

Essex County Council

Dedham Church of England Primary School

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ANNUAL REPORT BY THE GOVERNORS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/20

COVID-19

This report concentrates on the responses and actions by the School to the pandemic, and to the results achieved.

The School remained open continuously from 24th February 2020 including half-terms and the Easter holiday until the end of the Summer Term on 19th July 2020, initially providing in-school tuition to the children of key workers and remote home learning using online platforms. Then additionally from 8th June 2020, school reopened for Years R, 1 and 6 for two days each week to begin with at a maximum of 10 per classroom, increasing to three days each week after half term.

An estimated 90% of pupils accessed the online platforms, Tapestry for Reception and Seesaw for Years 1-6.

Term ended on 15th July 2020 for Years R, 1 and 6 to enable children from Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 to attend school for two days before closure on 19th July 2020. In summary, 180 pupils attended school at some time in the summer term. Special arrangements were made for the departing Year 6 children with an assembly attended by all 30 pupils, including a presentation from the church and Parent Group.

Staff made contact with pupils' families at least every fortnight, whilst pupils with Special Educational needs, those in receipt of Pupil Premium grants and any not accessing on-line tuition were contacted more regularly. A log of these calls was maintained. Vouchers were distributed via the Edenred system to those eligible for free school meals.

Formal assessment in English primary schools was cancelled for 2019/20. The cancellation applied to KS1 and KS2 end assessments (including tests and teacher assessment); phonics screening check; multiplication tables check; science sampling tests; and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. However an "End of Year" report was provided for each pupil.

Teaching staff formed a WhatsApp group to support wellbeing and held virtual meetings weekly using Microsoft Teams. This arrangement was extended to all support staff during the term.

No staff were furloughed.

This brief summary reports the end product of a complex, original and innovative infrastructure planned and installed in a short timeframe by the Headteacher, David Larner and the Deputy Headteacher, Laura Valentine with the assistance and commitment of all the staff. David and Laura worked tirelessly to combine new skills in engineering, logistics, interior design, health and safety, and risk assessment to implement a safer, effective educational environment for pupils at school and at home.



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford



Parents supported the arrangements wholeheartedly and made successful efforts to comply with all the restrictions that were required. The Headteacher and the Governors have received many very positive responses from parents for all that was achieved and we thank them for their co-operation under these difficult circumstances. Thanks to staff, parents, pupils and all involved for everything achieved.

THE GOVERNING BODY

Jason Dearsley and Rachel Brown had decided to retire at the end of the summer term but in early March offered to extend their service in order to provide continuity and avoid the distraction of seeking new volunteers. The governors unanimously accepted this generous gesture and both have remained in place.

Matthew Barnett and Aaron Orchard were elected Parent Governors and Ian Lovelock a co-opted Governor in November 2019. Laura Stapleton resigned in September 2019 because of work commitments. The Governors thank her for her contributions to the School.

FINANCE

Inevitably unbudgeted extra costs were incurred to keep the school open from February. These were offset partially by some reduction in expenses but the financial position of the school has deteriorated. The Governors are pleased to report however that prudent management, in the past and currently, has helped avoid any reduction in staff numbers or cutback in resources in the classroom.

The Parent Group has for many years provided substantial financial support to the school through active and successful fundraising, particularly from the Summer Fair, the Dedham Run and the Christmas Market. All three events have been cancelled but the Parent Group was able to fund construction costs for the dedicated fibre broadband line and pay £2500 for the cost of books to support the phonics ReadWrite Inc programme for years R, 1, 2 and 3. The Governors are immensely grateful to the Parent Group for the invaluable contribution to the success of the school.

STAFF

Gary Tuttlebee left at the end of the summer term after one year with Year 5 as a temporary appointment for maternity cover. The Governors thank him for the positive contribution he made and wish him success in his new teaching appointment.

Laura Griffiths began maternity leave in mid-November and Megan Chan began her maternity leave in September 2019. Katie Plant returned at end February 2020 and Megan Chan in early May. Laura Griffiths will be returning in October 2020.

PREMISES

The installation of a dedicated fibre line to the school was completed in late summer and United Net Connect are now the broadband supplier. Speeds have increased to a satisfactory range of 95Mbps to 97Mbps.

Essex County Council have approved a project to construct a new modular classroom, with toilets, for a target completion date of September 2021. It is almost certain that the school will be required to make a financial contribution to the cost but details will not become clear until after the tender process which will be completed in November 2020.

Contacting the Governing Body

We welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents. Please contact the Chair of Governors via the School Office.

Jason Dearsley, Chair of Governors

November 2020