



YEOVIL OPPORTUNITY GROUP

Annual Report for the year ended
31st March 2012

Charity number 304693

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Who 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. We are very fortunate to have a safe and secure building

Our correspondence address is:

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Balidon Centre
Summerlands Hospital
Preston Road
Yeovil BA20 2BX
01935 384157 email info@yog.org.uk
[07596839700](tel:07596839700)
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

The work of the Group has continued and we have worked with 40 families in all. We have seen the numbers of children reduce whilst their needs have increased. This has led to a higher staff to child ratio with several children needing medical interventions such as tube feeding.

Our key concern this year has been the financial viability of the Group as our per capita income has decreased as fewer children are attending and a grant from Yeovil Hospital Trust which accounts for almost a third of our income was very late in arriving as a result of changes in the structure of local health services. This funding is longstanding but the basis on which it is paid is very unclear and this causes the Trustees great concern as without it at the moment we are not financially viable.

Our Child Care Manager Sheila Kiddle has recently achieved her graduate Early Years Professional status and she has worked closely with Sarah Farnham our Early Years teacher seconded part time by Somerset County Council to develop the work of the group .

We have been pleased to offer apprenticeships to Sam and Lydia, both of whom have grown in confidence and skills during the year. We have continued to offer placements to students from Yeovil College and Stanchester School.

Sue Shaw has continued to work as leader of the Rainbow Time Together Group and we have run two sessions per week. Sarah Farnham also attends once a 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. Since Easter we have only been funded to run one group

We have continued to work closely with MAISEY (Multi Agency Identification and Support in the Early Years) with our Child Care Manager attending local meetings and the Chair of Trustees being a member of the county wide Steering Group. We are concerned at the reluctance of MAISEY to refer children to the Group as this denies parents their choice of pre school and sometimes means that children have to fail in mainstream settings before they are referred to the Group with significant negative consequences for both the child and their family.

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 are now working towards being outstanding in all areas.

We welcomed Dr Michael Fernando as a Trustee and Min Hodges as our Minutes Secretary. We said a very fond farewell to Mairead Farrell who retired as a Trustee after several years. We miss her expertise and commitment to the Group. Michaela Sharman has also had to resign because of family commitments. Otherwise the membership of the Trustee group has remained stable. Trustees have continued to take 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

Trudie Read,
Steve Clayton, Julie Lewis,
Wendy Vincent, Dr Michael
Fernando
Min Hodges

Secretary

Staff

Sarah Thompson

Administrator

Sheila Kiddle

Child Care Manager

Sue Shaw

Senior Nursery Nurse

Fiona Ham

Nursery Nurse

Rebecca Davies

Nursery Nurse

Natasha Davenport

Nursery Nurse

Paula Parks

Nursery Nurse

Laura Brown

One to one worker

Sam King

Apprentice

Lydia Gillham

Apprentice

Graham White

Driver

Barry Purchase

Driver

Sarah Farnham

Teacher (seconded by Somerset
County Council from September
2010)

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. It is good to see so many new volunteers joining us.

Students

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

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

We are open 5 morning per week, during term time. We cater for children aged 18 months to 5 years. We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum to support and enhance the children's development and support their progress. We also encourage families to access their local mainstream pre-school and we work in partnership with these groups to ensure the best possible outcomes for the children.

We have a good relationship with the many professionals who support our children and their families. It is our aim to ensure a smooth transition into school – most of the children go on to attend mainstream school. A parent comments *"we are really grateful for your support to us as a family"*.

Over the year we have worked with 25 families.

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, Teacher, and our 2 apprentices. Other staff are used as needed. The sessions focus on singing, access to our sensory room and tactile play. Children and their parents can access activities such as finger painting, water play and, wet and dry tactile play without the worry of clearing up afterwards. The group is small to enable us to offer individual attention to children and parents. There is always an opportunity for group or 1:1 discussions with therapists during the session. A parent's comments *"coming to the group has given us the best support."* The group numbers fluctuate as the children move into the main group but over the year we have worked with 15 families.

We welcome children from Dorset as well as Somerset to both sessions.

We are grateful to our many varied professional colleagues who work with the children and their families, and provide us with invaluable support.

Transport

We are fortunate to have our own minibus and drivers which enables us to collect children who would not otherwise be able to attend the Group. We are grateful to the Variety Club and the Co-operative Society for supporting us to have a new minibus this year.

Financial Review

Our two major sources of funding are Somerset County Council and Dorset 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 a total deficit this year of £14,297. This was mainly due to depreciation of our donated assets. However, we made a cash deficit of £3,769 which was met from our reserves.

Reserves Policy

The reserves of the Group that were freely available for charity use at the year end were £86,553. The Trustees consider this is required for working revenue as the numbers of children we work with remains small but their needs are increasingly complex. 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. This was brought into sharp focus this year, due to uncertainty over funding from a major source. The delay in receiving the funds resulted in a major review of potential costs should the Group have to close. Our historic reserves enabled us to continue working until the funding was approved and received by the Group.

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 and The Round Table for their generous cash donations

Sherborne Castle Fair and the Zaiger Trust continuing to support us.

The Beehive Pub who have fund raised for the group

Tamborino's who donate to the group each time three items are sold from their menu and also from their donation from their 7th anniversary celebrations

Martock Charity Shop for remembering us when they shared out their profits

Aiming High Funding for the Rainbows Time Together Group Funding

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 their families.
- To continue to provide early support to parents of newly diagnosed children, in particular by the provision of the Rainbows Time Together Group.
- To establish the finances of the group on a more stable footing.
- On reviewing the financial viability of two Rainbows groups we are now providing the same level of service but only once a week.
- To maintain our staff training and development to support our service delivery and implementation of the revised Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum (coming into effect September 2012).
- To liaise with Fiveways School and access their newly opened training programmes.
- To continue to offer student placements and apprenticeship opportunities to local young people through liaising with Yeovil College and local secondary schools.
- To continue to build our strong base of volunteers, and to support them in their valuable role we are now holding regular meetings with the Child Care Manager and also providing relevant training opportunities.
- To continue to work in partnership with multi-agency professionals, local early years settings and schools, and local Children's Centres to support all children and their families.
- Due to financial restraints our plans to refurbish our sensory room are no longer viable. However we will be improving the facilities by purchasing new fibre optics and relocating a sensory board.
- ✧ To continue to work closely with Early Years Advisory Team to ensure we are providing the best service possible.