

Trustee Report of Edale Stepping Stones Nursery and Childcare Centre

Introduction:

This first Trustee Report of Edale Stepping Stones Nursery and Childcare Centre (referred to as ESS in the following) covers the period from February 2020 until 31 August 2021. (Charitable status was granted in June 2020).

The report is divided into 5 sections:

Section 1 deals with management and governance,

Section 2 answers the question – ‘why has ESS been established?’ and details how this has been managed,

Section 3 describes what has been achieved and who has benefitted,

Section 4 is the Financial Report,

Section 5 provides insight into future plans. Administrative information is provided as an Appendix.

SECTION 1: STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

ESS is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Registration Number: 1190027

OFSTED Registration Number: 2600983

Address: The Old Winery, Grindsbrook Booth, Edale, S33 7ZA

The management and performance of ESS is overseen by a Board of Trustees made up of six volunteers as detailed in the Appendix.

The Trustees follow relevant governance policies covering areas such as role of trustee, training, conflict of interest, Safeguarding, correct use of funds, terms of reference for meetings and decision-making, recruitment, contracts of employment etc

Each Trustee has a set term of office and any new trustees will be provided with the appropriate policy documents. There is no formal recruitment policy, prospective Trustees being identified based on their areas of expertise.

SECTION 2: WHY ESTABLISH EDALE STEPPING STONES

Purpose and Objectives

1. The principal purpose in establishing ESS was to provide a much needed safe and high-quality childcare and early learning opportunity for young children in Edale and the surrounding area who would benefit from these opportunities. It had to be affordable and accessible.
2. A public consultation exercise was carried out with the village and local communities in January 2020 which identified positive support for such a venture. There was particular enthusiasm from parents who are critical workers, and who were struggling to find local provision at the times they needed. The consultation was led by two people, one who had experience as a foster carer and childminder and one as a Head teacher. Following the overwhelmingly positive response to the consultation, they both agreed to work together, voluntarily, to establish the nursery and childcare centre and seek trustees to oversee the developments and to gain charitable status.
3. There was a valuable opportunity to forge close links with the successful Edale Primary School and aid its sustainability by increasing the offer to a wider number of local parents with Day-care and After-School provision being high on the agenda.
4. Edale has managed to retain a very strong community but as with many rural villages, this is always under threat. A Nursery was seen as providing an important boost to the vibrancy of the village, encouraging and enabling young families to stay or indeed, move to the area, secure in the knowledge that high-quality childcare was available on the doorstep.
5. Edale is a small rural village. In order to access reliable childcare busy families needed to travel far afield. A Nursery located in the heart of the village would enable families to walk to their childcare facility rather than having to travel by car out of the area. It would contribute to a green environment, enabling parents to drop their children off safely and travel from the village railway station (serving Manchester and Sheffield) for their commute.
6. It would enable parents and carers to return to paid or unpaid employment.
7. There would be opportunities from a new venture for local employment and for training for those wishing to pursue a career in childcare and early learning.
8. A new venture would help sustain local businesses with regular purchases from cafes and the village shop.

How was this achieved.

Laying the foundations –

A Board of Trustees was formed of volunteers, two of whom were to head up the Nursery staff, once it was established.

Edale Stepping Stones Nursery and Childcare Centre was constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on the 19th June 2020.

A detailed project plan was developed together with policies to guide how the Trustees would work together, make decisions and ensure the objectives of a CIO were met.

Other policies were developed to ensure the effective running of the Nursery, to meet Ofsted requirements and to ensure Safeguarding provisions were satisfied.

Premises –

Suitable premises in the village had to be found.

The Primary School did not have spare capacity and the Village Hall could not be used exclusively as a nursery. However, the Old Winery, a building owned locally and needing a new use and requiring little in the way of alteration was identified. Located in the centre of the village, having a garden together with car parking and close to the railway station made it ideal.

Planning Permission and Building Regulation Approval were applied for and granted. A multi-year lease was agreed for ESS to use the building and associated garden. Delays in obtaining approvals for the use of the Old Winery due to the pandemic necessitated a temporary home for the Nursery at the Village Hall, bookings here having been cancelled due to Covid for many months ahead.

Occupation of this temporary location commenced in September 2020. An Ofsted registration was arranged and received a positive outcome with no conditions attached. Finally, in May 2021, ESS was able to relocate to its new home at the Old Winery, having received another positive registration inspection by Ofsted with unconditional approval.

Fundraising:

Key to ESS being able to operate as a successful nursery has been the huge input and support from local people.

Formal funding bids to bodies such as the Big Lottery had to be put on hold as their funds were being diverted to meet Covid demands. However, donations of furniture, toys and equipment poured in from local sources together with volunteer “work days” to create a nursery environment together with a suitable garden area. The latter being funded by a generous donation from a local business.

ESS has also benefitted from a share of Edale Car Park Charity funds and hosting joint fund-raising events with Friends of Edale School.

With the easing of Covid restrictions, a very successful outdoor fundraising event by ESS took place in July which was well supported by the community and visitors.

Communication:

The enormous input of local residents must be recognised and the Trustees are eager to maintain this very close and important connection. Key to this are monthly updates via the village local magazine, 'Ringing Roger', providing feedback on new developments and plans and highlighting the benefits of a charitable nursery.

A dedicated website is now up and running www.edalesteppingstones.co.uk

This was developed by an Edale resident at no cost to the Nursery.

SECTION 3: WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED, WHO HAS BENEFITTED?

There are many things that have been achieved that are not readily quantifiable but referring back to the original aims listed in Section One, a number of the defined objectives and desired benefits have been realised as follows:

Our charitable status means that any profits are ploughed back into the Nursery for the benefit of those children currently attending and their families and this will continue into the future.

1. A maximum of 12 children of ages from 1 to 5 years benefit at any one time and are provided with inclusive, sensory, fun and stimulating learning experiences. Having the unique surroundings of Edale on the doorstep to inspire them, their confidence and skills are enhanced building foundations for a happy childhood.
2. Approximately 20 families have already benefited from a flexible service affordable and in many cases tailored to their specific needs including the additional services after-school club, wrap around care, holiday care etc..
3. Increasing demand for placements confirms both its affordability and accessibility.
4. Key workers have been able to maintain their vital work during the pandemic secure in the knowledge that their children are being looked after in a safe environment.
5. Two paid staff have been recruited who both live in the village together with a number of volunteers who support the two senior volunteer staff.
6. New staff have benefitted from training opportunities and develop practical skills to set them on career paths.
7. Several of the families walk to the nursery, and all those using the after-school facility are collected from the school on foot. Car use associated with the provision of childcare has been reduced.

Links with the Primary School have been cemented and to reinforce this, siblings of school pupils are given priority for entry to the Nursery helping the cohesiveness of the community. Five older children from the nursery will soon join their primary schools following their Graduation Day ceremony. Joint fundraising events are planned to benefit both facilities and focus the attention of the community.

Feedback both verbal and from a formal questionnaire to parents reinforce that ESS offers high quality services which are much appreciated.

Public Benefit

In order to ensure that the principles of Public Benefit are at the forefront of the Trustees' actions, this is a standard agenda item for Board Meetings.

The Trustees are satisfied that no harm arose from the purposes outlined above, the beneficiaries being the general public and the village community and that no private benefit has arisen from these purposes.

SECTION 4: FINANCIAL REPORT:

The trustees are pleased to present the charity's Receipts and Payment Account for the period to 31 August 2021. This was an extended period to cover the setting up of the charity through to the end of the first full year of operation.

The period closed with a bank balance of £28k of unrestricted reserves. The trustees believe this represents a strong cash position from which to grow the charity and therefore are confident that the charity is a going concern.

These reserves were held to contribute to funding future objectives, as outlined in section 5, and to cover any temporary shortfall in funding sources over the next year.

The income derived from fees, charged to parents of children attending and claimed from the local authority (Derbyshire County Council) for eligible childcare hours, amounted to £60k.

The charity also benefitted from £6k of donations, from individual giving and local organisations.

A total of £10k was successfully secured from grants, which included:

- £9k awarded by High Peak Borough Council (from Government funding to support the organisation through the Covid pandemic).
- £1k from Breedon Cement Works for provision of Outdoor Resources
- £0.3k from Derbyshire County Council to part fund IT resources (i-pads)
- £0.25k from Alpkite to part fund waders for children to experience outdoor learning

The total income from all sources was £76k.

The paid staffing expenditure, for childcare practitioners, was £27k.

Premises costs amounted to £9k, which include the temporary hire of the local Village Hall (£4k) until the dedicated Centre space was established later in the year (£5k).

The cost of providing nutritious and varied meals, and cleaning the Centre, was £4k. These meals were cooked using fresh ingredients purchased locally.

Resources amounted to £4k. Primarily this was to buy materials for the children to use in their learning and play, but also included small items of essential furniture, waders and the IT hardware (laptop and i-pads).

Insurance and subscriptions to professional bodies and IT software (EY Log) cost just under £2k.

The outdoor resource delivered through the year by the Forest School, at £1k, contributed to the improved learning and personal development outcomes experienced by the children.

The total expenditure was £48k.

SECTION 5: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

All funding will continue to be used to enhance the nursery's offer whilst ensuring that ESS remains both affordable and competitive.

A number of objectives are currently under consideration;

1. A key objective of the Trustees is to ensure all permanent staff are appropriately paid and that proper work/life balances are established.
2. A plan is being developed in order to enable the 2 senior volunteer staff to plan their retirement whilst ensuring the future sustainability of the nursery. This will involve the recruitment of fully-funded replacements.
3. A marketing plan is currently being developed to ensure that momentum is maintained and opportunities are taken.
4. Continue to ensure that the children benefit from being accepted as an important part of the local community of Edale and of the Hope Valley.
5. Continue to capitalise on the use of outdoor provision and the wonderful environment of the Peak District.
6. Develop positive links with children who live in different environments and encourage a sharing of understanding.

Edale Stepping Stones Nursery and Childcare Centre has quickly built a reputation as being high quality. All the children aged 1-4 years living in Edale attend the provision and families from other areas in the Hope Valley are now choosing ESS as their first preference for childcare.

As of September 2021, there are 14 children aged 1-4 benefitting from the provision. 14 children attend the after-school provision, some regularly and some occasionally. There is currently only a one-day vacancy for a prospective one or two year old, and only one full-time place available for a three or four year old. At the request of families, ESS is now starting a waiting list, which will be helpful in future planning and sustainability of the provision.

Summary:

Edale Stepping Stones has generated very positive feedback, is well-led and supported by an enthusiastic community. Achieving this in the midst of a global pandemic has been very challenging with inevitable setbacks but the staff supported by the Trustees continue to work as a team and have increasing confidence that ESS has a successful and sustainable future ahead.

DECLARATIONS

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees Report above.

Signed on behalf of the Charity's Trustees.

Signatures(s)



Full name(s)....

NIGEL R.S. LAWFORD

LIAM GILLIGAN

Position(s)....

VICE - CHAIR.

TREASURER

Date

31.5.22

31.5.22

Appendix – ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The founding Trustees were:

Dr Jane Acty

Naomi Compton

Liam Gilligan

Sam Keating

Nigel Lawford

Theresa Skillen

Cathy Spingys

In August 2021, Naomi Compton and Theresa Skillen stepped down to concentrate on their roles as Head and Deputy Head of ESS with responsibility to manage operational matters. They were replaced as Trustees by Anita Critchlow. In order to familiarise themselves with the activities of the Board, the newly-appointed Trustee had already been acting as an observer since May 2021.

Banking facilities are provided by the Co-op Bank p.l.c., P.O.Box 101, Balloon Street, Manchester, M60 4EP.

Insurers: Pound Gates Chartered Insurance Brokers.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name
Edale Stepping Stones Nursery and Childcare Centre

No (if any)
1180027

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	19-Jun-20		31-Aug-21

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Fees - Direct parent funding	44,630	-	-	44,630	-
Fees - Local authority funding (DCC)	15,583	-	-	15,583	-
Donations - Organisation	2,385	-	-	2,385	-
Donations - Individual	3,294	-	-	3,294	-
Grants	8,970	1,550	-	10,520	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	74,862	1,550	-	76,412	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	74,862	1,550	-	76,412	-
A3 Payments					
Staffing	27,082	-	-	27,082	-
Premises	9,234	-	-	9,234	-
Fees Refunded	706	-	-	706	-
Professional / Subscriptions/ Insurance	1,683	-	-	1,683	-
Resources	3,834	550	-	4,384	-
Food / Sundries	3,981	-	-	3,981	-
Forest School	-	1,000	-	1,000	-
Sub total	46,520	1,550	-	48,070	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	46,520	1,550	-	48,070	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	28,342	-	-	28,342	-
A5 Transfers between funds					
A6 Cash funds last year end					
Cash funds this year end	28,342	-	-	28,342	-

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank Balance at 31 August 2021	28,342	-	-
	Total cash funds	28,342	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	-

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

NIGEL LAWFORD
LIAM GILLILAN

31.5.22
31.5.22

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of

Edale Stepping Stones Nursery &
Childcare Centre

**On accounts for
the year ended**

31 August 2021

Charity no (if any)

1190027

Set out on pages

1 and 2

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 August 2021.

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or

the accounts did 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:



Date: 31 May 2022

Name: Graeme Ralph

Address: 19 Brook Road
Sheffield
S8 9FH

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

Previously a Fellow Of The Institute Of
Internal Auditors. Now retired.