

**FIRST STEP PRE-SCHOOL LTD**

Annual Report

To 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012

This report covered by pages 1 to 10, along with the attached financial statements, was approved by the Trustees for presentation at the Annual General Meeting of First Step Pre-School Ltd on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by:

Clara Mason, Chairperson

Date

The chairperson presents this report with the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31 July 2012.

## **INCORPORATION AND CONSTITUTION**

First Step Pre-School Ltd is a registered charity (No 1022996) and is registered in England as a company (No 5885935). The company was incorporated on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2006 and commenced trading on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006.

The Pre-school's current constitution was formally adopted at the Annual General Meeting of 2002

## **PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY AND OBJECT OF THE CHARITY**

The principal activity and object of the company and charity, in the period under review, was to advance the education of children below compulsory school age. The Pre-school owns a building situated on leased land at Christ the King School in Thornbury and rents a second building at Crossways Infant School, also in Thornbury. Sessions run concurrently at both sites, where qualified and friendly staff provide stimulating and creative play, that enables learning to take place in a fun and secure environment. We look upon pre-school as the first stepping-stone to school and school life.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Working together to provide quality care and a foundation for life long learning.

## **BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

First step Pre-School has been educating children and benefitting the community of Thornbury for the last thirty years. We welcome all children in the local community from every background.

Our work with children from 2.5 years to school age means we help children learn and develop important social skills they will take with them into school and beyond. We lay important foundations in skills such as turn taking, staying safe, communication and language development, teamwork and conflict resolution. All these skills enable our children to be a responsible member of their local community.

Our work means we work closely with all the local primary schools and the local SureStart Children's Centre. This work is of benefit to our children and to the schools themselves as well as the wider community. We often visit local schools and this year we have taken children to see an infant school production, an Easter assembly and have stalls at local summer fayres, as well as other events. We also work closely with our local schools to prepare our children for starting school by visiting the reception class and using school facilities for PE and other sessions.

The work we do with the children in our care is of great benefit to the wider community as our staff are a source of information and expert knowledge on many aspects of childcare and we impart this knowledge to our families. Our staff are always willing to advise and discuss such issues as potty training, diet and mealtimes, sleep and behaviour management. This is a real source of support to local families and so the wider community.

Our pre-school is run by a management committee made up of parent volunteers. This is another way in which we benefit the community as we provide our parents with the opportunity to contribute to the development and running of our pre-school through this voluntary work. An important aspect of the committee's work is in fundraising for pre-school and in doing this we work a lot within the local community. For example we have links to our local community garden project, local businesses who donate to our events and we have run a number of events including a toy sale, Easter Fayre and Race night. We also participate in community events such as the Jubilee event held at Turnberries this year.

### **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – Clara Mason**

The new committee was elected at our AGM in the Autumn and it was good to see a number of familiar faces remain on the committee as well as welcome some new additions.

I would like to thank everyone on the Committee for all their help, support, ideas and contributions throughout the year. We continue to work well as a team and I really value the commitment people have made. This year the fundraising team have raised a fantastic amount of money. Huge thanks to Selina and Alex for all their hard work and organisation. Thanks should also go to the staff and parents who continue to be such valuable supporters of our fundraising events. The Committee have spent time this year looking at promoting the great work that Pre-School does and I would like to thank Laura, Andrea and Kelly for their work on the new logo and the new publicity materials. I would like to thank Gary and Lucy for their invaluable work as Treasurer and Vice-Chair respectively and to Helen in her role as secretary.

I would, of course, like to thank the staff for all their hard work this year. It is so fantastic to be involved with an organisation with such dedicated professionals who care so much about the work they do. The results of our parent/carer questionnaires were again full of positive comments about the work of the staff and they should feel rightly proud of all they have achieved. The Leaders and I continue to work closely together and I thank them for all the extra time and commitment they have given this year. The coming year will bring some significant changes and challenges for pre-school with the introduction of the new EYFS framework and our own changes at the Crossways site and I look forward to working together on these.

I will be remaining on the Committee next year and hope to continue in the role of Chair. We have some exciting changes ahead!

## **TREASURER'S REPORT – Gary Adams**

I am pleased to report that the Pre School has made a small financial surplus of £2,607 on a turnover of £112,057. The underlying surplus, after excluding fundraising activities and transfers to the savings account, is £947. Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the leaders at both sites, all the Pre School staff and the Committee for their help in achieving this positive result which represents a significant improvement on the budgeted position, where a deficit of £2,530 was forecast.

I am stepping down as treasurer after two and a half years in the role, I would like to place on record my thanks to Clara Mason (Chair), Jenny Harris & Penny Smith (Leaders), Tiffany Needham (Administrator) and all the other Pre School staff and committee members for their help and support during my time as treasurer.

## **LEADERS' REPORTS – Jenny Harris with news from Christ the King site**

As always, it has been another busy year at Christ the King site but already another group of children has left us to continue their learning journey at school. A settled staff team has helped them on their way by planning lots of learning activities and experiences. We celebrated Grandparents in September by inviting them to come and play, make music or talk to the children about what it was like when they were young. We also celebrated Harvest and raised money for Children in Need. At Christmas the children performed their Nativity for parents and families and we went to Cattle Country for our Christmas Party, including a train ride to visit Santa! Our celebrations included the Chinese New Year, when we did Dragon dancing and Tai Chi, as well as tasting Chinese food and of course Easter.

Among our visitors were the library, bringing Treasure chests for the children, the firemen, the police and some pets, including two ferrets and a puppy. Some grandparents came back to do a second music session with the children and a mum also brought in her guitar and got everyone singing. Zoolab visited and brought a selection of small creatures and creepy crawlies for the children to learn about. We also took the children to visit the library and Tesco, where they learned how to use the till. As usual we had a Bedtime Stories evening, when the children and Aunties came back to preschool in their pyjamas to enjoy some stories and hot chocolate with marshmallows and cream. The children added a new favourite activity to P.E. when Amie came to teach them Zumba. We had a fun Welly Wang for the morning children which raised lots of money for preschool.

To help the children's transition to school we have been visiting the Reception Class in school for most of the year and also worked together on a combined project. We learned some Teddy Bear songs with actions and signs and invited the parents to come and see the performance, followed by a Teddy Bear's picnic in the School's woodland. We also took the children to Crossways School to take part in a music and movement activity several times, called Wiggle Time, which helps them experience a different school environment.

The end of the summer term became very busy as the weather improved and we were able to hold our postponed Sports Day. Parents were also invited to an End of Year Concert and Art Exhibition in the school hall and to the Leaver's Party & Picnic at the Chantry.

During the year we have had a lot of school and college students doing work placements with us and we have liaised with other settings, exchanging visits, to help children who attend both

provisions. The staff at this site have also embarked on a Quality Assurance scheme called The Bristol Standard, which should benefit the preschool, the staff and the children as we progress. We have had great support this year from our parents and a lot of these activities would not have been possible without them.

### **LEADERS' REPORTS – Penny Smith with news from Crossways site**

We were sad to say goodbye to Claire Gaynor in January and pleased to welcome Lorraine Remfry and Katie Hopwood who have both started their NVQ3.

During the course of the year the morning children have taken part in a wide range of activities to help prepare them for school, including visiting the reception classes and playing with reception children in their playground. They have also had many visitors and we have had students on work experience or college placements also with us. As Jenny has mentioned, Zoolab returned again with their collection of snakes, gerbils, snails and other small creatures. We celebrated safety week by inviting the fire brigade and the police who brought their car and the children were able to sit inside it, use the flashing lights. In addition for road safety week we had a visit from a South Gloucestershire traffic warden, who showed the children the correct way to cross the road and kindly gave us a road safety pack.

Staff from the library brought treasure chests for the children and in July we walked to the library where we were read a story and had biscuits and squash. As usual we walked to the local shops and to visit Tesco, where the children were able to use the tills. We also had a pyjama evening with bedtime stories, torches and milkshakes. We all enjoyed Sports Day where there were races for younger brothers and sisters.

A great deal of excitement and interest was generated by the emergence of our butterflies from their chrysalises – some of which actually happened during session times! We successfully grew tomatoes, beans, strawberries, potatoes and lots of herbs which we ate at snack time, and the children also planted marigolds, sweet peas and many other flowers. Also, this year after a long wait our stick insect eggs hatched and we watched them grow!

At Christmas all the children enjoyed the parties and the morning children performed “The First Christmas” play for their families. Our Christmas party was in Cattle Country and we all went on a train to meet Father Christmas. In the summer term we made a log circle in the woods for everyone to enjoy. We also ended the year with a performance to families about our activities through the year.

We have also benefited from the efforts of the fundraising team and have erected a new garden gazebo for the children to read stories in and a PVC curtain strip to allow the children to move in and out of the garden easily. We also purchased more equipment for our woodwork bench, Christmas dressing up, play phones and washing set for the children, plants for the garden and lots more!

Both leaders would like to thank all volunteers who have done rota duty through the year. It really does make a difference.

## **FUNDRAISER'S REPORT – Selina Davies**

Well we certainly crammed a lot in this year. It has been very inspiring to have been part of such a dedicated team of volunteers. I need to mention the Aunties first, because we couldn't have made this year's fundraising events as successful as they were without the support of the Aunties, whom are not obliged to help but do and give up their free time to add support, the children love seeing the aunties outside school setting.

### **Annual Toy & Cake sale; at CTK Hall, Castle St.**

This was not held at our usual & more central venue, another charity toy sale event got the booking at the Methodist hall first and other dates clashed with various school fundraisers. Still with a strong team and some selling of cakes being taken into the town centre by a couple of entrepreneurial parents we managed to raise a healthy sum of cash. Less was made on the toys, as has been the case in previous years and more was made on the wonderful homemade cakes from our parents and grandparents and the added extra of homemade cakes made for us by Thornbury WI (they are keen to help in small local projects). The Methodist hall is already booked for our Toy Sale 2012 the date is Saturday morning 17<sup>th</sup> November. It will be worth confirming this early Sept as we booked it last year!

### **Raffle**

We put the price of the raffle tickets up this year it had been 20p a ticket for quite a few years so 'we went for it' and as a result more than doubled our profit. We had a tremendous response from parents and friends of the Pre School and we were able to make 10 hampers to go with a great selection of other prizes donated from local business.

### **Calendars**

These have gone down in sales over the last few years but still make a worthwhile profit as there are no production costs. And extra copies were bought at the Xmas Nativity shows this year.

### **We did not have stalls at either of the school Xmas fairs this year.**

We decided we already had too much going on.

### **Race Night.**

This was new on the calendar and after a few teething problems it was a successful evening. In hindsight there may have been a cheaper way to run it, but we can learn from this and make the next one more profitable. Thanks should go to the Aunties at CTK for their support on the night. I wrote to 60 local businesses asking for sponsorship and had responses from 5 local companies who were nothing to do with Pre School setting directly, A Solicitors, Opticians, an Estate Agents and Renishaw. Remember to ask businesses wider than just those relevant to preschool such as jungle chums etc.

*As a result of The Johnson and Furze options sponsorship they have since been into preschool coffee morning and given a very informative talk on preschool children's eyesight.*

### **Easter fayre**

This followed on from the first Pre School Easter fayre last year and it is definitely worth continuing. It was almost too close after the race night due to the length of the school terms. However everyone yet again pulled together to make it a success, although the weather was colder than last year's fayre we managed to keep everything outdoors. This is a good fundraiser as there seem to be no other 'Easter fayres' around. You need a lot of support from everyone for manning stalls etc but it is worth it and the chocolate tombola is very lucrative. As was having the Aunties on the door asking for donations.

### **Welly Wang**

This was again a very successful event and the timing of the event meant that most parents were able to watch their child have their turn before taking them home. We have all agreed that a similar event for the afternoon children would be just as successful and that the afternoon parents would like to feel included in this. Perhaps a 'bean bag bung' towards the end of the preschool year, this would make it easy to follow the welly wang format. We didn't do it this year due to me not having enough time!

### **Photonix Photographers,**

Thanks goes to Clara for organising these they are very profitable events.

### **Invitation books**

Again thanks goes to Clara for organising this it is a relatively easy way of making a tidy profit.

### **Turnberries jubilee event (which replaced the carnival) June**

This was a much smaller event than expected but raised awareness of the preschool and donations from parents also meant a profit was made. Hopefully the carnival will return next year as it is a very good way to advertise the preschool. Thanks again to Clara for organising.

### **The Crossways and CTK Summer Fayres**

These were held on the same evening. We made a small profit from them and it was good to be part of the schools events.

We had plans to hold a quiz night with bar in the final term but after what was personally a very busy first half of the year, we didn't get round to it. I think it would be a nice way for parents to celebrate the end of their child's time at preschool and that there would still be a demand for this next year, it wasn't easy trying to catch up with the other mums at the end of term party whilst being roped into zumba! A glass of wine and a natter would be much more relaxing!

Thank you to Alex my vice! Clara, all the Aunties and all the other committee members and parents and grandparents and friends whom without their help and support I could not have managed this role. (Don't get pregnant and organise your own wedding at the same time as doing this role!)

### Pointers for going forward...

1. Clara holds a vast amount of knowledge about this post and it would be good to meet with her and the past fundraiser before you start this position as you get busy very quickly.
2. You cannot do this role alone you need a small sub-committee with someone at both sites.
3. Ask the aunties, they are helpful and knowledgeable about previous fundraising events, but not too much, they do enough already.
4. We did not apply for any grants but did learn that all sorts of other different local businesses will support us.
5. Use the play link toy library it's free.
6. The round table will provide a bouncy castle and popcorn machine at charity events and most importantly man them both.
7. Parents continue to be very generous at donating items in response to specific requests.
8. Keep on with the matched giving.
9. Use your parent reps.

### Net profit from our fundraising activities

<b>Event</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Photographs	612	515
Christmas Calendars	257	288
Xmas raffle	440	207
Toy sale	240	202
Easter fundraising	521	604
Welly Wang	602	247
Invitation books	115	98
Carnival	-	112
Xmas + Summer fayre	46	91
Uniform	13	-131
Nativity	134	-
Race Night	561	-
Donations	500	250
Other fundraising	93	44
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>4134</b>	<b>2527</b>

## **TRUSTEES**

Trustees for the Charity are elected each year at the Annual General Meeting and are known as 'the committee'. Candidates are proposed and seconded by the AGM attendees; election is by a show of hands or a written vote. Trustees for the year 2011/12 were:

All the Trustees became effective following the AGM last year. i.e. from 12th October 2011. The Trustees are:

Clara Mason	Chairman
Gary Adams	Treasurer
Helen Milne	Minutes Secretary

There were also the following committee members:

Lucy Luke	Vice Chairman
Selina Davies	Fundraising Co-ordinator
Alex Craig	Vice Fundraising Co-ordinator
Laura Smithson	IT/Website Co-ordinator
Clara Mason/ Wendy Shippam	Policies Co-ordinators
Natalia Kent	Publicity Secretary
Jude Dickenson	Safeguarding Children Co-ordinator
Garry Davies	Buildings subcommittee
Adrian Redman	Buildings subcommittee
Andrea Redman	Parents Representative
Helen Brum	Parents Representative
Wendy Shippam	Parents Representative
Sally Shaw	Parents Representative
Clara Mason	Parents Representative
Hannah Curtis	Parents Representative
Kelly Thornber	Parents Representative
Laura Smithson	Parents Representative
Emma Wiles	Committee Member
Clare Rogers	Committee Member
Anne Tucker	Committee Member
Craig Tucker	Committee Member
Mel Spacey	Committee Member

## **STAFF**

Staff employed by the Charity during the past year are detailed below, along with their curriculum responsibilities:

Jenny Harris	- Leader, Christ the King and Knowledge & Understanding of the World
Penny Smith	- Leader, Crossways and Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy
Crossways Site- Suzanne Golledge	- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Claire Gaynor	- Resigned December 2011
Katie Hopwood	- Creative Development Knowledge & Understanding of the World – Started January 2012
Helen Stolliday	- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and Language, Literacy and Communication
Lorraine Remfry	- Physical Development
Christ the King Site- Karen Watola	- Creative Development, Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy
Amanda Starr	- Language, Literacy and Communication
Lisa French	- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Vicky Filer	- Physical Development
Both Sites- Tiffany Needham	- Book-keeper and Administrator

## **IMPROVEMENTS/ BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2011/12**

1. Ensure financial stability for the Pre-School
2. Improve Pre-School facilities and resources we provide for the children, their families and the community.
3. To build on relationships with parents and their involvement in their children's learning and development.
4. Improve the sharing of information with other settings/carers.
5. Look at the needs of the community to establish whether we need to extend our care.

## **UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

The unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012 form part of this report and are attached to the end of it. The Reserves Policy of the Pre-school is outlined on the following page.

## **RESERVES POLICY**

The funds held by First Step Pre-school fall into three categories:

### **Unrestricted Funds**

Unrestricted Funds are needed to cover staff costs and those of administration and support without which the Pre-school could not operate.

Income levels vary during the year, but expenditure levels remain relatively constant throughout. Income is at its lowest during the Autumn term rising during the Spring to its highest level in the Summer term - this is due to the availability of voucher funding.

The Trustees consider it prudent that unrestricted funds should be sufficient to cover one month's administration and support costs. This level will ensure we have adequate resources to cover our outgoings whilst income is at its lowest level during the Autumn term. Without this funding level we would not have sufficient funds to ensure our continued operation to the end of January.

The Trustees will monitor and review this unrestricted fund reserve level with reference to income forecasts and changes in funding on an annual basis to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the Pre-school.

### **Restricted Funds**

Restricted funds normally arise from donations or grants which have been received to meet the costs of specific items of expenditure. Occasionally, there is a time lag between the receipt of these funds and the related expenditure, thereby resulting in Pre-school holding the funds until payment is made.

### **Designated Funds**

Designated funds are amounts specifically excluded from being used to meet the day-to-day running costs of the Pre-school. Sums raised through fundraising activities fall into this category. Such funds may be spent at the discretion of the Trustees to provide additional resources or to pay for special events outside the normal running costs of the Pre-school. In addition funds have also been set aside to cover specific items of expenditure. The Trustees have identified four designated items:

1. A fund has been established for repairs and maintenance to the building we own, which is sited at Christ the King School. It is acknowledged that buildings such as ours do not have a "long" life and that it is prudent to set aside monies for its repair or even replacement.
2. A fund to cover the cost of renegotiating the lease for Christ the King site.
3. A fund to meet any costs associated with negotiating any rent reviews at Crossways site.
4. A fund to meet the costs of acquiring a larger building to replace that currently used at the Crossways site or to acquire the lease on the existing building.

The Trustees will review this reserve level on an annual basis to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the Pre-school.