**Maids Moreton CE School**

I am writing to you today during what has been the most unusual of school years. During the pandemic, we have had to find radically different ways of working and learned many new skills along the way. This has included periods in school where we have to had to adapt our practices to provide a Covid secure learning environment, and periods of lockdown where we have provided remote learning for children at home whilst simultaneously teaching vulnerable children and the children of key workers in school. The media portrayed pictures of empty classrooms. Schools were certainly not closed - we have been open throughout delivering remote learning alongside key worker provision.

Across the whole country, the demand for key worker places increased enormously in the second lockdown and we were no exception, with one third of our children attending school. Despite the challenges, the school staff have worked miracles, all pulling together to provide the very best for our children. It is enormously challenging to balance quality remote provision and face-to-face learning, requiring a huge whole team effort. I am very proud of my team who have met this challenge head on.

Our home learning offer was highly successful. We provided a full curriculum to mirror that which would have been offered in school, through a mixture of live sessions, recorded lessons and creating and uploading a wealth of learning resources to our learning platform. We kept in regular contact with our families providing personalised support and advice via phone calls, Zoom calls, emails and through our learning platform.

It has also been a very challenging time for parents, especially those who were trying to work from home and support their children to complete the remote learning. We have been truly impressed by the dedication and high levels of engagement of our pupils and families. We shared the children’s work with all our parents via our weekly remote learning gallery and on our school Facebook page.

During the Lockdown we have managed to find new and inventive ways of continuing with our normal programme of events in the school calendar. For example, in February, we put together a special video for grandparents, with contributions from all children, in place of our usual grandparents’ assembly. This was very well received by the delighted grandparents, many of whom had not seen their grandchildren for some time. Despite the Covid restrictions, the children enjoyed a near normal festive period, packed with some familiar as well as some new Christmas events. A notable highlight was the PTA Window Wonderland event in collaboration with St Edmunds’ Church. Despite the weather, the event was a huge success with many visitors throughout the day, who admired the wonderful festive windows, garden displays and nativity scenes. During December, we also arranged a visit from the Round Table Christmas float, much to the delight of our children, and held Christmas parties in our class bubbles on the last day of term. We also hosted 3 delightful class nativities which were recorded for families to watch at home, as well as our annual Carol Service at St Edmunds in three separate class bubbles. All the children enjoyed an online Christmas pantomime and supported the Save the Children Christmas jumper day.

Normally, we hold many collaborative events with Gracewells Care Home within the village. Since March 2020, guidelines have sadly prevented us visiting. Each child in school made a named Christmas card for each resident to show we are still thinking about them at this difficult time. This was much appreciated.

Despite the Lockdown, we have been delighted that our school expansion building project has started on schedule in January 2021. During your walks around the village, I am sure you have spotted the hive of activity as the foundations are laid for our new classroom, expanded school hall, new library and staffroom. The children have been enthralled to watch the diggers and see the huge progress that has been made in a relatively short time frame. Exciting times lie ahead as the school grows from strength to strength!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of Maids Moreton for their incredible efforts and positivity over the last year in giving our children such wonderful learning experiences both in school and during the periods of home learning. We hope the Summer of 2021 will be a happier and healthier year for everyone.

Keira Ainsworth

Head Teacher