



YEOVIL OPPORTUNITY GROUP

Annual Report for the year ended
31st March 2011

Charity number 304693

Contents

Page 1 Who we are

Page 2 View from the Trustees

Page 3 People

Page 4 Services

Page 5 Financial Review

Page 6 Future Plans

What we are

Yeovil Opportunity Group is Registered Charity established in 1970. We are governed by a Constitution which was revised and accepted by the Charity Commission in 2010. Our charity number is 304693

The aim of the group is to enhance the development and education of children irrespective of their race, culture, religion, means or ability, in particular those with additional needs by offering appropriate play, education and care facilities. Parents are actively encouraged to become involved in the activities of the Group.

The Group is based in Yeovil at the Balidon Centre, on the Summerlands Hospital site. We are grateful to the Somerset Partnerships for the provision of our facilities at a low cost. This year has seen the building upgraded and security arrangements strengthened.

Our correspondence address is:

Yeovil Opportunity Group
Balidon Centre
Summerlands Hospital Site
Preston Road
Yeovil BA20 2BX
01935 384157 email: info@yog.org.uk
Website: www.yog.org.uk

Our Bankers are:

Lloyds TSB plc
9, High Street
Yeovil BA20 1RN

Our independent examiner is:

PS Wellspring FCCA
42, St Andrews Avenue
Weymouth DT3 5JS

Public Interest

How the Group delivers its principal charitable aim is demonstrated in the rest of this report. The public benefit arising from our work is implicit in the services delivered and the education and support provided for children with additional needs to help them reach their potential, to the benefit of society as a whole as well as the children and their families. We provide all of our preschool and transport services at a subsidised cost and the Rainbows Time Together Group free of charge.

Risk assessment

The Trustees annually review the risks the Charity faces and takes appropriate ameliorative action where necessary.

View from the Trustees

This year has been an exciting one for us as we celebrated our 40th anniversary. The Group grew from concern by a small group of professionals in Yeovil, at the lack of resources for young handicapped children. In the summer of 1968 a summer play scheme was held and proved so beneficial that plans materialised to develop a permanent pre-school scheme. After a good deal of work a committee was formed in late 1969 and in March 1970 the Opportunity Group opened with 9 children – six with disabilities- two weeks later there were 18 children attending and the Group has not looked back since.

We celebrated our anniversary by hosting an Open Day in January 2011 which was attended by 100 people many of whom had been involved in the Group very early on including Ailsa Royston one of the very original founders. It was fascinating hearing more of the early history and seeing early and later photographs. Staff produced information about the work now with the children and visitors were interested to hear how the work is progressing. A review leaflet was produced to commemorate the event.

This year has been a year of consolidation of new ways of working in the Group which has provided exciting new opportunities. Mary Gilson who worked as our Group Co-ordinator from September 2009 until July 2010 after 6 years as our full time teacher seconded by Somerset County Council. We are grateful to her for her work enabling the Group management structure to develop with the appointment of Sheila Kiddle as our Child Care Manager as from April 2010. Sheila has a Foundation Degree in Early Years Education and during the year has continued her training with the aim of becoming an Early Years Professional. This will enable the Group to meet Government requirements that we have an Early Years Graduate Manager.

We have welcomed new nursery nurses – Rebecca Davies and Paula

Parks, and Louise Marshall who covered maternity leave from November 2009 until July 2010. We have also been delighted to be able to offer an apprenticeship to Laura Brown one of our students.

Sarah Farnham has been seconded part time by Somerset County Council since April 2010 as our Early Years teacher and she has worked with the staff to modernise the play room, develop the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Curriculum, re-organise reporting systems and to link the Group more securely into the evolving Children's Centre structure locally.

Sue Shaw has taken on the role as leader of the Rainbow Time Together Group and the numbers have increased so much that we are now running two sessions per week. The Group plays a key role in supporting parents at a time when they are most vulnerable and in introducing children and their families to the Group.

We have continued to work closely with MAISEY (Multi Agency Intervention and Support in the Early Years) with our child Care Manager attending local groups and the Chair of Trustees being a member of the county wide Steering Group.

We were inspected by Ofsted in January 2010 when we were judged as overall “good” with 2 Outstanding areas- partnership with parents and with other agencies and settings.

We welcomed Trudi Read as a new Trustee, otherwise the membership of the Trustee group has remained stable. Trustees have taken advantage of the governance training offered by Somerset County Council

People

Trustees

Andrea de Berker	Chair
Simon Rowbottom	Vice Chair
Simon Skipper	Treasurer
Mel Fludder	Chair Fundraising sub committee
Trustees	Mairead Farrell ,Trudie Read, Michaela Sharman, Steve Clayton, Julie Lewis, Wendy Vincent

Staff

Sarah Thompson	Administrator
Mary Gilson	Co-ordinator (left July 10)
Sheila Kiddle	Child Care Manager (appointed April 2010)
Sue Shaw	Senior Nursery Nurse
Fiona Ham	Nursery Nurse
Rebecca Davies	Nursery Nurse
Natasha Davenport	Nursery Nurse (returned maternity leave August 10)
Paula Parks	Nursery Nurse
Louse Marshall	Nursery nurse (maternity cover Nov 09 – July 10)

Helen Rendell	One to one worker
Laura Brown	Apprentice
Ken Rose until December 2010	Driver
Graham White	Driver
Sarah Farnham	Teacher (seconded by Somerset County Council from September 2010)
Martin Lawes	Music Therapy

Volunteers

We are extremely grateful to our volunteers who supplement the work of the staff team to great effect. Without them the Group could not provide the services it does. Some of our volunteers have been working with us for many years. These include Wendy Vincent, Sue Dyer, Dawn Bowes and Elaine Crivelli

Students

We are delighted to be able to regularly provide work experience placements for students from local colleges and schools and to have provided an apprenticeship.

Services

We provide pre-school education to children with additional needs. The children we work with have a variety of additional needs ranging from physical, sensory disabilities, speech and language and/or learning disabilities and many have complex needs. We provide two core services:

Pre-school Sessions

These are provided for children from 18 months to 5 years. 5 mornings per week during term times. Using the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework we aim to enhance their development and support their progress . A parent commented *“William loved the YOG, the activities were fun and exciting , just what you would hope for from a pre-school”*. Most of the children also attend mainstream pre-schools and we work in partnership with these groups to achieve the best possible outcomes for them.

We work with other professionals to ensure a smooth transition into school – most of the children go on to attend mainstream school. A parent comments *“When it was time for him to start school, the assistance from the Yeovil Opportunity Group for his transition was outstanding; I don't know how we would have managed without them”*.

Over the year we have worked with 39 children

Rainbows Time Together

This provides an opportunity for parents of babies and toddlers with additional needs to meet together with staff and therapists and play with their children in a supportive environment. The group is led by our Senior Nursery Nurse, our apprentice and other staff as needed. The sessions incorporate singing and music as well as opportunities for discussing concerns with staff and therapists. We have time for messy play every week so that children and parents can enjoy finger painting, water play or tactile play without the worry of clearing up afterwards. The group is small to enable us to offer individual attention to children and parents. The group numbers fluctuate as the children move into the main group but over the year we have worked with 12 families.

Children from both Somerset and Dorset attend both groups.

We are grateful to our therapy colleagues who support the children and the work we do with them.

Transport

We are fortunate to have our own minibus which enables us to collect children who would not otherwise be able to attend the Group.

Financial Review

Our major source of funding is Somerset County Council in the form of the Nursery Grant and School Action Plus funding. In addition we receive funding from Yeovil Foundation Hospital Trust. This is supplemented by various other supporters of the Group (see page 7 of the accounts). This has enabled us to deliver our objectives.

We have achieved a surplus this year of £19,673. This comprise of a surplus of £4,087 in respect of our core objectives and £15,586 of restricted funding, mainly regarding funding for the new Sunshine Coach.

Reserves Policy

The reserves of the Group that were freely available for charity use at the year end were £91,406. The Trustees consider this is required for working revenue as the numbers of children we work with continue to be small but their needs are increasing which increases our costs, particularly staff costs as we need to provide higher staff ratios than statutory funding covers. The target is to maintain adequate reserves to enable the Group to continue running for 12 months, even if there is a significant reduction in funding from statutory sources. This we feel is very important given the uncertainty of future government spending in the current economic climate.

Thanks

We would like to thank our many donors and supporters but in particular:

The Rotary Club for maintaining our website which enables us to keep parents and the wider public updated with our activities.

Yeovil and Yeovil Vale Rotary for their generous cash donations and for updating the playroom and the kitchen.

Sherborne Castle Fair for their continued generous support.

Mairead Farrell for completing a marathon

Tamborino's for hosting the Pizza eating competition and for including an item on their menu from which the group receives a donation each time one is ordered.

Mel Fludder for organising the Group Calendar which raised over £1,200 and the Christmas Concert.

The Variety Club together with The Co- operative for their sponsorship of the replacement Sunshine Coach, which we gratefully took delivery of on 22 March 2011. This replaced our 11 year old coach which had provided us with invaluable service. The new coach has a tail lift to help ease the embarking of those children who use wheelchairs.

Aiming High Funding for the Rainbows Time Together Group

Everyone else who has supported the Group financially over the year.

Future plans

- ✦ To continue to provide excellent services which meet the needs of the children and families we work with
- ✦ To continue to provide early support to parents of newly diagnosed children, in particular by the provision of the Rainbows Time Together Group
- ✦ To maintain our staff training and development to support our service delivery and implementation of the Early Years Foundation Curriculum.
- ✦ To continue to offer placements and apprenticeship opportunities to local young people
- ✦ To continue to work in partnership with professional, multi- agency staff, local playgroups and schools and Children's Centres to the benefit

of the children and their families.

- ✦ To upgrade the sensory room which now some 21 years old.
- ✦ To upgrade our IT systems and provide staff training.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees 7th
November 2011

.....
Andrea de Berker Chair