**Cotton End Forest School**

**Governing Body Report**

**July 2020**

*We aim to provide our children with opportunities to become confident, happy children valuing and respecting diversity and who are proud of their achievements.*

**Governance**

**COVID 19**

Governance in 2020 has been extremely difficult – face to face Governing Board

meetings held in January and February – then the virus struck!

Lockdown followed with only key worker children allowed on the school premises

Teachers and support staff were on a rota to supervise these children at school. This

was quite a difficult time with children of all age groups in the same classroom and not all children attending the same days of the week. In fact some days there were only 3 children in school.

The school closed on a Friday to allow 72 hours for any germs to die before the return to school on Monday. No formal teaching happened during this time. At other times staff worked from home compiling homework for those children still at home.

Many classrooms were left unoccupied which meant the site was extremely quiet

not the usual hustle and bustle. There were some ducks which settled on the site and laid some eggs. Unfortunately, these were destroyed by some animal/s

which was another sadness.

Risk assessments and action plans were put into place – no visitors to the school were allowed. Health & Safety personnel had to accept and agree to the assessments and plans.

In the midst of all this we have to cope with going fully funded from April which caused additional work for our Finance Manager.

Governors had a Zoom meeting in May and again in July, at other times we communicated by email. Policies had to be amended and agreed.

Governor and staff training undertaken remotely via video conferencing. A new skill which we all had to learn. My weekly meeting with the Headteacher was by the same means.

School staff and those self-isolating at home were tasked with getting their training up to date - on line of course.

Free school meals vouchers had to be administered sent or delivered to parents.

A time-consuming task.

No wrap around care available, no care club on a Friday afternoon.

On June 1 saw Pre School return, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

Not all children in these age groups returned to school for varying reasons.

More staff came on site. Teachers whose classes did not return were

supervising forest school learning sessions in Shocott Springs and supporting home learning.

Vulnerable and extremely vulnerable staff were offered the choice of returning to school or remaining at home.

The Government guidelines stated that children were to be confined their ‘bubble’

with their teacher, teaching assistant and a maximum of 15 children. No mixing with other children from other bubbles. Each bubble had their own indoor and outdoor classrooms. Play time was staggered to limit contact with others. Lunch time was strange. No hot lunches, only packed lunches in disposable bags.

On June 29 saw more children in school in Year 4 and 5 groups, although Year 2 and 3 could not be accommodated due to the restrictions of 15 per bubble. This in turn meant that we did not have enough teachers to accommodate all these children.

My grateful thanks to all staff who have coped very well in unprecedented times and

the Headteacher who has shown remarkable resilience in such extraordinary circumstances.

Let’s hope we can welcome all staff and all children back to school in September

*Sandra Thacker*

*Chair of Governors*

*Cotton End Primary School*

*July 2020*