fully qualified Early Years Practitioner. We also took on Neve as additional bank staff.

The Staff Appraisal System is in place and meetings were held with each member each term.

Staff are required to carry out certain specific core training but can also access online training courses to support their individual professional development via the Early Years Alliance website, NoodleNow, and Herts for Learning. Staff and Trustees also have been able to access guidance and support for updating policies. The Manager and Deputy had access to visits from an HCC Early Years Consultant which were very useful.

Regular communication is sent to Parents/Carers to keep them informed of any changes at the preschool, as well as updates and newsletters being posted on the website, via our Facebook page and Eschooly.

The policies of the preschool are being regularly updated on a rolling basis or according to need. Monthly Management meetings are used to discuss and/or ratify those being updated. The Admissions policy and Disciplinary policies have been completed.

The Trustees would like to thank all staff for their willingness to volunteer to help with unexpected moves and for their help in making the new building such a wonderful environment for children's learning, development and play. The Trustees very much appreciate all their hard work.

Once again, we find the need to actively seek several new Trustees. It has become increasingly harder to find adults who are willing to volunteer and give their time to support the preschool. We have two possible interested parties who may be joining us in the new year. However, we would be very interested to hear from anyone who has experience in Management or HR.

Financial Review

Overall, this year the Charity made a net loss for the fourth year in a row. This was of £11,410 compared to £37,292 (net loss 2023) and £27,491 and £4,804 for the years prior to this. Fortunately, the loss is smaller than the previous two years. Efforts to increase income such as introducing the Thursday afternoon session have helped and more initiatives are being rolled going forward.

Child numbers have steadily risen over the year and combined with the government expansion to childcare funding (to include 2-year-old working families from April 2024), Blues has seen its income grow this year by over £43K (on 2023), a rise of 45%. Increased EYPP funding and SEN funding (specific to children) has also contributed to Blues increased income. Funding income provided 85% of Blues overall income, compared to 77% last year.

On the other side, expenditure has also increased significantly. Staff costs have increased by 18% this year. The government increases to national minimum living wage in April 2024 (9.8% increase

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applied to majority of staff wages) impacted this. Blues also saw a greater number of staff required in the Summer term (due to staff shortages, and higher intake of children) which resulted in additional overtime / holiday pay. The added pressure on staff must also be noted.

This year, Blues has seen the full financial year building maintenance costs, which included garden maintenance, and general repairs and item replacement. New items were purchased for the outdoor area in Spring / Summer. Great efforts have been put into fundraising this year, and coupled with the generosity of our pre-school families, the fundraising income tripled on last year.

Blues also paid for some professional HR consultancy to review our staff contracts in light of onboarding new staff and aligning everyone to the same contract terms.

Reserves:

The charity ordinarily aims to put aside 10% for the contingency/sinking fund each year but for the fourth year running Blues has not made any profit in order to action this. Reserves have remained steady at £110K with £86K of that in cash.

The charity aims to keep its general reserves at a level equivalent to 3-6 months of running costs. As Blues expenditure increases, the running costs have also risen to around £70K (for 6 months). Therefore, our reserves currently cover this requirement, but further annual net losses will continue to see this position weakened. The Trustee Management Committee continue to identify new possibilities to generate income, and we are hopeful that new trustees can contribute towards this and reverse the trend.

This report was approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on 5th November 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Sophie Eves

Trustee

Blues Preschool & Nursery

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Independent Examiners Statement

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Blues Pre-School Nursery

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Blues Pre-School Nursery for the year ended 31 August 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Signed:



Name: ADAM AZIZ

Date: 06/11/2024

Ascott Blake Limited
11 Ducketts Wharf
Bishop's Stortford
Hertfordshire
CM23 3AR

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Statement of Financial Activities

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31/08/2024

			2023	2023
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Donations, funding and legacies	135,541	-	135,541	93,824
Income from investments	3,739	-	3,739	2,116
Total income and endowments	139,280	-	139,280	95,940
Expenses				
Costs of generating funds				
Expenditure on raised funds	9,945	-	9,945	7,411
Expenditure on charitable activities	139,291	1,454	141,195	121,081
Expenditure relating to move to new premises	-	-	-	4,740
Total Expenses	149,236	1,454	151,140	133,232
Net gains on investments				
			23	
Net income	(9,956)	(1,454)	(11,410)	(37,292)
Gains/(losses) on revaluation of fixed assets				
Net movement in funds:				
Net income for the year	(9,956)	(1,454)	(11,410)	(37,292)
Total funds brought forward	119,868	1,454	121,322	158,615
Net funds carried forward	109,912	-	109,912	121,323

This statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

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Balance Sheet

BALANCE SHEET AT 31/08/2024

		2024	2023
		£	£
FIXED ASSETS	<i>Note</i>		
Tangible fixed assets	2	25,199	26,477
CURRENT ASSETS			
Other debtors	3	1,015	0
Cash at bank and in hand		86,293	97,063
		<u>87,308</u>	<u>97,063</u>
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	4	<u>2,596</u>	<u>2,219</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>84,712</u>	<u>94,844</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u><u>109,912</u></u>	<u><u>121,322</u></u>
CAPITAL AND RESERVES			
Unrestricted funds			
General fund		1,595	11,551
General fund – prior year adjustment			
Designated funds		108,316	108,316
Restricted funds			
Restricted fund		<u>0</u>	<u>1,454</u>
		<u><u>109,912</u></u>	<u><u>121,322</u></u>

For the year ending 31/08/2024 the CIO was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Trustees 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' regime.

Approved by the board of trustees on 5th November 2024 and signed on their behalf by



.....
 Sophie Eves - Trustee

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Notes to the Accounts

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1a. Basis of Accounting

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with FRS102 - The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland and the Companies Act 2006 and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

1b. Incoming Resources

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

1c. Resources Expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

1d. Allocation and Apportionment of Costs

All costs relate to the single activity of the charitable company and are recognised accordingly.

1e. Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Designated funds are funds set aside by the trustees out of unrestricted general funds for the specific future purposes or projects.

1f. Depreciation

Depreciation has been provided at the following rates in order to write off the assets over their estimated useful lives.

Fixtures and Fittings straight line 15%

White Goods / Outdoor Shed straight line 20%

ICT equipment straight line 33%

Other plant and machinery straight line 33%

Contribution to development agreement for new building 4% to cover 25 year lease term

1g. Financial Instruments

The charity only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other debtors and creditors, loans from banks and other third parties, loans to related parties and investments in non-puttable ordinary shares.

Financial assets that are measured at cost and amortised cost are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, and the net amount reported in the Balance Sheet when there is an enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

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Detailed Statement of Financial Activities

2. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Short leasehold Properties	Office Equipment	ICT grant funded equipment / computers	Plant and machinery	Total
	£		£	£	£
Cost					
At 01/09/2023	21,874		313	6,135	28,322
Additions	0	176	0	874	1,050
At 31/08/2024	21,874	176	313	7,009	29,372
Depreciation					
At 01/09/2023	788		17	1,039	1,844
For the period	860	59	104	1,305	2,328
At 31/08/2024	1,648	59	122	2,344	4,172
Net Book Amounts					
At 31/08/2024	20,226	117	191	4,665	25,199
At 31/08/2023	21,086	-	296	5,096	26,477

3. DEBTORS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Prepayments and accrued income	1,015	0
	1,015	0

4. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Taxation and social security	135	677
Pension	255	-
Accounts payable	35	-
Accruals	1,674	1,510
Charge Card	-	32

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Other creditors	498	-
	<u>2,596</u>	<u>2,219</u>

5. LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

The company is limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. Each member gives a guarantee to contribute a sum not exceeding £0, to the company should it be wound up. At 31/08/2024 there were 4 members.

6. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year Kim Craythorne, a Trustee of the Blues Pre-School Nursery, received remuneration amounting to £29,334. This related solely to her salaried position as Manager of the pre-school. The role of Trustee is a voluntary one. Employer pension contributions of £693 were made into a defined contribution pension scheme during the year. Kim received no other benefits in the period.

INCOMING RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31/08/2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Incoming resources		
Incoming resources from generated funds		
Grants		
Council & Government Funding	118,169	74,285
	<u>118,169</u>	<u>74,285</u>
Donations		
Donations & Fundraising	2,995	918
Thorley Pre-School Closure donation (restricted)		3,000
	<u>2,995</u>	<u>3,918</u>
Other		
Session & Registration Fees	13,939	14,911
Toddler Group	268	467
Other Income	717	243
	<u>14,377</u>	<u>15,621</u>
	<u>135,541</u>	<u>93,824</u>
Investment Income		
Deposit account interest	3,739	2,116
	<u>3,739</u>	<u>2,116</u>
	<u>3,739</u>	<u>2,116</u>
	<u>139,280</u>	<u>95,940</u>

Blues Preschool & Nursery**Report and Accounts****For the year Ended 31/08/2024****EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR EDED 31/08/2024**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Expenses		
Costs of generating funds		
Costs of generating voluntary income		
Fundraising costs	397	447
Playgroup supplies (snacks, cleaning/hygiene, play items, arts & crafts, other consumables)	5,336	6,180
EYPP / DAF expenditure items	3620	Not split out
Equipment rental	593	783
	9,945	7,411
	9,945	7,411
Charitable Activities		
Rent	1,214	1,277
Marketing & publicity	314	416
Water Rates	(224)	331
Waste removal	365	372
Heat & light	3,233	3,169
Repairs & renewals	3,007	535
General wages	120,277	101,967
Pension	3,734	2,889
Training	656	1,321
Staff well-being	196	0
Insurance	815	1,063
Stationary, office supplies & printing	923	549
Telephone	802	1,338
Subscriptions	1,134	2,029
Professional Services (HR Consultancy)	1,308	
Sundry expenses	152	872
Depreciation of fixed assets	2,328	1,824
Expenditure relating to move to new premises	0	4,740
	140,235	124,690
Governance Costs		
Accountancy	422	973
Bank charges	87	159
	509	1,132
	150,690	133,232

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