

Executive Director's Annual Report for EPHA AGM 2017

It has been a very busy year since my previous report to EPHA. In that time, we have seen a 'snap' election (no change of Minister though), implementation of countless new initiatives from the Government, including the National Funding Formula and a Local Authority rapidly shrinking. However, Essex Primary Schools continue to improve in Ofsted ratings, data and popularity with parents! You are doing a great job as Essex Heads.

The challenges for Heads continues to rise with the following being the most pressing:

- Shrinking budgets – staff redundancies
- Recruitment and Retention still a major issue
- New Headteacher support and welfare
- LA Restructuring into SLIS support – knowing who is now responsible for what?
- Continued frustrations with Social Care and a lack of support from other professions to engage with EHCPs
- Broadband – The poor service received by some Essex Schools is limiting their opportunities to teach a broad and balanced curriculum
- SEND frustrations of exhausting regulations and paperwork
- Mental Health Challenges of damaged and vulnerable children and adults
- Safeguarding challenges which can lead to complaints by parents to Ofsted
- Parental Engagement and consistent support for behaviour, homework and other initiatives
- Curriculum changes with PSHE becoming compulsory across all schools from September 2019
- Early Years challenges including Baseline Assessment, work force reform and 30 hours of free childcare
- High stakes testing continues with the potential to distort and corrupt the curriculum - ASP introduced and a farewell to Raise on Line!
- Government expectation of constant improvement of data
- Governor recruitment and training to improve their strategic role within the leadership and management of schools
- Behaviour more challenging than ever before – From younger children and parents who do accept authority
- Public sector pay cap continues – morale at lowest
- Re-structuring of Health support with the introduction of Virgin Care & Barnardo's
- GDPR – Another bureaucratic nightmare which continues to gain pace and create panic among schools across Essex when we hear the possible fines that could be levied.
- School Readiness – In a recent NAHT survey four fifths of school leaders believed they had an issue with school readiness. 86% of Heads felt that School Readiness has got worse over the past five years.
- Now a new RSC in the form of Sue Baldwin who replaces Tim Coulson in the East of England

EPHA Executive Director's response to these challenges:

- ✓ Visited as many New Heads as possible so far +20 new Heads including a new initiative this term to have quadrant meetings for New Heads
- ✓ Sit on the SLIS School Improvement Board for Essex
- ✓ Met with Clare Kershaw and challenged her over these issues with varied success
- ✓ Sit on the Schools Forum as observer/Substitute
- ✓ Sit on the Recruitment & Retention Task and Finish Group
- ✓ Sit on each of the quadrant Children's Partnership Boards representing Primary Schools' interests
- ✓ Sit on Schools Broadband sub – group
- ✓ Sit on the Mental Health Working Party supporting changes
- ✓ Sit on Stay Safe in Mid and North quadrants
- ✓ Met with ESETT to understand the challenges of their sector
- ✓ Appeared twice on BBC Radio Essex – Talking up the role of Headteacher in Essex Schools
- ✓ Spoken with Charlotte Rose – New Political Editor of BBC Essex
- ✓ Tweeted at Conferences/EPHA events
- ✓ Represented EPHA on the Virtual School Governing Body supporting our most Vulnerable
- ✓ Travelled to Westminster twice to lobby MPs from Essex over issues including Funding, NFF and SEND
- ✓ Represented EPHA's views at NAHT Essex Branch level (Life Member)
- ✓ Represented EPHA at the annual NAHT Primary Conference
- ✓ Attended an Essex SEND Conference at Chelmsford College
- ✓ Written various documents and reviews for Heads
- ✓ Sit on the steering committee of the MAT2MAT CEO group funded by the RSC
- ✓ Sit on a National Lobbying Group led by Dame Estelle Morris
- ✓ Sitting on a collaborative enquiry group in the North East looking at School Readiness
- ✓ Written a summary of Behaviour Report for the Government by Tom Bennett
- ✓ Sit on the management group of WEISF challenging colleagues over the poor implementation of GDPR
- ✓ Met with Harriet, Pam and Nick on a termly basis to review our strategy and support for Heads
- ✓ Worked closely with Simon Thompson, Executive Director, ASHE in forming a consistent view with the Local Authority
- ✓ Supported the training/coaching for Heads by Viv Grant last summer

I look forward to lobbying the Local Authority, Government, Ofsted, DfE and of course the new RSC on your behalf!

Nigel Hookway
EPHA Executive Director
October 2017