

# End of Year Newsletter

## December 2019



**Where Learning is Fun!**

### THE PRESCHOOL TEAM

#### THE STAFF

**Manager/Designated Child Protection and Safeguarding Officer/GDPR Officer** - Heather Clarke

**Deputy Manager/ Designated Child Protection and Safeguarding Person** – Wendy Lewis

**Leader/Health and Safety Officer** – Emma Buckland

**Senco / Key Person** Sarah Naylor

**Key Person Assistants** – Claire Palmer – Kirsten Turner – Irene Slade – Theresa Parsons

**Assistant** – Tracy McLauchlin

**Bank Staff** – Vacancies

**Admin Assistant** – Emma Lockhart

We wish 'teacher Robyn every success as she embarks on her route to teacher training. If Robyn was your child's key person you will have been notified as to who will take over from January.

We also need to say a huge thank you to Dani, our student from Collyer's college. Dani has been an outstanding student who I am sure has a great future working with children. Thank you and Good Luck.

All the staff need to be praised for the hard work that has gone into making learning so much fun again this year and working in challenging circumstances at times.

#### The Manager's address (taken from AGM)

Firstly thank you for coming out this evening and supporting this AGM. As Sarah said in her report we had our Ofsted Inspection in February. It may have been Valentine's Day but the inspector showed us very little love. Sarah also said the team were disappointed to only receive a rating of 'Good'. For me Good is not good enough. The next step down is 'Needs Improvement'. Having held an 'Outstanding grade for 3 inspections over 12 years it was very hard to accept a 'Good grading in both 2016 and 2019.

Going back further to 2013 we were included in Ofsted's report 'Sustaining outstanding provision over time. We were in the top 10 early years settings in the country and received recognition in The guardian and Times newspapers. Some snippets from the report include:

- Outstanding provision is difficult to achieve, and just as challenging to sustain. This is all the more challenging where committee-run groups have regular changes in leadership and share use of premises. Southwater Village Hall Pre-School shows it can be done.
- There is no magic trick to sustaining excellent provision at the pre-school. It relies on strong leadership, well-qualified and experienced staff, and a dedication to maximise learning opportunities for all children. Staff work exceptionally hard, with some routinely working over their contracted hours to ensure that the learning environment and provision continue to be outstanding.
- The inevitable changes in committee membership means regular opportunities must be planned to inform new members' understanding about the Early Years Foundation Stage. This managed well at the setting so that the business needs of the pre-school are met.
- The pre-school operates from a village hall that is used by other members of the local community. This means that the manager and her team must set up and pack away all the elements the rich environment has to offer. Creating a stimulating, enabling environment from scratch each day involves significant investment of time, effort and careful planning. This is well worth it as children are making exceptional progress in their learning and development. They enjoy an extensive range of imaginative activities in areas enhanced by a wealth of interesting displays.

- Rigorous self-evaluation procedures underpin the provision so it evolves and improves continually.

At the time we were all very proud to have been singled out by Ofsted and to have received such high praise. My aim is to get this pre-school back to where we should be. To do this I have been looking back to see what has changed. Well Ofsted move the goal posts every 2-3 years and inspect slightly differently every time. Back then at the time of inspection we had 72 children on roll, this time we had 55. The funding level was at the same level as it is now so with more children we were receiving more income from fees. Staffing levels were higher with 3 staff in the back room and up to 6 in many sessions in front room. There have been significant changes to staffing. We lost well qualified, dedicated staff as they moved onto different jobs including school classroom assistants as teacher Robyn is going to be doing from January. As numbers have dropped in recent years so have the numbers of staff. This has a big impact as staff are our biggest resource. Some staff still work over their contracted hours so no changes there. My expectations of staff are as high as they have always been and much time is given to staff to maintain consistently high-quality teaching practices that Ofsted are looking for and parents should expect. Many a time a parent has said to me "I just want my child to be happy". I can guarantee that all children once settled are very happy here but there is so much more than just being happy. Children have milestones and goals to reach and it is through fun, high-quality teaching that achieves this. We will continue to provide the highest quality care and education for all of your children and I will strive to make each member of staff the best they can be.

Heather Clarke  
Manager  
November 2019

#### **THE PRESCHOOL COMMITTEE 2019-2020**

**Chairperson** – Lisa Cunningham

**Nominated Ofsted Person** – Becky Powell

**Treasurer** – Andrew Meredith

**Secretary** – Lucy Harrison

Emma Reeder – Phil Stenning – Piers Lockhart – Mairi Sleight – Emma Reeder

#### The outgoing Chair report (taken from AGM)

Southwater Village Hall Pre School  
Chair Person Report 2019

It has been a positive 12 months for the preschool, a trend that the committee hope will continue into 2020. 2018 ended with a fabulous Christmas party, where the children were entertained by an Elf with a story and magic tricks before meeting Father Christmas himself! Happy little faces headed off with their Christmas gift bringing 2018 to a close. 2019 started in the most positive way we could have imagined with confirmation that the preschool had been successful with our application to the National Lottery for a grant. The preschool needed new equipment – to include tables, chairs and some financial support to enable us to take on new staff. With the additional children now coming to us following the closure of Holy Innocents in October 2018, it is fair to say that the staffing team were stretched.

With an increase in staff numbers in place by April, along with the first deliveries of the new tables and chairs it was a great start to the Spring term. We cannot describe how delighted we were to then discover that the preschool had been awarded a Gatwick Community Grant of £1000. This extra surprise meant that the staffing team were able to almost make a wish list of what they'd like to have in place for the children.

Ofsted Inspection arrived in 2019! Heather and the team put in an enormous amount of effort in prepping at very short notice for the inspection. Everyone wanted to make sure that the Inspector saw the preschool as the amazing place of learning that it is. Some wonderful feedback was received, praising the quality of the staff, comprehensive and well documented policies regarding children's well being and safe guarding to include some of them. Whilst I am aware that the team were disappointed to receive a rating of 'Good' and not outstanding, I truly believe as I am sure most parents do, that what an inspector sees in just a few hours is never going to provide a true reflection the preschool.

June saw our annual fair, with fabulous raffle prizes being donated from our wonderful local businesses. It was a fun couple of hours and we would like to thank the parents who gave up some of their time to support by either help setting up or by coming with their children and families on the day. The fair combined with a sponsored thread raised over £1000 which will go towards a new lap top for the office and a tablet for the children's use in sessions.

The leaver's party in July is a happy occasion, mixed with a tinge of sadness, seeing the children receiving their graduation certificates for the move up to big school. Magic Mr Steve, our party entertainer was just terrific and we'd like to make him a regular! We hope that the children had a good first term at big school and are making lots of new friends.

On our return to pre school in September we saw the arrival of the 'diggers' in earnest, right behind the back room. Hours of free entertainment watching the workmen turn the allotment into a building site, before the emergence of the new play area. I am aware that this has been an ongoing struggle to deal with in terms of parking, management of the children in/out around the machinery and also, for Heather, in making sure that what they built and placed within the area was suitable for the children's use. The play area will be a fabulous resource for many years to come.

The Gatwick community grant has been well spent. Following the last delivery in October your children are now benefitting from a superb new role play area to include a fabulous kitchen with cooking equipment, a comfy new reading corner with sofa and tables and extended crafting resources..... as we are sure you can appreciate how much card, paint and glue we get through each year!!

As some of the committee members stand down this evening, myself included, we'd like to thank Heather and the dedicated team of staff at Southwater Village Hall Preschool for everything they do for the children in their care. I hope that the new committee team have a great 2020 and that the children continue to flourish here.

Sarah Weston

Chair Person


November 2019.

### **This week**

Lots of fun activities planned around Christmas this week. Children will be role playing 'Christmas with families at home, decorating the hall with paper chains, listening to and making marks to Christmas music, cup case snowmen and other Christmas cards, decorating a Christmas tree, listening to Christmas stories and of course using lots of glitter and glue.


### **Weekly Updates**

The Monday updates will resume in January.



We will finish the end of the year with our Christmas Party this Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December. Thank you for your food contributions.

We are very lucky to have Father Christmas coming to hand out presents to all of our children. We know how busy he is at this time of year. All party details have been sent out in previous emails and invites. **Please follow collection details carefully so that we finish on time.** The hall is in use after us. Thank You



### **Fees**

Invoices are being sent out for the 'Spring term' 2020. You need to notify me if there are any errors in the number of sessions that are booked for your child and or the number of lunch links they are due to attend. Please note the £10 membership fee is due from all non funded children and funded children that attend extra sessions and or lunch link sessions. This £10 termly membership fee forms part of our Pre-School constitution. West Sussex education authority guidelines state that we can only ask for this from non-funded children or those who access one or more lunch link sessions. This charge is included in your invoice. The amount of funding that we receive from the local education authority has reduced in real terms over the last few years, so that unfortunately does not fully cover all the running costs of our Pre-School (let alone those extras that we like to provide). If any parents or carers are able to make an extra donation to us, we would be extremely grateful and would ensure that the money given is used specifically on enriching children's learning. Payments can be made in the usual ways – cash, cheque, online or via childcare vouchers. Thank You

If you have not got a signed payment agreement with Emma then session fees including membership fee are due in full by the end of week 2. There are no payment options for the lunch link. These fees must be paid in full by the end of week 2.

### Wanted

- Please save your Christmas cards/birthday cards for us to use at pre-school.
- Any size paper that can be used for painting/drawing etc
- Boxes of tissues
- Baby wipes

### Plus Sessions

From January 'Letter of the Week' will be introduced into the plus sessions as follows:

Week Beginning	Letter
6th January	S
13th January	A
20th January	M
27th January	D
3rd February	T
10th February	I
24th February	N
2nd March	P
9th March	G
16th March	O
23rd March	C
30th March	K

### E-mail

[southwaterpreschool@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:southwaterpreschool@hotmail.co.uk)

Heather can be contacted during the holidays via email but only for **anything that cannot wait until January** and cannot guarantee when a reply will be sent.

Spring Term 2020 starts on **Monday 6th January**.

*Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas  
And a prosperous New Year*



*Heather Clarke*  
On Behalf of the team

Telephone: (01403) 733 954 (during session times)  
Registered Charity Number. 1027293