

Parents Voice meeting - Zoom – Tuesday 16th November 8pm

This was the first Zoom Parents' Voice meeting we have ever had! It was good to have 24 people involved. The meeting was chaired by Parent Governor Bern Leckie; also attending was Ruth Cochrane, Community Lead, plus 22 parents - representing all year groups. This was a long meeting and these notes aim to give an overview of what was said, rather than recording every single point.

Bern explained that Parents' Voice was a chance to meet governors, explore new developments in school, raise general concerns and suggest constructive ways forward. He explained that individual concerns were best considered outside of this meeting. As Parents' Voice has not met for some time, Bern explained that we would use the school values as a starting point, as we had done in the face-to-face meeting earlier in the week.

Bern showed participants where the school values (and some explanations) can be found on the school website.

Determination – the importance of making mistakes and learning from these was raised. Perseverance and the need to stick at it, including completing homework, was mentioned too.

Openness – we discussed what openness looks like when school is working well. We acknowledged the impact of Covid. Parental involvement and cross-cultural groups have been much missed. There is not so much going on and fewer social events. For parents in reception and year 1 in particular, there have been very few opportunities to get involved and meet others. There were different views expressed about whether parents should be invited into school, for example if they have concerns about behaviour or if they are asked to support with their child. One view was that teachers should be left to teach and that parents should trust that their child is safe at school. Others felt that coming into school could be reassuring and this should be seen as a supportive move.

Nurture – there were positive comments about children being supportive to others and some children with additional needs being helped. One person said that the assistance of year 1 children in settling some reception children was super-sweet. Hannah More's diverse community and its welcome to all has been a strength in the past, but some people felt this has been lost. There was a sense that current levels of poor behaviour and bad language across the school are unacceptable and do not chime with our value of Nurture.

Enjoyment - Mums' fitness was mentioned as a nice thing that has restarted and that brings people together. After-school clubs are really good but more places are needed as some children have been left disappointed both in term 1 and 2. The bonfire, the planned disco and possible bike breakfast were all mentioned.

Respect – this value prompted the most discussion and raised the most concerns. Respect is not always shown by older children and this has filtered down to younger children. Parents would like to see respect being taught better in school. Bern commented that our values are hard to teach through talking alone, and often they're best learned by example – just as parents had noticed that disrespect was copied by some children. Everyone agreed that we want to see more respect from and for everyone in the school community. Some parents said they did not feel heard. Everyone agreed that children should speak respectfully to each other and to adults and that bad language has no place in our school. Whilst children may not understand the bad words they are using, most fully understand that these are not acceptable. As adults we need to be open about what bad language children are using and talk with children about why some words are so offensive. Adults need to be open about what some street slang means. A suggestion was that parents could run a zoom meeting for staff to discuss offensive language from different cultures and explain just how upsetting some words can be to other people. One parent proposed that if a child has been involved in fighting they should be asked to come to school via the office, to have the problem explained before they collect their child. Some parents also said children do not show respect physically. This means no pushing or shoving, respecting adults in school and respecting the school building. One parent said they had been in a meeting and children had been disrespectfully banging on the door during their meeting. There was discussion about parents not approaching other parents when there have been issues between children, but leaving this to school adults to sort out. One parent said she did not feel that issues she had raised had been sorted out by the teacher or senior leadership. Bern explained the complaints procedure and how people should use this route if they felt concerns had not been dealt with. A positive suggestion was some family learning sessions where people could spend time together, for example some family baking sessions or dads' science days. There was a lovely example of openness and respect demonstrated by a parent at the end of the meeting – she was really keen to explain that an earlier comment made by her intended no disrespect. This was so good to hear at the end of the meeting.

Bern thanked everyone for their involvement and explained that all the points raised would be fed back to governors. Parents' Voice will meet again – in person and on Zoom – in term 3.