

**WEST ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION TERMLY CONFERENCE
MANOR OF GROVES HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTRE
FRIDAY 2 FEBRUAY 2024**

MEETING SUMMARY: ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

p 2 **ATTENDANCE LIST AND APOLOGIES**

p 3 **COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS** Dr Emma Kell

p 5 **EPHA update** Isobel Barron and Pam Langmead

p 5 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS 2023/24**

WEPHA Conferences, Collonade Suite, Manor of Groves
 Friday 17 May 2024 – Dave Keeling
 Friday 27th September 2024
 Friday 31st January 2025
 Friday 16th May 2025

WEST meetings with the Local Authority officers 2024/25
Manor Suite, Manor of Groves
 Wednesday 12 June 2024

Headteachers' Annual Conference 2024
 Friday 22 March 2024 Chelmsford City Race Course

Deputy Headteachers' Annual Conferences
 Friday 11 October 2024 Colchester Stadium

WEST ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION TERMLY CONFERENCE
FRIDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2024

Headteachers

Ros Allsop	Clavering Primary	Ross Jones	Upshire Primary
Isobel Barron	Roseacres Primary/Chair	Ian kendal	Our Lady of Fatima Trust
Dale Bateman	Coopersale and Theydon Garnon CE Primary	Alison Kerrell	Holy Cross Catholic Primary
Annemarie Black	St Alban's Catholic Primary	Annette Norris	Katherines Primary
Casey Cox	St James' CE Primary	Teresa Phillips	Thomas Willingale Primary
Matt Curzon	St Mary's CE Primary, S	Andrew Price	Manuden Primary
Ben Davey	Henham and Ugley Primary	Marne Reynecke	Ashdon Primary
Liz Gelston	Hatfield Heath Primary	David Rogers	Bentfield Primary
Lisa Gibbs	Leverton Primary	Linda Todd	Elsenham CE Primary
Katie Henson	St Andrew's CE Primary, North Weald	Sharon Vessey	Birchanger Primary
Lucy Heys	Stebbing Primary	Amy Wareham	Matching Green CE Primary
Monica Holland	Longwood Primary	Kevin Watts	Great Dunmow Primary
Claire Jackman	Great Easton Primary		
Chris Jarmain	St Mary's CE Primary, SW		

In Attendance

Pam Langmead	EPHA Professional Officer
Dr Emma Kell	Those That Can Ltd
Laura Parr	Great Easton Primary

Apologies

Clare Charter	Dunmow St Mary's Primary
Sarah Cowley	The Henry Moore Primary
Michael Doughty	Milwards Primary and Nursery
Patrick Kenney	St John Fisher Catholic Primary
Colin Raraty	Rodings Primary
Sami Taylor	Limes Farm Infants
Stacey Ward	Church Langley Primary

Note: If your attendance or apologies have not been noted please contact the EPHA Professional Officer at pam@langmead.me.uk for amendment.

**NOTES OF THE SPRING TERM WEPHA CONFERENCE HELD ON FRIDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2024
COMMENCING AT 9.15 AM**

Action

1. EPHA WELCOME

Isobel Barron, WEPHA Chair, welcomed the West headteachers at the meeting. She welcomed the new heads in West.

2. COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

Dr Emma Kell is director of Those That Can Ltd. She has 25 years of experience as a teacher and leader in UK secondary schools and currently teaches in Alternative Provision. She is a qualified Performance Coach and speaks regularly on teacher wellbeing, recruitment and retention, Emma writes for a variety of publications including TES and BBC Teach. She has completed a doctorate on teacher well-being and parenting at Middlesex University and is author of *How To Survive in Teaching* (Bloomsbury, 2018) and *A Little Guide For Teachers: Wellbeing and Self-Care* and *A Little Guide for Teachers: Engaging Parents and Carers*. She is currently writing her fourth book, *Real Lives of Teachers*, due for publication with Sage Education in 2024. *She can be found at <https://www.those-that-can.com/>.*

In this workshop, Emma explored how to master those tricky, courageous conversations, that all headteachers have to face. She included:

- Key principles and real-world scenarios
- Values: what really matters (and what doesn't)
- Impact - what (exactly) are you aiming to achieve?
- Emotions and empathy
- The practicalities: who, when, when, how...?
- A chance to practice

She started the session by asking:

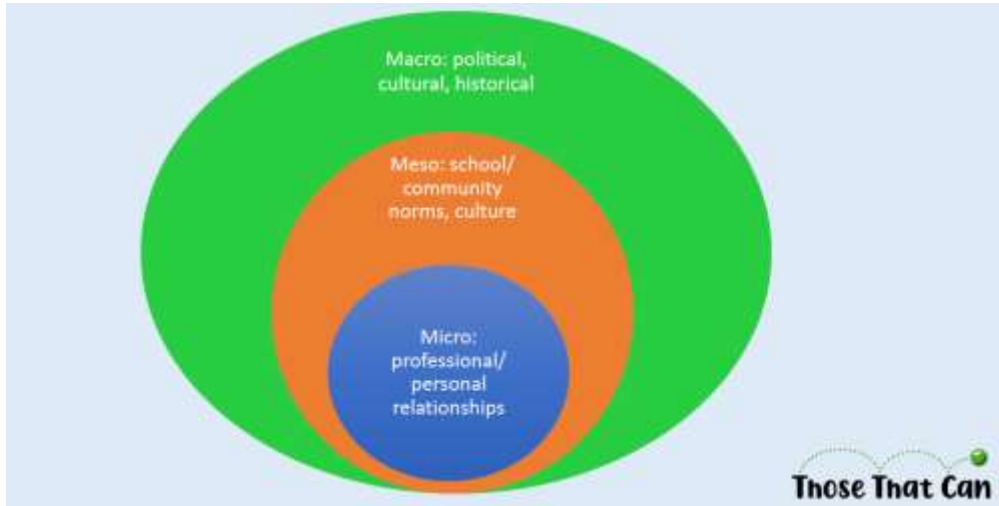
Which image most closely chimes with how you feel about our profession at the moment?



Do you have an alternative image?

Those That Can

She outlined at length the challenges faced by headteachers both at school level, and on the national and international arena.



Macro: political, cultural, historical

- Covid-19
- Information Overload
- War and Conflict – Intolerance and Extremism
- Recruitment and Retention
- Levels of Need and Deprivation
- Workload
- Public Perceptions of Schools

Meso: school/ community norms, culture

- Staff Absence
- Holy Grails and Silver Bullets
- Matching your Values
- Communication, Calendars and Meetings
- Emotional Contagion
- Parental/Community Engagement
- Behaviour!
- Mental Ill Health

Micro: professional/ personal relationships

- Personal Challenges
- Perfectionism
- Guilt and Shame
- Selflessness?
- Confidence, Identity and Professional Integrity
- Compassion Stress*
- The Cost...

She talked about 3 stages of compassion and potential stress:

- Satisfaction – despite everything, we know we’re doing a good job
- Stress – kicks in when factors beyond your control prevent you from doing the job you want to do
- Stress injury – akin to burnout

Emma set out a framework for facing challenging conversations:

VIEW: A FRAMEWORK

V: Values

I: Importance

E: Empathy

W: Who, Where, Why, What...

The group discussed emotions, and then values, including links values to scenarios where courageous conversations are needed.

Things to remember during a courageous conversation

Each person is responsible for the way they behave and for what they say.

Be aware of power dynamics

Simply feeling heard (active listening) and seen will go a significant way towards resolving any issues

Focus on what unites you (the interests of the child!)

Staying calm and respectful will always win the day.

Keep your eyes on the objective and look for signs that you are getting there.

Bear Traps



Lying, threatening, stonewalling, crying, sarcasm, shouting, silence, accusing, taking offence: difficult conversations can present an arsenal of thwarting ploys.

But you also have an array of potential responses, ranging from passive to aggressive.

The most effective is to move to the middle: disarm the ploy by labelling and addressing the behaviour you are seeing. For instance, if your counterpart has stopped responding to you, you can simply say, "I don't know how to interpret your silence."

Adapted from Holly Weeks

Emma mentioned a couple of helpful books:

Radical Candour, by Kim Scott

Permission to feel, by Mark Brackett

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emmakell@me.com

<https://www.those-that-can.com/>

Chris Jarman, West Vice-Chair, thanked Emma for her excellent presentation.

3. EPHA UPDATE

The EPHA Professional Officer reminded headteachers about the annual conference on Friday 22nd March, and encouraged heads to send their application form, as places are going fast!

Dates for the diary

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The meeting ended at 12.20 pm