

Stratford-sub-Castle Church of England VC Primary School

Governors Annual Report to Parents

Monday 19th October 2020

This year's Report to Parents is very different to any I have written before. The first six months of the school year were as "normal" as they usually are and then our little community, like so many others, was to undergo changes we could never have foreseen. A brief resumé of our school's experience during lockdown is added at the end of this document.

Our children continue to explore 'Life in all its fullness' building on their life skills and increasing their knowledge in the safe and secure environment of our school. Here they experience a happy, inclusive and accessible education that prepares them for their futures. They enjoy coming to school and are eager and willing to learn while they are here. They are confident and social individuals who surprise and reward us every day.

The extra expenses incurred during the Covid19 pandemic and the continuing school funding issues have negatively impacted on our budget. Staff and Governors have continued their hard work to keep the deficit as low as possible. We have carried on rolling the children's books over, sending emails rather than hard copies of newsletters and other school information. We have kept training down to the essentials and minimised purchases. The school also continues to function without a Parent Support Adviser or Premises Manager. At the end of the school year, our deficit stood at £214,641, an increase that is being addressed with the help of Wiltshire Council School Financial advisors. The deficit budget our school has, can be mainly attributed to the national Special Educational Needs funding crisis. The school has to top up funding for pupils with SEND from the delegated budget as the funding delegated for all SEN within the school does not cover the shortfall in the Named Pupil Allowances given to individual pupils or fund the high number of pupils in the school with additional needs.

The number of children with varying forms of Special Educational Need in September stood at 21% (31/150 children) and ended the year at 22% (33/150 children). Children taking up their Free School Meal provision was quite constant, starting at 12 children (8%) and ending the year at 14 children (9%).

The year started with 151 pupils on roll and ended the year with 150. This number is 3 over our PAN (Pupil Admission Number)

Before the Covid19 pandemic, our school attendance figures remained at a very good level of 96%, which makes our attendance rates above the national average.

Behaviour remains at a very good level, the enormous changes to school life highlighted the team-work between home and school. This has allowed so many children to adapt without affecting attitudes to appropriate behaviour. Where children feel anxious the staff continue to support their feelings appropriately.

The school continued to provide a full range of enrichment activities at after-school and in-school clubs until March. Thanks, as always, go to the staff and volunteers gave up their time to provide these very popular extra-curricular opportunities.

Up to March, children in EYFS continued to make good progress, growing in confidence and increasing their "learning power".

Year One and Year Two Phonics screening did not take place.

Key Stage One and Key Stage 2 outcomes could only be measured up to March 2020 so end of year outcomes are not available.

Our year six leavers went on to take up places at Bishop Wordsworth's Grammar School, South Wilts Grammar School, Wyvern, St. Edmunds, Sarum Academy and Burgate schools.

The Pupil Premium Grant Allocation was spent on a variety of interventions. The impact of the Covid19 crisis negatively impacted on the delivery of these interventions.

Mrs Cook began her maternity leave before lockdown and Mrs Jane Wilson took over as the teacher of Fox Class.

By the end of the year we said goodbye to Miss Paula Barnes and our long standing cleaner Mrs Jennifer McMEnamin. Mrs McMEnamin showed the school dedicated service and we are extremely thankful to her for all her efforts over the years.

The Governing Body membership numbers have been reduced, we stand at two Parent and one Co-Opted Governor short. We are also looking for a new Clerk to the Governors.

FOSS have worked hard over the past year, raising more funds for our school. Despite the changes in how they could raise funds due to lockdown, they found ways to do so, thanks in part, to the power of social media. On behalf of the Governors I would like to thank every committee member and member of the FOSS for each and every contribution they have made to the enrichment of school life.

Our strong links with Stratford-sub-Castle village and the wider community have continued despite the restrictions Covid19 inflicted. Our relationship with the church although temporarily changed, continues to provide us with valued support.

The successes of this school year and the continuing development of our school are due to the dedication, loyalty and sacrifices of our staff. Without strong leadership and the willingness of all our staff to go above and beyond for our children, our school would not have been able to stay open during lockdown. Staff provided home learning opportunities, kept in touch with all our families and made sure our children felt safe and secure when they could attend school.

On behalf of the Governors I would thank Mrs Bridson, Mrs Watkins, our staff governor Miss Crook, all our teachers, teaching assistants and support staff for their hard work. You are valued and admired for all you do, we wouldn't be here without you.

The help, support and commitment of our great school by the 'Stratford Team' children, parents, carers, staff, governors and volunteers ensure we remain a wonderful, vibrant and inclusive place.

Angela Britten (Chair of Governors)

What happened in March and the rest of the school year.

Following the government announcement on **Thursday 19th March 2020** it became apparent that the school was closing on **Friday 20th March**. There was very little information around and there were rumours of 'hubs' being set up for the children of Key Workers and those with a vulnerability. Mrs Bridson's decision to run the school with reduced staffing levels for an indefinite period, to provide a service to Key Workers and vulnerable pupils was taken following consultations with all staff and the Chair of Governors. This was due to our high levels of vulnerable pupils who we knew would not access other services easily (for a variety of reasons).

At this stage, the government had not published a list of 'key roles', but we took the approach to gather as much information, as possible from families and get some tentative plans in place for **Monday 23rd March**.

Families responded to our letter and sent back the forms very quickly. Initially we accepted the word of

parents as being Key Workers and for the most part, parents were extremely responsible. They worked with the school to keep staff and children safe and were flexible to allow other children places when they were working from home. At Wider Opening we required proof of being a Key worker as places became more limited.

A system of three teams working for a week in school and for two weeks at home was put in place. This allowed for staff to recover from the intense week in school, which involved no breaks and a lot of extra cleaning duties and also for any COVID 19 symptoms which may have developed to 'come out' at home! This structure meant that staff felt more confident and paced themselves throughout the period. Mrs Bridson contacted staff regularly and e-mailed them with information and reassurance as much as possible.

This regime ran for 9 weeks from **Monday 23rd March until Friday 22nd May**. The school remained open during the two-week Easter break and for the two Bank Holidays. Staff and Governors are immensely proud of this!

Support provided to families follows:

- Weekly phone calls / fortnightly phone calls to all families – traffic light risk assessment according to individual needs / vulnerabilities
- Information on front page of website so as easy to find
- New tab on website – learning from home and linked to Oak Academy and extensive resources
- Class e-mails set up to allow communication between teachers and their class
- Class newsletters
- Community newsletter (weekly) to all families, staff, governors and volunteers
- E-mail facility to SLT if any concerns, worries or questions
- Vouchers downloaded and sent for FSM (no hot dinners provided in school during Lockdown)
- Role of 'Support Teacher' adopted by Mrs Richards following wider opening – liaison with families remaining at home. Individual learning packages put together. In some cases, picked up at the school gate and in others dropped off at garden gates by Mrs Richards.
- Work books (maths and English) purchased by school and provided for learning at home.

A government announcement on **Sunday 10th May** triggered plans for 'Wider reopening' on **Monday 1st June**. This involved families contacting Mrs Watkins by e-mail to say if they wanted a place or not and Mrs Bridson put together a Risk Assessment. Wiltshire produced a useful template. However, this did not take as much time as working out, how to make it operational.

The school opened to 79 pupils on Monday 1st June.

Facts and Figures (Lockdown and Wider Opening)

- **Lockdown** – school was continually open for 9 weeks from Monday 23rd March until Friday 22nd May
- Lowest attendance on one day = 1 pupil (vulnerable) on Monday 6th April 2020
- Highest attendance on one day = 27 pupils (17 Key worker / 10 vulnerable) on Wednesday 20th May.
- Lowest weekly attendance = Week 3 (06.04.20 – 10.04.20) = 16 places across the week
- Highest weekly attendance = Week 9 (18.06.20 – 22.06.20) = 124 places across the week

- **Wider opening** on Monday 1st June = 79 pupils max per day = 227 places across the week
- By end of the summer term 14/151 pupils did not attend school at all. 137/151 = 91% of pupils had returned to school before the break.
- 11/12 (92%) Service children attended school.
- 9/11 (82%) PP children attended school.
- 4/5 (80%) of pupils with EHCP attended school
- 12/15 (80%) pupils with My Support Plan attended school.
- 14/16 (86%) pf pupils at SEN Support attended school.
- 30/36 (83%) pupils with SEN attended school

Significant Events during Lockdown

- Week 3 (w/c 15.06.20) of Wider Opening Robin Bubble closed due to suspected case of COVID 19. As the pupil was unable to take a test the 'Bubble' was closed on the advice of PHE. Letter sent to all pupils and staff involved on Saturday 13th June informing them that they had to self-isolate and could return on Thursday 25th June. SLT also talked to each family on the phone to answer any questions or concerns.
- Delivery of gifts to school for staff following a collection by parents in June. Hampers of nice things to eat, smellies and named gift bags for all the staff – extremely thoughtful and very much appreciated.

Angela Britten

(Chair of Governors)