

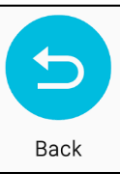
# EPHA Area meeting

## West Quadrant

Spring Term 2026

March 2026

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  - a. [Essex Priorities](#)
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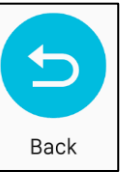
2. [South Y6/7 Transition project](#)
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# Director's LA Updates

Spring Term 2026

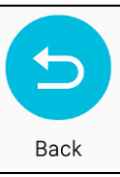
Clare Kershaw, Director of Education

# Essex priorities



- Inclusion Strategy
- Essex Education and Training Taskforce
  - Essex Year of Opportunity
  - NEETS
- SEND Improvement and Sufficiency
  - Funding @ week 20
  - Wolsey and Chetwood Special School
- H2ST - £60m budget set 26/27

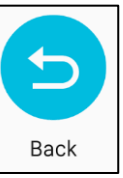
# Policy updates



- Best Start in Life Strategy and Local Plan
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill
- Families First Partnership Programme - education focus on severely absent pupils
- RISE
- Every child achieving and thriving – SEND White Paper
- National Year of Reading
- Youth Guarantee
- LGR and Devolution

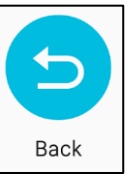
# Schools White Paper: Every child achieving and thriving, and SEND Reform: putting children and young people first.

# Links and Alignment



- **Child Poverty Strategy**
- **Best Start in Life Strategy (Nat. target of 75%)**
- **Post 16 reforms**
- **Curriculum and Assessment Review**
- **Curriculum and behaviour and attendance hubs**
- **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill**
- **RISE – Universal and targeted**

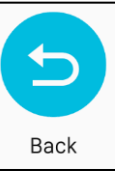
# Vision / Ambition



- **High Standards and high expectations for all children**
- **Build a genuinely inclusive education system**
- **Redesign SEND pathways around early intervention and outcomes**
- **Rebalance investment towards prevention and family support**
- **Strengthen evidence-based teaching and the importance of continued learning at home**
- **Tackle attendance, behaviour, disadvantage and narrow the attainment gap**
- **Stabilise and support the workforce and rebuild parental confidence**
- **Halve the disadvantage gap**
- **Restore attendance levels to 94% or higher**
- **On average pupils leave school grade 5 or higher across their GCSEs**
- **Boost pupil engagement and levels of belonging**

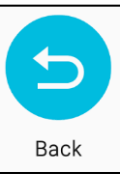


# Schools White Paper: Every child achieving and thriving.



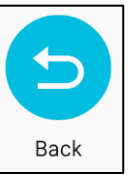
Curriculum and Enrichment	Exclusions and behaviour
Curriculum and Assessment review outcomes implemented	Re-integration support partnerships following suspensions
Transitions points strengthened – KS3 alliance launched as part of RISE	Update guidance on behaviour and suspensions and exclusions
RISE networks expanded & expand English and Maths Hubs	Race Equality Unit to research increases in racist incidents
Reading test in Yr 8 / strengthened Progress 8 measure	New dashboard to monitor behaviour and exclusion patterns
Enrichment benchmarks and new pupil engagement framework in 2029	
Disadvantage	Workforce
White working class / SEND / CiC focus	Plan to recruit 6,500 teachers published
Summer 2026 – consultation in funding model, move away from FSM	Enhanced maternity pay
Mission NE and Mission Coastal	£500K per year to support early headship coaching, and retention grants to teach in more disadvantaged places.
Admissions code to be reviewed and stronger FAP process	Introduce AI tools, assistive technology and digitised NC framework
Evidence base for effective use of PP to be developed	Wage increases in MATs to be monitored

# Schools White Paper: Every child achieving and thriving.



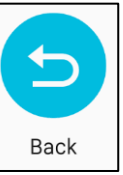
Collaboration	Parental Engagement / complaints
Collaborative system leadership – no school an island	Minimum expectations for parental engagement
Schools expected to join MATs –no timeline / LAs to establish Trust(s)	Best Start Family Hubs
Trust Standards in inclusion, value for money, community partnerships	Annual parent forums in trusts
Local SEND Collaboration groups	Digital complaints process and mutual expectations for complaints handing

# SEND Reform: putting children and young people first



Specialist Support Packages (SPPs) and EHCPs	Parental preference
Most complex needs	Presumption of mainstream first
Nationally defined SPPs will set out evidence-based support, outlining interventions, resource, curriculum adaptations, health and social care support	Disagreements over ISPs will be dealt with through the strengthened digitised schools complaints process
Underpin the future EHCPs	Independent mediation services to be strengthened
ISPs will outline day to day provision	Where SPP is needed, LA will set out list of suitable settings, parental preference is a consideration but LA to balance VfM, effectiveness and needs of other children in placement decisions
	Tribunals will remain the route of redress, regarding thresholds for specialist provision and settings, but will not name a placement for a child.,
	Independent Special Schools to be more regulated ( price and places)
Experts at Hand Service	Workforce
Targeted Plus	£200m national training
Multi disciplinary specialist teams working routinely with mainstream settings	Reframe role of the SENCo – more strategic
£1.8b over 3 years to LAs to commission and establish	Training expectations embedded within revised Code of Practice
Funding to recruit more SALT, OT and EPs	

# Funding:



## Funding

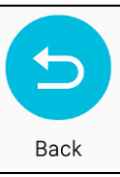
Additional £4b investment over 3 years

- £1.6b Inclusive mainstream Fund direct to schools
- £1.8b Expert at Hands Service
- £200m National Training Programme
- £40m workforce expansion

£3.7b Capital investment – Inclusion bases and 60,000 additional specialist places

2028 - £3.5b increase in HNB. Funding to be rebalanced with more going direct into schools

# Timelines:



## **Phase 1: 2026 to 2028** **Investment and building** **new system**

- Workforce training programmes for all staff (£200m)
- Schools, Colleges and EY to receive Inclusive Mainstream Fund
- Experts at Hand comes on stream for all settings
- Specialist Provision Packages published
- National Inclusion Standards published
- Maternity Pay increases
- 2027/28 new National Curriculum

## **Phase 2: 2028 to 2029** **Improved support**

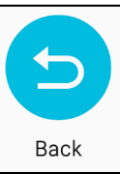
- Government will continue to invest and build up the new system
- New legislation expected to come into effect from September 2029
- Government to take responsibility for HNB deficit

## **Phase 3: School year** **2029/2030 onwards**

### **Future system**

- AY 2029/30 – first assessments for children take place under reformed system
- EHCP, National Inclusion Standards and ISP legislation enacted
- First children using SPPs
- 60,000 new school places for children with SEND will have been created in special schools and inclusion bases

# DfE Updates 2026 – 2/1/2026



## [VAWG strategy to better protect children from misogyny and abuse](#)

- Violence against women and girls (VAWG) strategy will focus on healthy relationships and consent, and tackle relationship abuse through a new helpline.

## [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education](#)

- Statutory guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education.

## [Use of reasonable force in schools](#)

- Guidance about the use of physical restraint in schools for governing bodies, headteachers and school staff.

## [Government modernises exam records with new app](#)

- Every year 11 student in England to be able to see their GCSE exam results on a new app from summer 2026.

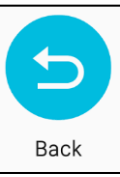
## [Government to introduce academy trust inspections](#)

New academy trust inspections to boost transparency for parents and strengthen outcomes for children

## [£200 million landmark SEND teacher training programme](#)

New requirement that every teacher receives training to support pupils.

# DfE Updates 2026 – 2/1/2026 contd.



## Mobile phones in schools

- How schools can prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day.

## Government to drive action to improve children's relationship with mobile phones and social media

- Government launches consultation on children's social media use and bans phones in schools to protect young people's wellbeing and ensure safer online experiences.

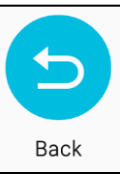
## 450,000 disadvantaged pupils could benefit from AI tutoring tools

- Safe AI tutoring tools co-created with teachers to be available to schools by the end of 2027, helping to close the attainment gap.

## Improving behaviour in schools

- Resources to support schools and trusts in developing, implementing and maintaining a whole-school behaviour culture.

# SEND top up funding - update



Schools Forum agreed that top funding should be paid to schools where an EHCNA has exceeded the statutory timescale at the point of reaching week 20 rather than retrospectively.

The annual value of this top up was set at £5,951 based on the average Pupil Top-Up funding paid to Essex mainstream schools at the time.

On 1 December 2025, a report was generated listing the pupils whose EHCNA had exceeded 20wks and where no Educational Psychologist (EP) had been allocated. It was agreed that pupils already allocated an EP would not be included because those Plans were expected to be finalised imminently, at which point funding would be agreed and backdated.

Work was undertaken to add Funding Provisions to MRi/Capita for the backlog of pupils who required backdated funding. There were some 1300 Funding Provisions added with funding totalling £5.5m.

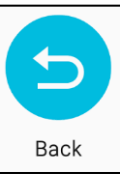
Schools will have received that funding in their bank accounts at the end of January 2026.

In January 2026, the SEN Provision Team identified that there were additional pupils that had an EP allocated but their status was 'under assessment'. It was agreed that the 20wk funding should be applied even though they had an EP.

Funding Provisions have been added for these pupils for funding. There are circa 200 pupils affected, and these schools will be paid on the next payment run that is currently being worked on by the SEN Provision Team.



# EY Update



The EYEPs, SEPs and EYEIPs are the workforce who provide **support for quality provision** to all Early Years settings . They also support

- LA schools who are due Ofsted – please speak with your SEP.
- Any schools where GLD is below national ‘overtime’ ( three years)– speak with your SEP if you feel you meet this criteria but haven’t had contact from your SEP or an EYEP.

We also have a range of activities being delivered in **localities for schools and settings** –

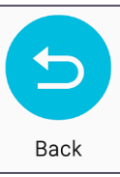
- Basildon, Harlow and Tendring specific projects focused on SLC .
- Locality Cluster Meetings – termly at a local school to you with EYEPs and other local services. Focus on effective transitions .

A wealth of resources linked to EYFS pedagogy is on the **EYEP page of Education Essex Online**. This is a rapidly growing resource – includes e learning for ease of access.

**Face to Face CPD Opportunities** – Essex EY Conference – May 2026 and ‘Meeting the needs of mixed R /Yr 1 ‘ Ruth Swailes 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2026.

The EY teams are currently finalising the ‘Best Start in Life’ Essex Local Plan that has to be sent to the DfE in the next month. Further information regarding ‘raising standards in reception’ and free training from the LA will be detailed over the next term and at next EPHA once we have had the funding approved by DfE .

# How LGR and Devolution Work Together



The **Devolution Priority Programme** and **Local Government Reform (LGR)** are interconnected, forming two sides of the same transformation coin in England's governance landscape

**Devolution** transfers new powers to Greater Essex from Westminster with control over functions essential for business growth; skills, transport and housing.

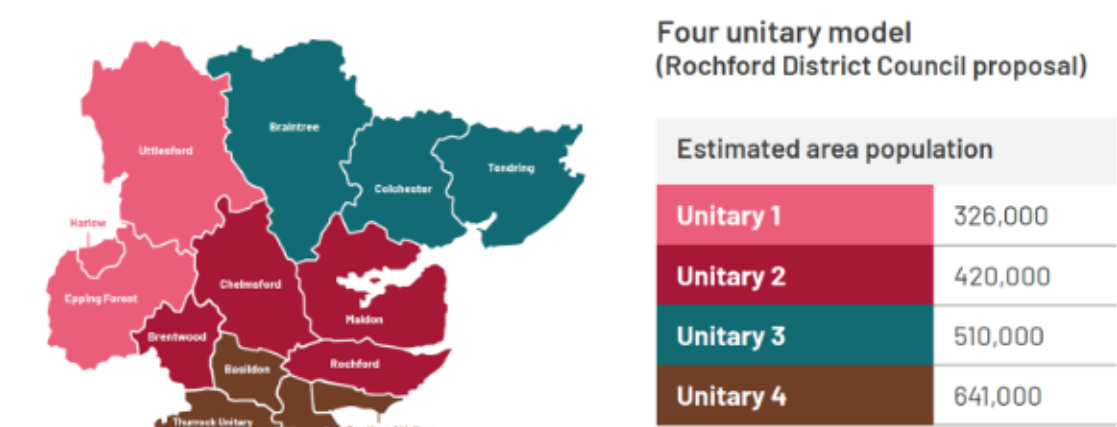
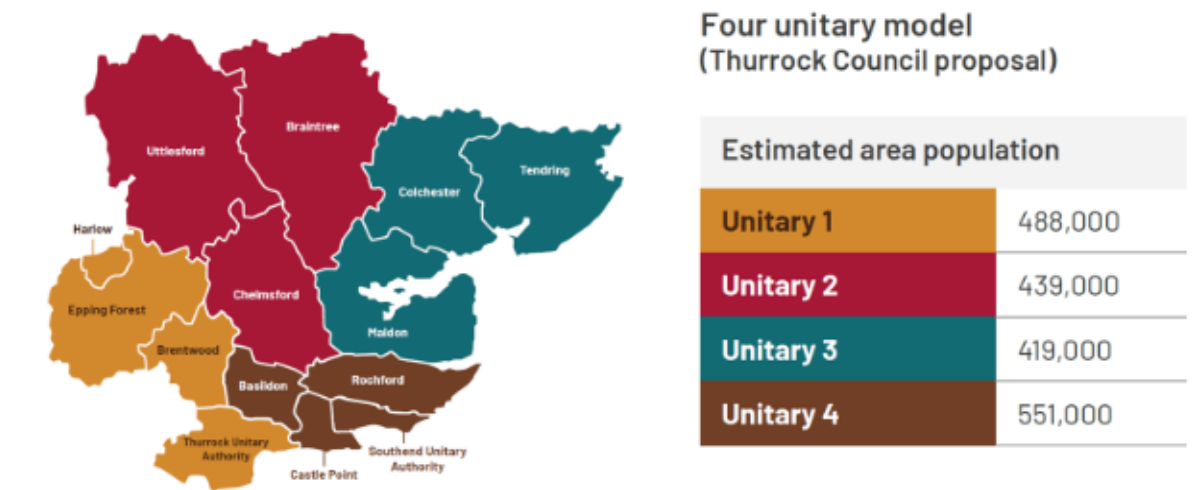
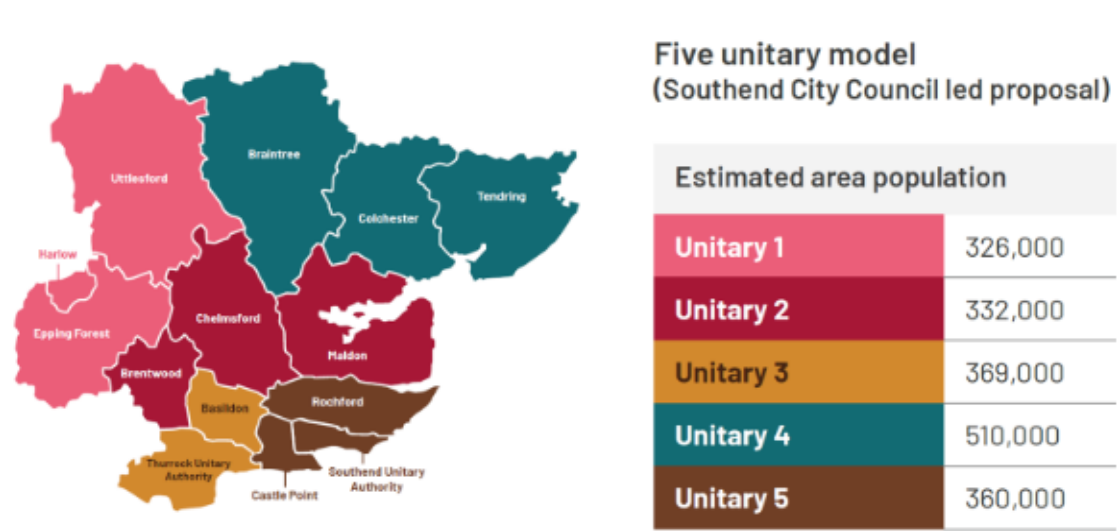
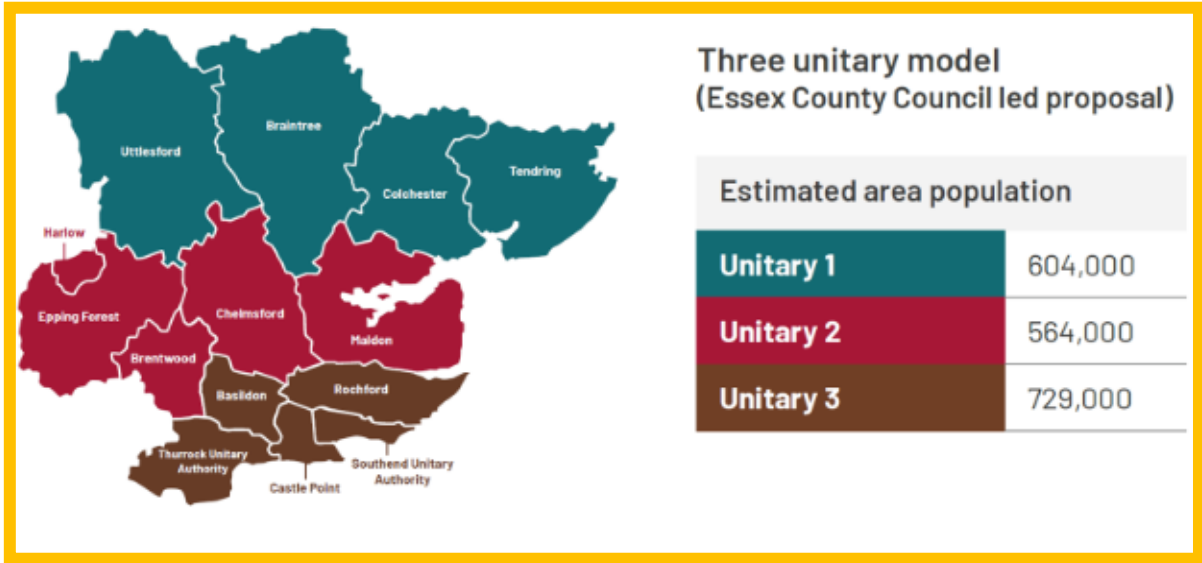
**Local Government Reform (LGR)** supports effective implementation of these services: streamlined structures and stronger councils working with the Mayor to drive growth.

Three Unitaries align with economic corridors, making joint planning and delivery simpler.

- Without change, the Mayor inherits a fragmented system – slower decisions, weaker growth outcomes.
- With change, Essex can move faster and with more certainty through streamlined & larger unitary councils better positioned to receive and manage powers with the Mayoral Combined Authority.



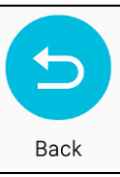
# Four business case options from Greater Essex



# Inclusion Framework Digital Solution

March 2026

# Inclusion Framework Digital Platform – key highlights



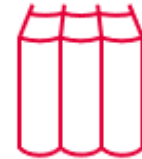
**The system enables schools to profile children and young people against the Inclusion Framework grid.** This information can be extracted in a one- page document which can be shared with parents and downloaded to the child's file



**The system will initially be available to use in 250 schools** Additional schools, assessments and staff numbers are possible but will incur additional cost.



**CYP can be assigned to groups (e.g. year groups) and cohorts.** Data will be available from the system which can monitor where progress is being made.



**ECC staff able to view (non identifiable) data across all schools.** This will enable ECC to see progress across quadrants, types of school (primary or secondary) and individual schools.

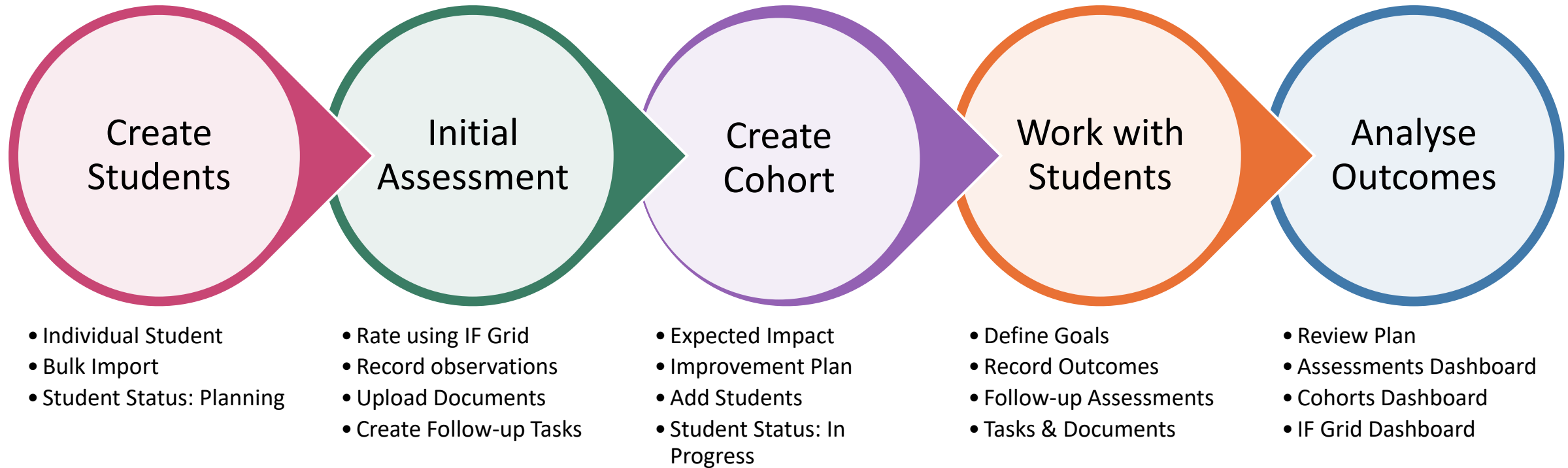
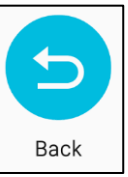


**Ongoing evaluation** An ongoing programme of evaluation will run alongside the rollout to identify future improvements.



**Building for the future.** Whilst this is built on a one-year contract all decisions have been made with future proofing in mind

# Inclusion Framework Digital Platform- Functionality





# What do we need from you

We are looking for schools who would like to support us in this initiative.

Signing up will give you the option to **profile children** and young people on the grid and monitor progress over time.

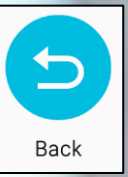
We will be onboarding new schools in phases over the new few months. Once your school has been added to the system you will be able to **access the system and watch the one-hour training video** and access supporting documentation.

Initially we would suggest giving access to **1-3 staff in the school**, and this can then be extended to further staff if needed.

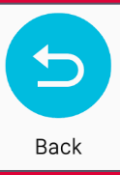
There will be the opportunity to give **feedback to ECC**, looking at how useful the solution is to you and if/ how we can develop this or other solutions going forward.

If you would like to be part of this, please email the Inclusion Framework inbox at

[inclusion.framework@essex.gov.uk](mailto:inclusion.framework@essex.gov.uk)



# The Essex Attendance Summit



Essex County Council is delighted to announce the upcoming **Essex Attendance Summit**, on 17th March 2026 in Colchester.

This event is dedicated to strengthening strategies and sharing best practice for improving school attendance across the county.

This summit will bring together **Attendance Leads and Officers** from all four quadrants of Essex for a day of collaboration, learning, and practical solutions.

## What to expect:

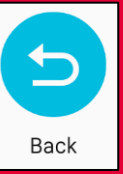
**Networking opportunities** with colleagues from similar settings.

**Keynote speakers** exploring the current attendance landscape and showcasing impactful changes in schools.

**Interactive workshops** tailored to your role, interests, and development priorities. Workshop selection will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

By completing our **Expression of Interest form**, you will receive **early notification** when booking opens on the Education Essex Online system - giving you priority in choosing your workshops.





# South Y6-7 Transition Project and connections to the Inclusion Strategy:

## *Key Insights*

Maggie Efenich

*Headteacher, Grange Primary School*

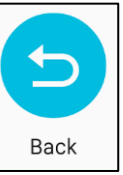
Mat Harper

*Headteacher, Beauchamps High School*

Lorraine Ramet

*Headteacher, Wickford Primary School*

# Our context & rationale



**Wickford is in the south of the county in the Basildon district and has two secondary school and eight main primary/junior feeder schools**

Beauchamps and Bromfords

Abacus, Grange, Hilltop, North Crescent, Oakfield, Runwell, St Lukes and Wickford

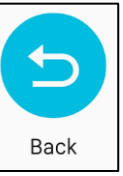
A mixture of LA Maintained, Academies in MATS and a LA Federation (Wickford Primary and Beauchamps High) schools

**A strong and well-established partnership of Headteachers in Wickford, termly meetings very well attended**

**Headteacher at Beauchamps is part of the Inclusion Strategy Team and involved with many Inclusion Reviews across the county in primary and secondary schools**

An Inclusion Review in one of the schools in Wickford matched what has been seen in many other schools across the county, even in schools that have a clear commitment to inclusion, transition is still a barrier to effective inclusive practice. The barriers are sometimes seen from an inclusive primary/junior school not being mirrored by the receiving secondary school; and visa versa

# Transition is at the heart of effective inclusion



## Central to all the Pillars of the Inclusion Framework

- “Relationships and Wellbeing”
- “Attending and Participating”
- “Achieving and moving on”

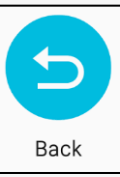
**Of course, the White Paper has all of this at its core – so its imperative we get it right!**

Back in the Spring of 2024, I approached Jochen Tree at Bromfords to look at the emerging themes that was being seen from the ECC Inclusion Reviews – our views were totally aligned – we knew we had to improve the transition offer in Wickford.

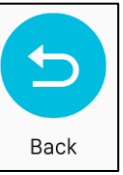
We met with all Primary Headteachers, and all agreed. It quickly became apparent that if we got this right, that all of our schools would benefit, as would the families we serve.

# Three main themes to the pilot

1. How well does the **Y5/6 curriculum support students** in developing the essential skills needed for transition?
2. To strengthen and enhance the physical transition, especially how are we **engaging with parent/carers of complex/vulnerable families**? How can we support them to better support their children with transition?
3. How can we **improve the transfer of information** for our more complex students – and how can this continue into Y7?



# 1. Transition curriculum

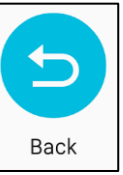


**Running a thematic project over the summer term of Y5 in all the primary schools – devised by Y5 leaders across the schools**

**Sessions done with a paired primary/junior school, so children are meeting and working together**

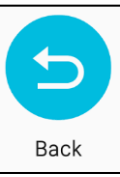
**Some vulnerable students working with students from other primary schools for extended periods, supported by SENDCo's**

# Overview of content



Week 1 - Teamwork & communication	Team Building: Introductions, fast paced, lots of activities, carousel style.
Week 2 – Independence & resilience	Play team games – playground games, allowing children to learn and play games with new children.
Week 3 - Creativity & cultural awareness	Outdoor Art (different art piece linked to a different value?)
Week 4 - Leadership & responsibility	Positivi-tree / negativi-tree activity. Children look at each other's negativi-tree and think of solutions to overcome this (turn them into positives). Each child will have a chance to be the spokesperson for their group.
Week 5 - Risk taking and determination	Teamwork competition where they get from one side of the field to the other (hoops – make choices on how many travel e.tc.
Week 6 - Respect and bravery	Group work reflection.

## 2. Improving engagement with vulnerable families



### **A wide range of improved activities for ALL children including**

At least one visit for all in Year 5

TWO Y6 transition days

Meet the tutor days in last week of August and tour of school with parents and children

### **Additional events aimed at parents of Year 5 vulnerable children held at neutral venues, supporting with secondary school choices:**

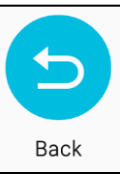
Understanding the Common Application Form

Understanding admission criteria

Unbiased information about both secondary schools and if relevant, other providers such as special schools

Local charity SNAP working with us to support these families

# 3. More effective transfer of information



**SENDCo Conference to be held each term with a focus on students and transfer of information**

**Professionals from the secondary schools to be invited into Y5/6 SEND review meetings**

**Agreement from all our Wickford Primary Heads that the Inclusion Framework Matrix would be completed for every vulnerable child joining us**

SEND;PPG; LAC/PLAC; Non-attenders

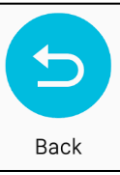




Back

	Relationships	Wellbeing	Attending	Participating	Achieving	Moving-on
7	Demonstrates empathy by adjusting their own behaviours in support of others	Has the confidence to speak out about emotional wellbeing, physical & mental health	Sustains good levels of attendance and/or able to re-engage after period/s of reduced attendance	Actively seeks out opportunities to take on new challenges	Confident at decision making and able to reflect and evaluate own learning	Engages with work experience and enterprise opportunities which raise aspiration and allows informed choices to be taken, including opportunities to actively engage in voluntary work.
6	Able to sustain mutually respectful friendships, fully recognising that some actions can harm others.	Demonstrates self- awareness and displays positive self-esteem	Able to access support, or safe space, to sustain or improve attendance	Able to tackle projects confidently, demonstrating resilience, and perseverance in the face of challenge	Able to improvise and deliver outcomes imaginatively	Engages with exposure through the curriculum to career/ education/ life IAG. Has opportunity for interaction with inspiring role models, including those in the local community
5	Able to form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers	Able to manage own basic hygiene needs and maintain good physical health, including diet	Engages in leisure and/or outdoor activities as part of the school community and/or outside of school	Shows awareness of the similarities and differences between themselves and others	Able to formulate and question information, ideas and arguments and take on board the opinions of others	Shows initiative when solving problems, analyses options and accepts that there can be more than one solution to a problem
4	Able to work and play co-operatively, share and take turns with others	Has an awareness of stressors and how to self-regulate when experiencing stress	Regularly feels positive about attending school and participating in learning experiences	Engages in group activities  Able to share their own needs, wants, interests and opinions with others, in a familiar group	Able to understand the consequences of a decision and review a decision	Able to solve a problem independently, persevering until it is solved and approaching it in different ways
3	Shows sensitivity to their own and others' feelings	Able to seek support through co-regulation of emotions and practical help	Engages in positive routines for entering school	Shows willingness to try new activities, undertake new ventures and begin to show independence	Has the confidence to do things differently and try new things, recognising that some life skills (for example, reading) are important and engages positively	Shows willingness to develop skills that enable independence and safety in the community
2	Able to interact positively with peers	Begins to recognise danger and seeks support of significant adults to keep physically safe, including road safety	Able to separate from close carers and co-explore new situations	Engages in interactive play, using everyday materials and/or toys to explore, understand and represent their world, ideas and interests	Expresses interests and uses special interests to engage positively in appropriate provision	Accepts change in familiar situations, recognises a problem and makes choices that lead to successful transitions
1	Able to interact positively with supporting adult/s	Able to express a range of emotions and respond to calming strategies of others	Accepts being with others	Will respond to experiences that are brought to their attention, including sounds	Able to take instruction and engage in exploring concepts of interest	Able to identify a choice. Shows growing sense of self through asserting their likes, dislikes, choices, decisions and ideas

# Impact of Y5/6 Transition Project Work



## Feedback from primary/junior schools

***“The project gave lots of students a ‘feel’ that they were getting ready for transition and that this was the start of what they would be experiencing over the next year”***

***“The impact was so positive and now schools have delivered once, there will be a development of the resources and the logistics of how to best deliver the sessions – looking forward to next year!”***

***“was so worth the initial investment in time!”***

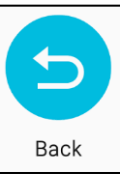
## Student Voice

**“loved the opportunity to make new friends”**

**“Enjoyed working with different students and teachers”**

**“Enjoyed being able to go to another school and talking to other students about which schools they would be going to next year”**

# Impact of improved exposure to secondary school



Starting secondary school can be one of the biggest emotional shifts for a child.  
Proactive transition work helps pupils:

- **Understand what to expect, reducing fear of the unknown**
- **Build familiarity with routines, buildings, and key staff**
- **Feel more secure and confident before September**
- **Develop coping strategies for change**

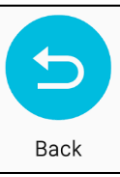
96% of parents felt students were more confident, less nervous and more excited to attend than before

100% of parents felt the pre-visit helped their child settle in

Incredibly high take up from Year 7 families attended the August “Meet the Tutor Day”, over 80% in both secondary schools

Key take-aways that helped: touring the school again, finding their form room, meeting their form tutor, asking questions

# Impact of improved transfer of information



**Earlier identification of vulnerable pupils - proactive transition and use of the matrix has allowed us to better:**

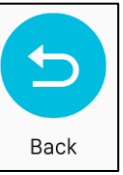
- **Highlight pupils with SEND, mental health needs, or safeguarding concerns early**
- **Put effective provisions in place before September (e.g., nurture groups, TAs, safe spaces)**
- **Reduce the risk of pupils becoming overwhelmed or unnoticed in the larger setting**

This clearly strengthens inclusion and ensures support starts on day one.

In both schools, there has been a positive impact on attendance data, particularly with PA figures and SPA figures in vulnerable groups.

Smoother academic continuity has led to a stronger, faster academic start in Year 7.

# Impact



**Greater equity for pupils and their families – the proactive approach has been particularly important for:**

- **Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds;**
- **Those with social or emotional needs;**
- **Pupils who are the only child coming from a particular primary school.**

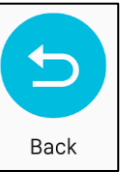
No student is “left behind”

Student/Parent Voice:

Pupils felt part of the community earlier

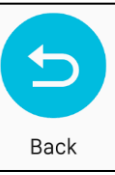
Parents/Carers have developed trust in the new school earlier

# Conclusion



- **This is no longer a pilot project in Wickford, it's here to stay because it's had clear impact and is the right thing to do for the kids and the families**
- **It has strengthened relationships with Leaders and SENDCOs across the town**
- **All schools can create the capacity to strengthen transition – the wins are so clear to see**

# Next steps - How do we continue to improve our practice?



**Embed our pilot as common practice – its how we do it in our town!**

## **Strengthened alumni**

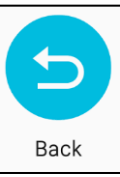
Ex-students visiting ex primary school supporting with Y5/6 students

Extended to include Y10/11 SEND students supporting Y6 SEND students with transition

**Has given us a great foundation to further strengthen transfer of information – which will be so useful with new areas of foci like Oracy development**

**Share our experience – encourage more of this partnership transition work across the county**

Harwich pilot started in 2025



# Questions – or discussion time on your tables

**How can you make this work in your town?**

**Who leads it?**

**What local meetings are already in place in your town to facilitate the planning – transition leaders/SENDCOs/HTs/DHTs?**



# ESSEX YEAR OF OPPORTUNITY

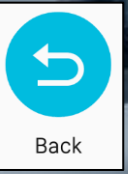
Realise **your** potential

Website:

<https://www.essexyearofopportunity.co.uk/essex-year-opportunity>

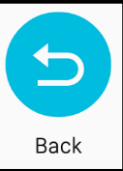
Email: [Essex.yearofopportunity@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Essex.yearofopportunity@essex.gov.uk)

**Building on success**  
**Working across the system**



# Starting Early

My Future  
Step into STEAM  
Careers newsletter and Roxie's journey  
Primary Times  
Eco Refill Shops  
Essential Skills Support  
Oracy training and competition





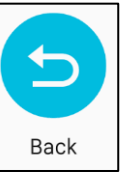
# Why Start Early?

## Limited Exposure, Limited Aspirations

- Children **form career ideas by age 6–10**
- The patterns of jobs chosen by seven-year-olds mirror those selected by 17-year olds
- Disadvantaged pupils often **lack role models and career awareness**
- Family, TV, radio and film have the biggest influence on children's choices
- 75% of aspirations are shaped by **gender and socio-economic stereotypes**
- Children's career aspirations have little in common with projected workforce needs, which could have serious implications for the **Essex economy**
- Multiple Aspirations = **Greater Resilience**

- **Embedding essential skills** in primary education supports both **academic success** and **future employability**, preparing pupils for a changing world.
- These skills are transferable across subjects and **help children connect learning to real-world contexts, improving motivation and engagement.**
- Countries like **Singapore and Germany** integrate career-related learning early, resulting in **higher employment rates** and **better transitions to work.**
- “Only 1 per cent of children knew about a job from someone visiting their school. This has real implications for social mobility, as children from poorer backgrounds may not have successful role models from the world of work and their aspirations are limited as a result.”

# My Future Aims



To raise  
aspirations

To broaden  
horizons

To challenge  
stereotypes



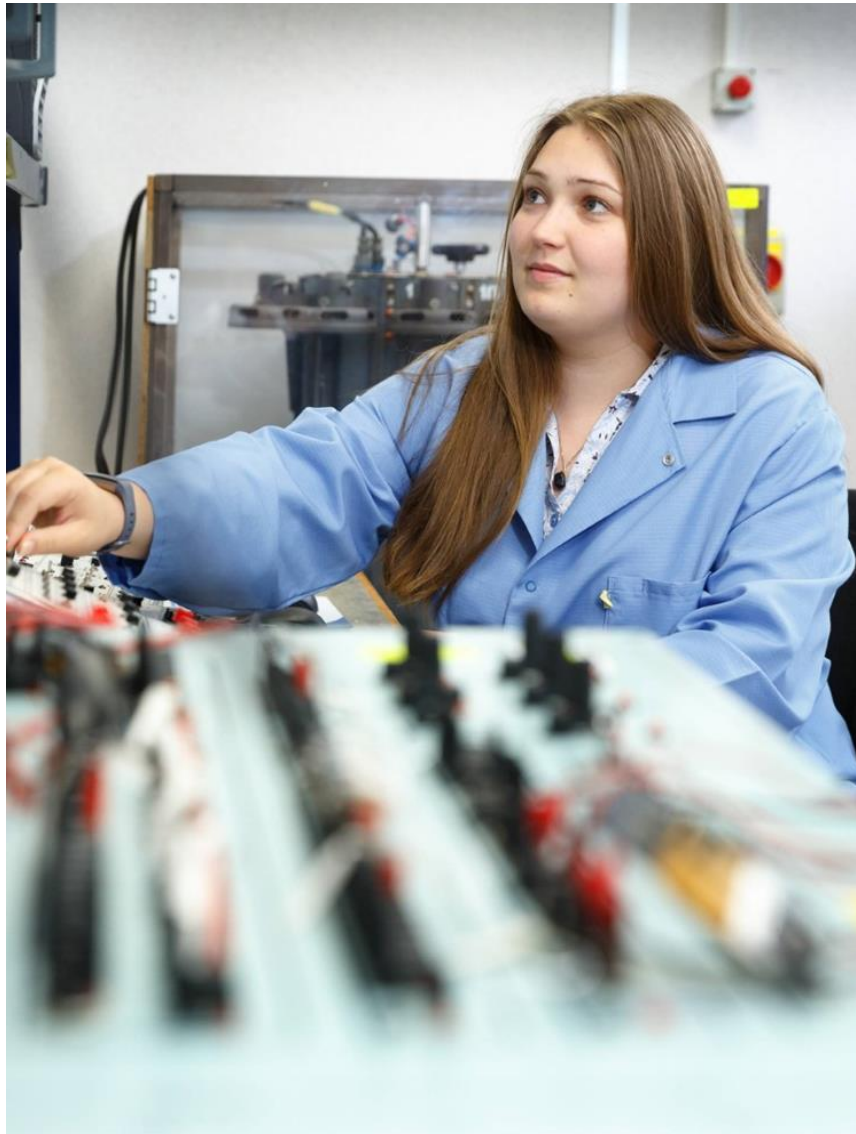
Jess is a Volkswagen Product Designer who designed the ID Buzz.

# THE MY FUTURE PROGRAMME WILL:

- ✓ Reach over 18,000 children
- ✓ Engage 100 schools
- ✓ Feature over 20 employees
- ✓ Enable over 300 000 encounters
- ✓ Showcase 8 industry sectors

Subject to funding if you would like to join in  
September 2026, please email  
[Essex.yearofopportunity@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Essex.yearofopportunity@essex.gov.uk)

By July 2026 as part of the Essex  
Year of Opportunity

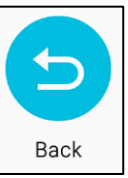


Imogen is a Senior Hardware Engineer who designs fighter jets.





# Primary Careers Newsletter



## Explore careers with Roxie - a journey into the world of work in Essex for primary schools

[Meet Roxie](#), a pupil on a mission to discover careers across Essex. In each video, she visits real workplaces and meets inspiring professionals. Each newsletter includes short videos, real-life stories and classroom activities to help pupils connect learning to future careers. They also include links and information to share with parents. [Subscribe to our regular Primary Careers newsletter](#) so you don't miss Roxie's next adventure or the advice from our seconded teachers.

**ESSEX YEAR OF OPPORTUNITY**  
Realise your potential

**Exploring careers: powering the future**

What will your child be when they grow up? It's never too early for children to think about that. They want to be when they grow up. A new series of short films are encouraging youngsters to think big and follow their dreams by showcasing some of the different jobs in Essex.

At school, parents and carers can follow lead as they raise the county meeting people and discovering the jobs they do. Snuggle in and watch together and encourage your children to talk about their dream job. The films have been created by the Essex Year of Opportunity to inspire the next generation to think big.

Roxie's latest adventure she meets a man as they install solar panels.

Joe LEGO® talks his future job as a solar panel installer in Chelmsford. He explains that his career is based on his childhood interest. "I loved playing with LEGO® as a child and installing solar panels is a bit of building with LEGO® bricks."

However, it is not just his childhood interest that gives Dan job satisfaction. "I love helping the planet become greener and making it a nicer place to live. Solar panels are a little bit like a sponge, but instead of soaking up water they soak up sunlight."

Feel your child's passion

LEGO® fans in the family should head to their local library where there are LEGO® sessions all year round. They'll learn new building skills and have fun at the same time. The LEGO® in Libraries sessions are for kids aged 4-10 and they can learn maths, reading and problem-solving through fun, hands-on LEGO® stories. Book a session at [www.essex.gov.uk/digital-essex/help-and-support/lego-libraries](http://www.essex.gov.uk/digital-essex/help-and-support/lego-libraries).

**Power to the people!**

One of Dan's colleagues is Jared, a battery installer and renewable engineer. Jared talks about what the role requires. "Engineers need to be careful and enjoy solving puzzles because there is a lot of smart technology involved. You need to work well as a team and ask the right questions to make sure everything goes smoothly. That way we're helping people and the planet."

"Our batteries store the spare energy from solar panels, so we can save it for later. We can use the power to charge our electric cars or phones when it's convenient. We can also use the electricity when the sun is not shining!"

Dan and Jared's stories are just some of the featured jobs in Essex's videos. Each short episode takes children behind the scenes of real workplaces. The films explore what people do, how they get there, and the skills they need to succeed. The videos highlight how children's interests could shape their future careers. By connecting these interests to real jobs, children can see how their passions today could shape their future tomorrow. Young people can step into their dream role via so many different paths, such as apprenticeships, professional training or university.

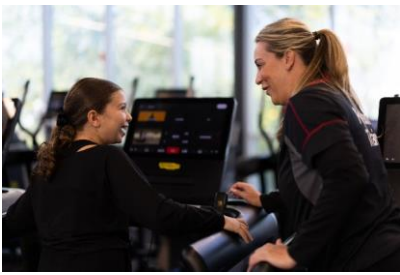
To watch Dan, Jared and others' stories visit [www.essexyearofopportunity.co.uk](http://www.essexyearofopportunity.co.uk).

Scan the QR code to watch Dan's story and explore more careers on the website.

**Inspire your child to reach for the stars by thinking big.**

You can encourage big thinking by:

- encouraging curiosity and play
- fostering a growth mindset ("I can't yet, but I will...")
- teaching problem-solving by breaking down goals into smaller, manageable steps
- engaging with puzzles, experiments and making things
- leading by example with your own learning



## Primary Times:

Digital access: [Family activities and events for primary school children | Primary Times](#)

Want Primary Times delivered to your school at no cost? [Request your free copies today!](#)



# Step into STEAM – Year 5/6

What is coming:

University of Essex 12th June 2026

Harlow College 30th June and 1st July

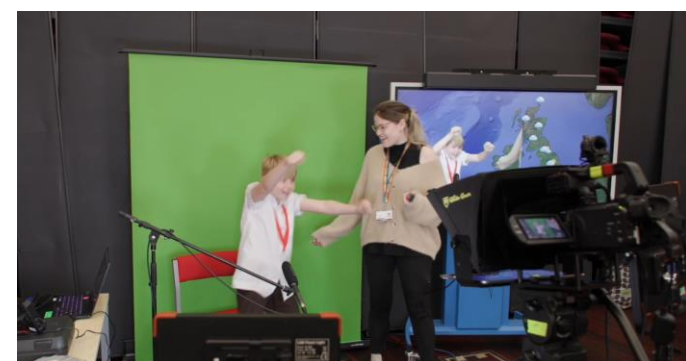
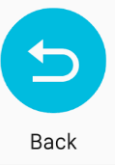
Interactive fun STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) fair with employee encounters and workshops.

**Aim:** to get children thinking about their future and ensure seeds are sown early enough for it to impact their studies just before they start at Secondary school.

[Uni of Essex - STEAM Expo 2025 - Edit 3](#)

Reach:

Over 1,000 children from Harlow, Tendring and Colchester



# Eco refill shops

## Now with added Essential Skills

Currently 55 schools have a refill shop with sustainable pricing built in for future sustainability

“Our children are literally making the world a better place right now! Proud doesn’t even begin to cover it”

- Fingringhoe CofE Primary School



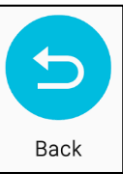
“We have had OFSTED. They loved the shop and came to visit!”

“The children loved doing [the shop] again, thank you for including us in this!”

- Kingsmoor Academy



[https://www.pupilsprofit.com/Eco\\_Refill.html](https://www.pupilsprofit.com/Eco_Refill.html) Email [essex.yearofopportunity@essex.gov.uk](mailto:essex.yearofopportunity@essex.gov.uk) to register interest





# Essential Skills

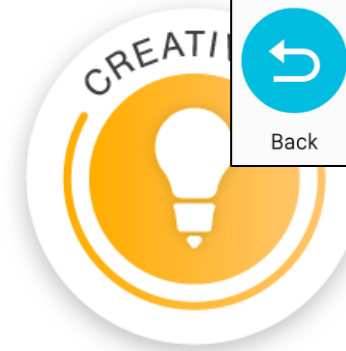
Built into My Future and  
Primary Careers Newsletter.

Recommended resources:  
Career Cards - Ages 4-10



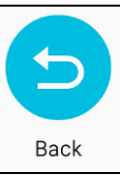
Adobe Acrobat  
Document

Explore the essential skills that are needed for different careers – including as a ‘Top Trumps’ game



Adobe Acrobat  
Career Challenges - Ages 7-11 Document

Learners can use these challenges to explore different careers and apply one of the eight essential skills to each scenario. Each challenge has a crib sheet for the teacher and a challenge sheet for the pupils.



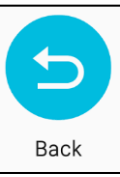
**Oracy is the word on everyone's lips, but what does it really look like in the classroom? Oracy for All gives your staff a practical, high-impact hour of CPD that focuses on key principles that can be applied in all contexts and subjects.**

**Explore how to embed oracy techniques into existing curriculum time rather than adding extra workload, unpick issues for pupils and unlock speech confidence.**

**Free access to [Debate Planet | Debating Done Differently](#) resources**

**Proposed dates:**

- **21-23 April – Oracy for All Zooms, 3.45 p.m. to 4.45 p.m. Schools can register in advance and receive copies of the mini-books for distribution to staff. – designed for groups of staff for interaction – practical and fun activities and copies of the ‘Help Me Find My Voice’ minibook – free to schools.**
- **29 April - full day primary face-to-face training to help primary teachers embed oracy strategies into their existing practice.**
- **26 May, 3.45 p.m. – Zoom for staff who are supporting the oracy competitions**
- **15 - 17 June Primary Oracy Competition [The Essex Oracy Network Competition](#) — [Oracy for Schools](#)**



# Grasping Opportunities

**More opportunities -> greater economic growth -> prosperity for all**

**Digital Strategy for Lasting Impact** – free conference for Essex School Leaders 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026 to be held in Apple’s European HQ in Battersea. This event is designed to explore how technology - used purposefully and strategically - can enrich pedagogy, improve accessibility, and support wellbeing. For further details and to [register please click here or use QR code.](#)

**LinkedIn Learning** – Parents and staff via the Essex Library service  
<https://www.linkedin.com/learning-login/go/essex-gov-uk>

## Coming Soon:

Lesson resources and videos to introduce finance literacy for Primary children from Go Henry

ESSEX YEAR  
OF  
OPPORTUNITY

**GO  
ALL  
IN.**

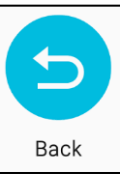
National  
Year of  
Reading  
2026

ESSEX YEAR  
OF  
OPPORTUNITY

Realise **your** potential



National  
Literacy  
Trust







# What's on offer?

A termly cycle of....

## **Go All In Together events**

Half termly broadcasted events for pupils and young people to celebrate literacy and reading, together across the nation. Featuring exciting names and faces!

## **Professional development for teachers/practitioners**

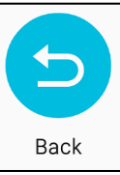
A suite of phase-specific online webinars, resource and briefings, and in-person events and conferences.

## **Events, challenges and quizzes**

A variety of reading challenges, quizzes and events for your children and young people to take part in.

throughout 2026.

# The NYoR in Essex



**ECC will promote NYoR activities through EYoO**

**ECC will plan NYoR projects with Partners from the Essex Year of Reading (EYoR)**

**Projects planned with; Libraries, Music Service, Active Essex and more.**

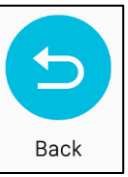
**Reprise some EYoR activities – eg Tell me a Story**

**National events can be signed up for at: [What's On For Schools | National Year Of Reading 2026 | National Literacy Trust](#)**

# Quadrant Update



# Strategic Planning Meetings: a time for change.



Strategic Planning Meetings are an opportunity for schools to meet with their link IP, and EP where appropriate, to reflect on and review inclusion improvement work over the last academic year and discuss strategic priorities for the coming year and agree what support is required, linked to whole school approaches to inclusion, with a lens on SEND.

For some time, these meetings have been held well into the Autumn term, where the focus is more on transition than whole school improvement planning.

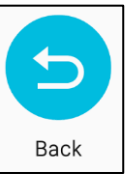
## **Test and Learn Project in NE looked at the potential impact of moving SPM to the summer term.**

Results have shown better alignment to:

- School improvement planning
- Inclusion priorities
- CPD planning

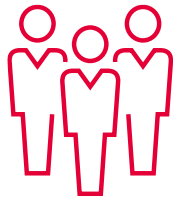


# Strategic Planning Meetings: a time for change.



**“Being able to discuss inclusion priorities and plan support during the summer term, guided by live school data, ensured clear join up to our School Improvement Plan.”**

With inclusion high on the agenda, including within the new OFSTED Toolkit, your link IP and EP can be pivotal in supporting the embedding of inclusive practice.



**“Holding the meetings after Public Examinations allowed us to ensure the right leaders were round the table.”**

Due to the combined strategic and operational elements to the meeting, it is most effective when wider leadership are present, as well as the SENCO and Head e.g. DHT Inclusion or DHT Teaching and Learning.



**“It was really helpful to discuss how the IP could support us to embed Ordinarily Available at the same time as developing our teaching and learning priorities for the following year.”**

The IP team are well equipped to support schools to audit, plan and implement change, linked to ECC’s Inclusion Strategy, with additional input from the EP team and others as appropriate.



**“We were able to ensure that the right staff received the right training and development opportunities, planned into the CPD calendar for the following academic year.”**

As well as delivering elements of the ECC Core Training Offer, IPs and EPs can also support embedding learning and reviewing impact, as part of your ongoing reflective practice.

# Essex Research School

## Current Initiatives & Focus Areas

### Updates for Spring 2026

**Sarah-Louise Johnston**


Director of Essex Research School




**Essex**  
Research  
School

# Upcoming Event: Purposeful, Effective Questioning


**Purposeful & Effective Questioning**  
FREE Online PD EVENT hosted by Essex Research School's ELE, Susan Marbe  
21 April 2026, 4pm - 5pm



**Essex Research School**



If explicit teaching and modelling is perhaps the master skill of a teacher then questioning is its closest companion. When we use questioning in a multitude of ways, it is our most powerful tool for deepening learning.



In this session we will look at the misconceptions and mistakes that teachers often make when using questioning as a pedagogical tool and present practical tools for questioning that can be embedded into your practice the very next day.

[RS Network | Free Online Event - Purposeful & Effective](#)

[Questioning](#)



Supported by the Education Endowment Foundation

# What's on?



**10 June 2026 - Lacey Davis ELE and Head Teacher at Pear Mead Primary School** Metacognition and Self-regulated learning



**1 July – Don Wry ELE and CEO of Hearts Academy Trust –** Leadership and Disadvantage



**6 July 2026 Elizabeth Millane Research Advocate and NCETM Primary Maths Specialist / Venn Maths Hub**  
CftC Effective Assessment in KS1 Maths webinar



Essex County Council

# Want the latest research, blogs, and events at your fingertips? Subscribe to the Essex Research School newsletter today!

The graphic features a yellow background with abstract shapes. In the top left, the Research Schools Network logo (three overlapping circles in blue, orange, and white) is displayed next to the text "Research Schools Network". Below this, a white banner contains the text "ESSEX RESEARCH SCHOOL" in red, and a red banner below that contains "SUBSCRIBE TODAY!" in white. To the right of the graphic is a QR code. Below the QR code, the text "Essex Research School Newsletter" is written in red.

# Harlow Early Years Event

Transforming Early Years Language and  
Communication: Harlow Futures Lessons and Next  
Steps

Transforming Early Years Language and  
Communication: Harlow Futures Lessons and Next  
Steps

**23<sup>rd</sup> March 10am to 1pm**

## Venue

**Latton Bush Centre, Harlow Southern Way, Harlow,  
Essex, CM18 7BL**

## Link to Book

[https://educationessex.essex.gov.uk/Event/  
290290](https://educationessex.essex.gov.uk/Event/290290)

Event for PVI settings, including Pre Schools, day nurseries, childminders and School nursery and reception classes. The audience we would like to capture is school senior leadership teams, for example, head teachers, deputy head teachers and EYFS leads working in Harlow.

## Description

1. We will start with an introduction to the Harlow Futures project, with an explanation of the aims and objectives and what was set out to be achieved
2. We will then hear about how Essex County Council has for the last two years invested resources in supporting settings, schools and childminders to improve their ability to support children's speech, language and communication outcomes.
3. The Early Years Education Partner will explain how the training was organised and supported to be implemented with the Early Years sector, including monitoring the progress of 3 initiatives: WellComm, Elklan, and Talk Boost.
4. The Council's Evaluation Team will explain how they set about collecting data to understand who engaged with the training and the impact it had, and what we've learned to date.
5. We will hear direct from settings and schools, who will tell us first-hand how they've used the training to benefit children and help reduce the word gap between peers and disadvantaged children.
6. Sarah English, EYEP, will then present plans for selecting and launching the 2 SLC Communication hubs in Harlow.
7. EY providers from across the system will also have stalls at the event, to showcase the different training, tools and support on offer to the Early Years sector.
8. Senior Leaders will be at the event to talk about the importance of this work, how it fits with the national focus on Early Years, GLD data and reflect on how this work can impact practice across the county.



Over coffee, why not let us know what training you want from the Education Directorate....

Education training needs survey



Thankyou.

