

## Minutes

### Multi-schools meeting - MID Secondary

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

### Columbus College

#### In attendance

Columbus - Host

Alec Hunter

Beaulieu Park

Chelmer Valley

**Apologies** - Saffron Walden County High, Great Baddow, Highlands

#### Minutes

Just like our North Essex schools it was brilliant to be back in person once again, especially in special school setting. Once everyone was in - and a good turnout from all schools who came, we got underway with discussing racism. The issue evoked some very strong view points;

- Much more education in schools, including primary schools as early intervention is needed (Popular)
- Identification of racist issues early on
- More general talks about it as people become scared to talk about it when we don't
- Stereotypes from media are very unhelpful
- It's too easy for people to say 'I didn't know' - this needs to be changed
- People who experience racism can be very deeply affected and it has an impact on their mental health
- Children need to hear from people who have experienced racism as this would be more powerful
- Theatre plays about the issue - like we have seen with knife crime and county-lines
- Focus on the correct language to use
- Extended tutorial groups in secondary schools to talk about the issue

- 'White privilege' is something that is still expressed within the community and young people which links to whole systems needing to change
- There needs to be stronger consequences for racist behaviour

This is a focus area for the next 3 years and ideas will be taken forward as part of our long-term plan while also asking schools to respond where they can.

Next up we spoke about the impact of covid-19 on young people, what was helping them to recover and what more could we be doing. Ideas included, after school clubs focused on building social skills back, better mental health support that is adapted, more mental health training for school staff, remembering children individual SEN needs, creative ways of using technology as some people benefited from this, more opportunities to spend time with friends, better covid-friendly ways of getting to school, peer to peer support, remembering to push physical health as well as mental health with a focus on inactivity in young people and more community events for young people. So much was discussed in our two topic points that we stopped there for a break.

The break was a fantastic chance for children from mainstream schools to talk and learn from children who attended the special school. It went so well that one girl from the special school ended up sitting with a mainstream school for the second part of the meeting. The second part of the meeting began with a discussion on our school awards event that we hope to run again in 2022. Ideas on the awards;

- Best tutor group imitative award
- Creative award
- Encouragement award
- Disability awareness award
- Speaking out award
- Most improved award
- Friendship award
- Multi-cultural award

The group also said that there needed to be a good mix between personal and group awards and that the process of applying and then choosing needed to be tight so that we really made sure the right people/groups were being rewarded.

We then moved on to discuss children's speech, language and communication needs and how to support these. We had so many ideas including more social clubs after school (popular), more work in schools on confidence, more paired work in class, mixing up seating arrangements, more councillors in schools, more

visits to special schools, more signing in schools which could be a club, paired readers, learning from peer role models, school mentor schemes, link people up with like minded individuals, better mental health support, more networking opportunities in schools, a focus on body language following the pandemic, work on reducing social anxiety and more inclusive practice in schools. This will all form part of our wider speech and language project which is currently on-going.

So many ideas today that we didn't get a chance to discuss our website but as this was a secondary meeting it was something we invited interested children to do and send through any suggestions. Our star of the meeting for her wonderful points during our racism discussion was Helen from Chelmer Valley. Well done to all those involved for a fantastic meeting.

Next meeting - Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June, 10:30am - 12pm, Chelmer Valley High

#### **Follow up points**

- **Can you send through any suggestions of improvements for our website - <https://www.multischoolscouncil.org.uk/>**