

# Chair of Governors, Chapel Street Nursery School – Report to Parents Summer 2023

Dear Parents, Carers, Children, Staff and Governors,

I am pleased to write my end of year report after my second year as Chair at Chapel Street Nursery School.

I want to start by thanking everyone for all their support during this very different academic year.

Due to extensive damage that required urgent and thorough repair works on our beloved Russell Street building from January we were faced with the unusual situation of having to uproot the whole nursery to our current location in the Surrey Street site, Cutenhoe Road.

We owe an enormous debt of thanks to Mrs Jackson and all her staff at Surrey Street who have been exceptional. They have welcomed us with open arms and accommodated us, you, and your children at no small cost to their usual routines / spaces / operational activities. The move has involved a lot of planning for all parties and Surrey Street have willingly vacated several classrooms and offices to enable us to work from their site, let alone using a lot of shared areas and the car parking facility. We will be forever grateful for their full cooperation and acceptance of the situation.

In spite of the logistic difficulties this posed, the staff, children and parents adapted incredibly well, and the provision continued in our new home. Thank you to you, our parents, and carers for being so flexible at short notice and supporting us throughout this challenging time. I am sure that those of you who will be returning with your children in September will be thankful that the site is on a level terrain!

As with all unforeseen situations, there have been losses. We were sad to see several staff and families leaving us but encouraged to learn that they have found other establishments to continue their careers and nursery provision respectively. I commend the staff body for providing continuous provision of care and for being adaptable to the demands of an ever-changing situation with regards to staffing levels day to day.

You will also be aware that the nursery had an OFSTED inspection on 4 May. I am delighted to be able to inform you that the outcome was that the school continued to be graded as 'good'. This is an enormous validation of the quality of nursery care and education that we have continued to provide, and given the context of our unusual circumstances, praise indeed must go to the staff for all their hard work and dedication.

## **This year**

Parents' consultations have been conducted face to face where parents have requested to meet the staff and by phone for others. I am pleased to say that staff work hard to make sure that parents know exactly how their children are progressing during their time here.

Despite the disruption caused by the relocation, where children and staff have had to get used to a new environment, sharing both indoor and outdoor spaces, new timetables, and lots of new faces, I wanted to reassure you that your child will have been learning all the way through. At this age, children learn best through play, through exploring and by enjoying stories and rhymes. You don't need a lot of toys to have fun. Simple activities are great - like looking under rocks to find bugs, cutting up cereal packets to make simple jigsaws, putting out cushions to make an obstacle course,

giving a doll a bath or zooming around playing aeroplanes, something they have seen and heard a lot of in the new site! - anything that creates curiosity or is fun for you to do together.

The children settled in amazingly well and for those who are returning to our old site in September, it will be another change that they will adapt to in no time.

### **Staffing news**

In September, Emma Duckers left to have a baby and returned from maternity leave in June.

Sadly a few staff decided to leave for various reasons coinciding with the relocation; Emma Bugler and Sam Bugler left in December to work at another school, and Carol left to take early retirement.

In January Jackie Fursseidonn left to work at another school.

In February Emily Pheby left and moved away to Devon to pursue another career.

In February Jan Nathan retired.

Congratulations to go Kayleigh and Kayley both successfully completed their Early Years Apprenticeships in April. Kayleigh is leaving at the end of term and we wish her well.

Lakshmi is leaving to start work at another school in September.

Louise Knowles is taking early retirement after 23 years and is leaving at the end of term.

We have employed 2 midday supervisors until the end of term. Habiba and Sultana are helping to support the children at lunchtimes while we are at Surrey Street.

We value staff training at Chapel Street to ensure that all our team have up-to-date skills and access to continued professional development. Much of the training this year focussed on wellbeing as it has been a difficult year for a lot of people. Staff have also pursued safeguarding training throughout the year.

### **Special events**

Events enabling children to have new experiences have been restricted this year but having smaller groups of children in each class has enabled them to form strong relationships with the children they see every day, which helps develop their language, creativity and understanding of the world.

- At Christmas, each class sang Christmas songs and they were published on the website, so that parents could see them enjoying 'Jingle Bells' and 'We wish you a Merry Christmas' etc in their bubbles.
- The children were excited by visits from Ark Farm and Zoolab. They took great interest and asked lots of questions about the different animals.
- They also enjoyed watching the eggs hatching into chicks in their special incubator.
- The classes have each been looking after caterpillars in a special cage, watching them eat and grow, eventually turning into beautiful butterflies.
- Children were involved in celebrations for the King's Coronation in May and wore red, white and blue and made lots of crowns and flags.

- Every two weeks the learning in the classes focusses on a certain book, whether they are in the 3-and 4-year-old classes or Butterflies 2, the class for 2-year-olds. The children learn a lot of new vocabulary, songs, phonics, and math surrounding the books. Look on the website for the theme for the current week.

### **Governor news**

Thanks go to governors Katey, Jenny, Stuart, Greg, Louise and Liz for their continuing support and involvement with the nursery and carrying out governor visits to observe teaching and learning in the school. A special thank you also goes to Louise Knowles who has been our governance clerk for many years at Chapel Street who will be leaving us at the end of summer term, an important role for the governing body and often goes unnoticed. We wish Louise all the best for her early retirement. This year we welcomed Louise I to the governing body as a staff governor. In her role as family worker assistant, safeguarding is a key priority. Her skills in this area and her hard work towards improving attendance have been invaluable to the school.

I, and all the governors are looking forward to returning to Russell Street, and especially spending time getting to meet you all as Parents & Carers from September.

The Governors are a friendly group of volunteers, and we hold seven evening meetings a year. All the governors have different backgrounds and interests. We currently have two parent governor vacancies and would really value your insight as a parent / relative of a child at (or who has just left) Chapel Street to ensure the school meets the needs of all the children. If you are interested in becoming a governor, please speak to Sarah, Headteacher or Reception.

### **Nursery changes in the last year**

Unfortunately, due to the move, we have not been able to provide a 'Meadow', ie. a specially adapted dedicated space to support SEND children at certain times of the day. However, when we return to the old site in September, we look forward to using it as before and have invested in specialist equipment to enhance learning for the children. The room will be managed by Liz, our SENCo, and staff who provide exciting learning opportunities for our SEND children.

### **Children moving on to primary school**

This year we will be resuming the tradition of holding school graduation ceremonies in nursery this year for our leavers. They are a lovely opportunity for parents to applaud their children on their progress and the children each receive a certificate 'for being wonderful in our nursery'.

Finally, I would like to wish all the children who are moving onto their new schools, a fantastic future.

Daniel Coppin – Chair of Governors