

**COMPOSITE MINUTES OF THE 2016 SPRING TERM AREA MEETINGS  
OF THE LA AND ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION**

**South**            **Wednesday 24 February 2016**  
**North East**   **Thursday 25 February 2016**  
**West**            **Wednesday 2 March 2016**  
**Mid**             **Thursday 3 March 2016**

**Action**

**1. WELCOME, THANK YOU AND NOTICES**

- a) Clare Kershaw, Director for Commissioning Education and Lifelong Learning, the Area Commissioners and the Area Chairs, welcomed those present to the meetings, extending a particular **welcome** to the new (or new in post) headteachers in each area, who are:

**South**

John Archer	Westwood Primary
Jackie Avis	Doddinghurst CE Juniors
Jennifer Brizman	North Crescent Primary
Tracy Dennis	Ryedene Primary
Ryan Duff	Glebe Primary and HIU (Interim)
Glenn Moore	Hadleigh Juniors
Jackie Walker	St Joseph's Catholic Primary, Canvey Island

**North East**

Linda Gildea	All Saints CE Primary, Dovercourt (Acting Head)
Marie Kelly	St Teresa's Catholic Primary, Colchester (Executive Head)
Laura Khine	Boxted St Peter's CE Primary
Jackie O'Mara	Chase Lane Primary (Executive Head)

**West**

Vicky Early	Harlowbury Primary
Louise Gurney	Debden CE Primary
Jeanette Harman	Abbotsweld Primary (Head of School)
Katie Henson	Milwards Primary & Nursery (Acting Head)
James Hollinsley	Longwood Primary (Head of School)
Bozena Laraway	St John Fisher Catholic Primary (Executive Head)
Maree Matthews	Coopersale and Theydon Garnon CE Primary (Acting Head)
Sinead McCarthy	Latton Green Primary (Head of School)
Sarah Mitchell	Great Chesterford CE Primary
Sarah Roffey	High Beech CE Primary

**Mid**

Debbie Gayler	Kings Road Primary
Simon Harbrow	Parkwood Primary Academy (Executive Head)
Andy Lucas	Parkwood Primary Academy - Headteacher
Rosie Mirecki	Terling Primary (Acting Head)
Jayne Pavitt	Westlands Primary
Paul Prest	Rayne Primary (Interim)

- b) **Thank you and farewell** to those headteachers who are retiring or leaving their current post at the end of term:

**North East**

John Crane                                      Rolph CE Primary/St Andrew's Weeley

**Mid**

Sandra Ray                                      John Ray Infants  
Ellena Mortimer                              Bulmer St Andrew's CE Primary

2. **A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE**

**Clare Kershaw, Director for Commissioning Education and Lifelong Learning**

Clare was congratulated on her recent appointment as the substantive Director for Commissioning Education and Lifelong Learning.

a) **EDUCATION AND ADOPTION BILL**

The Education and Adoption Bill was passed on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016 and Royal Assent is expected by the end of April. The implications for schools are:

- Coasting Schools eligible for intervention by Local Authority or Secretary of State
- Proposed definition of coasting to be confirmed – draft Schools Causing Concern was out for consultation autumn 2015
- Extended to cover academies
- Secretary of State will gain powers to issue warning notices to any school (through Regional Schools Commissioner)
- Requirement to consult on a school converting to academy status to be removed

Clare stressed that if a school has any concerns about possible intervention, perhaps triggered by outcomes, the headteacher should contact the Local Authority for support. She reminded heads that she had written to schools on 23 February to share the aggregated predictions in order to provide an indication of the outcomes for pupils in Years 2 and 6 (based on 260 returns – 65% of Essex schools). The letter acknowledges the challenge of a new system and stressed that the LA will take a pragmatic approach where a school's results are significantly different to the school's predictions. The letter concludes: "We see this as a critical time to reassure school leaders and governors that, whilst we are relentless in our challenge to all schools to be ambitious with high expectations for all children, there are a number of unknowns this year which has influenced the level of confidence in the new assessment system."

At the Mid meeting, following a briefing on Russell Hobby's presentation to the North East Heads, Clare noted that, while she accepted that there are insufficient sponsors to support new academies, she fundamentally disagreed with his assertion that the rate of academy conversion would not increase significantly; she argued that the activity and direction of travel at the DfE would indicate that academy conversion is increasing and very much on the government agenda.

b) **SCHOOL-LED IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM UPDATE**

20 school led improvement partnerships have now been approved and have been awarded grants of up to £25,000 and 5 partnerships are trialling a peer review system with the Education Development Trust (CfBT). The Funding Review group, which

determined the allocation of the grants, included representatives from the Local Authority, the Headteacher Associations (Pam Langmead represents EPHA), ESGA (Essex School Governors' Association) and the diocese. The group considered the bids in detail and gave feedback to both the successful partnerships and those who did not meeting the criteria.

As a result, a total of 362 schools are now within partnerships of some form or another:

- 254 in school improvement led partnerships
- 26 in HEP (Harlow Education Partnership)
- 32 in BEP (Basildon Excellence Panel)
- 50 in Tendring

The collaborative partnerships offer opportunities for schools to work together in accountable partnerships to achieve collective outcomes for children across a group of schools. The benefits include sharing of good practice across schools, curriculum development, joint governor meetings, pooling of staff, and efficiencies across back office functions.

CK reminded headteachers that the Comprehensive Spending Review in November stated that the Education Support Grant is being cut by 75% and that the Government is undertaking a review of Local Authority statutory responsibilities, with the intention of cutting these even further. Therefore, developing an alternative school improvement system that is much less dependent on Local Authority resources is critical and the School Led Improvement Partnership strategy is a key part of this.

The contract with the Education Development Trust includes the development of a peer review model that will, in time, be delivered by the Essex Teaching School Alliances.

### c) **OFSTED OVERVIEW**

There have been relatively few inspections so far this year, following the introduction of the Common Assessment Framework.

There have been 29 primary inspections so far this year (up to end February)

9 in North East of which 67% are good

7 in South of which 86% are good

5 in West of which 100% are good

8 in Mid of which 50% are good

- 13 schools were previously good and 16 were grade 3 or 4
- 21 of the schools inspected have been judged at least good (72%), 4 are outstanding (14%)
- 3 good schools have dropped, of which 2 dropped to inadequate and 1 to requires improvement
- 2 RI schools have dropped to inadequate (RI)
- 3 RI schools remain as RI

Clare noted that where SEFs are accurate and demonstrate improved performance, conversions from Section 8s to Section 5 inspections in "good" schools, that can argue that they are now "outstanding", are happening.

A number of areas of concern are being identified in inspections:

- Safeguarding – and, in particular, record keeping and consistent referrals (for example, if a child reports an incident at home, the school must follow this through as a safeguarding concern);
- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning;
- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged children and those eligible for Pupil Premium funding;
- The effectiveness of governor's – particularly in relation to performance management

Clare reminded heads that inspectors take into account the pupil voice in the school, and some lines of enquiry can arise from concerns expressed by children during the inspection.

#### **d) RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY**

Clare explained that the LA has recognised that there are insufficient teachers in schools in Essex, in all sectors including the special schools. Therefore, the LA has established a Task and Finish Group working with the three Headteacher Associations and the National College, to roll out an effective recruitment and retention strategy.

The Schools Forum has pledged £270,000 to fund the strategy and the LA Communications budget has funded an initial advertising campaign. This has been targeted at other Local Authorities, including neighbouring authorities, but also Local Authorities where there are a surplus of teachers such as the Midlands, using intelligence from the National College. The campaign has resulted in an additional 3,000 clicks on the Essex Schools Jobs website. <http://www.essexschoolsjobs.co.uk>

The Task and Finish Group will also be interrogating data in order to inform the campaign, so that there is an accurate understanding of vacancies, potential vacancies and which specialisms are particularly affected. This could inform ideas around recruitment incentives, such as providing subsidising housing for teachers in the hardest hit areas. The group has discussed the possibility of recruiting from overseas, and Sue Hammond will spend time during a trip to Adelaide to recruit teachers, as that state has a surplus of qualified teachers (at least in the secondary sector).

EES is running a survey about recruitment and retention in schools and headteachers were urged to take part, to ensure that there is a deep understanding of the current vacancies and recruitment challenges in schools.

An Intern programme is being introduced, which will give schools the opportunity to employ graduates cheaply, prior to them embarking on Initial Teacher Training.

The fourth cohort of the Heads in Waiting programme is about to begin.

A headteacher at the South meeting expressed her strong view, shared by many, that the fundamental question that needs to be considered is why many teachers don't want to remain in the profession. The reasons are many and complex, but must be addressed if the national recruitment and retention of teacher is to be solved.

#### **e) SEND CAPITAL UPDATE**

- The work on feasibility for school forum projects for new SEN provision is nearing completion. The proposals include a significant increase in capacity for all, through ASC (Autism Spectrum Condition) and SEMH needs.
- In addition there will be four new ASC Enhanced Provisions opened from September 2016. (Mid – Kelvedon, St Mary's / NE – Hamford Primary / South – Merrylands Primary / West – Milwards Primary.
- The primary schools that have applied to host SEMH provision will meet in March to look at capital requirements.
- Work is underway to establish pilot clusters of schools working together to embed highly effective support for children with SEN.
- New Ofsted / CQC framework for the LA and partners from May 2016.

Ralph Holloway has been appointed to lead on the SEND transformation, with support from Lesley Cheshire, an experienced external consultant.

#### **f) CAPITAL UPDATE**

- Re-running 10 year forecasts
- Quadrant and district overview of proposed growth that is needed
- Most opportunities for school expansion have already been utilised or viability studies are underway
- Consideration of new schools and free schools as part of the programme. Clare stressed the importance of taking advantage of DfE funding to increase school places in Essex. She stressed that the DfE has given assurance that it will only approve new schools where they are actually needed.
- Presentations to headteachers to take place during the summer term

Paul Crick is the newly appointed Director for Capital Delivery.

#### **g) RAISING THE ATTAINMENT OF DISADVANTAGED PUPILS**

- Over 100 schools completed survey feedback as part of the study - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PupilPremiumSurvey>
- 4 sets of focus groups with schools – 2 this week
- Review of school websites undertaken
- Stakeholder meetings this term
- School visits to see impactful practice
- Conference – April 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 (2 places per school)

A toolkit for excellence with the pupil premium, informed by as many Essex Schools as possible will be published in April 2016.

Contact the Pupil Premium lead – [stephen.mellors@essex.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.mellors@essex.gov.uk) for further information.

The Local Authority has commissioned NET (National Education Trust) to undertake a review on the impact of the Pupil Premium Grant in Essex schools. Clare noted that SECs will spend time during their visits focusing on the school's Pupil Premium data.

#### **h) SCHOOL CLOSURES FOR POLLS AND THE REFERENDUM**

Clare noted that a number of schools that are designated as polling stations have refused to close for the upcoming Police and Crime Commissioners Poll. She reminded headteachers that designated schools do not need to close entirely, but must make

arrangements to provide facilities for polling. Headteachers were reminded that this will apply to the EU referendum on Thursday 23 June.

The presentation shared at the meetings is available on the EPHA website <http://www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk/meetings/termly-area>

### **3. SCHOOLS BROADBAND SERVICE**

Sian Shordan, Schools Broadband Team manager, was welcomed to the four headteacher meetings. Clare Kershaw noted that an independent “best value” review is taking place of the current Schools Broadband contract ahead of a decision in March 2017 regarding the continuation of funding for the service from the Schools Forum. In the meantime, the Local Authority is keen to ensure that schools using the service are accessing all that is available and so are getting value for money.

The key principle of having an overarching schools’ broadband contract in the county is to ensure that all schools, including those that are in remote or hard (and expensive) to access locations, can have affordable Broadband provision. All maintained schools in Essex CC are required to use the service (and pay for this through a top-slice from the DSG) but academies can opt out.

Headteachers were referred to a survey circulated at the meeting (being carried out by EPHA) asking for feedback on the current provision and support for schools. The results of this will be shared with the Schools Broadband Manager in order to inform and improve the service.

Sian gave the following information about the current service and what is available to schools:

85 Secondary Schools connected to the network at 100Mb

450+ Primary Schools connected to the network at 10Mb

- Managed Wide Area Network
  - 76 PoPs (Exchanges)
  - 1:4 contention ratio
  - 24 hour monitoring
  - Fully resilient backhaul network
  - Resilient Internet Addresses for School Services (Email etc) via Public IP addresses
  - Fully resilient managed DNS services (essex.sch.uk)
  - SMTP Relays and Forwarding for Email

The service includes:

- Secure Online Backup System
- Virus Protection for all devices within Schools - McAfee
- Web site hosting
- Domain Services (.essex.sch.uk)
- Office 365
- Telephony Services
- Mobile Phones

Detailed information on all these services can be found on the Schools Infolink

## Web Filtering

- ECC responsible for ensuring only suitable content is accessible
- Fully managed by DUCL
- Netsweeper is a web filtering tool and will prevent access to predefined URL's. It is possible to report on all URL's that have been allowed and denied by the filter but is not proactive
- Reports can be run by the school or the DUCL Service Desk if there a safeguarding issue. Schools should contact the DUCL Service Desk if they wish to create a report.

## Telephony services

- Telephony "one bill" charges from are charged directly by DUCL (Daisy Updata Communications Limited)
- Schools that are not with DUCL can convert to DUCL and schools that have done this are saving on average 40.74%
- DUCL are also able provide whole telephony systems for schools
- Mobile phones can also be purchased from DUCL

## Service Improvement

This is driven by schools via

- Regular network managers meeting
- Meetings with third party support companies
- Survey
- Schools Forum
- Requests from schools to ECC and DUCL

Headteachers asked a number of questions and commented on the service.

Sian was asked about the possibility of increasing bandwidth within a school and comment was made about the fact that secondary schools automatically have 100 MG bandwidth whilst all primary schools (some of which are as big as secondaries) only have 10 MG. Sian said that this was a historic decision and, in her experience, most primaries had sufficient bandwidth and sometimes the problem was with the hardware in the school itself. However, it is possible for a school to buy more bandwidth.

Schools are limited to a number of IP addresses, but Sian said that she is releasing a further contingency of IP addresses that may be accessed by schools.

It was noted that notification of penetration testing is not always helpful or clear – Sian agreed to take this feedback into account.

One headteacher stated his strong opinion that ECC puts too much trust into DUCL and that they are not fulfilling their responsibilities or offering adequate support to schools.

Sian noted that schools should check and update their SSL Certificate to allow access to a full range of services.

Sian reminded schools of who to contact for support and information:

- Support or service changes requests 0333 320 2325
- DUCL Service desk [customer.service@ducltd.co.uk](mailto:customer.service@ducltd.co.uk)  
0800 0283011/ 01737 827030
- Sian Shordan [schoolsbandmanager@essex.gov.uk](mailto:schoolsbroadbandmanager@essex.gov.uk) 03330 137084

The presentation shared at the meetings is available on the EPHA website  
<http://www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk/meetings/termly-area>

#### 4. PERSPECTIVE LITE

Nicola Woolf (and the Area Commissioners) reminded headteachers that SSET will be discontinued at the end of March 2016 and will be replaced by Perspective Lite, an on-line information platform that will be provided free of charge for all Essex Schools. This product has been developed by Angel Solutions. They have contacted schools to ask for an email address to enable them to provide user names and passwords – the aim is that all schools will be on the system, and will have logged on at least once, by the end of term. It was noted that heads must use a headteacher email address (not admin@). If a school has not yet received their user name or password they should contact Nicola Woolf at [nicola.woolf@essex.gov.uk](mailto:nicola.woolf@essex.gov.uk)

The Perspective Lite offers a range of information, both local and national. The LA will use the platform to share visit notes from Commissioners, which may be altered online rather than using email. The presentation included detailed information about how this should be done. Schools can also access real time data and information such as Watchsted, 5 minutes lesson plans and so on.

If you need **Support** using Perspective Lite or have any questions about the full version of Perspective then please contact Angel Solutions on;  
0845 833 7190  
[perspective@angelsolutions.co.uk](mailto:perspective@angelsolutions.co.uk)

Headteachers were reminded that they should only pay the renewal subscription for GSET and SSET if they specifically wanted these services.

The presentation shared at the meetings is available on the EPHA website  
<http://www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk/meetings/termly-area>

#### 5. EDUCATION ESSEX

Headteachers were reminded that all notifications and information to schools are now sent out in the Monday morning Education Essex newsletter and there will no longer be a termly briefing paper or Head Lines.

The link to Education Essex is <https://schools-secure.essex.gov.uk/info/education-essex/Pages/default.aspx>

On that page there is a link to previous editions of Education Essex and each one gives a summary of the contents of the newsletter.

The presentation shared at the meetings is available on the EPHA website  
<http://www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk/meetings/termly-area>



## 6. OFSTED CASE STUDIES

### a) South Meeting – Melissa Heatherson, Hockley Primary

Melissa shared her experience of her recent Ofsted inspection, when the school was judged to have moved from “good” to “outstanding.”

Melissa’s first Headship started in September 2010 and the school was inspected in **May 2011 – overall effectiveness: good** – daunting during the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Headship, but determined to move from satisfactory to good. She explained that she had to ‘fight’ for good, but the capacity for further improvement seemed to be the factor in their favour *‘begun to make significant improvements in provision under new leadership’*, *‘The positive impact of the new school leadership is evident in good staff morale and readiness to participate in change.’*

They were given three clear areas for improvement:

- *‘Ensuring teaching is consistently good or better’* – the quality of teaching had been the hardest to persuade into a judgement of good – at that time it was very much borderline.
- *‘Improving the EYFS’* – judged to be satisfactory – particularly as child led learning and resourcing were still in the early stages of being developed.
- *‘Extend community cohesion’*

May 2014 – interim assessment letter – Inspection deferred for at least a year.

**Ofsted January 2016 – overall effectiveness: outstanding** (a long wait.....4 years, 8 months).

The experience:

- Phone call just before midday – slightly in shock after so long waiting.....
- Then action begins.....started a fresh notebook to write everything down... in one place.
- First things first – practical - what is happening tomorrow – staffing issues, things to reorganise etc.
- Let staff know, County SEC, school advisor, Governors, parent letters, staff survey etc.
- Assembly that afternoon to talk to the children.
- Meetings with staff planned – middays, SLT, whole staff – 2 that evening, but short and focussed. School open until 9pm – ordered pizza in for 6pm.
- The communication and support of staff really count – keep them informed, keep them positive, but give them time to do what they need to do!

The Lead Inspector was Ruth Brock:

- Start of the whole process – she knew a lot about our data already and asked me, “what is your current GLD?”
- She had a thorough overview of our school from our website – policies etc
- She told me the things that I needed to organise – meetings with Governors, SLT, pupils, teaching & learning – where it is weakest and strongest; organise book scrutiny – 3 from each class and subjects etc
- I also told her that we had judged ourselves to be outstanding, but we are still focussed on driving the school forward and clear of our next steps.
- The Ofsted portal to upload documents –also emailed them directly to lead inspector.

### Information sent :

- summary SEF – links to Ofsted framework – clarifies judgement, strengths and next steps for development
- full SEF/HT report combined – more comprehensive
- SDP and SDP autumn update.
- summary data booklet. – everything in one place

Time is so precious, but having these documents up to date saved pressure through this process. I had to tweak before sending, but this saved huge amounts of time. These also gave lead inspector very clear and concise overview of our school before she came in. I also made her a pack with school map, timetables for Key stages, children she would be speaking to – letter 's' and a suggested timetable for the meetings that she had asked for.

How did they achieve a judgement of outstanding?

- Team, collaborative approach
- What goes on in the classroom – everyday – teaching and learning, books, what the children say about their learning
- Books – rigorous book scrutiny, clearly looking for expectation, progress (MTEP) and impact of marking and feedback
- Rigorous systems and processes – e.g safeguarding, performance management, monitoring of teaching and learning
- Leadership at all levels and being able to articulate their understanding of schools successes and next steps.
- School website
- Pupil voice – SMSC and British values – running through everything linked to school ethos and philosophies
- Being reflective and working beyond your school collaboratively and in a supportive role
- Developing staff, enabling progression 'school of leadership'
- HLTA/LSA high quality support for teaching and learning
- Governor involvement – monitoring, visit notes, linked to key areas
- External support and validation – County SEC, school advisor, maths advisor
- Know your current data – she already knew everything about where we had been at end of key stages over the last 3 years. Huge focus on current MTEP (to demonstrate o/s) and percentages for each year group on track to achieve age related/national outcomes
- SEN – be clear about your principles and philosophy

It was all about what we do every day – having things in place to show and evidence against so many aspects

- Belief – moving our judgement is a brave move and a little scary – are you setting everyone up for disappointment? Had to be a collaborative decision – and it clearly was
- Support your staff through the process – being told that section 8 will be turned to section 5 is exciting but stressful at the same time.
- 4 inspectors the following day, looking at....everything...so much time spent in the classrooms.
- Manage the inspection in the small ways that you can – show what you believe makes you an outstanding school, take some control e.g leader interviews ensured pairing up.

**b) West Meeting – Gillian Napier, Rickling and Farnham Federated Primaries**

Gillian explained that this is her fourth year as a headteacher, of two schools– Rickling CE Primary and Farnham CE Primary. The schools are located about 15 minutes apart and the previous inspections of both were held on the same two days, meaning that she had to travel back and forth. The schools were judged to “require improvement”. Ofsted took into account her feedback about the impracticality of running two concurrent inspections and this year both schools were inspected, a fortnight apart. What was particularly striking was how different each inspection was, due to the different style and focus of the two lead inspectors.

The first inspection, at Rickling, was very challenging but developmental. The Lead Inspector directed the inspection and asked for very specific information to be available. He identified which children he wanted to see and spent a lot of time in discussion with pupils. He specified what pieces of work he wanted to see and repeatedly asked pupils “How did this (*feedback*) help you to move forward?”

In contrast, Gillian said that the second inspection, at Farnham, was very old style and the Lead Inspector hardly spent any time with pupils. The inspection of safeguarding was extremely thorough.

Gillian suggested that schools should put a “statutory” tab on their website, linking inspectors to all of the statutory information that they need to see.

Both schools were judged to be good but it was striking how different the experience was at each inspection.

**c) Mid Meeting – Fiona Dorey, Great Bradfords Junior School**

Fiona had limited time to present, but focused her feedback on the safeguarding demands that were made during the inspection. She noted that the Lead Inspector had “trawled” the website in advance of the visit and had gleaned a huge amount of information about the school, including checking on the sports and PE Premium funding information. She also noted that the inspectors spent a lot of time scrutinising books.

Most of all, she noted that they were tenacious about safeguarding, and shared the following checklist with colleagues.

## 7. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

### Area Heads Meetings

Summer term 2016

N-EAST	Wednesday 8 June	Weston Homes Community Stadium
SOUTH	Thursday 9 June	Holiday Inn, Basildon
WEST	Wednesday 15 June	Weston Homes Business Centre, Takeley
MID	Thursday 16 June	Chelmsford City Football Club

### EPHA Conferences

Headteachers' Conference

Friday 18 March 2016

Stock Brook Country Club, Nr. Billericay

Deputy/Assistant Headteachers' Conference

Friday 14 October 2016

Weston Homes Community Stadium

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