

Session 1 :

Jeni introduced the idea of reconnecting with the 'vision' for the school – that might change within the next 5 years as things progress, and might have changed from the recent past too.

Groups were seated around the hall in mixed groups, and staff from all areas of teaching and support were mixed up, in order to have a voice.

A very positive table activity because :

- A mixed group
- An interactive task
- Collaborative and professional participation

The discussion was based upon research of mission statements and 'visions' of other companies and schools. We looked for key words and characteristics, in order to see best practice. Mike stood back and observed, as the staff shared their ideas. This provided an open platform.

We decided that in order to be effective, a vision statement had to be snappy, using key words to stimulate the reader. It also should be concise and memorable, linked to the ethos of the organization (ie – together, everyone, learning, believe, achieve, dream). This was our task – to create one for the school.

Our group came up with – 'Dream as one, Believe you can, Achieve together'.

After sharing all of the thoughts of the room (which could have been really tricky), the majority voted for a 'vision statement' based on the following :

'Inspire the child

Discover the adult

Empower all'

Session 2

Following the agreement of a suitable vision statement, Jeni then introduced the idea that – in order for all stakeholders to buy into the shared ethos, the values that underpin the vision should be clear and concise too. We watched a video about another special school, who had chosen to highlight core values, which were shared by the staff and children alike (ie - cooperation, responsibility, happiness, resilience, respect, caring). These all develop emotional intelligence and life skills, as they grow to understand their world.

Table activity – we discussed the core values of Cleaswell Hill School. These seemed to be highlighted as – resilience, independence / self- awareness, happiness, respect, self -confidence, integrity, self- belief.

We then thought about how we could explain the terminology to the stakeholders. What would it look like? Our group chatted about the possibility of starting each half term with a chosen value (of 6) and introducing it in an assembly across each phase. Then at the end of the half term, evidence would be shown in an assembly or on paper, to identify examples of best practice throughout the school. We decided that Happiness, Self-belief and Resilience were the first 3 in order of priority.

We then all discussed each other's ideas in a very cooperative and supportive way. Other values highlighted were determination, being self-able (defined as 'to have courage and self-confidence to move forward and believe in your abilities').

NEXT STEPS –

That a group of 5/6 staff members and governors, would complete this at a later date, in a formally recorded way. It will then be implemented throughout the school.

I was thrilled to be involved in such an interactive and enthusiastic morning with staff who all wanted to share the same vision. I have offered to help with the next steps as a governor, and think that as governors, we too could monitor how this develops as a working project throughout the following year.

Hilda Blythe
Governor