

Harbour Bears Pre-school

Leaders report

September 2023

The following is a summary of the 2022 – 2023 academic year at Harbour Bears Pre-school.

We began our new school year on 30th August with 23 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.

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. We were able provide six sessions of relaxed kids, three sessions of wiggle it and were able to provide a giant box of craft for each child.

Harbour Bears were very lucky to be nominated and consequently won a competition on Facebook to receive a free session with jump jiggle and jive.

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

We began to distribute our Getting ready to learn resources, big bedtime read and happy healthy kids - these were kept at home to enjoy for two weeks.

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. This funding was withdrawn in March 22.

In December we were delighted to get back to practicing for our Nativity which this year was 'Away in a Manager.' 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 memory stick.

As is our usual practice, we finished 2022 with a party and a visit from Santa who brought presents for all the little bears.

Fundraising continued, we were grateful to be able to raffle a knitted nativity scene and sell knitted tree decorations kindly donated by Mrs Blair at Christmas. We held a sponsored row and cycle and toddle to help raise funds for a defibrillator for the local area, Harbour Bears wanted to give something back to the local community. We also held a Minnie and Mickey afternoon tea which was a great success.

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.

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 – Fiona, Pamela, Nicola and Kerry who always go above and beyond their normal duties and hours to ensure that our children receive the best care and support possible.

We were sad to say goodbye to Fiona who decided to move on to a new adventure after 26 years of service to Harbour Bears Pre-school. We thank Fiona and wish her 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.

We thoroughly enjoyed getting back into the community through educational visit and stay n play days with parents.

We celebrated King Charles the third's coronation with our own kings and queens royal party.

The end of term finished with our annual trip to W5 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.

Thanks everyone

Kerry Mills
Pre-School leader.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kerry Mills." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.