

Orford Annual Meeting

Orford has a rising roll with an age range of 2 -11 years. During the last year we have restructured the classes to include the former playgroup, which we took over in 2018, into a mixed age class; the Nursery children have joined the class with the Reception and some Year 1 children and it is working well. It has enabled the nursery to be more included in the school and benefit from being able to choose to learn with the older children if they want the challenge and for the older children to be more nurtured in the EYFS setting.

This has also allowed us to split the large year 1 cohort and hire an additional teacher for the Summer term using some of the COVID catch up funding given to schools; this is to help the children catch up on some of the learning lost during the lock down. Although we had a high level of engagement from families during this time, the youngest children were the most affected and need more help; their basic learning was not there to rely on when we went into remote learning, so we are recapping and re-embedding their lost learning. Families have supported the school through lockdown and with the changes we have made, which will continue into the Autumn term.

During lockdown we had Chromebooks and laptops given us to lend to families, we were given more from a Farlingaye parents' crowd fundraiser and an additional set were bought for us by the Brennan family. This meant every child could access remote learning which was so appreciated. We were overwhelmed by the support shown by the local community.

Since September we have run Thrive throughout the school, which is a way of helping children with their emotional development and wellbeing. This is helping a lot of children cope with the changes that have been happening nationally and within their own lives. All the wider opportunities are still being given to the pupils like forest schools and learning to cook each week. We are planning to extend this by using the links with Bawdsey CEVCP School to look into teaching Beach schools at Orford which is already embedded at Bawdsey. We have shared staff training and their skills between the two schools which has benefited everyone. Both schools now have the same Thrive practitioner and SENDCo as well as me as Executive Headteacher.

We have made some changes to the site/ resources during the year. We have increased the height to the back wall of the site, added high handles on necessary doors and attached baby changing units for the younger nursery children and for visitors when they can come back in. The safety of the children is paramount, and we felt that these areas needed immediate attention. In the future we will look to make the front playground more secure as well. We are looking to develop the old pre-school and two adjoining smaller rooms to make a more user friendly suite of rooms, increasing its floor space and functionality to accommodate the needs of the new mixed aged class. We have already used an injection of our budget to increase and improve the resources for the younger children, making us more comparable to other EYFS settings.

Future projects are to improve the front playground by removing old play markings and resurfacing with brighter colours, to replace the roof, to continue to develop the grounds (made much more attainable by winning the £1000 garden competition run by the East Anglian Daily Times) as well as improving the disabled access to the school. Following the flooding in September 2019 we have had the boiler replaced which we hope will make a big difference in our heating bills and improved the drainage to ensure it never happens again - we hope!