Parent Council Annual Report 2019/20

It has been an unprecedented year for all schools, whilst the nation has had to learn to live during a pandemic and face the challenges and difficulties this has brought with it. Davenham Primary School, along with every other school across the country, was directed to close by the Government on 20th March 2020 in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19; it did not reopen again to all pupils until September 2020. The physical closing of school to all pupils was by no means a pause in learning opportunities or school-home engagement at Davenham. It should also be noted that Davenham remained open throughout the school terms for key worker and vulnerable children and school staff and teachers continued to attend school to support these children.

On behalf of the Parent Council, I would like to thank Mrs Hyslop and all the staff at Davenham Primary School for their tremendous efforts during this period and their continued commitment to maintaining parent/carer engagement throughout.  As Chair of the Council, I would also like to thank all the Parent Council representatives who have given their time and support over the last 12 months including during the school closure.  The success of the Council is dependant on the combined efforts of both staff and parent volunteers and these unusual times have further highlighted this effective and valuable communication platform at Davenham.

The Council met half termly and the meetings were always well attended by the existing members.  This continued during the pandemic but online via Zoom meetings, which again were very well attended. A body of representatives continues to exist and parents/carers are encouraged to contact any representative, irrespective of their link class or teacher.  This has worked well over the last year and will continue, but I am also pleased to report new volunteer interest for the coming academic year, which will hopefully bring diversity of views and ideas.

The school-home engagement during ‘lockdown’ was frequent and used various methods. Google classroom was set up and used to provide learning opportunities to the children and as a means of children sharing what they had been doing. Worships, story telling, singing, Sports Days, Environment week, pre-recorded phonics lessons, zoom talent shows, Well-being week, end of year party zooms and meet your new teacher zooms were some of the ways school communicated with children and parents at home. Telephone calls were made by staff to parents/carers to ‘check-in’. The weekly newsletter continued to be sent out throughout the year but was supplemented by numerous letters as and when required, particularly to inform about COVID specific matters. Twitter was and continues to be utilised to a greater extent to keep the Davenham community connected. Feedback from parents during the closure was that communication from school had been ‘excellent’. The Council was able to support school during this period by providing feedback at the zoom meetings, particularly regarding google classroom, the volume of work, how the children were managing, what they were enjoying in particular and to pass on thanks.

Whilst the Parent Council will continue to support the school via zoom meetings for the time being, it is hoped that children will be able to stay in school and that the additional school-home communication lines, such as google classroom, can continue to be utilised to support learning and contribute to providing the best possible learning environment and opportunities for our children.