



Chairperson's Report

When, in summer 2015, Rachel Diamond sent an e-mail around the then-committee to see if anyone would be willing to take on the role of Chair from her, I did some careful calculations. Lucy had one year left in Pre-school; it would be three years before Jennie left; it was 18 months since our last Ofsted inspection. Safe in the knowledge that I could get both my girls through before the next Ofsted inspection, I took up the mantle of Chair.

Fast-forward to December 2016 and Jennie's settling in session at Pre-school. My quiet filling-in of her forms was rudely interrupted by the news that Ofsted would be in on Monday, in two days' time. So much for those careful calculations...!

It might have been some two years before we were expecting a visit but our staff came through the inspection brilliantly and we were delighted to be awarded a Good rating. As one of our staff members said, just think of the pressure to maintain it if we'd got an Outstanding! The report from our inspector was overwhelmingly positive and she was very complimentary about our staff, their relationships with children and parents and the quality of Early Years education offered within the setting.

The feedback we had from Ofsted was mirrored in the responses we had from parents to the Parents' Questionnaire we sent around in February. Both committee and staff are very aware of how important it is to give parents an opportunity to interact with setting and we were really pleased to have such a good response rate together with some very positive feedback. We also very much enjoyed reading the final page of the responses where children were, for the first time, given an opportunity to tell us what they particularly like and dislike about coming to Pre-school. Following the questionnaire feedback, we have increased our use of social media, staff have provided more information to parents about plans for the term and we are going to initiate a committee who's who board. It also emphasised how important it is to continue the extra-curricular activities we have been offering in setting.

The huge successes of our recent fundraising (of which more later) have put Pre-school in an excellent position financially. We have been able to invest heavily this year in new equipment including construction toys, a marble maze, a CD player with story and activity CDs and new rugs and cushions. We have also had the funding available to us to offer extra activities to children in the form of Rugby Tots, Music with Leah and East Devon Dance.

After the staffing changes of my first year as Chair, it has been great to have had a year without any need to recruit. Clare, Elaine, Alex, Angela and Ruth are all central to the happy and successful setting we have in Plymtree and I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of them for their commitment and dedication. They make a great team and it is self-evident when you go into the setting that they are all having fun and enjoying what they do, which will inevitably carry through to the children. Angela in particular has put a lot of hard work in since joining us as an apprentice in February 2016 and it was great to hear from Clare earlier this year that she had qualified and we are very pleased that she has stayed on with us since qualification. One of the key things we have had to get to grips with on the committee in the last year was auto-enrolment and my thanks go in particular to Georgie for her research of different options and for making sure that we are compliant with our obligations to make pension provision for our staff.



I promised to come back to our successful fundraising. We repeated our Halloween party for children and though we had fewer party-goers than previous years, it was a great event again and much enjoyed by those who came. Later in the year, we ran Race Night for the third successive year. We were full to the rafters and the funds were raised from it were more than I think any of us had hoped for. We had thought it would be the last year we would run Race Night but it's been such a successful model for us that it's safe to say that it will be back again in 2018. We also raised funds through our Bag2School collection, Rotary Community raffle and a sponsored obstacle course. As ever, my thanks go to everyone who has helped to organise and run our events and to those who have supported them, either through giving their time or by attending and contributing to the funds raised.

We finished the year with excellent numbers of children within setting and those children who moved up from Pre-school are all settling into their new schools. We have welcomed a new cohort behind them and we start the new academic year with a full complement of children. There's no doubt that our staff will be busy in setting and with the introduction of the 30-hour entitlement and new data protection laws coming into force next May, the committee have lots of new things to learn too.

My final thanks go to my committee members who have, yet again, all been integral to the smooth running of Pre-school. Pre-school couldn't exist without its committee and we are very fortunate to have a dedicated committee who have so much pride and put so much time into their work for Pre-school. I am hugely grateful to every member of the committee. We are sorry to be losing Charlotte after only one year but hope that, having heard all the positive news tonight, we will be able to welcome new members to the committee to start building for the future.

Ellie Hibberd

September 2017