

Harbour Bears Pre-school

Leaders Report

September 2024

The following is a summary of the 2023 – 2024 academic year at Harbour Bears Pre-school.

We began our new school year on 29th August with 15 pre-school aged children attending Monday to Friday, 9.00am until 12 noon. We also had 10 playgroup aged children start between the months of September and October. Three playgroup children attended Monday, Wednesday and Friday and 7 attended Tuesday and Thursday, again attending from 9am until 12noon.

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

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 three sessions of relaxed kids, three sessions of jump, jiggle and jive.

Thank you to our Treasurer Jennifer Warnock for her work in securing this grants.

Harbour Bears were also grateful to receive a grant from Childcare Partnership (CCP) Regional Small Grant Scheme totalling £1500 that would focus on our outdoor play development.

This grant was intended to progress improvements in both the experiences and outcomes for children and early learning and play practice. It allowed our Outdoor play area to be enhanced through improvements such as new surfaces, fencing, plants, sensory additions and natural outdoor play resources. Our outdoor Space has now been changed and has become more accessible to the children who use it now and will in the future.

Massive thanks to Pamela Mulholland for taking the time to apply for this grant and to all the committee members, staff and local businesses who took gave up their time to help us complete our project.

Harbour Bears held their first open day in 20 years, this took place on Tuesday 21st November 2023. We opened our doors for all parents/guardians and children to come along, view our setting and meet the staff team whilst enjoying some fun

activities. We received some lovely feedback from the local community and our open day was a great success.

In December we were delighted to get back to practicing for our Nativity which this year was 'The Nativity.' We were thrilled to be able to do our performance face to face in front of parents/guardians. This took place on Thursday 14th December at Sandy Bay Pavilion. We all had a lovely morning and all the little bears enjoyed saying their words and acting their roles, we were very proud of each and every one.

As is our usual practice, we finished 2023 with a party and a visit from Santa who brought presents for all the little bears.

We are very grateful to Mrs Margaret Blair for her continuing support for our school in providing knitted Christmas decorations and a nativity scene for us to sell and ballot.

Fundraising continued, we held quiz nights, discos', a winter warmer competition, a sponsored cycle and a toddle for the children to help raise funds. 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 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 – Kerry, Pamela and Nicola who always go above and beyond their normal duties and hours to ensure that our children receive the best care and support possible.

Harbour Bears Pre-school was notified that they would be inspected by The Education Training Inspectorate (ETI), this two-day inspection took place in February.

Staff, committee and our Early Years Specialist were all delighted with the feedback provided from ETI and were very happy that no follow up visits were required. The full ETI inspection report can be found on their website.

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 visits, forest school sessions with local primary schools and stay n play days with parents.

The end of term finished with our annual trip, we attended Streamvale Open Farm with the staff, children and their parents and a fabulous day was had by all. We had our graduation party in school and we were thrilled to be able to hold our graduation

celebration for our pre-school aged children face to face this year. This took place in Sandy Bay Pavilion, the children received their certificates and wore their gowns. We all had a lovely morning celebrating all the little bears.

As we embark on a new academic year, we 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 cursive script that reads "Kerry Mills."