

Meet Parent Council members, Amanda and Ida

Each member school in our family of primary schools has at least one Parent Council member, who is a member of the Hub Advisory Board for the school and also part the parent council group for the trust.

Here we introduce you to Amanda and Ida, who are Parent Council members for Brixington Primary Academy and they tell us a little bit about what they do.



How long have you been a Parent Council member and what attracted you to volunteering your time and skills in this way?

Ida: I became a Parent Council member in November 2019 and volunteered for the role as both my children attend Brixington. When I first started the role, I didn't know much about what it involved, nor had I ever met Amanda, with whom I share the role. All I knew was that this was an opportunity to learn more about the school itself and to play more of an active role in my children's education.

Amanda: I've been a Parent Council member since November 2019 as well. With both my children now in school I was looking to do some voluntary work on the days when I'm not working, so when this role came up it sounded really interesting and a great opportunity to be involved with the school.

What are you working on right now and what do you typically do as Parent Council members?

Ida: The role has evolved from when I first started and you aren't expected to be the voice of all parents, simply the voice of 'a parent'. A typical outline of what we do is to work alongside the school and the trust in a voluntary governance capacity to ask questions, to challenge and help provide accountability from a parent's perspective. We can attend hub board meetings, read reports, and discuss various topics. Mr Dyer (Head of School at Brixington Primary Academy) often invites us to share our ideas and make suggestions on a wide range of subjects such as school clubs, events, etc. We are also members of

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the Academy Committee, where we focus on the links the school has with the wider community, the school ethos and much more. The most important and rewarding part is of course being able to come to school, to meet the children, to talk to them about what they have been doing in school and to see them proudly share their work. A particular highlight this year was meeting the Ofsted inspectors and being able to participate in the inspection.

What have you enjoyed most since you became a Parent Council member?

Amanda: My highlights are really about getting to talk to the children and seeing how the connection between the ideas and plans the school leaders have are reflected back in the way children are learning. During lockdown we met with children virtually and we've now been able to go to the school for visits as well, but every time it's notable how passionate and engaged they are with what they're learning, and how keen they are to share that with us.

Ida: I have enjoyed the school visits the most, even when they were virtual, and meeting the wonderful children who speak very openly with us and share all their thoughts. I have also enjoyed getting to know the fantastic teachers and working alongside Amanda.

What would encourage someone to become a Parent Council member?

Ida: Becoming a Parent Council member does require you to give up your time to attend meetings, do school visits, and read and write reports, but if there are two of you at the same school this time can be split between you. It is an interesting and rewarding role, where you can get involved and feel very much a welcome and valued part of the school community. The trust will provide any necessary training but simply being a parent, who is interested in education and able to volunteer their time, should encourage anyone who is thinking about taking on this role.

Amanda: I would echo Ida's comments around the time and meetings, but it is a really rewarding role. I feel that we've got a really good relationship with the school and have felt heard, and our thoughts and suggestions are valued.



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