

Minutes
Multi-schools meeting - Colchester
Doucecroft
Wednesday 2nd March 2022

In attendance

Doucecroft

Little Garth

St Josephs

St Peters

St James's

Layer-de-le-hay

Apologies - Heathlands, Mersea, Boxted, NECCA, St Michaels, Lawford, Colchester Borough Council, Langenhoe

Minutes

Our second meeting for this round across Essex and we were joined by plenty of new faces. It was great to hold the meeting in a special school as that instantly breaks down some of the perceptions of what a special school might look like.

Our first agenda point was to discuss Racism and what could be done to tackle this ongoing issue. Ideas included more lessons in schools about racism, making sure children are aware of racist language, signs promoting anti-racism (popular), promoting more friendship groups, letters to schools and the government asking them to do more, making sure people know the seriousness of racism, producing a song and having characters that represent different skin colours. Ideas will be suggested to schools moving forwards.

Our second discussion was about the impact of covid-19 on young people. We wanted to know what was helping them settle back into school and what more could be done. There were a range of ideas;

- More education about vaccines for children
- More work on building back friendships
- More after school clubs
- Having a chance to speak about worries with staff
- Wellbeing rooms setup in schools
- Wellbeing walks with staff
- Breaking work down for those that need to catch up
- Don't over hype it - find a balance
- Respect those who want to wear a mask

This will form part of information that is being collected across Essex these next few weeks.

Our final discussion before the break was what would help children with their speaking and listening skills as part of a big project, we are part of across Essex. Children thought we could be encouraging writing letters to each other (popular), to be creative with tech and use things like zoom, have worry boxes more available (popular), have older children working more with younger children (popular), promote friendship benches, encourage more sign language in schools, have more wellbeing leads and promote more friendship groups. We stopped our discussions there for a well-earned break!

The group were demonstrating great respect for each other and really listening to each other's ideas. The break was also lovely to witness as children interacted from all different schools, accepting our challenge of speaking to at least one person they didn't yet know! This led us on to talking about our 2022 awards event. We will again celebrate the schools that are most engaged in our work but we want to ensure we are handing out awards that children want to see, so we asked what awards we should have. What a long list of suggestions we got;

- Perseverance award
- Anti-bullying award
- Community award (popular)
- Communication/listening award (popular)
- Accessibility award
- Tech award
- Compassion award (popular)
- Confidence award
- Eco-school award

- Sign language award
- Education award
- Most improved award
- Healthy school award
- Homework award

Ideas will be combined with the 9 MSC areas to see what comes up the most!

Our final discussion was on website improvements. Unfortunately, technology failed us but we know some had seen the website before the meeting. The group would like to see additions to our website that include more information on children's special educational needs, a translator for different languages so people can access this, a mascot linked to our website (suggestions included a bird, a student, a happy brain or something showing equality between races), games in the links section, a place to sell merchandise, a messenger board so children can communicate, links to mental health groups, video's from different schools, better broken up sections, less writing and more photos (popular). Lot's of great ideas that will be taking forwards.

It's always such a hard decision choosing a star of the meeting, but it was particularly hard today! We loved all the ideas that came out but for his enthusiasm and willingness to speak to others during the break time our star was Arthur from Doucecroft school! Arthur wanted to make sure that everyone involved in the meeting also got lot's of praise too.

Next Meeting - 28th June 2022, 10am - 11:30am, St Peters

Follow up points

- **Could you produce a letter that explains what more could be done on Racism and we will make sure these are shared with schools and MP's?**
 - **Can you action any of the speaking and listening suggestions?**

Have you signed up to our 2022 Green Day? - If not contact us to find out more - mschoolscouncil@gmail.com

