

## **Virtual Meeting with Parent Council Chairs**

**Thursday 25 March 2021**

**6.00pm – 8.00pm**

### **Main points of feedback from the discussion groups.**

- Parents really appreciated being so involved with the learning of their children and some parents commented that they were now much more aware of the learning styles and abilities of their children.
- Parents really appreciated the use of learning platforms – seesaw and Microsoft teams were the two mentioned. There was a plea that teachers continue to use these and we continue to upskill our teaching staff.
- There was clear agreement that the learning presented by schools during the second period of lockdown was far more structured, detailed and appropriate. One parent indicated that she had preferred the offer in the first lockdown as she felt that at that time it caused her less pressure and was great for her child.
- Parents commented that they really enjoyed seeing in detail what children were learning. They felt it was great in helping them communicate with the children – especially in project-based learning. Some parents were surprised and impressed by the level of learning which young people are doing – maths and numeracy got a special mention.
- All (1 group) were unanimous in their praise of teachers, schools and the authority in creating a really positive experience.
- Communication was very positive in most cases. Parents felt that communication with school was more frequent, and more direct access to teachers, which they really liked. Parent contact meetings online were welcomed, and supported parents who could not normally attend in person.
- Parent council meetings initially attracted more parents, as they could just attend, with cameras off if they wanted, and it was less threatening than turning up to a meeting in person
- Parents in this group felt strongly that their children were really keen to get back to a structure, and that they are enjoying being back at school, and are resilient.
- Parents were assured that schools had their children’s wellbeing firmly in their planning, and that was welcomed. However, they also wanted their children to resume their learning, and that this should not be decoupled.
- There was a slight concern raised about the use of language. They didn’t want to hear that their children were being given a “test” to see where they were in their learning on their return – some parents found that threatening, and as if they were being tested on their ability to teach their children. Other parents felt that it was right that teachers needed to see where children were in their learning, but the use of the word “test” should be avoided.
- Care to be taken to ensure that as much integration of ASN pupils in provisions should be implemented when safe to do so. Parents felt that their children were missing that aspect of their experience in school, whilst understanding the need for it at the moment.
- Children were very anxious during first lockdown.
- Very positive return to school over last few weeks.
- Children are most in need of connections with peers and school staff.

- Learning offer was much better during second school closure.
- Remote learning not the same as in person but schools did very well.
- Most people in the group commented very positively on the emotional and educational support provided.
- Secondary pupils more confident in use of technology, managing time and prioritising.
- Primary pupil more confident in use of technology.
- Although everything had gone pretty well, nothing can beat actually being back in school – children so happy to be back.
- Frustration at child having to self-isolate after just returning to school.
- The requirement for all interactions to be more formal/distanced is a disadvantage.
- There were issues with children not being able to be visually connected with teachers in online interactions, especially in 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown.
- Parents found it challenging balancing working and home learning.
- Benefits of digital funding were noted.
- Everybody is much more used to digital technology now.
- There were variations across the departments in some secondary schools in experience of remote learning offer delivered.
- It was hard to maintain the motivation of young people in S3-S5.
- It was recognised how massive the learning curve in relation to using digital technology must have been for many teachers and how well they managed this.
- Keep engaging – the use of an App to keep parents connected was mentioned.
- Recognition that one size doesn't fit all - in one school the efforts to provide resource packs that gave families options to use other learning material other than the digital offer was very appreciated.
- The process introduced for qualifications should be kept – don't go back to reliance on exams.
- Teachers have gone way beyond expectations – a thank you campaign should be organised.