



First Steps Bath

STEP UP

Summer 2023



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Welcome



This time of the year affords an opportunity for reflection, a chance to look back and consider the highs and lows.

It is heartening to see that staff turnover has been low and that over half our staff are local to the service that they work within. Quality is directly boosted when Early Years Practitioners understand the lived experience of local families and have the knowledge and expertise to provide joyous and relevant learning experiences for children.

Communication with families is also improved as staff know families and the Famly app has made daily communication easier.

As we say goodbye to pre-school children and prepare children for transitions, we celebrate the progress they have made and wish everyone well in their new school. We also thank every family for their ongoing support for First Steps.

Annual review, message from Ken, Chair of trustees



Maint
Ken Littlewood
Chair

I am pleased to report that First Steps has continued to make progress on many of our key objectives over the last year. We now have over three hundred children attending our nurseries at Twerton, Moorlands and BOP, and over a third of these have a SEN plan to meet their special needs. This helps us to ensure all children get the best out of their early years. And additionally, we were pleased that we were successful in being awarded the Early Years Specialist Contract for our First Steps BOP (Bath Opportunity Preschool) service for a further five years, allowing us to continue to provide this valuable service.

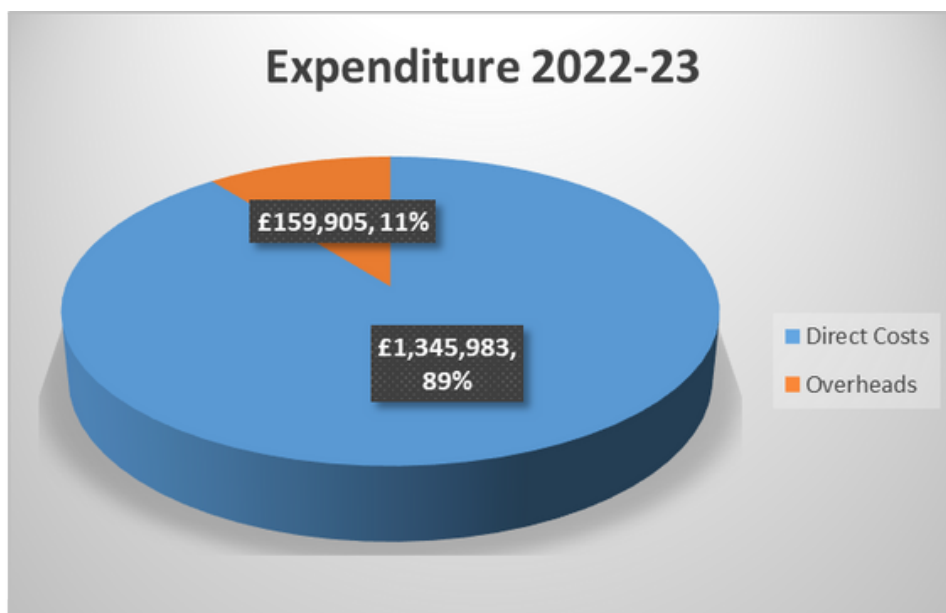
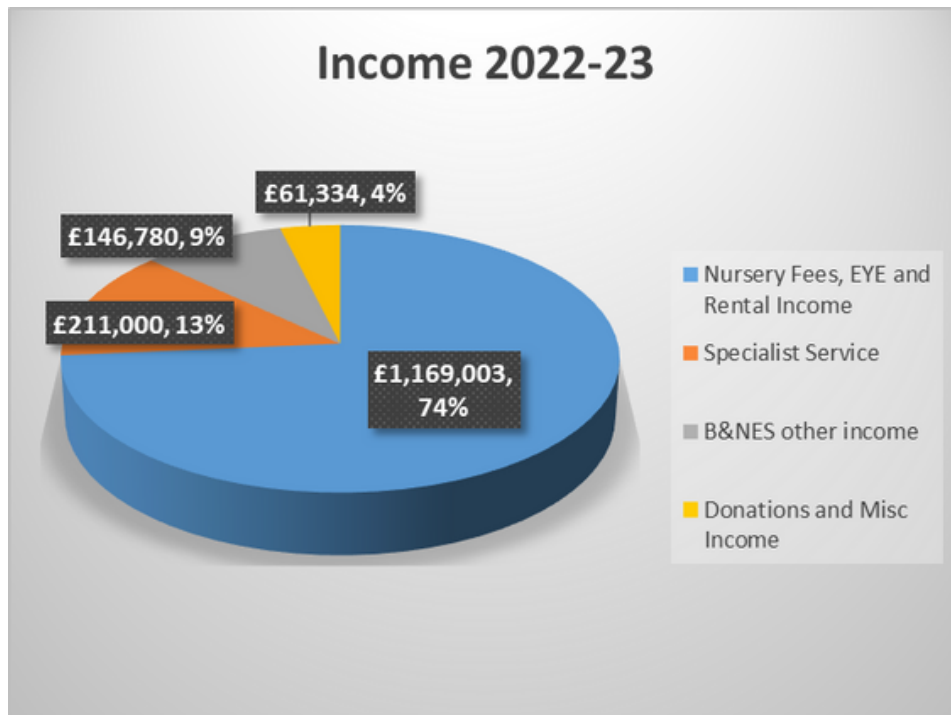
Maintaining our staffing levels has been particularly challenging over the last year. We have put an emphasis on staff wellbeing plans, swift recruitment processes and being flexible on hours whenever this has been possible. Consequently, we have kept satisfactory staffing levels when other settings have had to close. And over 50% of our staff live within the areas they work in, contributing significantly to providing the community approach we seek to bring to our work.

We also managed to achieve a satisfactory surplus of £46k allowing us to continue to invest further in the support we provide. In addition to the costs of moving BOP to new premises in Keynsham for September 2023, we are investing in improving the facilities on the first floor of our Twerton building and extending training opportunities for staff.

Fundraising remains a crucial element of service development, and I thank all those who have supported us during the year in a wide range of different ways. In addition to helping us provide free meals and snacks to nearly 20% of our children (who would be eligible for free school meals), kind donations and fundraising support makes such a difference in enabling First Steps to deliver a whole package of support that families need. For example, over the last year we have run special educational needs stay and play sessions for families and children.

Over the year ahead I want to make further progress in ensuring decision making and accountability at Trustee board level has a higher level of parent voice, including more diverse groups. I encourage all parents to take every opportunity to share their thoughts with us. And finally, I want to thank the First Steps management team, staff, trustees, and volunteers, as well as our partners, for their commitment and hard work during the year. This has provided the foundation for the progress we have made.

How we managed our money



Our Trustees



Ken Littlewood
Chair
Retired Business
Executive



Meg North
Fundraising Trustee
Retired Local
Government Officer



Mike Turner
Special Projects
Public Policy
Consultant
Managing Director
Socium
Consulting Ltd



Val Wheeler
Twerton Link Trustee
and
Parent Partnership
Retired Health Visitor



Tom Williams
Treasurer
Head of Finance -
National Composites
Centre



Isobel Michael
Fundraising Trustee
Director - NSP
Philanthropy



Marina Sloan
Safeguarding Trustee
Specialist Speech &
Language
Therapist - NHS Trust



Elisabeth Barratt
Hacking
Trustee
Senior Lecturer &
Deputy Head of
Department
Department of
Education
University of Bath



Simon Andrews
Trustee
Moorlands Link
Trustee
Civil Servant - MoD



Janet Rose
Vice Chair
'Future Excellence'
Project Group
Principal - Norland
College



Kate Tuckwell
Bath Opportunity
Pre-School Link
Trustee
SEN Lead
Senior Lecturer
Department of Social
and Policy
Sciences, University of
Bath

Looking back and looking forward

Our achievements for 2022 - 2023

Priority One: To continue with the ambitious vision to deliver universal, inclusive children care and education, high expectations for children's achievement and high standards of provision.

Ensure that a sharp focus is placed on improving the life chances of children through accurate evaluation of provision through information gathered from, children, parents, staff and linked professionals and data from children's assessments.

To embed the concept of Childhoodnature, the idea that children are nature that human health and wellbeing is linked to the environment.

That adults have a responsibility to ensure that children have access to nature and opportunities to explore the natural world, that children are encouraged to be active citizens and are encouraged in appropriate ways to embed sustainability. To be promoting healthy and sustainable living for children families and the community.

- Continued to support social and emotional development of all the children we work with through the Thrive Approach.
- Provided continuity for children with a low staff turnover of 12%
- Consulted with staff, parents and carers.
- Locally employed 52% of the staff team.
- Increased opportunities for staff development and progression
- Providing training on Childhoodnature amongst the staff team to support curriculum planning.
- Embedded new nursery software, improving communication with families.

Priority Two: To further develop the concept of Community Nursery and Early Years Centre through the delivery of services that raise the profile of the early years in a child's life and are responsive to family needs and special educational needs.

- Secured ongoing funding to support Stay and Play sessions for children with special educational needs, thirty two families attended across the year.
- Fundraised £52,414 to deliver quality services and free meals to children from low income families.
- Loaned home learning bags to families

Priority Three: To further develop the Social Enterprise Model, exploring new funding and trading opportunities, employing a mixed model of funding to ensure the success and security of our long-term future plans.

- **Maintained occupancy to capacity**
- **Improved ability to monitor occupancy of children through the new nursery management software**
- **Created increased income from room rental**

Priority Four: To develop the theory of change, identifying the core problem that First Steps aims to address, its root causes and consequences, question assumptions and establish evidence of need. Leading to meaningful and measurable activities that meet community need and can be clearly articulated.

- **A process diagram of First Steps Theory of Change model has been approved by the trustee board.**
- **The model has been used to support decision making and strategic planning.**

Looking Forward

First Steps Priorities for next year are:

Priority One: To continue with the ambitious vision to deliver universal, inclusive children care and education, high expectations for children's achievement and high standards of provision.

Ensure that a sharp focus is placed on improving the life chances of children through accurate evaluation of provision through information gathered from, children, parents, staff and linked professionals and data from children's assessments.

To embed the concept of Childhoodnature, the idea that children are nature that human health and wellbeing is linked to the environment.

That adults have a responsibility to ensure that children have access to nature and opportunities to explore the natural world, that children are encouraged to be active citizens and are encouraged in appropriate ways to embed sustainability. To be promoting healthy and sustainable living for children families and the community.

Priority Two: To further develop the concept of Community Nursery and Early Years Centre through the delivery of services that raise the profile of the early years in a child's life and are responsive to family needs and special educational needs. Taking actions to build an organization that includes the voice of minority groups.

Priority Three: To further develop the Social Enterprise Model, exploring new funding and trading opportunities, employing a mixed model of funding to support special projects that meet community.

Priority Four: To enable the trustee board to reflect the voice of the community of families that services work with, (locality and community of need) to ensure confident decision making and understanding of their role and responsibilities and are ready to be accountable to families with young children who use First Steps services.

Twerton

Green Fingered Toddlers

In the spring we reported an exciting composting project now we have moved on to planting. The toddlers have been exploring seeds, using tools to plant and water the seeds and observing the growth. These activities help children understand processes of change in the natural world and start conversations about where our food comes from.



Getting out and about.

Children have been exploring their local area taking time to observe the built and natural environment, they have been feeling the wind in their hair, seeing the dappled shade under a tree, and telling stories of favourite places. All activities that help children develop their understanding of our world, extend their vocabulary to describe their immediate environment and notice change in the natural world.



BOPing about

The big move

After many happy years based in the Annex at Threeways School BOP are moving to Keynsham. Staff have been busy creating the same safe, warm and welcoming environment at Broadlands Academy in St Francis Road.

We wish all the children who are moving up to school a settled transition and look forward to welcoming children back to BOP at Broadlands.



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FirstStepsCommunityNurseries



FirstStepsBath

