

Our Impact
2019-2020



Dingley's
Promise



' We believe in the best start for every child.'

Welcome to our Impact Report 2019-2020

This report sits alongside the Trustee Report and Annual Accounts that cover April 2019 to March 2020, but we always attempt to include key developments for the period running up to publication. The national lockdown arrived at the very end of our 2019 - 2020 financial year. The successes of that year - greater reach, more services, more children supported, influencing regional and national SEND strategy – are outstanding and should not be overlooked.

The impact of COVID-19 on our services from March onwards and on the children and families we support has been significant. I want to pay tribute to the commitment, flexibility and sheer determination shown by the whole team, led by our inspirational CEO Cath, in responding to very challenging conditions. Our Centre Managers have taken on additional 'business as usual' responsibilities to free up Cath to focus on our regional and national work. We have developed new ways of working that we will embed into future service offerings. When we add the impact of our extended training offering and the recently commissioned consultancy project, our influence and contribution to the SEND sector is greater than ever before.

The Trustee Board remains determined to grasp new opportunities to further enhance Dingley's reputation and impact, particularly focussing on the important area of inclusion of SEND sector children in mainstream education. To ensure we are structured and governed in a way that supports our ambitions and helps us realise our potential, we have further strengthened the Trustee Board, adding skills and experience in business strategy, governance and risk, financial management, marketing, and - a first for us - a Student Trustee role. We will continue to add further expertise over the coming months.

I make no apologies for my upbeat tone. Both before and most notably during the COVID-19 pandemic, Dingley's Promise has been one of the very few organisations to step up and provide support to families under enormous pressure. We have done so whilst managing expenditure to match revenue, and using that revenue to reach more children than at any time in our long and successful history. My sincere thanks go to my Trustee colleagues, to our passionate and committed staff and volunteers, and to each and every one of our supporters.



David Ormrod, Chair of Trustees
Dingley's Promise



Our Impact in 2019 – 2020

We reached **323** children - more than **double** the number in 2018 – 2019



100% of our children showed developmental progress against the Early Years Foundation Stage

65% of our children transitioned to mainstream provision when they left Dingley's, despite a quadrupling of children with Education, Health & Care Plans



100% of early years professionals completing our Early Years Inclusive Practice training said it helped them to work more inclusively

94% of families feel less isolated as a result of the support they have had from Dingley's Promise.



Reflecting on our year from April 2019 to March 2020, I cannot help but focus on the day in March that we had to close our Centres due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. However, it is important to recognise that we achieved so much in the year before that happened.

The most striking change has been that after decades of reaching roughly the same number of children each year, in 2019 - 2020 through the development of our outreach work and training, we were able to reach 323 children with SEND. We remain committed to working with every child to ensure they have the best chance to reach their potential – regardless of their level of need.

In our Centres we developed a focused project on tooth brushing, in response to parent concerns around this vital activity and the stress it causes for them and their children at home. We have also focused on storytelling, and using stories to boost learning and engage children even more. We continue to look for new ways to support every child who comes to us in the spirit of continual learning and improvement, and wherever possible base this on the needs and requests of families.

Our training continued to grow in 2019 - 2020. 57 practitioners are now qualified in our Level 3 Certificate in Early Years Inclusive Practice. We concluded a successful pilot with 'Action for Children' in the north of England, and a formal Memorandum of Understanding was signed with national SEND training provider 'nasen'. In March, we created a free unaccredited version of the course, and over two months of lockdown 737 practitioners from across the UK signed up.

We have taken great steps forward this year, and are committed to continuing to be there for our families locally, as well as driving more inclusion nationally. I look forward to delivering real change for families of children with SEND – and as always giving every child the very best start.



Catherine McLeod MBE
Chief Executive, Dingley's Promise





**“The support
and the
sessions at
Dingley are
invalu-
able for
myself and my
child.**

**I do not know
where we
would be
without
them.”**

Our Centres

Dingley's Promise was formed in 1983 by local parents who wanted their young children, all patients at Reading's Battle Hospital, to experience play and learning the way that children without SEND could. 37 years later, Dingley's Promise now runs three specialist centres in Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire, all of which are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. Our impactful Learning Through Play sessions set the standard for SEND early education for others to learn from.

193 children attended our Centres in 2019 - 2020

The children we support are aged from 3 months to 5 years and all have learning difficulties with various levels of cognitive delay, often with additional physical disabilities, genetic conditions and sometimes life-limiting conditions and illnesses. They experience delays in motor skills, speech and language skills and social and emotional development, as well as having visual and hearing impairments, breathing and eating difficulties, anxiety or epilepsy. Conditions include Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Down's Syndrome and other chromosome conditions.

23 children required 1:1 support in 2019 - 2020 and 47 had Education, Health & Care Plans

Learning Through Play is stimulating and structured early years learning that focuses on the individual development needs of each child. Each centre provides 9 three-hour Learning Through Play sessions per week. Each session follows the Early Years Foundation Stage are designed to ensure each child reaches their "Individual Learning Goals"

In 2019 - 2020 we delivered 19,732 hours of Learning Through Play

In 2019 - 2020 our Centres also delivered 20 playscheme days during the school holidays to provide much-needed respite for families. 42 children attended our playschemes.

Family Support & Outreach

Caring for a young child with SEND can be challenging and isolating. At Dingley's Promise, every staff member is committed to supporting families and making sure they are listened to, and a dedicated Family Support Worker is based in each Centre. They offer coffee mornings, Stay and Play sessions, one-to-one support, family trips, help with completing forms and information about other services.

In 2019 – 2020 44 families benefited from our centre-based family support

The most common form of support we provided was emotional one-to-one support for parents going through difficult times. The importance of a friendly face and the chance to be listened to without judgement cannot be underestimated.

94% of families feel less isolated and 92% more positive about the future, thanks to our support

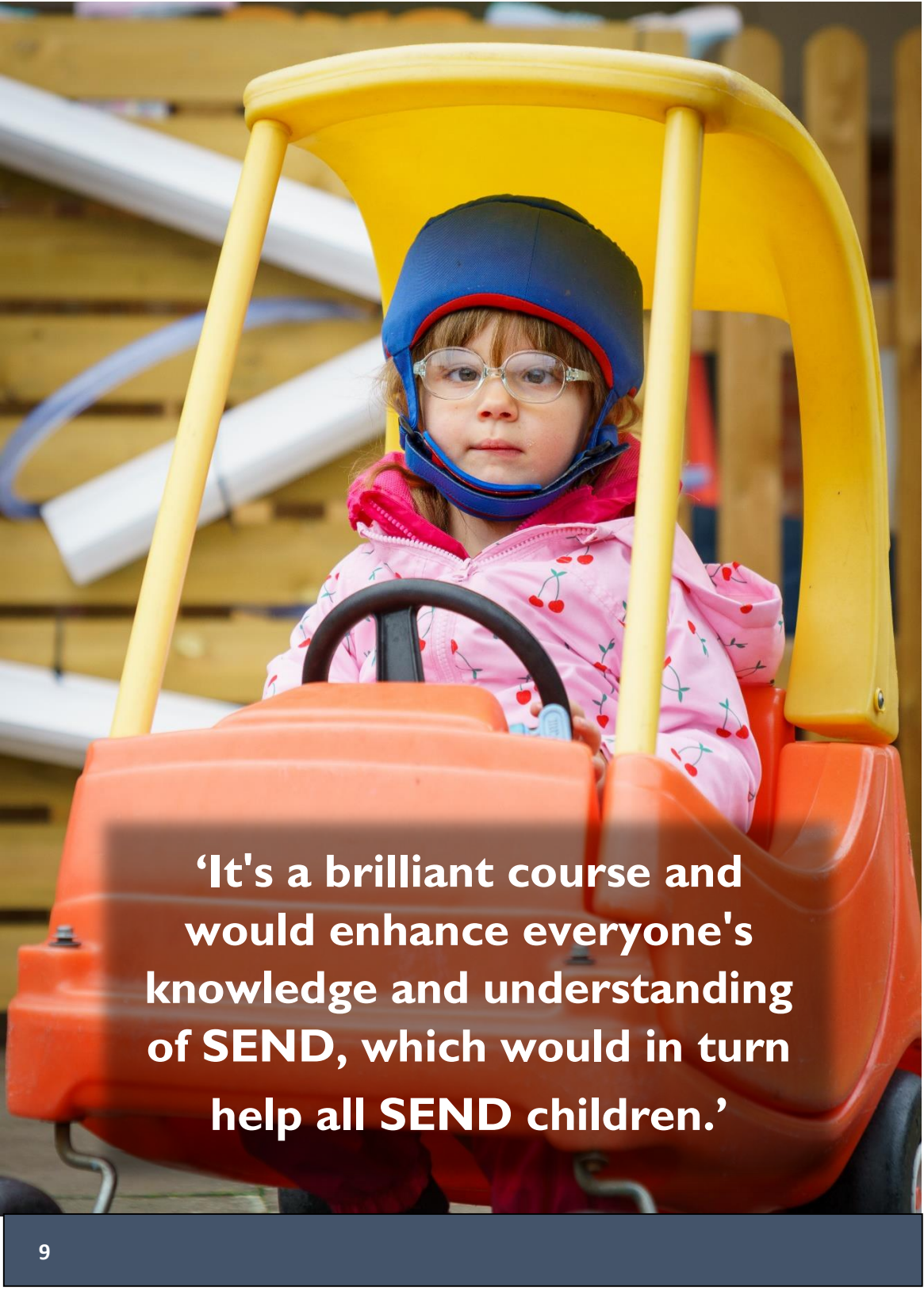
‘They have gone above and beyond to support us - thank you for all your help and caring.’

Concerned about families whose children did not attend our Centres, in 2019 – 2020 we started a Family Outreach Programme. In that year we were able to help 62 families through this new programme.

‘One thing I have definitely got out of Dingley is meeting the other families. It’s given me a great support group.’



“Since our son started attending, we have learnt how to support him, by sharing information with staff and asking for advice. This has brought us all together as a family and now we are able to do things together.”

A young child with glasses and a blue helmet is sitting in a yellow and orange toy car. The child is wearing a pink jacket with a cherry pattern. The background is a wooden structure, possibly a playground.

‘It’s a brilliant course and would enhance everyone’s knowledge and understanding of SEND, which would in turn help all SEND children.’

Training & Consultancy

In 2019 - 2020 we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with national SEND training provider nasen to deliver our flagship course **‘NVQ Level 3 Certificate in Early Years Inclusive Practice’** to more early years practitioners across the country. 57 practitioners have now successfully completed the training. Independent analysis of its impact by The University of Reading shows that it leads to a doubling of capacity to support children with SEND.

We also successfully completed the pilot project with Action for Children to train the staff in its north-east nurseries and were delighted to learn that 100% of trainees felt that our training had made their practice more inclusive.

In March 2020, faced with the national lockdown, we worked at pace to adapt our Level 3 Certificate into an abridged online version that we made freely available to practitioners across the UK. From April to July 2020, 737 people signed up for this training. This proved to be a very influential training initiative in inclusive practices in early years education and led to Dingley’s Promise being invited to join the national Early Years SEND Partnership in July 2020 and then developing a second training course on **‘Transitions for children with SEND in the Early Years’**.

During 2019 - 2020, we also hosted visits and had discussions with other charities, organisations and local authorities to help them understand the model that we use in our Centres and to share expertise and documentation with them. Dingley’s Promise is committed to sharing best practice, and working to ensure that all specialist settings have a clear strategy for enabling young children with SEND to transition to the mainstream if that is the right thing for them.

Our response to COVID-19

On 18th March our Centres closed following government advice. Within weeks we had switched to online support for our children and families. WhatsApp groups and online get-togethers were organised to support staff who were working hard, and those who had needed to furlough - keeping the teams together even if they were experiencing the crisis very differently. We packed up resources to send out to families isolated at home, called regularly to make sure parents had someone to talk to and confide in, and created a raft of video and online activities for families to do at home with their child. The positivity and commitment shown by the team during this challenging period has been inspirational and we are so proud of the incredible resilience of our families, and of what everyone has achieved.



‘We love the support from Dingley’s – my child has made so much progress whilst being with them. I am eternally grateful to all the staff for their support during this difficult time.’

Once our families began to return to our Centres in June, we assessed all the children to understand what impact lockdown had on their wellbeing, learning and development. In line with national research, we found that the higher the needs of the child, the more their development was affected by the lockdown. The areas of their learning that had been affected most were ‘Health and Self Care’ and ‘Listening and Attention’, and so as we start the work of helping children to recover we are focusing on these areas.

Our Work During Lockdown

From 19th March to 31st May Dingley's Promise was able to offer the following:

1295 separate contacts
with isolated families



232 one to one calls

63 children received toys
or resources at home



737 early years staff accessed
training to support more
children with **SEND** in the UK

40 extra families supported

One Family's Experience during Lockdown

'It's hard. We have seen a huge and detrimental change in our daughter's behaviour, and it is having a massive negative impact on us as a family. I am seeking support and advice, and **the main place I am getting that from is Dingley's Promise**. We have had no other appointments with other service providers or professionals involved in our life, and very little contact from other providers which is quite hard. I'm here at home with three children on my own, so for me to see Dingley's staff in the Zoom sessions is really helpful. They understand our situation, so when I say what has been happening, they understand because they know my daughter.

We are not sure what information my daughter retains, but I know that she has recognised her key worker [during Zoom sessions], which is amazing in our situation. For some people who don't have children with SEND, they would think that's not much, but for us that is huge! **To feel there is some progress in this situation where we have felt so very low and sad and perhaps not achieving as many things as we'd like to... is amazing and it just means so much to us.**

We also received a wonderful delivery from Dingley's Promise in the post! It was a box of sensory toys, which just lifted me so much because my daughter loves them and they are similar to toys that she plays with at Dingley's Promise. **It really helped in what has been a really dark period in our life.'**



Our Plans for the Future

Research suggests that the recovery period from the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to be years rather than months for children who have lost key developmental inputs in their earliest years. We implemented individual **Recovery Learning and Play Plans** for every child as soon as they returned to our Centres and are committed to continuing to help our children recover for as long as they need us. This will be our key focus in 2020 - 2021.

As an organisation, we are passionate about **diversity**. A third of the families who use our services come from diverse ethnic communities, and as an organisation we work hard to provide services that embrace different cultures and beliefs. In 2020 - 2021, we will review our staff and family surveys to capture more data on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), review our website and materials to ensure they represent diverse groups, undertake staff training, and establish targets on EDI for the organisation.

Being Active will be given greater focus in our Centres. We know that, for many of our children, our gardens are the only spaces where they can play freely and safely, so we will be making them as stimulating and fun as we can.

We will continue to develop our **Storytelling and Teeth-Brushing projects**, involving families so they can continue these activities at home.

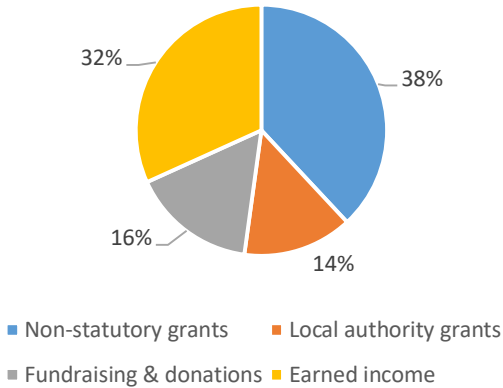
We will expand our **Family Support Work** in Reading by recruiting a new member of staff who will help us to engage even more with our own families and other families in the community when they need it most.

We will deliver our **Transitions for Children with SEND in the Early Years** training to 180 practitioners in 83 local authority areas, as part of the national Early Years SEND Partnership.

We will aim to reach over 1000 practitioners across the UK with our training in 2019-20 and begin to build a movement of **'Inclusion Champions'** driving better opportunities for children with SEND in the early years.

How we Fund our Work

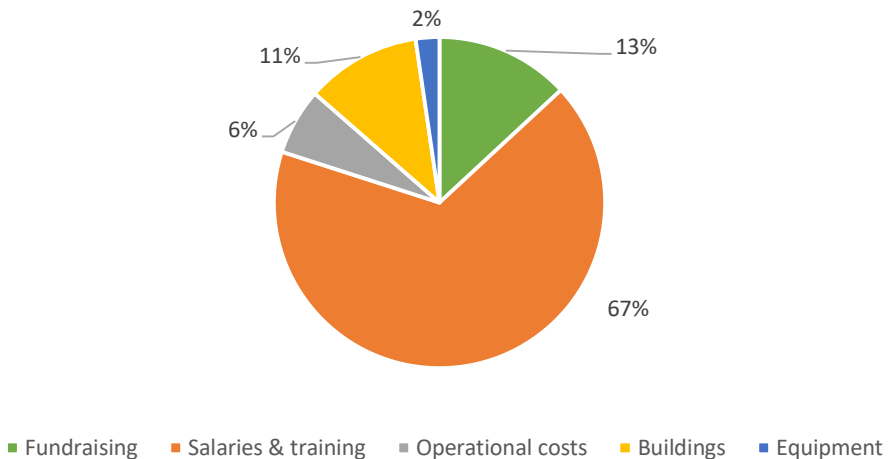
Total income £647,515



The largest part of our income is from non-statutory grants including large charities, trusts and foundations.

Earned income includes the Nursery Education funding distributed by local authorities on behalf of central government.

Total expenditure £645,199



This is a summary of information extracted from the full audited and unqualified annual accounts of Dingley's Promise for the year ending 31st March 2020. Copies of the audited accounts and financial statement are available from our website, the Charity Commission and Companies House.



We could not continue to ensure that young children with SEND have the best start in life without the many people and organisations who support our work. We thank everyone who ran, walked or sky-dived in aid of Dingley's Promise, those who competed in our Dragon Boat or Wheels of Fortune challenges or attended our Ball, and the many people who sent us personal donations - particularly those in memory of loved ones.

We would particularly like to thank the following organisations:



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Big Lottery | Elstree School |
| BBC Children in Need | Englefield Charitable Trust |
| Reading Borough Council | FastTrack Fit Camp Ltd |
| West Berkshire Council | Foyle Foundation |
| Wokingham Borough Council | FSP Foundation |
| | Gamma |
| | Greenham Trust |
| | Henry Smith Charity |
| | Hilton Hotel Reading |
| | Involve Community Services |
| | Irwin Mitchell Solicitors |
| | J's Tea Bar |
| | Kings College School |
| | Lions Club of Reading |
| | Lloyds Bank Foundation |
| | Masonic Charitable Foundation |
| | MHA Macintyre Godfrey LM |
| | Morrison's Foundation |
| | Newbury & Crookham Golf Club |
| | Newbury & Reading Wargames Society |
| | Newbury Building Society |
| | Newbury Junior Netball Club |
| | Omni Reading |
| | OneBite |
| Airinmar Ltd | |
| AL Marketing | |
| Archway Business Solutions | |
| Ascot Racecourse | |
| AWE Aldermaston | |
| BNI Henley | |
| BNI Reading | |
| BNI Wokingham | |
| Boyes Turner LLP | |
| Broad Street Mall | |
| Calcot Women's Institute | |
| D M Thomas Foundation for Young People | |
| David Brownlow Charitable Foundation | |
| David Knight Charitable Trust | |
| Dexter Montague LLP | |
| Edward Gosling Foundation | |

Oxford County Council
Plough on the Green
Prudential plc
Purple Turtle
Reading Football Club
Reading St Laurence Relief In Need
Trust
Rotary Club of Bracknell
Softtalk Consultancy and Services
St James's Place Charitable
Foundation
Stonehenge Visitor Centre
Thames Water
Thatcham Town Council
The Botanist Reading
The Castle Inn, Cold Ash
The Gordon Palmer Memorial
Trust
The James Wise Charitable Trust
The MCC
The Midcounties Co-op
The Oracle Centre
The Peter Baker Foundation
The Sobell Foundation
The Stevenson Family Foundation
The Thomas Curtis Charitable
Trust
The Woodpecker Pub
Thorngrove School
Total Surf Ltd
University of Reading
Vodafone Foundation
Waitrose Ltd
Waitrose Woodley Community
Matters Project
Wates Foundation
Windsor Castle
Wokingham Masons
Wokingham Town Council
Wokingham United Charities
Wootton Hill Market





www.dingley.org.uk

 Facebook - @dingleygroup

 Twitter - @dingley

 Instagram - dingleyspromise

 LinkedIn - Dingley's Promise

 Youtube – Dingley's Promise

Registered with



Dingley's Promise is the working name of Dingley Family & Specialist Early Years Centres, a company limited by guarantee and registered charity. Company Registered in England and Wales No. 07279320. Charity Registered in England and Wales No. 1137609. Registered Office: Kennet Walk Community Centre, Kenavon Drive, Reading RG1 3GD.