

## **Hansel & Gretel Preschool – Leader’s Report**

The following is a summary of the 2023 – 2024 academic year at Hansel & Gretel Preschool.

Our school year commenced on 29th August with 12 Preschool aged children

attending Monday to Friday, 9.00am until 11.30am. An additional preschool aged child commenced in October 2023. Between September 2023 and April 2024 a further 9 pre-preschool aged children joined the group, all attending 3 mornings per week (Monday/Wednesday/Friday).

Our first term focused on settling the children in and making them familiar with the areas of play, growing their confidence and ownership of the space – enabling children to make their own choices in play and developing peer interactions.

We had our annual Social Services Inspection on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The inspection went well and the inspection social worker reported

*“...Hansel and Gretel Pre-school is a well-established Playgroup which benefits from a team of professional and experienced staff who aim to provide warm, safe and stimulating environment for children. On day of inspection the quality of the physical environment was to a good standard with excellent play equipment and materials provided. Equipment was used appropriately for its purpose helping to create a stimulating environment.”*

We had our Nature Walk in the surrounding village on 13<sup>th</sup> October, during which staff were supported by parents.

We held our annual Open Morning on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November. We welcomed a number of parents and children to view the setting and received lots of positive feedback and praise for the facilities we had on offer.

During the first term we held a Hamper Raffle, Fireside Quiz sheet and Christmas Fair & Grotto to support our fundraising efforts.

We also supported Children In Need by making a donation of our snack funds on 17<sup>th</sup> November.

Children went on a outing to Inver Garden Centre on 15<sup>th</sup> December to see the seasonal displays and post their letters to Santa.

On 20<sup>th</sup> December we joined Glynn Primary School for their Christmas concert. Children were able to watch the performance of Glynn PS pupils, before taking to the stage to sing our own Christmas song and rhyme.

On 21<sup>st</sup> December we invited all children to our Christmas party, where we had a visit from Santa and all children received a gift.

Children returned after the Christmas holidays on 3<sup>rd</sup> January. They quickly settled back to the preschool routine and continued to develop their play and learning.

On 10<sup>th</sup> February 2024 we held a Celebration Dance at Magheramorne House for the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Preschool. Current and past parents, pupils and staff attended the celebration and a fantastic evening was had by all.

We celebrated World Book Day on 7<sup>th</sup> March, where children brought their favourite books from home and we had the opportunity to share them together.

We had a 'Stay & Play' morning on 15<sup>th</sup> March for parents/carers to come to preschool and play alongside their children. The children enjoyed sharing their daily routines with the adults and showing them their favourite areas of play. Mornings like this are great for our continued partnership with parents and family.

In our final term we had a Breakfast morning and indoor boot sale, a book sale, A '10000 Steps Challenge' and a Sponsored Pedal Push fundraisers to continue fundraising for resources and activities to support the running of the Preschool.

After the Easter break, we had a visit from a grandparent who brought a baby pigeon for the children to see, another grandparent who brought a lamb to visit and Gary from Inver Garden centre – these activities all related to our learning of growth, change, seasonal awareness and caring for living things.

On 7<sup>th</sup> June we invited parents back for a whole morning of 'Physical Stay & Play' – we highlighted the importance of physical play for children's health and wellbeing. Parents and children enjoyed a variety of physical activities (including jumping, skipping, balancing) as well as parachute games and action rhymes. We finished the morning off with a Yogarilla 'Calm down Yoga' session. Lots of fun was had by all.

In June we highlighted the 'Transitions' the children would be experiencing when moving to primary school or transitioning back to preschool for their full time year.

We enjoyed an end of year outing to Carrickfergus Train Station. Staff, children and parent helpers travelled on the train from Larne Train Station, accompanied by a translink employee , to Carrickfergus Train Station where we had a tour of the station, including the old signal box. Children were given activity packs and we had a snack at the station. We then travelled back to Larne on the train. It was a fantastic educational and fun-filled trip.

On Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June we held our Preschool Graduation to celebrate the success of our Preschool children throughout the year. All children received their certificates and we watched a slideshow celebrating all the activities we took part in throughout the year.

In our final term we had a Breakfast morning and indoor boot sale, a book sale, A '10000 Steps Challenge' and a Sponsored Pedal Push fundraisers to continue fundraising for resources and activities to support the running of the Preschool.

Our preschool staff were supported by the voluntary Management Committee – their support and efforts in the running of the preschool is greatly appreciated.

Thanks to the staff team – Sarah, Anita, Karen and Joanne who go above and beyond their daily duties and hours to ensure the children at Hansel & Gretel Preschool get the best possible start to their early educational.

We look forward to supporting another cohort of Preschool children after the Summer Break.

*Sarah McMillan*, Preschool Leader