

ESSEX PRIMARY HEADTEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

MEETING OF THE EPHA SMALL SCHOOLS SUPPORT GROUP

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 JULY 2022 3.30 – 5.30 pm

Venue online

Clerk Pam Langmead [TEL: 01621-786359/07791 143277]

1. IN ATTENDANCE

Emily Bartram	Radwinter CE Primary
Natasha Bartram	Wimbish Primary
Hannah Coyle	Fingringhoe CE Primary
Ceri Daniels	Holy Trinity CE Primary, Eight Ash Green
Becky Keitch	St George's CE Primary, Great Bromley
Kate Mortimer	High Beech Primary (from September)
Jinnie Nichols	St Andrew's CE Primary/ St Giles' CE Primary
Maire O'Regan	Margaretting CE Primary/ Roxwell CE Primary/Ford End CE Primary
Lucy Overton	Great Tey CE Primary
Jennifer Penney	Shalford Primary
Sarah Stevenson	Langenhoe Primary
Amy Wareham	Matching Green CE Primary
Lyndsey Wood	St cedd's CE Primary, Bradwell
Pam Langmead	EPHA Professional Officer
Richard Manville	FundEd
Sean Tobin	CEO Berlesduna MAT/member of national Small Schools' group

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Claire Berry	Birchanger CE Primary
Hayley Dyer	Crays Hill Primary
Alison Kerrell	Great Bardfield Primary
Stephanie Newland	St Margaret's CE Primary, Toppesfield
Harriet Phelps-Knights	EPHA Chair/ Janet Duke Primary
Melissa Raymond	Finchingfield Primary
Sarah Roffey	High Beech Primary
Simon Rance	Ashdon Primary
Theresa Walker	St Mary's, Woodham Ferrers

Jinnie Nichols, the Chair of the Small School Group, arrived late (due to a number of unavoidable issues at her school!) and, in her absence, Ceri Daniels, Vice-Chair, chaired the meeting. She welcomed everyone to the meeting, acknowledging how busy everyone is at this time of year.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th May were approved as an accurate record. The Professional Officer noted that she had included information sent by Ceri Daniels following the meeting, outlining the current thinking of the Anglican Diocese in response to the DfE White Paper and focus on structural changes. There is a meeting for church schools on Monday 11th July in Chelmsford.

It was noted that all matters arising had been progressed and were on the agenda for the meeting.

4. SUPPORT FOR SMALL-SCHOOL HEADTEACHER WELLBEING AND CAPACITY

The Professional Officer noted that, at the last meeting, the group talked about the opportunity for participation in the HeartHealth programme (led by Maria Brosnan) which is largely subsidised by funding from the Education Taskforce. Heads were encouraged to sign up for this, if they wished. However, Pam explained that EPHA is willing and able to support other counselling and coaching programmes and Headteachers should contact her to discuss if they wished to access support.

The group shared information about a number of counsellors and coaches that they would recommend, including the following:

Emma Steadman, a therapist who provides excellent supervision to a headteacher in North East. She is based in Colchester and her phone number is 07841029305. She provides both remote and face to face sessions.

Last term the Mid headteachers heard from **Christina Gooday**, a former Essex headteacher who now works as a coach/counsellor in the Mid area. Christina's contact details are
07784 490 434
CGooday@outlook.com

Sean Tobin noted that his trust use BCCS and have received exceptional supervision from that company.

Staff therapy - £50 per session. This can be funded by school, the individual or any combination of the 2. Most schools tend to fund for up to 10 sessions. We are mainly working via Zoom at present but can be flexible around this or face to face as necessary. Some of our work is either with part-time staff or those who are currently signed off work and this often takes place during the day. However, for those who are working a full week, we can again offer flexibility around working outside of school hours.

Group supervision for Heads - £250 for 1.5 hours for a group of 8. This would generally run once a half term.

DSL supervision- Catherine and I both agree that DSL supervision is best done on a 1:1 basis because of the emotive nature of the work.

Individual supervision- £70 per session if going into school to deliver 1 supervision. £300 for

a whole day to deliver 5 sessions. £180 for a morning to deliver 3 sessions. £120 for a morning or afternoon to deliver 2 sessions. Most supervision sessions run for 45 minutes to an hour and take place every half term.

Louise Picton

Counsellor, Head of Clinical Supervision, trainer

Telephone: 07715 665249

Maire O'Regan recommended **Prue Barnes**, who she meets with once a month; she is particularly helpful for Executive Heads who run more than one school.

The Professional Officer noted that the EPHA Support Directory includes information about a number of counsellors.

Expansion of the Colleague Support programme.

The Professional Officer explained that EPHA is in the process of expanding the colleague support offer, and needs help and support from headteachers and senior leaders in Essex schools. The aim is to:

- Offer colleague support to any headteacher in Essex, to help their confidence and wellbeing – please contact the Professional Officer if you would like to participate.
- Broker support for occasional and time limited support from headteachers, deputies, senior leaders and SENCOs, to help out another school on an ad-hoc basis. This is not intended to solve a long-term staffing problem, but offers a way of sharing expertise and capacity across schools, and perhaps helping out in a crisis. Small schools may be in particular need of support on occasion, but this offer will be considered for any school, on a case-by-case basis.

Pam reminded the group that at the area meetings this term, headteachers were asked to complete an expression of interest form if they felt that they and their school could participate in the Colleague Support programme. A number of headteachers in each quadrant have offered support, including offers to lend teachers, deputies, SENCOs and subject leaders. Small school heads are encouraged to contact Pam if they need support within their school.

5. SMALL SCHOOL HEADTEACHERS' NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE

Sean Tobin was welcomed to the meeting. He is the CEO of Berlesduna MAT, which is a group of eight schools, including two small schools. He was asked to be a member of the national small schools' roundtable, which comprises of about 10 CEOs from MATs across the country. The roundtable was established by the DfE, so the remit of the group inevitably focuses on the benefits of small schools joining MATs, but Sean stressed that there has been the opportunity to be completely frank and the three meetings so far have been useful; he feels that the DfE is listening to the discussions that the group having. The name of the project is Small Schools- Viability and Sustainability within a MAT.

Sean noted that there are nearly 2000 schools in England with 100 or fewer pupils, and 91% of those are serving rural communities. Interestingly, only 30% of those are currently in a

multi academy trust. The aim of the group is to consider and determine the sustainability and viability of small schools in the long term, in the context of the DfE White Paper.

The Roundtable focuses on four themes:

- The opportunities and benefits of small schools within a MAT;
- The challenges of supporting small schools within a MAT and can these be overcome;
- Can a Trust be effective with just small schools?;
- What options should the DfE be considering to support the sustainability of small schools (whether in or out of a MAT).

The group has discussed the opportunities and benefits of small schools, but recognises that they can put a strain on the resources and finances of a MAT.

The group consider that the opportunities and benefits fall within a number of areas:

- Resilience
- Staffing and leadership
- Finances and premises
- Quality and capacity of provision
- Partnerships
- Community
- Capacity development opportunities

The group of CEOs create case studies to feed into meetings, to help unpick the challenges and find solutions and mitigations. One huge advantage of the Trust system is that MATs can make changes rapidly, without the mechanisms and regulations that restrict larger local authorities.

The group has almost finished work on a Presentation Pack which will be made available to Local Authorities and Dioceses, and hopefully small schools as well. Sean confirmed that the group will continue, as far as he is aware, with the next meeting in September. It will be extended to include other organisations, including dioceses.

It was **AGREED** that the Presentation Pack should be shared at a future meeting and the group would welcome further feedback from Sean.

**November
meeting**

Sean stressed that discussions in the group, including with DfE representatives, confirm that there is no political appetite to close small schools, rather to make them sustainable and viable. The group feeds back to education ministers in the DfE.

6. FundEd – MEMBERSHIP FOR ALL SMALL SCHOOLS

The Professional Officer reminded heads that, at the last meeting, there was a request for information about funding opportunities; she committed to providing an update at each meeting. However, since the last meeting, she was approached by Richard Manville, the Managing Director of FundEd, a company that provides support, advice and guidance to schools and PTAs about fundraising. She and the EPHA Chair met with Richard to discuss

FundEd and EPHA has made the decision to fund membership for all small schools within the group.

Richard introduced himself and gave a presentation about FundEd and the benefits that this membership will offer schools. He explained that he has set up a group membership for EPHA small schools and the information, including a Getting Started on Your fundraising Campaign document, and the log in details will be circulated by the Professional Officer following the meeting.

Getting Started on your fundraising campaign

Outcomes are everything

Fundraising, as opposed to funding in general, is used to buy products and services that provide an enriched education.

The nature of these products and services will help you build a compelling story and highlight the positive outcomes that your fundraising will achieve for the pupils at your school.

What are you fundraising for?

The following questions will help you develop a plan

- What will be the benefit to the school/children?
- When would you like it by?
- Where are you in the process of fundraising for this product?
- Approximately how much do you need to raise?
- Have you selected a supplier?

Creating a 'wish list' is a good place to start. Useful both for planning your activity and gaining an understanding of how much you need to raise. Wish lists can be shared with potential donors and the wider school community.

Fundraising is usually thought of as an activity to raise money for enriching or extra-curricular activities or products. However, if you do need to raise funds for general classroom resources, we suggest you try to bundle these up into 'classroom packs' and add these to your wish list.

Liaise with your PTA if you have one, so that you are working together on developing your plan. A PTA will control their own funds, so if they are working to an agreed wish list these funds will then go towards those agreed targets.

The Fund Ed website and magazines are full of inspiration and support – back copies available on line. The case studies can help a school understand what can be achieved via real life examples they can relate to. Members will receive these magazines every three months.

Developing your strategy

Your fundraising strategy will be determined by the type, location, and demographic makeup of your school, as well as the time and resources at your disposal.

A strategy using a mix of activities will maintain momentum and provide alternatives if one approach falls short.

These could include:

- Grants
- Crowdfunding
- Regular Giving
- Sponsorship
- Facilities Hire
- Event Fundraising
- Non-event Fundraising

Finding a grant

A grant provides a non-repayable sum that is to be used for a specific purpose outlined in the grant application process.

- Use the FundEd Grants database: the sector leading [FundEd database](#) allows you to search by Key stage, category and region and includes examples of previously funded projects
- Research past successful applications – if your school has been successful in the past, contact that grant provider to discuss your current campaign.
- Search the internet for funders and read through their advice, case studies and application requirements. Use social media to link to other schools and ask for recommendations.
- Use a funding consultant – they will research and find grants for you. The initial search is often free, but they will then charge a fee for writing a bid and then take a commission on a successful application.
- Search for local funding opportunities from councils, local authorities, businesses, charitable bodies, and Community Foundations or similar. The PTA.co.uk website provides an up-to-date table of regional grants and support via [local pages](#).

Once you find a grant:

1. Confirm that you fit the criteria.
2. Check the deadlines for application carefully.
3. Contact the grant provider, if possible, to discuss your project.
4. Research other successful school bids

Also.....

Ask for help – you might find a supportive parent, governor, or another member of staff with experience of writing bids or applying for grants. FundEd will read through a bid application to help a (member) school ensure that the bid is effective.

A grant provider might require a school to find a proportion of the grant value themselves or 'match fund' the amount awarded. Additional fundraising activities can support this and cover fees of third-party funding consultants or bid writers.

Some grants require you to have charitable status. If required a PTA may be able to apply on the school's behalf.

If you receive a grant, make sure you keep in touch with the provider, giving details on how the grant was spent and the subsequent benefits to the school. This will help if you wish to reapply to this funder in the future.

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding uses an online platform to attract lots of smaller donations, that when added together help achieve a larger fundraising target. Importantly, although you set a goal, you do not need to reach a specific amount to access the funds raised. The aim is to achieve or exceed the goal, but all funds donated during a campaign can be used.

Most schools are aware of sponsored activity fundraising.

These events are often organised by a PTA or pupils themselves and have the added benefit of your participants also being your main marketeers and cheerleaders for the event.

If combined with a crowdfunding campaign this help create more publicity for the fundraising goal and ultimately boost support.

Regular giving

- Easy to set up, time efficient & delivers ongoing revenue
- Allows you to promote a broader 'wish list' of projects
- Donations can be made by the immediate school community & can help to develop an alumni support base
- Provides a route to gain support from local companies and & in return promote them to the school community
- Provides great ongoing opportunities to raise the profile of the school, both internally and externally
- No Standing Orders or Direct Debits to set up
- Gift aid where applicable is collected automatically

Whereas a crowdfunding campaign can be time consuming once a Regular Giving account has been set up it is easy to maintain and grow interest and can provide valuable additional regular income.

Campaigns with eye-catching photography and exciting campaign graphics - can promote school successes and raise the profile of a school in its local community. Indirectly, this kind of activity can help to attract more pupils to the school, as well as creating opportunities to develop new relationships with community organisations and businesses.

Working with a PTA

If you are lucky to have one, it is important not to take a Parent Teacher Association for granted - instead, appreciate it as an invaluable asset. In addition to raising their own funds, PTAs can:

- Support and help run school led campaigns and events.
- Work with the school to develop wish lists.
- Develop community partnerships.
- Help engage 'hard to reach' parents.
- Audit parents for useful skill sets.
- Contact and liaise with potential suppliers.
- Take the lead on social or eco campaigns.
- Help create memorable, high profile events.

It is important to remember that most PTA's operate as a separate legal identity, with their own bank account and constitution. Obviously, they are raising funds for the school, but they are not controlled by the school, but are run and managed by their own committee.

As a member, your PTA also can access the advice and guidance on the FundEd website and the dedicated PTA+ section.

Other general fundraising activities to consider:

- **Printed products** - Popular examples include: Tea towels, Cook Books, Leavers Gifts, Mugs, Calendars & Christmas Cards.
- **Toys and Merchandise** – these can be sold at events and used as raffle or competition prizes.
- **Recycling**
- **Setting up a lottery** is easy to manage and can generate repeating income.
- Shopping affiliate or reward schemes

Harnessing support from local businesses

To begin with, consider current partnerships:

- How do they support you now?
- What have they helped you achieve?
- Is this support ongoing?
- Have you talked to them about working with them more?

Then target 'low hanging fruit':

- Local suppliers / businesses near the school.
- Parents who work in or run local businesses.
- Corporations having an impact in your area, construction companies, amenity tips, transport providers.
- Local companies offering to 'match fund' employee fundraising.

BE BOLD!

- Contact a decision maker and outline your campaigns.
- Personal contact can be vital in securing support.
- Show that you offer good value for money.
- Give them options and choices.
- Demonstrate impact!

Standing Out From the Crowd

Marketing and income generation should go hand in hand. Strategic marketing can help define and articulate key benefits to potential supporters and position your school so that it is attractive to sponsors.

Your fundraising plans should allow you to segment your target audience(s) and potential supporters and then tailor your approaches accordingly.

Fundraising Support Staff

Many schools now employ someone to help with fundraising, either part time or full time depending on the needs and size of the school. Even a few hours a week can offer much

need support to a business or finance manager.

However, it can be hard to justify the cost of employing this additional person, especially if a new role to the school. An alternative is to look for a volunteer to come in and help one day a week, perhaps with the understanding that this could develop into a part time paid role.

A fulltime fundraiser will take the lead on income generation while a volunteer or part time person will liaise with and be led by the Business Manager or equivalent. In both roles they will liaise with a PTA if there is one and help maintain continuity as PTA committee personnel change every few years.

How to find a fundraiser

Some larger schools may wish to advertise the role locally but for most schools this is not necessary. Search across the wider school community, for an enthusiastic capable person. It may well be that someone from a PTA comes forward, but any parent with transferable skills (such as planning, networking and public speaking) could be attracted to a role that might eventually allow them to work part time.

In addition you can sign up for Funding Alerts via the group – though FundEd can add you to this listing if you email us with permission

Social media

Twitter @fundEd4schools

Facebook Group @FundEd

The presentation (including a recording) can be found on the EPHA website www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk and will be circulated to the small school headteacher group.

7. SMALL SCHOOLS SUPPORT GROUP CONFERENCE

The Professional Officer noted that the following presenters have been booked for the conference on Wednesday 19th October 2022, which is being held at The Lion Inn, Boreham:

- Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne – planning the journey to 2030
- An Ofsted HMI (to be advised) focusing on inspecting small schools
- Rob Merchant – Anglican Diocese - what the DfE White Paper means for church schools
- Dave Keeling – Independent Thinking

The conference is definitely intended to be a rewarding, informative and enjoyable day for small school headteachers. Pam suggested a slot focusing on celebrating small schools. It was **AGREED** that she would circulate a survey/suggestions for feedback to headteachers to share with their school communities (including pupils, staff, governors and parents) to get feedback on the positive aspects of small schools.

**Professional
Officer**

The group discussed how all small school headteachers can be encouraged to attend the conference – it will be a flop if only 15 or so turn up! It was suggested that if a headteacher could access the Colleague Support programme to cover their absence so that they can

attend the conference. Everyone was asked to contact local small school headteachers and encourage them to attend. Although there is no charge for the conference, Pam will circulate the programme and a booking form before the end of term, and will contact heads individually if they don't respond.

Professional
Officer

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND SUGGESTED ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

a) Funding issues

Sarah Stevenson, headteacher at Langenhoe Primary, explained that she had just come from a meeting with Yannick Stupples-Whyley, the Senior Finance Business Partner at Essex County Council. She was pleased to report that the meeting resolved a long-standing financial issue involving her school. During the meeting Yannick mentioned the Sustainable Schools Dashboard, which is being revised and will be relaunched for all schools in September. The SEPs will be encouraging all small school governing bodies to complete the audit. It was agreed that the purpose and value, and impact, of the Sustainable Schools Toolkit will be discussed at the next meeting in November.

November
meeting

Sarah urged headteachers not to give up if they feel that they are entitled to funding. She did feel that Yannick is aware of the financial strains that small schools are under, and there may be some changes to future policy to help small school funding.

Yannick's email is Yannick.Stupples-Whyley@essex.gov.uk

She noted that they discussed the issue of school balances, which gives a skewed impression of how much funding sits in schools and academies; for example, one secondary school has a carry forward this year of around £7 million. Jinnie Nichols confirmed that she asked the LA to analyse the distribution of balances, particularly highlighting whether they are rural or urban schools. This research inevitably showed that small, rural schools are, generally, holding very small balances.

The Professional Officer stressed that the Local Authority has no power to claw back funding from academies, and does not intend to take back funding from maintained schools, but it is clear that there is a real imbalance in the system.

Maire O'Regan noted that she received huge financial support from their MAT, but lost out on Key Stage 1 funding, which had a real impact on her budget.

Emily Bartram noted the immediate impact of the energy crisis, explaining that her school's electricity bill has increased by 111%, which is crippling her budget plans. Jinnie Nichols noted that she is a representative on the Schools Forum, and particularly focuses on the financial challenges for small schools; it was **AGREED** that she will raise the issue of the lack of funding support for fuel bills at the Schools Forum meeting next week.

Jinnie
Nichols

b) Children coming from the Ukraine

Amy Wareham noted that she has recently admitted 5 children from the Ukraine (with another arriving soon), which has had a real impact in her small school of just 92 children. The Professional Officer confirmed that funding will be forthcoming for each primary pupil (£6,580) but that this money has not yet been received by the LA; the Professional Officer

Professional

AGREED to contact Shamsun Noor to find out if the funding will be distributed soon. There is also a real shortage of translators and other services for schools to help them support these children, many of whom do not speak English and may be traumatised and impacted by their recent experiences. **Officer**

Following the meeting the Professional Officer had the following response from Shamsun Noor:

“For the Homes for Ukraine scheme the government is providing funding to local authorities to provide education services for children from families arriving from Ukraine under this scheme, including support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This funding will be paid by DfE and we are currently working at pace to develop the methodology and mechanism for the allocation of this education funding for children and young people and will write to local authorities once this work is completed.

“On timing, we anticipate funding to be paid in mid-July..”

There was a conversation about admissions and provision, and whether a child from Ukraine could be held back a year, if they were not ready to move up a year. Headteachers have received contradictory information from SEPs, and it was suggested that these discussions should be escalated to the quadrant Head of EY and Education, or even Clare Kershaw if necessary.

7. DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS FOR THE 2022/23 SCHOOL YEAR

- Wednesday 19th October 2022 – conference, in person, 9.00 am – 1.00 pm Lion Inn, Boreham
- Wednesday 23rd November 2022
- Wednesday 18th January 2023
- Thursday 16th March 2023
- Wednesday 10th May 2023
- Thursday 13th July 2023

Meetings to be held online (unless otherwise indicated) starting at 3.30 pm

The meeting ended at 5.30 pm