

Handsworth Pre-school Committee Meeting Minutes – 7 May 2024

- 1. Present:** Johnnie Padilla (Chair), Louise Paul (Interim Leader), Ruth Mattison (Business Manager), Lykke Hansen (Treasurer), Siobhan Knifton, Alex Fletcher
- 2. Apologies:** No apologies noted.
- 3. Minutes of the last Committee Meeting:** Agreed.
- 4. Matters arising (from previous Committee Meeting):** N/A.

5. Chair's report:

Johnnie reported that this term has focused around staffing – the setting has seen a new member of staff start with the preschool, Sarah Dewberry. Sarah is both Early Years Level 3 and first aid qualified, has integrated quickly and is a good fit for the preschool's culture. Please all join me in giving a warm welcome to Sarah and wishing her success in her role at Handsworth Pre-School.

Two candidates were interviewed towards the end of April for the position of preschool manager, with one of the candidates being a current employee of Handsworth Preschool.

Whilst no candidate was appointed due to insufficient experience in leadership, it has allowed for a novel proposal by the interim preschool leader following a realisation that there is currently a great wealth of expertise internally to allow the preschool to look at a new staffing structure that divides the preschool leader's role up in practise whilst maintaining a named individual on paper.

The aims of this review are:

Utilise current expertise to effectively run the preschool in the absence of a preschool leader

Have a named person on paper and bring stability to the preschool's staffing

Build in succession planning within roles to ensure both operational and general business continuity.

Have a structure that is flexible and robust enough to allow the preschool to quickly transition to a 30-hour model with morning and evening wrap-around care.

The interim preschool leader will consult with trustees to explore how this is taken forwards.

Finally, trustees have been discussing a proposal for new staffing pay rates following an increase in the national minimum wage with a decision to be made soon on new pay rates.

6. Pre-school Manager's report:

Louise reported that since February's update, the main change to Pre-School has been the appointment of Sarah Dewberry after the Easter holiday. Sarah has settled into Pre-School extremely well has experience, ideas and lots of plans for the future. Having another member experienced member of staff is already having a positive impact for both staff and children. Enabling us to extend our curriculum further including adding some school readiness groups.

Curriculum wise the children particularly enjoyed science week where we explored the children's interest in cooking. This was enjoyed by both staff and children and we utilised the additional space the kitchen and hall in the main church have to offer.

Since Easter the staff team have been exploring ideas to revamp the garden area and we have plans to use the May inset day to spend time cleaning and redecorating outside.

We are also discussing various options for our end of term celebrations.

The church carried out some improvement works to the floor in the entrance of the Cowling Hall and the children's bathroom. I have spoken to the Church and have thanked them for getting the work done, as well as liaising with them as the work continues. They have

thanked us for our continued support and confirmed that they have waived the fee for the hire of the church on the day of our summer fair.

7. Business Manager's report:

Ruth reported that there are 27 children currently in the setting, which is 5 less than we usually have due to staffing matters. 13 children are set to remain in the Preschool in September, although some may leave and go to other nurseries. 14 children will be leaving to start school or a school attached nursery.

Aiming on 17 children joining the preschool in September to take the number of children up to 30 for the start of the new academic year. Ruth has started contacting the families. The waiting list is healthy with 57 children.

8. Items for discussion/proposals:

There would be a closed meeting for committee members following this meeting to discuss the staffing proposal and pay.

9. Any questions: N/A.

10. Date and Time agreed for the next meeting: Tuesday 9 July 2024, 8.30pm via Zoom.

11. Johnnie thanked everyone for attending the meeting and to Louise and Ruth for their contributions.