**Minutes**

**Multi-schools meeting – Braintree**

**Tuesday 14th June 2022**

**Alec Hunter**

**In attendance**

Alec Hunter – Host

Birchanger

ECC SEND Facilitator

John Bunyan

St Francis

Edith Borthwick

**Apologies –** Notley Green, Christen School, John Ray, Henham & Ugley, Great Easton, Howbridge

**Minutes**

It felt like going back to the old day’s a little with this meeting as we had both primary and secondary schools in attendance due to Alec Hunter hosting this primary focused meeting. It was great to have all ages back in the same room, as well as special school representation too!

Everyone was on time which meant we got underway straight away. Unfortunately, no schools had followed up our action points so we were unable to hand out any certificates. This led us onto our first discussion area which was all about how we could improve school attendance;

* Focus on decreasing bullying
* Have a buddy system for children who feel anxious about school (popular)
* Give children more of a voice in school
* Make sure technology is used in class
* Make sure timetables are available for all students
* Have more fun day’s in schools
* Extra learning outside
* Have better reward systems (popular)
* Designated teachers that focus a lot more on school attendance in a positive way
* More clubs available
* More virtual lessons available – we did this during the pandemic, why not now?
* Make schools generally more comfortable places
* More input to meet children’s sensory needs
* Include more animal therapy for children who are struggling with school
* More chances to speak about issues

We can see some similar ideas on what would support the return from Covid-19 so we will be looking at how we can act on these ideas further.

We then moved on to discussing our key topic for the term which is animal cruelty. The group came up with ideas on how we could raise awareness on this issue which included; have a group fundraiser across Essex (popular), more education across all year groups, posters that can go into the community, an ‘animal bag’ where schools can use different resources, talking about mixed breeding, use social media to share awareness, have more specific space on the curriculum, bring in people to schools to talk about the issues. So many ideas from a range of young people! We then paused for our break and of course there were biscuits available!!

Following our break we discussed how we could ensure groups like ourselves are hearing from more children, not just at these meetings. The group would like to see;

* After school opportunities for more children to give ideas (popular)
* A number for children/schools to phone (popular)
* More encouragement for schools to come to these meetings
* Have learning leads at each school that promote this
* Have a virtual offer for schools who can’t attend in person
* Have a drop in box in schools that can then be passed onto us
* Do some Q & A assemblies with children
* Make sure meetings don’t ever become too overwhelming
* Ensure there is a way through the website that things can be communicated
* Get the many ambassadors to collect more views or lead some of the meetings

We will be exploring all options and talking to children from across the county in the next couple of weeks.

Finally, we discussed an important topic for many young people in gender diversity. It was great to have a diverse age of children in attendance so we were able to cover many different points on how we could raise awareness about many issues associated with gender diversity. The group covered being much stricter with stopping jokes about the issue, more lessons about the topic, reducing segregation in sport, having express yourself days, better education at a younger age, more detail on LGBTQ+, more support groups for children to come and talk, mixing up girls and boy’s a lot more, conversations about same sex schools, a focus on appropriate language, more emphasis on being unique, ensure PE in secondary schools still has a gender mix and ensure it us seen as a very important topic to continue talking about. So many conversations and some grown-up views too.

We finished in our usual way by getting a picture and by choosing a star of the meeting, even though everyone was a star! The star for this meeting went to Robbie from St Francis primary school for some brilliant contributions throughout, especially when talking about how we hear from more young people.

Next meeting –Tuesday 22nd November 2022, Venue TBC, if you would like to host please let us know ASAP.

**Follow up points**

* **Could you action any of the improving attendance ideas and then tell us about the impact of this?**
* **Can you design some posters on animal cruelty and get them into the local community?**
* **Can you put in place any of the hearing from children’s ideas?**