

# Harbour Bears Pre-school

## Annual report

September 2022

The following is a summary of the 2021 – 2022 academic year at Harbour Bears Pre-school.

We began our new school year on 24<sup>th</sup> August with 25 pre-school aged children attending Monday to Friday, 9.00am until 12 noon.

Our first term was, as usual, very busy getting everyone settled into our school family.

# Making Life Better

supported by the Public Health Agency



Harbour Bears Pre-school were very grateful to be in receipt of a grant financially supported by the Public Health Agency and managed by Northern Area Community Network to support positive Mental and Emotional Well-being by Making Life Better.

Harbour Bears are committed to providing the best possible environment for our children and we are conscious of the times we are living in and the stress increasingly younger children are dealing with. With the help of this grant, we endeavoured to provide children with strategies to help them combat stress, anxiety and other emotions now and in their future lives.

The funding enabled us to facilitate the following objectives;

Objective 1: provide the children with a Music & Action Pack containing a Tumble Tots Rhymes & Songs CD, dancing scarves, egg shakers and a wooden sounder, to encourage singing and movement to help keep the children agile and improve their mood. Music and movement help develop their self-confidence, independence, self-discipline, self-worth and sense of security and identity.

Objective 2: provide the children with an Art & Craft Activity Pack to spark their creativity, develop their motor and coordination skills and improve their memory and language skills. Using these packs will boost the children's self-esteem and serve as a stress outlet for them, while they connect with their families and work on craft projects together.

Objective 3: provide the children with an Emotional Wellbeing Pack containing a story book 'Lucy's Blue Day Book' and Emotions flashcards. This pack will help

the children understand their feelings and emotions so they can develop effective ways of managing them, and Lucy helps them to learn that it's #OKNotToBeOK. By sharing this pack with their families at home, they will be connecting with them, and sharing precious reading time together.

Harbour Bears Pre-school are delighted to be able to provide these opportunities and thank the Public Health Agency and Northern Area Community Network for the opportunity to do so.

We were also successful with a grant application from the Halifax which has enabled us to order new tables and chairs, sand and water trays, music wall and a paint easel. This equipment will be very beneficial to the children in the group and we thank Halifax for this funding.

Thank you to our Vice Chairperson Jennifer Warnock for her work in securing these grants.

Covid-19 continued to impact our delivery of the Getting Ready to Learn programme. Unfortunately we again were unable to hold any face-to-face meetings with parents or have our group sessions with the children. We did however provide information to parents via email along with the monthly newsletter.

Harbour Bears were grateful to receive Engage funding from the Department of Education. The programme was created to support schools in limiting any long-term impact of the disruption caused by Covid-19 on pupils by supporting their learning and engagement, along with their social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing.

In December we were delighted to get back to practicing for our Nativity which this year was 'Shine Star Shine.' Again, due to Covid-19, we did not feel it safe to bring groups of people together so we recorded the performances which enabled every family to have a CD.

As is our usual practice, we finished 2021 with a party and although Santa continued to self-isolate to ensure that he was fit and healthy for Christmas Eve, he had made sure that presents had been left for the little bears.

Thankfully this year we were able to return to school in January and although Covid remained present in our community, we managed to stay open and continue with our pre-school sessions and activities.

Fundraising has continued to prove difficult during the ongoing situation with Covid but we were grateful to be able to raffle a knitted nativity scene and sell knitted tree decorations kindly donated by Mrs Blair at Christmas and then hold another virtual marathon. The money from the virtual marathon helped to pay for the front door at our new building. A further event was organised and although it was unsuccessful, we thank those who organised it and provided services on the night.

Thank you to all those who organised, attended and supported our fundraising events and to those who made donations or donated items to be sold to raise funds for us. We greatly appreciate your generosity and support.

With regards our new site, the new door has been fitted during the summer and we now look to secure funding to begin the internal work.

Many, many thanks to those individuals who volunteered to become Committee members and gave their time to attend zoom meetings, make important decisions regarding the day to day running of our group and organise events to raise money to help secure the future of our group. Your support and commitment to Harbour Bears Pre-school is greatly appreciated.

Thanks must also go to the staff team who always go above and beyond their normal duties and hours to ensure that our children receive the best care and support possible.

We are sad to say goodbye to Patricia who, after 21 years of service to Harbour Bears Pre-school, took early retirement in June. We thank Patricia and wish her (and her expanding family) well and hope that she has many happy years ahead.

The Department of Health and Social Care Trust held our annual inspection in May and we are delighted that we passed with no recommendations and our registration was renewed.

The end of term finished with the group celebrating the platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and having our graduation celebrations both at school and at home.

As we embark on a new academic year, I look forward to working alongside our new families so that together we can provide the best possible learning opportunities and experiences for the children of Harbour Bears Pre-school.

Fiona McKinley BA (Hons) ED.  
Pre-school Leader.