

AGM Preschool Leaders Report

In September 2019 we started back with a different keyperson structure as we lost Shirley, we joined the blue and the green team together leaving two groups, this has worked well. Sally took over as Deputy Leader and Naomi as deputy SEND and deputy safeguarding lead. They have both been very supportive, and are carrying out their new roles well. Ruken was working less hours as she was doing her last university year and needed time to study. We decided to cover the sessions by staff working more hours till the following year, then when Ruken left to become a teacher, employ one full time member of staff to cover her and Shirley.

Everything was going well when in March Covid 19 hit, the government announced closing schools and nursery's on that Friday but asked us to stay open for critical workers. We had five parents that were nurses, several teachers and shop workers. All the staff, including myself were a little apprehensive about how it would work, and the risks involved, but we stayed open to support those critical workers. In some ways it was lovely to come to work, go on lovely walks and forget what was happening. Some staff shielded or worked from home, but the majority continued throughout on reduced hours as we only had six children most days. The staff all pulled together to support each other through this and to make it a happy time for those still coming to preschool as well as supporting parents and children at home. At a time when most of the country were worried about jobs and finances we were all very grateful to the preschool committee for agreeing to pay full wages to everyone all through lockdown. The present committee worked very hard to obtain grants and fundraising to continue to pay wages and maintain the preschool when we lost revenue from fees and fundraising.

When the children returned in June, only two older children did not return due to health concerns, it was lovely to see all the children who did return before they left for primary school. 31 Children left for 7 different primary schools, we hear they are all settling well.

This September we have managed to re-settle all the returning children who had 6 months away due to COVID as well as the new starters. We have a new member of staff Hannah who has fitted in well. Staff have worked very hard on creating a safe, nurturing environment with as little risk and disruption as there can be, while maintain high standards of cleanliness. This is an uncertain time for all of us, so we are focusing on supporting the children's emotional wellbeing and resilience, as well as that of all of us within the preschool family.

I would like to thank the staff, Helen, the committee and all the parents for all their continuing support.

Kathryn Cosser
October 2020