

COMPOSITE MINUTES OF THE 2021 SUMMER TERM AREA MEETINGS OF THE LA AND ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION

North East	Wednesday 16 June 2021
South	Thursday 17 June 2021
West	Wednesday 23 June 2021
Mid	Thursday 24 June 2021

Action

1. WELCOME, THANK YOU AND NOTICES

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

North East

Sam Wilding St Andrew's Primary, Marks Tey

South

Julie Braithwaite Lincewood Primary (now substantive)

Lisa Patient Noak Bridge Primary (now substantive)

West

Jen Pearce Magna Carta Primary

Mid

Spencer Bragg Southminster CE Primary

Jennifer Penney Shalford Primary

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

North East

Brian Combes Stanway Primary

Lisa Corby Icen Academy

Mel Cork Heathlands CE Primary

Anthony Cosans Unity Primary

South

Ian Barton Ashingdon and Plumberow Academies

Sasha Furze Runwell Primary

Jude Gibbon Ghyllgrove Primary

Kirsteen Newell Kingston Primary

Veronica Wallace Kingswood Primary

West

Linda Chesworth Milwards Primary

John Clements CEO of Learning Partnership Trust

Lawrence Garside Felsted Primary

Jane Harvey Staples Road Primary

Linda Reid Elsenham CE Primary

Mike Ross St John Fisher Catholic Primary

Linda Todd Radwinter Primary

Mid

Sally Brisley Woodcroft Nursery

Shelley Jones de Vere Primary

Gill Marrion Trinity Road Primary

Hannah McCann West Hanningfield CE Primary

Kate Mills John Ray Infants

Robert Pike St Nicholas CE Primary, Tillingham

2. LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

Clare Kershaw
Philippa Holliday (North East meeting)
Lisa Fergus (South meeting)
Nicola Woolf (West Meeting)
Catherine Hutley (Mid meeting)

a) ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION CHANGES

Following the local elections in May, a new ECC administration has been elected. The following councillors have been elected as members:

Cllr Kevin Bentley – Leader
Cllr Louise McKinlay – Deputy Leader
Cllr Tony Ball – Education, Excellence, Skills and Training
Cllr Andrew Sheldon – Deputy for Education, Excellence, Skills and Training

Clare noted that, whilst Cllr Ray Gooding was re-elected as a councillor he does not continue to hold the portfolio of cabinet member for education. He was much valued in this role, and will be missed. Cllr Tony Ball was Cllr Gooding's deputy in this role and has a commitment to "cradle to grave" lifelong learning.

The new administration has launched a 100 day plan focusing on renewal, ambition and equality. Clare suggested that there is a different direction from the council, the previous administration was very focused on austerity and cost-cutting; there is likely to be more of an investment approach to aid post-Covid recovery. In addition, there will be a strong focus on climate change and sustainability.

b) COVID-19 UPDATE

Clare reiterated that this has been another year like no other but the response from the education system in Essex remains brilliant.

On 14th June the Prime Minister announced that the current restrictions will remain in place until (hopefully) the 19th July 2021 and so protective measures and risks assessments will remain in place until the end of term (give or take 3 days).

- There have been some changes to the guidance around residential visits
- Infection rates amongst the 0-9 age group remain low but are rising in the 10-19 age group.
- The DfE has published a report pulling together all the support available to schools and settings: Education recovery
<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/education-recovery-support-dfe-june-2021.pdf>
- The majority of secondary schools are engaging in the summer schools programme.

c) ESSEX EDUCATION TASK FORCE

The establishment of the Essex Education Task Force is hugely exciting and positive. Clare reminded headteachers that the Council has committed £1.5 million to support schools and colleges. The Task Force includes representatives from all phases of education, including early years and post-16, supported by Roy Blatchford as the independent Chair. Harriet Phelps-Knights, Chair of EPHA, has been chosen to represent the primary voice on the task force.

At the first meeting, held on 20th May, it was agreed that the Task Force will focus on Excellence and Equity as underpinning themes and the discussions about how the

investment will be prioritised will continue during the summer.

Immediate activities include a focus on summer outdoor learning for vulnerable pupils and there will be particular focus on reading in the new school year.

Clare expressed her disappointment that Sir Kevan Collins has resigned as the Education Recovery Commissioner, but was not entirely surprised as he had clearly committed his name and reputation to an ambitious national strategy for recovery. Recent announcements have made it clear that the government funding for education will fall far short of the £13 billion that Sir Kevan had suggested was needed.

The work of the Essex Task Force will complement wider ECC strategies as well as the national programme, and the aim is to focus on opportunity and not deficit / negative language.

3. SEND STRATEGY UPDATE: CURRENT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Response to the Care Quality Commission/Ofsted inspection

- Development of joint commissioning framework and strategy;
- Commissioning workstreams on therapies, diagnostic pathways, SENDIASS, local offer, equipment;
- Reduction in the number/percentage of pupils identified with MLD at SEN support.

The next step is to look at how this impacts on children/young people (individual case studies):

- Quality of EHC assessment in Essex –workstreams on guidance on initial requests for assessment, quality assurance and moderation of EHCPs, annual reviews, provision for medical needs;
- Products to be shared and launched with schools in autumn term 2021;
- Preparing for re-inspection any time from October 2021.

SEND strategy

- Using feedback and responses from SEND vision shared in 2019;
- First draft to be shared with roundtable;
- Strategy launch in September 2021.

High needs spending review:

ISOS has been commissioned to carry out a comprehensive review of funding arrangements for children and young people with SEN in Essex; lead the development of a co-productive piece of work to develop concrete proposals for a new SEN funding system (effective, coherent and transparent); work in partnership with Essex partners to support broad engagement and build consensus around a new funding system.

SEND sufficiency strategy

- Developed a forecasting tool to enable us to map the future growth of SEND across the county;
- Undertaken capacity assessments of all the Essex special schools;
- Develop a sufficiency strategy which maps need, capacity and how we meet both in the future within our limited resources.

Leadership and staff changes

North East quadrant

Sarah Yearley, the SEND Operations Lead, has retired. Tracy Nudd (West team) is currently supporting the North East, but not being fully staffed is adding to the capacity pressures.

Ros Somerville, the Inclusion Manager in North East, is leaving Essex after 23 years, to work in Suffolk. Ros has been an exceptionally valued colleague and her expertise, experience and professionalism will be much-missed. Janine Hanson has been appointed to take over the post from Ros.

Essex Inclusion conference

Virtual Inclusion Conference for Essex Headteachers and Senior Leaders: Wednesday 30 June 2021 9am –12:30pm

The Essex Headteachers' Roundtable for SEND and Inclusion would like to invite all Headteachers to join them at a virtual conference. Margaret Mulholland will be the key note speaker.

4. SAFEGUARDING

i) Harmful Sexual Behaviour in schools (Item 7 also refers)

The DfE commissioned an Ofsted review into sexual abuse in schools, following the establishment of the Everyone's Invited website. Representatives from the Essex Safeguarding Children Board were interviewed as part of that review, including the EPHA Professional Officer. The Ofsted review was published on 10th June.

Clare stressed that this isn't just a secondary matter, while it affects secondary colleagues significantly, it is also an issue for the primary-phase sector. Ofsted is stating that schools should work on the assumption that sexual abuse and sexual harassment is going on and that they are unlikely to be aware of the full extent of this. There needs to be a whole school approach, a whole school culture of zero tolerance, and a significant review of the curriculum around relationship, sexual and health awareness.

Training has already been delivered to secondary and independent schools and colleges, and Jo Barclay is working on training and guidance for primary staff and governors. She has already circulated a number of new materials including a checklist/self-audit tool and Peer on Peer Abuse model policy. These are predominantly aimed at secondary schools but will be interest to primaries as well.

ii) Safeguarding forums

The session will provide a safeguarding update and other key, relevant information to support settings in safeguarding. These sessions contribute to the CPD for Designated Safeguarding Leads (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads).

Virtual Sessions – via Teams The dates are 29th June, 9.30 am – 11.30 am, and 1st July, 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm. Places may be booked [here](#)

iii) Safeguarding guidance being produced for next term:

- Reporting incidents process / guidance
- Safeguarding arrangements for commissioning alternative provision
- Resources to support equality and diversity
- Resources and training to strengthen governing body oversight of safeguarding
- Guidance on site security

5. THE EDUCATION AND INFORMATION SHARING PROTOCOL

Clare reminded headteachers that this is a protocol to support ECC and education providers to deliver services, which supports sharing that is safe, lawful and secure. In addition, it helps organisations meet their legal accountability and transparency

obligations and sets out the statutory and current practice sharing between education providers.

The current protocols are coming to an end and the overarching protocol and the addendums are in process of being updated. New links will be shared with schools later this term by a number of routes (including via EPHA) and headteachers were reminded that it is essential that each school signs the new protocol to enable information sharing to continue.

7. CURRICULUM: REVIEW OF RSE AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Following the review of sexual abuse in schools, the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, has announced that the government will:

- encourage schools to dedicate INSET time to train staff on how to deal with sexual abuse and harassment among pupils and how to deliver the (RSHE) curriculum;
- work with up to 500 schools to provide support for DSLs, with a specific focus on sexual abuse;
- talk with tech companies about preventative measures on social media platforms and help support parents, staff and children to make more informed and safer choices online;
- strengthen the RSHE curriculum, to help teachers focus on sharing images online and consent; and
- continue to fund the NSPCC confidential phone line until October 2021.

Recommendations for school leaders

School and college leaders should create a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated, and where they identify issues and intervene early to better protect children and young people. In order to do this, they should assume that sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are happening in their setting, even when there are no specific reports, and put in place a whole-school approach to address them. This should include:

1. A carefully sequenced RSHE curriculum, based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance, that specifically includes sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online. This should include time for open discussion of topics that children and young people tell us they find particularly difficult, such as consent and the sending of 'nudes'
2. High-quality training for teachers delivering RSHE
3. Routine record-keeping and analysis of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, to identify patterns and intervene early to prevent abuse
4. A behavioural approach, including sanctions when appropriate, to reinforce a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated
5. Support for designated safeguarding leads (DSLs)
6. Training to ensure that all staff (and governors, where relevant) are able to:
 - better understand the definitions of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online sexual abuse
 - identify early signs of peer-on-peer sexual abuse
 - consistently uphold standards in their responses to sexual harassment and online sexual abuse

SOURCE: Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges -GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Healthy Schools Engagement Workers (can provide PSHE support in relation to Healthy Schools)

Public Health Specialist Educator (PSHE Lead) Sharon Williams

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A number of resources for policy and review were shared on the slides – these can be accessed at <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/1624275875-epha-meetings-june-2021-la-input.pdf>

6. HEADTEACHER WELLBEING – ACCESS TO EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME

It was stressed that headteacher wellbeing is a key priority for the Local Authority. A range of ideas and support are being identified, as it is clear that there cannot be a “one size fits all” approach. The slides included links to resources and support organisations.

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/1624275875-epha-meetings-june-2021-la-input.pdf>

Jo Barclay, Stephen Chynoweth and Steve Whitfield have been delivering online training to governors and there will be an additional session on 30th June.

Two headteachers gave an account of wellbeing programmes that they had benefited from.

Sarah Crookes, Cann Hall Primary (North East quadrant)

Sarah explained that she returned to headship this year and knew that, given the exceptional circumstances, she needed more than just the support of friends and family, as well as local colleagues. She learnt about the Headteacher Wellbeing Programme through the Education Support Partnership. www.educationsupport.org.uk

This offered either individual supervision or a peer-to-peer peer support programme. Sarah applied for the individual programme which offered six telephone supervision sessions run by a trained counsellor (at the time funded by the DfE). She found that this worked really well for her; the therapist was brilliant and having someone neutral to discuss issues with (both professional and personal) within a protected space was incredibly helpful and supportive. Over a very short space of time her supervisor got to know her well. As a result, Sarah explained that she has grown in confidence and has more strategies to cope with her own thoughts and emotions, particularly in difficult situations. She encouraged colleagues to actively explore supervision as an extremely effective way to help manage the exceptionally challenging and difficult job of headship.

Dale Bateman, Coopersale and Theydon Garnon CE Primary (West quadrant)

Dale explained that his local partnership of 10 schools decided that they wanted to focus on headteacher wellbeing and they committed to a “Leading in the time of Covid”

course. This consisted of 3 x 2 hour sessions.

Their Executive coach/mentor reset their approach to leadership reminding them that no one signed up to lead a school through a pandemic and there was no manual to guide headteachers! The coach introduced 3 circles of leadership:

- Myself
- What I do
- My relationships

The participants were given tasks to undertake in between the sessions, and they explored the time and investment they put into looking after themselves, as well as considering their productivity, both personal and professional.

Dale argued that headteachers never switch off and are “heads” all of the time. The course gave this group a chance to look back and reflect, as well as looking forward. The amount of time invested gave them a chance to build trust. Each participant met with the coach at the outset of the course, to build that relationship.

One important aspect of the course was learning how to deal with emotional triggers, as often one’s inner voice will dramatise and catastrophise. A three step process helps manage those emotional triggers, and reminds you to rely on the truth of a situation:

- Notice
- Slow down (analyse those inner voice comments)
- Choose and act

Dale noted that, whatever choice you make, you’ll probably have to sacrifice something else, but the key thing is the informed decision. The headteachers in the partnership really benefited from taking part in the programme and would recommend it to others.

8. EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE FRAMEWORK REFORMS

It was stressed that the changes to the EYFS framework are an evolution, not a revolution in change. There are still the same areas, but some of the content has changed. The framework underpins the importance of relationships.

Main changes

- More depth added to Educational Programmes
- 17 ELGs are clearer, more specific and easier for teachers to make accurate judgements
- More focus on strengthening language and vocabulary development to particularly support disadvantaged children
- Strengthening literacy and numeracy outcomes to ensure all children have a good grasp of these areas of learning in preparation for year 1
- To ensure the ELGs are based on the latest evidence in childhood development
- To ensure the ELGs reflect the strongest predictors of future attainment.
- Still an inclusive framework

Revision to assessment

Exceeding judgement

- The government are removing the “exceeding” judgement criteria from the EYFSP and says that this will “free up teachers’ time”.
- Teachers will be expected to continue to identify and stretch more able children, support them to excel and provide information to parents and the year 1 teacher, but they will not be required to record 'exceeding' judgments.

The role of the Local Authority under the reformed EYFS

- Provision of training and information –LAs will still be under a duty to provide training on EYFS assessment and the completion of the profile to all providers who need it.

- EYFSP data –LAs will still be responsible for the collection of EYFSP data in future years, quality assurance of the data and submitting this to DfE.

Schools have been asked to nominate a Reception Baseline Assessment Leader and to notify the LA.

Oral health

- A need to include oral health alongside the requirement to “promote the good health of children” will be added to the EYFS framework.
- Individual settings and schools will need to determine how to meet this requirement and practitioners will not be required to assess this.
- ‘By building oral health awareness from early years and supporting parents and practitioners with good quality resources, we can equip children with essential lifelong health and wellbeing skills’. CYP 2020

RBA helpline: 0330 088 4171 / emailreceptionbaseline@nfer.ac.uk

9. PHONICS CHECKS

It was noted that, on 16 June, the DfE confirmed the arrangements for the phonics check this year.

Cancellation of the phonics screening check in June 2021 means incoming year 2 pupils did not take the check in year 1. In the 2021 to 2022 academic year, it is statutory for schools to administer a past version of the phonics screening check to year 2 pupils during the second half of the 2021 autumn term and return results to their local authority.

The autumn check is intended to ensure that year 2 pupils who need support in learning to decode using phonics are not missed.

The autumn check is designed to be as flexible as possible, whilst also minimising any burden that could have arisen from the existing requirement, which would have required all year 1 and 2 pupils to be assessed concurrently in a short window in the summer term.

Year 2 pupils who meet the expected standard in phonics in the 2021 autumn check will not be required to complete any further statutory assessments in phonics. Year 2 pupils who do not meet the expected standard in the 2021 autumn check will be expected to take the statutory check in June 2022, alongside year 1 pupils.

Year 3 pupils, who were due to take the statutory check in June 2021 (when they were in year 2), are not required to take the autumn check. Schools are expected to maintain a programme of support for these pupils but do not need to return phonics data for year 3 pupils to their local authority.

10. INTRODUCTION TO MICHELLE HAYDEN-PEPPER, DIRECTOR FOR LOCAL DELIVERY (SOCIAL CARE) **West meeting**

Michelle Hayden-Pepper was recently appointed as the Director for Local Delivery in West. She attended the meeting to introduce herself and to give an update on the current position in West Essex.

Michelle noted that social workers are pretty fatigued following a difficult and

challenging period. Referrals are beginning to increase and Child Protection numbers are at their highest for 7 years. She explained that families who were already known to social care before the pandemic are now under even greater pressure and the interventions needed are more complex than ever. There have been a particular increase in mental health assessments.

In addition, more families are going through the court process but there is a huge backlog of cases leading to significant delays.

The West quadrant is managing two quarantine hotels (incoming passengers who are being shipped over from Heathrow) accommodating around 200 adults and 60 children. Michelle confirmed these travellers are not Essex-based so do not pose a long term issue.

As a result of the Covid pandemic Essex has seen a reduction in the number of foster carers, resulting in pressures on placements available for children who are looked after.

On 7th June social care had its annual conversation with Ofsted which was generally positive.

The West quadrant has made a successful bid to the What Works Well centre, to roll out social work supervision for DSLs – more information to follow.

Michelle mentioned the current national review into Children's Social Care services, which has an emphasis on joining up social care and education.

11. CLOSE OF LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETING

Clare Kershaw closed the LA part of the meeting noting that, once again, there has not been the usual dynamic of the academic and all schools continue to juggle the demands and stresses of the Covid-19 pandemic. Headteacher wellbeing will be a key part of the Taskforce discussions. Whilst there have been no SATs tests in primary schools to contend with, secondary headteachers have had the additional challenge of managing a grades assessment process this term.

Clare reminded headteachers not to under-estimate all that they have done in the last year. She continues to be immensely proud to work with such an esteemed group of headteachers and the staff in their schools, and expressed her sincere thanks to everyone. She confirmed that the School Communications team will send out weekly updates to headteachers on a Monday morning during the summer holiday period, but hoped that this will not impose too much on the break.

At each meeting the Area Chair thanked Clare and her team for their continuing advice, guidance and support, which has been appreciated by all primary headteachers.

12. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Area Heads Meetings

Autumn term 2021

N-EAST	Wednesday 10 November	Colchester Community Stadium
MID	Thursday 11 November	Lion Inn, Boreham
WEST	Wednesday 17 November	Weston Homes Business Centre, Takeley
SOUTH	Thursday 18 November	Holiday Inn, Basildon

Spring term 2022

N-EAST	Wednesday 2 March	Colchester Community Stadium
SOUTH	Thursday 3 March	Holiday Inn, Basildon
WEST	Wednesday 9 March	Weston Homes Business Centre, Takeley
MID	Thursday 10 March	Lion Inn, Boreham

Summer term 2022

N-EAST	Wednesday 15 June	Colchester Community Stadium
MID	Thursday 16 June	Lion Inn, Boreham
WEST	Wednesday 22 June	Weston Homes Business Centre, Takeley
SOUTH	Thursday 23 June	Holiday Inn, Basildon

EPHA Conferences

Headteachers' Conference

Friday 18 March 2022 Stock Brook Country Club

Deputy/Assistant Headteachers' Conference

Friday 8 October 2021 Colchester Football Stadium

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