**Minutes**

**Multi-schools meeting – Brentwood**

**Thursday 23rd June**

**Shenfield St Marys**

**In attendance**

Shenfield St Marys

Quilters

Essex Virtual Schools

**Apologies –** St Thomas Juniors, St Helens, St Johns, Ingatestone infants, South Green Juniors, West Thorndon

**Minutes**

It was great to be back in Brentwood and we were given a good welcome by the children. Once settled in we kicked straight off with our discussion on school attendance. These were the views from the children;

* Have more preparation before lessons
* Chat time with an adult in the morning
* Good relationships with the staff
* Music can be supportive
* Being flexible about start times
* Better support with transitioning between year groups and schools
* Buddy support
* Bullying can be a reason we don’t want to come in
* Fear of failure is another issue
* Pressure to catch up on work
* Leaving parents can create anxiety

Some good honest views, especially from Darci who spoke about her own personal experiences.

We then went on to discuss animal cruelty and what could be done across Essex to raise awareness on this issue. The children had some suggestions such as a day when you dress up as your favourite animal, sharing positive tips on how to look after animals, posters in schools that children make, writing letters to MP’s and awareness about stop leaving dogs in cars. We have our North Essex meetings next week where we will then start to collate the ideas from across Essex. We then stopped to have a break which of course included biscuits!

Straight after our break we focused on how we could hear from more children in and outside of school and they had some great ideas;

* Zoom calls (popular)
* Letters to us
* Email feedback
* Setting up a podcast with young people to express their views
* Get schools to collect ideas on the agenda before the meeting
* Be flexible on meeting dates

Finally, we focused on gender diversity, and it created a lot of conversation in the room. The group had thoughts such as celebrating changes in perceptions to hobbies that might be seen as ‘male or female’, make sure football includes girls, celebrate uniqueness, show different genders leading different jobs so there are no stereotypes, have more mixed clubs in schools, dress in the colour you want, use role models who are challenging gender differences. It was great to have everyone back together again and it was very difficult to choose a star for this meeting but our star went to Darci from Quilters for being so honest about her own experiences of attending school and growing in confidence throughout the meeting.

Next meeting – Friday 18th November, 10am – 11:30am, Quilters Primary

**Follow up points**

* Could you action any of the improving attendance ideas and then tell us about the impact of this?
* Can you share any good practice with us on educating about animal cruelty?
* Can you put in place any of the hearing from children’s ideas?