



Patrons Christopher Khoo DL & Naomi Khoo and
Helene Raynsford

Company Registration Number: 07279320
Charity Number: 1137609

**Dingley Family and Specialist Early Years Centres
(Limited by guarantee)**

Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2019

**Dingley Family and Specialist Early Years Centres
(Limited by guarantee)**

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Dingley Family and Specialist Early Years Centres (Limited by guarantee)

Legal and Administrative information

The Trustee Board presents their report, together with the financial statements, for the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Reference and administrative details of the charity, its directors and advisors

Dingley Family and Specialist Early Years Centres is a registered charity, number 1137609 and is a charitable company limited by guarantee, number 07279320.

Trustee Board

The members of the Trustee Board (who are also the directors of the charitable company) during the period were as follows:

Chair: Mr David Ormrod
Treasurer: Mr Ian Mackinder
Secretary: Vacant
Trustees: Mr David Ormrod
Mr Nick Richards
Mr Ian Mackinder
Mr Allan Gibson (resigned 25th April 2019)
Mr Richard Cronin
Mrs Lorna Fairbairn
Mrs Helen Amner Munslow (appointed 14th June 2018)
Ms Jacqueline Ann Napier-Munn (appointed 16th August 2018)
Mr Jason Daniels (appointed 25 April 2019)

We currently have no parent representatives at any of our centres

In addition, our Patron, Lady Stevenson DL, stepped down in September 2017. Two new Patrons, Christopher Khoo DL and Naomi Khoo, were appointed in January 2018, and a further Patron, Helene Raynsford was appointed in June 2018.

Key Management Personnel

Catherine McLeod MBE	Chief Executive Officer
Sarah Affleck	Fundraising and Communications Manager
Aimee Knight & Julia Cox	Group Operations Manager (JC replaced AK in February 2019)
Louise Farmer	Reading Centre Manager (replaced HS in August 2018)
Zora Morgan	Wokingham Centre Manager
Abi Preston-Rees	West Berks (Newbury) Centre Manager (replaced LF in August 2018)
Hannah Spence	Reading Centre Manager (left in July 2018)

Company registered number

07279320

Charity number

1137609

Bankers

CAF Bank
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent, ME19 4JQ

Aldermore Bank
1st Floor, Block B
Western House Lynch Wood
Peterborough, PE2 6FZ

Shawbrook Bank
Lutea House The Drive
Warley Hill Business Park
Great Warley
Brentwood
Essex, CM13 3BE

**Dingley Family and Specialist Early Years Centres
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Legal and Administrative information

Registered office

Kennet Walk Community Centre
Kenavon Drive
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 3GD

Outreach addresses

Poplar Place
Shaw
Newbury
Berkshire
RG14 1NA

All Saints School
Norrey's Avenue
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1UX

Independent Examiner

BDO LLP
R+
2 Blagrove Street
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 1AZ

Dingley Family and Specialist Early Years Centres (Limited by guarantee)

Directors' annual report Year ended 31 March 2019

Structure, governance and management

Dingley Family and Specialist Early Years Centres is both a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It is governed by Articles of Association, which were approved and adopted in August 2010 (upon registration as a charitable company).

During the year, the Trustees have considered the requirements of the Charity Governance Code and its seven principles – leadership, integrity, decision making, risk and control, board effectiveness, diversity, openness and accountability and believe that these principles are consistent with the way in which the organisation is governed.

In May 2016, the company formally adopted Dingley's Promise as the new brand name, retaining Dingley Family and Specialist Early Years Centres as its registered company name. The term Dingley's Promise (or Dingley) will be used throughout the remaining narrative sections of this document.

As we seek volunteers with new skills and experience and as, inevitably, we have to replace volunteers who can no longer work with us for various reasons, the charity will have to "induct" new Trustee Directors on a reasonably regular basis. To provide a consistency and thoroughness of introduction that will maximise the new Trustee Director contribution as quickly as possible, we follow an induction process which is both simple and yet sufficiently flexible to take account of individual's needs and availability. The process is described in the Trustee Induction document dated April 2017, and includes:-

- Attending at least one Board Meeting as an observer;
- Providing a CV and letter/email outlining the contribution that the potential Trustee feels they will make to Dingley's Promise;
- Providing two written references;
- Agreeing a written Trustee Role Specification specific to his/her role on the Board;
- Signing a Trustee Director Commitment document detailing his/her commitment to the organisation, including completion, within 3 months of appointment, of a Safeguarding Children Level 1 course (possibly on-line).

Upon appointment as a Trustee Director, the Chairperson will inform Companies House and The Charity Commission of that appointment and the new Trustee Director will complete the Ofsted EY2 on-line registration process.

When appointing key management, and when reviewing their remuneration packages, external benchmarking is undertaken against directly compatible roles, wherever possible. The Trustee Board is responsible for setting and agreeing the remuneration package of the CEO. The CEO reviews and recommends changes to the remuneration packages of his/her direct reports (see below), which must be agreed by the Trustee Board who will bear in mind the agreed expenditure budget for the relevant period. The Group Operations Manager follows the same process with the CEO when setting and reviewing the remuneration packages of the Centre Managers.

Organisational structure and decision making process

The Trustee Board delegates day to day management of the operations of the charity to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Catherine McLeod MBE, who was appointed in March 2015. The CEO has three direct reports, a Fundraising & Communications Manager (FCM), Sarah Affleck, a Group Operations Manager (GOM), Julia Cox (who replaced Aimee Knight in February 2019) and a Finance Officer (FO), Theresa Bowers who was appointed in February 2017 and who, since August 2017, has operated as a contractor to Dingley. The GOM directly manages the Centre Managers who are as follows:

Newbury:	Ms Abi Preston-Rees
Wokingham:	Ms Zora Morgan
Reading:	Ms Louise Farmer

Directors meetings are held six times per year. In between meetings decisions are made in consultation with the Chair and other Directors as required. If necessary a special meeting of the Board is convened.

During the period under review, we formed and held the initial meetings of two Sub-Committees, one for the Training Offer and one for Fundraising.

In 2016, we created an Advisory Board, and this currently comprises the following individuals:-

Chris Burnell (Buildings Compliance & Development)
Jacquie Hathaway (Early Years Foundation Stage & Ofsted compliance)

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Directors' annual report *(continued)* Year ended 31 March 2019

Paul Wallace (Social Enterprise)

Laxmi Patel (SEND Law)

Adrian Walcott (Diversity)

Karen England (Fundraising) had to resign in 2018 due to conflicts of interest with her new employment

Objectives and activities

We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities.

As part of our five year strategy review in 2015 we updated our Vision and Mission statements:-

Dingley's Promise vision is *'The best start for every child'*.

Our Mission Statement is *'We deliver life changing support to under 5's with additional needs & disabilities and their families, by providing specialist learning through play, family support & training, and advice to mainstream settings'*.

Within this overall framework, our main objectives are:-

- Reach as many children as possible.
- Ensure every child transitions to the best educational option for them when they leave Dingley.
- Offer year round provision to take the pressure off parents and give each child as much support as we can.
- Be active in networking and signposting to ensure all of the child's needs are met.
- Ensure parents are always given choices and their voices are heard.

We also took the opportunity as part of the strategy review to bring to the fore our core values:-

- We seek **excellence** in all we do through continuous learning and improvement.
- We **care** for each other, our children and their families.
- We promote **development** of children, families & our team in a stimulating environment.
- We work with **integrity**, sharing resources and expertise for best outcomes.
- We **empower** children and families to make their own choices.

The Newbury Centre operates from a building in Shaw, Newbury, which opened to families in mid-February 2015. We have a sub-lease for the building, large garden and 10 car parking spaces with Shaw Social Club which is co-terminus with their own lease with West Berkshire Council due for review and renewal in March 2024.

The Wokingham Centre operates from premises within the All Saints School in Wokingham. We have a licence to occupy this space (with 12 months notice by either party) and pay both fixed and variable (e.g. utilities costs) elements of rent based on the percentage of space that we occupy within the school.

The Reading Centre operates from a Reading Borough Council owned building for which we pay a peppercorn rent, but for which we must pay the buildings insurance, utilities costs and all associated building maintenance costs as part of the lease. At the time of publication, we are awaiting completion of a 15 year lease extension on the Reading building.

Volunteers play a very important role within the groups by assisting with fundraising, driving children to the groups, and helping in the playgroup. As a result, Dingley's Promise was nominated to receive the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (the MBE for charities), and the formal announcement of the receipt of that award was made in June 2011. During 2017/18, our volunteer hours (including Trustee time) totalled almost 3,700 hours, an increase of over 30% on the previous period.

Risk Management Statement

A detailed risk analysis was undertaken in 2014 and a Risk Policy was implemented in February 2015, which remains valid. The policy states that :-

- The trustees and executive management of Dingley Family & Specialist Early Years Centres believe that sound risk management is integral to both good management and good governance practice.
 - Risk management considerations will form an integral part of our decision-making and be incorporated within strategic and operational planning.
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Directors' annual report *(continued)* Year ended 31 March 2019

- Risk assessment will be conducted on all new activities and projects to ensure they are in line with Dingley Family & Specialist Early Years Centres's strategic plan and objectives.
- Risks and opportunities will be identified, analysed and reported at an appropriate level and escalated as necessary.
- A risk register covering key strategic risks will be maintained and updated *at least twice* a year and more frequently where risks are known to be volatile.
- All staff will be provided with adequate training on risk management and their role and responsibilities in implementing this.
- Dingley Family & Specialist Early Years Centres will regularly review and monitor the effectiveness of its risk management framework and update it as considered appropriate.
- Reports will be made to the trustee board and CEO each quarter of continuing and emerging high concern risks and those where priority action is needed to effect better control.
- Individual error and incident reports will be required from individual staff where a reportable event is identified.
- This policy is a formal acknowledgement that the Trustee Board is committed to maintaining a strong risk management framework. The aim is to ensure that Dingley Family & Specialist Early Years Centres makes every effort to manage risk appropriately by maximising potential opportunities whilst minimising the adverse affects of risks.
- This policy will be used to support the internal control systems of Dingley Family & Specialist Early Years Centres, enabling us to respond to operational, strategic and financial risks regardless of whether they are internally or externally driven.

A "root & branch" risk review was held in August 2018 and a further review was held in April 2019.

Our key risk remains the same - difficulty in recruiting suitable staff. Other notable risks include serious failures in following policy or procedures, workplace stress for staff, failure to comply with data protection regulations and data breaches/loss from external sources. In addition, a further notable risk is around failure to secure sufficient core funding, due to local authority changes in funding levels.

Achievements and performance

The year to 31 March 2019 has been a successful one in many ways, but not without its challenges.

The past year has been our 35th year anniversary as an organisation, and we marked it with a variety of events. A summer garden party for key supporters was hosted by our first Patron Lady Catherine Stevenson DL. Key community figures attended as did TV personality Timmy Mallett who cut our birthday cake. A trip to the pantomime in Reading included a "meet the cast" session with Justin Fletcher MBE. In addition to our events, we also celebrated our birthday year by securing 35 well known faces to wish us a happy birthday either by video or by having a photo with Dingley Bear. These included actors Michelle Collins and Sally Phillips, newsreader and presenter Sir Trevor McDonald OBE, gymnast Louis Smith MBE, and Strictly stars Anton Du Beke and Craig Revel Horwood. In addition, we secured 35 "Friends of Dingley" regular givers for the organisation over the course of the year.

Other highlights of the year include:

- a) The award of a grant from the Henry Smith Charity early in 2019 (for 3 years) has enabled us to extend our family support worker and other outreach services. This involves attending mainstream groups and activities in the community to identify children with SEND and to provide their families with information about options that will enable them to access early years provision.

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Directors' annual report (continued) Year ended 31 March 2019

- b) As we forecast in our 2017/18 report, our continued focus on children with a higher dependency who find it very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain support elsewhere, has seen an increase of 24% in children requiring 1:1 support and those coming to us with Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs). This, in turn, dictates higher staff to children ratios, leading to only a very small reduction in the number of children (from 152 to 150) attending our Learning Through Play (LTP). However, this also signals a shift whereby more children with lower needs are able to access mainstream provision, and this year 72% of our transitions were to the mainstream – an increase of 17%. This year we also delivered 12% more LTP hours than the previous year and 300% more coffee mornings for families. We also delivered 50% more trips than the previous year and saw a 13% rise in the number of children attending playschemes.
- c) The delivery of our online Inclusion Training for mainstream nurseries (aimed at assisting other settings to provide more SEND provision) has progressed more slowly than we hoped, although 50 Early Years Practitioners completed the four module course in the last year. We were successful in obtaining three grants that provided bursaries for a number of course attendees, and 100% of those who completed the course rated it good or excellent, with further feedback stating that the number of places for children with SEND would double as a result of their additional skills and training. Pilots for the course have recently commenced in Windsor & Maidenhead, courtesy of another grant. We also established a national pilot with Action for Children with a view to securing external evaluation of the programme that will support wider roll out in the future.
- d) Our campaigning this year focused on building strong relationships with national organisations and amplifying our voice through those partnerships. We work closely with national Mencap, linking in with their new focus on the early years, and are an active member of the Disabled Children's Partnership. We continue to link with Hemsalls and Childcare Works, speaking at regional meetings to promote inclusive practice. We are also now a member of the Early Years Alliance Members Panel where we focus on keeping SEND on the agenda. Finally, as a result of our lobbying, we were invited to meet with the Department for Education to discuss the lack of access for children with SEND in the early years, and were also invited to be part of the civil society consultation at Westminster.
- e) We have secured two important partnerships over the year. Firstly, working with highly skilled volunteers from Fujitsu and Boehringer Ingelheim to develop a brand marketing plan for the charity. With their marketing and digital knowledge, this is an important step in making sure we are reaching the right people. Secondly, we have established a new partnership with the University of Reading who are starting work on a project to help us better demonstrate our impact, and to evaluate our value as a service.
- f) Throughout the year, we have been holding discussions with local authorities in different local geographies about their early years provision and children with SEND. These discussions have included options such as: providing them with a training package to better equip their mainstream settings to take children with SEND; looking at outreach and support models that would help to bring children with SEND into existing settings; advising on setting up of similar settings to Dingley's Promise in new areas; and actually looking at setting up new Dingley Centres ourselves in new areas. To date, one local authority is carrying out a pilot of our training in their area, and another has used our advice in the process of setting up a new Centre.
- g) Our latest parent survey highlighted that; there has been a significant increase (at 92% vs 74% in 2018) in parents feeling less isolated as a result of attending Dingley; 65% (vs 63%) of parents feel more knowledgeable about their child's condition; our sessional child care sessions are rated as good or excellent by 94% (vs 89%) of parents.
- h) In line with previous work focusing on staff wellbeing, we joined the Real Living Wage (RLW) movement, and from April 1st 2019 all of our staff will earn a minimum of £9 per hour in line with the RLW. While we are a small organisation, we will continue to strive to make our organisation a great place to work, making staff wellbeing a priority when planning and developing our services.
- i) We have added a further two Trustees to strengthen our Board. Jacqueline Anne Napier-Munn joined us in August 2018 and brings experience of running a Community Interest Company (CIC) and a wide range of business contacts. After an initial period of volunteering on the development of our brand marketing plan, Jason Daniels joined us in April 2019 and brings his extensive experience in modern computing techniques to his role as our Chief Digital Officer (CDO). Sadly, Allan Gibson, who had served five years as a Trustee, stood down to follow other charitable endeavours.
- j) With the help of a grant from The Earley Charity, further enhancements were made to the Reading Centre (total toilet area refurbishment), and work is about to commence on their garden make-over, thanks to grants from the Morrisons Foundation and the Leeds Building Society.

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Directors' annual report *(continued)* Year ended 31 March 2019

- k) Our "Strictly Come Dingley" annual ball in March was a huge success, raising over £14,000 net (our highest ever) whilst keeping 240 guests entertained by a local rock choir, professional dance demonstrations and supporter awards.

Financial review

We started the financial year with ambitious plans to expand our services and our impact, whilst at the same time achieving a balanced budget. As reported elsewhere we made significant enhancements to the quality and reach of our services, but at the same time we only achieved two thirds of the income growth necessary to cover the increased expenditure. Consequently we made a net annual loss of £31,040. This has been covered by our existing reserves and we remain in a relatively healthy financial position.

Our total expenditure for 2018/19 was £672,296, which represented a 15 per cent increase on the previous year. Nearly half of this increase was an increase to the salary and pension costs of our permanent staff: additional staff employed in our centres; our commitment to pay all our staff the Real Living Wage; and statutory increases in pension contributions. The biggest other increases in expenditure were payments to contractors for delivering our Training Offer (although most of these costs were covered by fees and grants) and necessary expenditure at our Reading centre to replace the boiler and refurbish the toilets.

Our total income for 2018/19 was £641,256, which represented a 10 per cent increase on the previous year. Just over sixty per cent of this income comes in the form of grants. This year we increased our income from local government grants by 18 per cent to £128,549, thanks mainly to improved funding from West Berkshire Council. We increased the grant funding we received from other bodies by 10 per cent to £262,285. BBC Children in Need and the Big Lottery Fund, remain the two biggest of these other grants, but we have continued to increase the number and range of other charitable grants we receive. We are truly grateful for all these grants, which are listed on page 16.

We classify a quarter of our income as 'earned income', and this grew by 13 per cent on the previous year, to £159,816. The biggest element of earned income is Nursery Grant funding, which increased by 8 per cent to £103,465. In addition to this, we receive £33,650 as direct 1:1 payments from our local authorities in respect of individual children. Also within this category, we have doubled the amount we receive from families as a contribution towards their LTP sessions, or play schemes, to £16,650, although we provide bursaries for any family not in a good position to contribute. The final element of earned income is revenue of £4,653 from our training offer, which has been greatly supplemented by some of the grants listed on page 16. The balance of £1,397 is revenue from the sale of merchandise and the hiring out of a room in the Reading building.

Our income from donations and fundraising has reduced by 4 per cent this year to £89,499. This was in spite of our most successful annual ball in March, which raised a gross amount of over £23,468. As always, we are very grateful to The Good Exchange, who in addition to giving grants, has provided match-funding for many individual donations. Our fundraising income was also the result of generous donations from companies, community groups and individuals. We would like to give a special mention to the following companies and community groups who each raised over £1,000 for us:

- AWE Aldermaston
- Candis Ltd
- Herma UK
- John Lewis (Community Matters Scheme)
- Osborne Clarke
- Dr Nadeem (book sales)
- Plough on the Green
- Prudential
- Reading St Laurence Church Lands
- St Michael's Church, Tilehurst
- Softtalk Consultancy
- Vodafone Foundation

We are also tremendously grateful for all the individuals who fundraised for us by completing various challenges. This support is vital in maintaining our core services.