**Minutes of the Belonging and Well-being meeting: 6 pm 22.06.22**

Thank you so much to those who attended yesterday evening. There were some tremendously rich and valuable conversations. We’ve tried to summarise in the minutes below…

Miss Ahle discussed how the concept of belonging stemmed from our work on the anti-racist award which began two years ago. She summarised the progress that the school has made with this. She noted that the profile of anti-racist language and equipping children with appropriate vocabulary has been raised significantly, both regards to the general culture, our curriculum, the hidden curriculum (including elements such as representation in books and resources, different skin tone and coloured pencils, et cetera,).

Unconscious bias was discussed and it was agreed that school has come a long way in supporting children and their understanding with this via the curriculum and specific events around religion, with a school values being integral to this and the respect and responsibility that children have for everyone’s uniqueness.

Ms Ahle stressed that celebration of diversity and uniqueness is key and this was agreed. The school’s curriculum helps allow for this. She added that there should never be an endpoint to anti-racism – we always need to keep this in mind and on the agenda as anti-racism is not merely about not being racist but for standing up against racism and discrimination in all its forms.

Ms Ahle mentioned that a staff belonging group has been set up to keep momentum going and to ensure it’s embedded across the school. ***She added that she would like to get a parents belonging group involved as well so please let Ms Ahle know if you are interested.*** The parent voices need to be heard as do the children’s, as it is so important that we reflect and represent the school community.

The photos on the website were mentioned as being out of date and not necessarily representative of our children. Mr Parker certainly conceded this and said that whilst it hasn’t been a priority, it’s something that need to be done. A governor mentioned that this had been discussed at a recent committee meeting. It is essential that the school represents the community that the children are growing up in.

Ms Ahle talked for a PowerPoint which discussed house visits to places places of worship are certainly on the app – it gave children the opportunity to speak to religious people who live their beliefs every day. She added that we are lucky to be educated in Manchester to access mosques, are Gudwara, synagogues et cetera and it was enabled our children’s cultural capital and awareness of other faiths to be enhanced greatly. A parent added that is so nice that the children are able to talk about their faith and are comfortable in doing so in front of their peers. A governor mentioned how important it is that there is an atmosphere created I’ve been welcome and feel a sense of belonging. A scenario was mentioned about secondary school and how a child was ridiculed for displaying their religious belief in an RE lesson and the passion they had for this.

This evoked conversation on how we can promote children doing what is right and sticking up for what is right and we as a school actively promoting being more. A staff member mentioned that UPS is a wonderful place to be she added that the children are so accepting of everybody and that we don’t label people. It was added that the way our children talk, play and challenge in our school back this up – they are so kind and respectful so people feel like they belong. An in-depth discussion was then had about the importance of nurturing and supporting our children to challenge the things that they feel aren’t right and that is what being more is all about. Ms Ahle added that there are a number of scenarios in the RE and PSHE curriculum which encourage children to feel confident in challenging when others might be belittled or bullied or treated differently because of their diversity or because of their uniqueness or preference.

It is our role to make sure we empower the children to have the self-belief to stick up for what is right and Ms Ahle added that this is the reason why the likes of Rosa Parks and Emmeline Pankhurst are used as role models as part of our curriculum. It was added that we need to challenge people from a position of respect. Long discussions we had on how we can support others to be comfortable with being different and how important it is that our children leave school feeling good about themselves and are willing to follow their own path and be comfortable in their own skin.

A parent mentioned that the recent DNAV parent workshop was excellent and discussed the ‘fearing the worst’ voice in the head has been present from primitive times – we are set up to listen to that voice in order to keep us safe. She added that it might be useful for school to consider how we can spread this message throughout school and how we might be able to listen and reflect on that voice and whether it should be listened to or whether we should consider where we need to be active in challenging unfairness and unkindness. This led into conversation on online chat and the challenges that this represents in our current society, especially for young people.

It was discussed how adults quite often set a bad example and that we need to support our children to be strong enough to challenge a negative culture and to stick up for what is right, as well as being willing to say sorry if we do things wrong ourselves, which also takes courage, responsibility and respect. It was acknowledged that in order to do this the children and young people would need to realise that in sticking up for what is right they will draw attention to themselves and they need to be strong enough and resilient enough to accept this and risk others looking at them.

In order for this to happen, again, they need to be confident in their own skin and feel good about themselves.

Ms Ahle reiterated that the PSHE curriculum plays a key part in this as does the computing curriculum in addressing online relationships.

Again it was discussed how we need to empower our children to have enough self-respect to stick up for what is right.

Discussion was then had on the amount of time spent on phones – by both parents and children – and how flicking on phones and iPads gives people of all ages the dopamine hit, that keeps us engaged and on the phone.

There is certainly work that we need to do on this and we as parents need to role model use online. Less (time on phones) is certainly more and so many of us our guilty of this!

Mrs Billingsley then discussed what her role is as Senior Mental Health Lead at Urmston Primary. She stressed that the role is not diagnostic or therapeutic, as Mrs Helyar as SENDCO and our pastoral team can support with regard to this, but her role is about helping our pupils to be emotionally secure, developing young people who are emotionally resilient.

This will be key moving forwards and great strides have already been made in our children working together to support each other in being independent and resilient.

***Ms Ahle ended the meeting by asking again for parents to get in touch if they are willing to be part of the parent belonging group***.

Mr Parker thanked everyone for their attendance and their hugely valuable contributions.