

Bradpole Preschool AGM – 17th November 2021

Preschool Leader Speech – Kathryn Cosser

Last year, starting September 2020, was a difficult one for all of us, in respect to the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff had to work very hard to settle back all the returning children, most of whom had been away for several months due to Covid, as well as settle the new intake, we also had a new member of staff, Hannah.

We had to operate in a very different way, we staggered drop off and collection times to limit parents present at one time. One member of staff a day did the gate to limit and trace contacts, but this was made difficult for Keypersons to give everyday feedback to their parents. We collected some children of very vulnerable parents from the car park, although it has been more difficult for staff and parents it has made the children very independent, hanging up their belongings and leaving their parents at the gate.

Staff have worked very hard throughout on creating a safe and welcoming environment while maintaining very high standards of cleanliness. Late Autumn saw a rise again in cases so we did not do our annual Nativity play at Bradpole Church and afterwards at St James nursing home, we did it at Preschool, Simon Pearson a parent, kindly videoed it for us and we sold copies to raise funds, as we were unable to have one traditional Christmas Fayre fundraiser. The committee arranged a successful Christmas raffle and trail. When we returned in January nine families isolated but all the other children returned, even though Schools were shut for most families. We made good use of the school grounds and PE hall at this time. At Easter, we sadly lost Hannah who had decided to return to nursing. Luckily, we have now employed Gemma who has settled in well and soon became a valued member of staff. The Preschool had anew kitchen put in, we had been raising money for years, Sienna Page-Smith designed and organised the installation. We are very pleased with it and it has benefitted the children enormously, we are now trying to cook with the children every week.

We finished the year back up to full numbers, although we had to Teddy Bears picnic. We did hold a lovely leaves party outside at Salway Ash, the committee laid on hot dogs, crisps, cakes, ice cream and Declan joined us to sing with the children. We were also able to hold several smaller leaving ceremonies.

We had 52 children on the role, 31 left for 9 different primary schools. Throughout the year we put a lot of effort into the children's personal, social and emotional development as well as providing lots more physical activities both inside and out, as lots of children were unable to socialise, go out to parks or play outside as much as normal due to the pandemic. As a setting we have been very fortunate that everyone, parents and staff, have been very vigilant in isolating when necessary, getting tested and always checking before bring children in when they have been unsure. Although, we have had cases, we have never had to close which we are very grateful for.

I would like to thank last years committee who have been very supportive and proactive, not just in raising funds but in supporting myself and the other staff through what has been a very difficult time emotionally and financially. I especially, wish to thank Helen who as a chair has always gone above and beyond to support myself and the Preschool.

I would like to end with again thanking the staff, committee and parents for all their hard work and support.