

Annual Report to Parish Council April 2021



Thank you once again for the opportunity to talk to you about our amazing primary school. It's been quite a year...and a bit, with so many challenges brought upon us by the pandemic. School has remained open throughout the crisis, supporting key-worker, SEN and vulnerable pupils. Staff have continued to work throughout – initially on a rota – and more recently full time and we are exceptionally grateful to each and every one of them. At the time I write, 64% of our staff have received their first vaccine.

Upon our return, we have defined 6 principles which underpin our direction:

1. Structure

It is really important for the children to have a structure and routine. This does not mean we need to ram the day from 9—3 with academic purpose, but it does mean that each day should have a similar structure. With time dedicated to national curriculum content, (prioritising reading, writing and maths) time for discussion, time for socialisation and time re-establish connections.

2. Connections

Some children may feel that they have lost connection with adults and peers at school. Our children have had varying experiences of the pandemic and we need to take each into account. It is important that there is time dedicated to re-build these connections. They might need explicit support through structured conversation starters, play based activities or Q&A sessions – these are built into our timetable.

3. Emotional regulation

The children will have all sorts of different feelings over the last year. Being able to label their emotions is really important, we need to help support them with this without overwhelming or patronising them. Acknowledging and normalising difficult feelings is vital.

4. Separation

Some children may experience separation anxiety from parents/carers after this extended time together. They are moving to a less predictable and more socially challenging environment (in most cases) and might need supporting with this.

5. Continue to work closely with families

We have forged different relationships with our families during lock-down and we need to continue to work closely with them. We continue to share some learning experiences on Seesaw e.g. photos of Forest School, group activities or tasks, video clips, we continue to communicate via email/teams/telephone and app.

6. Assessment

Teachers, as experienced professionals, are best placed (and qualified) to judge progress, assess gaps (however they see best) and plan moving forward. We must maintain a broad and ambitious curriculum whilst prioritising reading, writing and maths.

Our school

We seem to be ever-growing, here is our current structure and numbers

Class	Number on role
Acorn	46 (27 Nursery, 19 Reception)
Oak	28
Beech	30
Willow	26
Sycamore	24
Total	154 (including Nursery) 127 (excluding Nursery)

Wrap around care

We offer 'wrap-a-round care' from 7:55 am to 5:30pm to help support working parents. We have two bases, each is staffed by two members of the school team, who are First Aid trained and Safeguarding trained. They have a wealth of experience with primary aged pupils and organise a selection of activities to engage the children, as well as provide breakfast and after-school snacks.

Dinners

We were pleased to welcome hot dinners back in March, up until that point we provided 'grab bags' for pupils in school and supermarket vouchers to those who could not attend. We have recently partnered up with the catering team at The Corbet School, Baschurch.

New Build

As mentioned, the school has grown exponentially in recent years and we are seriously lacking in space: children eating in their classrooms, unable to do PE in the winter months, class sizes of 31 in a 40-meter squared space.

Our governors have been pro-active in helping us find a solution, in the form of a multi-use hall which would be situated 'behind' the school on the school field. We had desperately hoped to purchase land to maintain our beautiful field and forest schools area, which the children love, but this does not appear possible, consequently, we are losing a significant chunk of our outside space.

However, with limited options, we will endeavour to make the very best out of the space we have. Our governors have worked tirelessly to secure support and funding for the project and we hope it will have a positive impact on our fantastic children *and* the wider community in the not to distant future.

Structure

I officially started my role as Headteacher in September 2020 and Mrs. Nicola Bond continues as Executive Headteacher of the federation (West Felton, Nesscliffe, Kinnerley and Weston Lullingfields). Having lived and worked in the village for the last 18 years, it continues to be an honour and a privilege to be part of this community. We will rise up from this together.

