

Governors' Review of the School Year 2020-21

Autumn Term

September 2020 saw the excitement of a return to school but with a difference, COVID safety was paramount and the procedures and systems in place to keep children, families and staff safe were approved by governors and rigorously applied. Class bubbles meant that whilst children and staff were delighted to be teaching and learning face to face in the classroom and outdoors, there was no opportunity to mix with other classes and the wider school community. For our reception children, for example, they had no chance to see or meet staff or pupils outside their bubble and so had no real sense of our whole school both as a place and a community.

Governors for the last few years have also been 'back to school' in September, our 'Governor's back to school day' is a day where we receive updates and undertake training on changes in the curriculum, assessment, data, safeguarding etc. Last year was virtual, but nevertheless equally valuable, a highlight for all governors was the opportunity to meet and talk to our Head Boy, Oscar and Head Girl, Jahzara, we were amazed and impressed by their eloquence and confidence in answering our questions and asking questions of us too.

As always, the children's well-being was paramount, our specially developed 'recovery curriculum' focussed on ensuring that children were given the opportunity and support to deal with any anxieties, fears or emotions stemming from such a difficult period and a very different life experience for us all in the first lockdown. It was only by ensuring children were given the time and support to process these experiences that we could be sure that they were ready to return to our full creative curriculum and all the variety, challenges and learning opportunities this offers to them.

By half term many classes were ready to get back to our Creative curriculum, whilst maths and English continued to be a priority every morning, ensuring that gaps in learning from lockdown were identified and filled.

The celebration of Christmas is a very busy and special time in our school and whilst the pandemic and Covid safety meant that they would have to be adapted, nevertheless, the Nativity, Christmas dinner and class workshops and parties meant that children and staff were able to celebrate this special season together.

Spring Term

Spring term saw us back in lockdown with staff working hard to support children and families with home learning and well-being once again. Teachers uploaded videos daily, a welcome video included praise and celebrations to encourage children to keep going with their home learning, videos for English and maths were uploaded every day and these were available on the class pages of the school website so children and families could access them at any time. Workbooks and packs were provided, and teachers were available for support daily by email and rang families every week. Both

teachers and teaching assistants joined in with activities with a well-being focus, many resources on mental health and well-being for families to access were added to the school website. All together worship on a Monday with Mrs Magiera was shared with children learning in school as well as families at home, and Fridays' celebration assemblies were now online. We were delighted that around 90% of families engaged with home learning; teachers and our family support worker visited families who weren't participating in home learning as every effort was made to ensure learning continued for all our children.

Mrs Magiera and all our staff worked incredibly hard to support children and families through the second Covid lockdown but challenges of a different kind arrived with 'Storm Christoph' and the dreadful flooding of our school at the end of January

The flooding was awful and Mrs Magiera and the whole staff team came together to ensure that support to families with home-learning continued, whilst at the same time working with representatives of the Diocese, local authority, insurers and our school community to get our school building ready to welcome children back as soon as possible.

Children who had been learning in school were very quickly accommodated at Brio who were amazing in offering a safe space for children to continue their learning. The local community donated toys and other equipment for the children to use, the Town Council organised for fencing to be sourced and erected to create an outdoor area at Brio so children could get some fresh air and exercise.

The Friends of Church Walk led an amazing fundraising effort with their GoFundMe page raising over £10,000 to buy resources to enhance children's learning and well-being. Mr Whittaker undertook his own challenge running every day that the school was closed and raised an amazing £1200 to fund new outdoor equipment for the playground.

In March restrictions were lifted and all children returned to school, for Mrs Magiera and her team this meant calling on our community once again, this time Rudheath Senior Academy came to our aid and provided classrooms and outdoor space so our children could return to school. Covid precautions and risk assessments were of course carried out and staff worked hard to ensure all the resources were in place for children and staff to use.

The whole school community joined in the 'National Day of Reflection' on 23rd March, marking one year since the first lockdown. Children created their own daffodils which represented hope, strength and new beginnings as we all looked forward to better times ahead.

Summer Term

The start of the summer term, 20th April, saw us move back in to our newly repaired and redecorated school, there was great excitement as our staff welcomed your children back, the newly painted arches at the front of school and the rainbow-coloured

balloons reflected a sense of celebration and a sense of coming home and being together once again as a school in our own home.

Children got back to their learning with gusto, it felt like school was getting back to normal with Wow days like Year 3/4 Roman Wow Day to inspire children in their learning and fundraising days like 'Number Day' on 7th May raising money for NSPCC and marking a week of amazing maths learning.

Key Stage One and Reception children helped plant up our Vegetable beds in May, and Mrs Westron's class planted out their bean plants which grew just as well as those planted by Jack in the fairytale! The second half of term saw sports days for the different key stages and Reception children went on a very exciting trip to Knowsley Safari Park.

Following much discussion at their full governing body meeting on 9th June governors agreed that our school should move to having 4 Key stage bubbles, with children being able to mix in the larger bubbles outdoors whilst maintaining the smaller class bubbles inside. This was felt to be important for staff and pupil wellbeing especially as we moved towards transition for the following school year, getting children used to mixing in bigger groups and allowing them to play with their friends and siblings in other class groups outdoors.

Parents evening appointments were made online and took place virtually in June and later in the month Reception children enjoyed a virtual tour of London, played tennis and enjoyed scones, strawberries and cream.

Heart shaped 'Thankyou cards' were shared with so many companies and organisations who had helped us through the flooding to mark National Thankyou Day on 2nd July and the children enjoyed indoor picnics for the National Big Brew Day to thank the NHS on 5th July.

Whilst a walk to Marbury Country Park for Year 5/6 was unfortunately curtailed due to heavy rain, Key Stage 1 enjoyed their local walk into Northwich and practised their art skills, sketching the Swing bridge.

Children enjoyed an 'AmaSing' day of singing, dancing and creating music out in the playground on 14th July.

As we reached the end of an unprecedented school year Covid cases meant that some children returned once again to home learning. Staff did their utmost to ensure that children were enjoying the end of school year activities as much as possible, for example Mrs Westron visited every child in her class at home, with a card and gift. Thankfully Year 5/6 children were back in school to spend that last part of their Witton Church Walk School journey together.

As we finished the school year, we said farewell to our Year 6 children who were ready to move on to the next stage of their education, they showed amazing resilience throughout the year and we were very proud of them, I'm sure that strength and determination will serve them well in high school.

There were farewells to staff too, with Miss Ennion, Mrs Westron, Mrs Wilkes and Mr Wilson moving on to new roles, whilst Mrs Lawrence retired after many years working as TA in our school.

In conclusion it has been the most challenging school year, but one in which our school community: pupils, staff, governors, families; and indeed our wider community have pulled together to support each other and really helped ensure that despite all that has happened our children have been valued and continued to be nurtured educationally, creatively and spiritually.

Thank you to our families for working so hard to support your children's learning at home and at school, by working together in partnership we can achieve the very best outcomes for our children -

'Where every door is opened and every gift unlocked'

Regards

Sarah Merison

Chair of Governors.