

Village Meeting Pre-school Report

I am here to tell you a brief overview of the school year and how the pre-school is doing.

The pre-school has had a good but busy school year. We began the year with a changeover of committee and low pupil numbers. We completed a survey on our opening hours to see if it would be beneficial to extend our opening hours. The survey results showed that to current parents a change of hours wouldn't improve the pre-schools situation and the main interest was for Monday all day which has been explored and is not possible. We have particularly struggled with recruiting committee members and are currently running at the minimum required.

The winter term flew by in the build up to Christmas and we held lots of fundraisers including The bonfire lunch, a cuppa and cake café and photo day, the Christmas raffle and the Christmas activity workshop. In the first half of the term the children celebrated the Harvest festival and had a trip to the church, their topic of Autumn saw them learning and talking about colours, making scarecrows, printing with fruits and vegetables and collecting leaves. They also completed activities relating to Halloween, and Bonfire night. In the latter part of the term the preparations were mainly focused on Christmas and the nativity.

In the Spring term the children started learning and talking about a letter each week working their way through the alphabet. The topic was about themselves and they completed self-portraits to put on the school bus display. They celebrated the Chinese new year and had a visit from a couple of Chinese teachers who talked and completed activities with the children. We had the pancake races in half term and Easter activity workshop just before the Easter holidays, both events were successful and raised £433 for the pre-school.

In March, we had a visit from OFSTED and we were awarded with a Good. The inspector was very happy with the pre-school and commented that children "are happy, settled and enjoy their time at pre-school" and "They develop confident social attitudes in readiness for school." The inspector also felt the pre-school is well managed.

This term the pre-school has had the rising 5's on Wednesday afternoons to prepare the children for their move up to school, they have had a couple of visits to school and have been practising their letter formation and pencil control. In pre-school the topic has been shapes and this has been included in many of the activities that the children have been enjoying. With the good weather the children have been spending a lot more time outside. Last Saturday we had the ploughman's lunch which was quiet but everyone enjoyed the lovely lunch and good weather.

We have spent much of the school year researching and preparing for GDPR. We have had to implement changes, introduce new policies and learn the new processes. We now have all the requirements in place.

We are now coming to the end of the school year with a smaller deficit than we expected but are still experiencing a loss of between £3,000 and £4,000 and particularly low pupil numbers. The 30 hours funding which working parents now receive and also our short opening hours may be contributing to the decrease in numbers. With the peaks and troughs that we often experience as a village pre-school we are hoping that our numbers will increase in the next year to make up for the quiet year we have had this year.

In the last few days that we are likely to be receiving a £985 grant from the community chest to replace the shed and to purchase a new trampoline. We are just waiting for the 8-day call in period to finish.

There is always a challenge with finances but thankfully from previous healthier years we are able to take the cushion this year but this can't continue. We are looking for new committee members to join the Pre-school. If there are any members of the community who are willing to support the pre-school and keep our valuable community resource alive then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.