



Blewbury Pre-School Update

Introduction

Blewbury Pre-School has enjoyed another good year. We have received a fresh 'Good' rating from Ofsted, we have a new committee, we have healthy numbers of children enrolled presently and are gearing up for our big annual fundraising event, the Quiz & Curry Night on the 20th May 2023 at Blewbury Village Hall. There remain ongoing challenges regarding our finances as we deal with rising costs and limited opportunities to increase revenues.

Curriculum update & Ofsted Rating

We continue to deliver a vibrant curriculum whilst the children enjoy their learning through play. Children are encouraged to "show and tell" items and stories from home and to enjoy books together. Older children are starting to join in with short phonics sessions in readiness for school.

We were inspected by Ofsted in November 2022 and are proud to say that we have been rated as Good. Our teachers remain committed to providing quality care and are dedicated to helping all children access their potential in readiness for school.

One to one support

We have been supporting a child who requires dedicated one to one support. They'd been turned away from other education settings in the region, so it's been fabulous that we have been able to deliver this much-needed care and support. This role has been part funded by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and The Malthus Trust have generously topped up the funding gap to cover the additional time spent by our Play Leader and Deputy Play Leader working through increased paperwork work and meetings with outside care workers.

Committee Changes and Fundraising

In November we took on four new committee members. I have stayed on as chair for one more year and Phil Weeden has stepped down as Treasurer, with Alain Ritchie now taking over the Treasurer role.

Our annual fundraiser, the Quiz & Curry Night, takes place on May 20th 2023 in Blewbury Village Hall. This event made £2250 last year and we hope to repeat this.

The Blewbury Pre-School Lottery continues to provide a regular flow of fundraising, generating almost £200 a month, sometimes more when winners donate their prize money.

Energy Bills

In response to concerns about the pre-school's energy bills, we have been working with Jo Lakeland of Sustainable Blewbury, Marianne Suhr and The Malthus Trust to improve the energy efficiency of the building. Secondary glazing has been trialed successfully on three windows with the remaining windows to be completed in Autumn 2023. Other smaller improvements are underway including: the installation of a plastic curtain at the back door to reduce the draft when children need easy access to outside play; modifications to the radiator covers to allow more heat out while keeping the children safe; a thermal curtain at the front door.

Outlook

The National Living Wage increase came into effect this month and will result in a net increase to our annual salary costs of just over £4800. While OCC funding per pupil has increased, it has not kept in line with inflation, thereby exacerbating the cost pressures we're facing. We will be looking very seriously at our operational model over the coming months to consider further opportunities to generate more income. For example, introducing minimum hours of attendance for children and/or increasing the hours that we open, such as extending the day from 2pm to 3pm. These ideas are not without their complications but we are all focused on finding practical ways to resolve those challenges to provide a sustainable long-term future for the pre-school.

Philippa Weeden
Chair - Blewbury Pre-School CIO
April 2023

For more information about Blewbury Pre-School go to www.blewburypreschool.co.uk