

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

North East	Wednesday 10 November 2021	Colchester Football Stadium
Mid	Thursday 11 November 2021	The Lion Inn, Boreham
West	Wednesday 17 November 2021	Online
South	Thursday 18 November 2021	Holiday Inn, Basildon

Action

1. WELCOME, THANK YOU AND NOTICES

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

North East

Debbie Conroy	Sir Martin Frobisher Academy
Joseph Fielder	Heathlands CE Primary
Karen Jones	Rolph CE Primary (Executive Head)
Hannah McCann	Gosbecks Primary
John Poulson	Iceni Academy
Pieter Labuschange	Unity Academy
Valerie Rose	Ravens Academy (Principal)
Hannah Watson	Stanway Primary (Acting Headteacher)

Mid

Jamie Bearman	St Peter's West Hanningfield
Lucinda Bellett	Richard de Clare Primary (Head of School)
Hannah Cagney	Bocking Primary
Lisa Christian	John Ray Infants
Xanthe Glynn	St Nicholas CE Primary, Tillingham
Sue Kemp	Silver End Academy (Head of School)
Nicola Morgan-Soane	Richard de Clare Primary (Executive Head)
Natasha Outhwaite	Trinity Road Primary
Ferliene Willis	Woodcroft Nursery
Carolyn White	De Vere Primary (Head of School)

West

Emily Bartram	Radwinter Primary
Natasha Bartram	Wimbish Primary (Acting headteacher)
Justine Brooks	Thaxted Primary (Acting, from Autumn half term)
Michael Doughty	Milwards Primary
Jennifer Hone	Helena Romanes (Primary)
Ian Kendal	St John Fisher Catholic Primary (Interim Headteacher)
Andrew Laing	Great Sampford CE Primary (Head of School- autumn term)
Sophie Laing	Little Parndon Primary (Acting headteacher)
Tom Le Masurier	Stebbing Primary
Nick Mallender	Staples Road Primary
Linda Todd	Elsenham CE Primary

South

Rachel Anthony	Runwell Primary
Tommas Bottrill	Plumberow Primary Academy (Head of School)
Emma Campkin	Kingswood Primary
Rachelle Tidiman	Ghyllgrove Primary (Acting co-head)
Lisa Morley	Ghyllgrove Primary (Acting co-head)
Charlotte Leasure	Ashingdon Primary Academy

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

North East

Donna Parker Ardleigh St Mary's CE Primary

West

Michelle Hughes Thaxted Primary

South

Liz Keeble Vange Primary

At the Mid meeting the EPHA Chair and Director of Education both said goodbye and thank you to Cathie Bonich, who has worked as a School Effectiveness Partner for many years. Before that she was an Essex headteacher in West, and was a key member of the EPHA Executive (including being on the panel to appoint the EPHA Professional Officer!).

2. **LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE**

Clare Kershaw (North East, Mid and South meetings)

Philippa Holliday (North East meeting)

Lisa Fergus (South meeting)

Nicola Woolf (West meeting)

Catherine Hutley (Mid meeting)

Jo Barclay

Carolyn Terry

a) **DIRECTOR'S WELCOME**

Clare Kershaw welcomed headteachers to the meeting, expressing her pleasure at meeting in person after such a long time. She noted that headteachers have been amazing during the pandemic and should be extremely proud of what they have done. The collective team effort has demonstrated the strength of the education system in Essex.

She reminded everyone of the Education strategic aims for 2021-22:

Drive collaboration, partnership working and collective improvement across the Education, Health and Care system.

So that a connected system can achieve more significant, sustainable improvements utilising all of our collective assets, resources, skills and innovation for the benefit of all children and young people.

Encourage place-based working, understanding the needs, challenges and opportunities of different localities of Essex.

So that we can respond effectively, make best use of resources and encourage all relevant partners in those localities to work effectively together around the needs of young people. Including forging links with local employers and post 16 opportunities to support economic growth and lead to Essex jobs for the young people of Essex.

Align our workforce, strategies, communication and information across our directorate, behind one clear vision and overarching strategy.

So that our business and service plans enable achievement of our vision for Education in Essex with a workforce who is well equipped and supported to achieve the very best outcomes for children and young people in Essex.

Support, drive and enable whole school/setting **inclusive practice**, underpinned by our **early intervention** and **non-labelling** approach

So that all children and young people have access to high quality, inclusive learning experiences, with timely intervention to remove barriers and build aspiration.

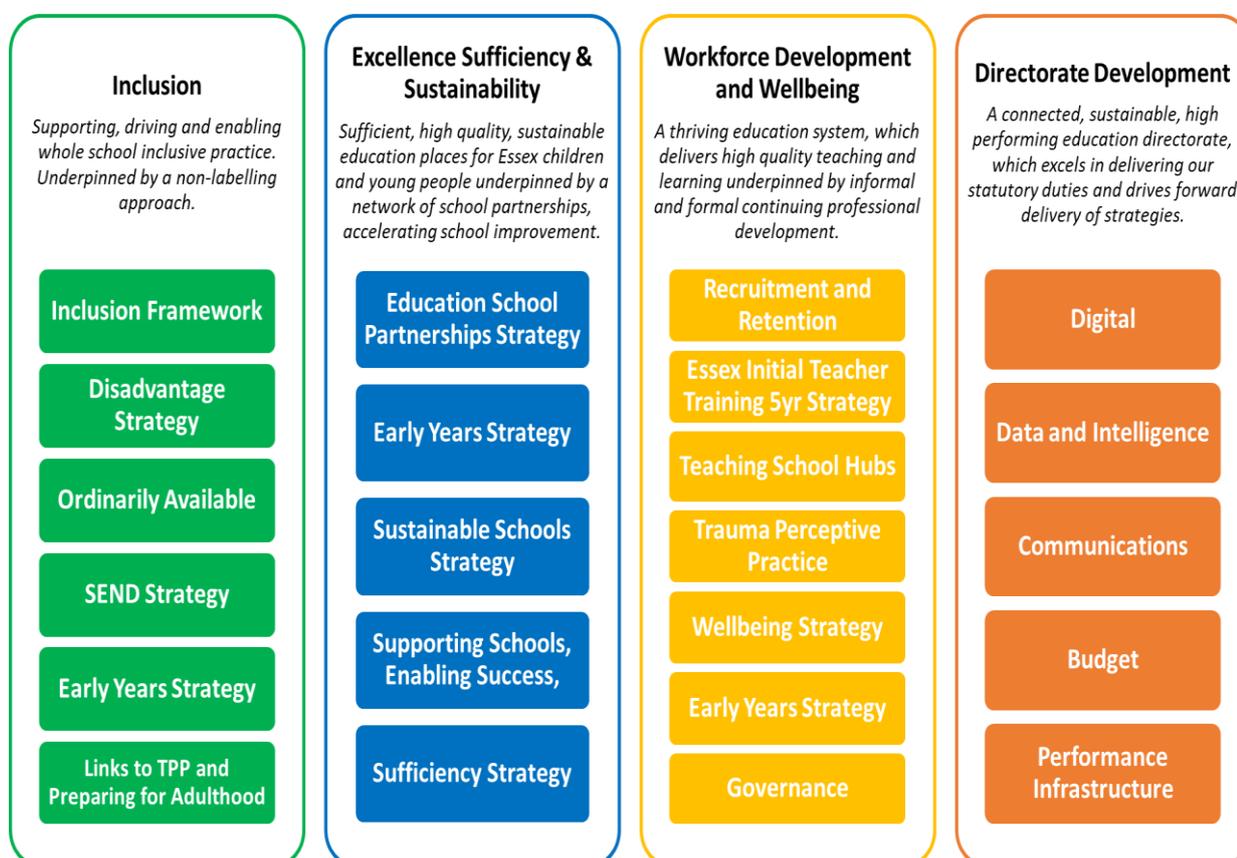
Deliver **sufficient, high quality, sustainable education places** for all Essex children and young people, underpinned by a network of school partnerships accelerating school improvement.

So that every child and young person has a place in a 'good' or outstanding' school which delivers high quality learning experiences, attainment and retention of skills and knowledge and enables successful transition into adult life.

Enable Essex to have a **thriving education workforce** with access to informal and formal professional learning opportunities and **wellbeing** support initiatives.

So that the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning can be sustained and our best talent nurtured and retained within Essex for the benefit of children and young people.

The key strategies include:



The core work for this year will include:

- Working with all **settings, schools and MATs** to ensure the **highest quality of education** is provided to all children and young people **and inclusion** is at the heart of all of our work. CK noted that the DfE appear to be rolling back slightly on academisation, with other higher priorities, although a White Paper is expected in the new year. However, the development of a sustainable system is critical, particularly to sustain small, rural schools.
- Working with Roy Blatchford and the Essex Education Taskforce on the **delivery of the activities the Taskforce has put together including the '2022 Year of**

- Reading**'. CK noted that reading is featuring highly in every Ofsted inspection.
- A continued focus on our SEND improvement journey in response to the **Local Area SEND inspection and subsequent Joint Written Statement of Action**
 - Work continues on the development of an **Ordinarily Available Framework** (due to be published in November) **and joint commissioning of services as well as improvements to the Local Offer, Preparing for Adulthood resources, Early Years support and resources to support accurate identification of need.**
 - Linked to and as part of this work, we will continue to roll out across schools, settings and colleges **Trauma Perceptive Practice, the Disadvantaged Strategy and continue to pilot the Inclusion Framework.**
 - We will also continue to work with **the Headteacher Roundtable to develop a suite of tools and expectations to ensure every school can be as inclusive as possible** for all pupils and students.
 - We will continue to promote the **safety and emotional wellbeing of all children** and young people across Essex.
 - We will respond to the new requirements placed on the **Virtual School to promote high educational outcomes for both children in care but also children in need.**
 - Provide support to Cllr Ball and the cross-party working group that has been established to review **the Elective Home Education / Children Missing Education system in Essex.**
 - And finally, we will continue to prioritise the **Headteacher Wellbeing programme** across primary, secondary and special schools.

b) **ESSEX EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

CK reminded headteachers of the establishment and work of the Education Taskforce. The Board, chaired by Roy Blatchford, is independent of the LA, working on behalf of the system in Essex. They have met 3 times and have agreed what they aim to achieve.

The slides included a summary of activity, focused on the following actions:

- Colleges – support young people to transition into colleges well – Transition coaches identified and in place (*EETF lead: Dan Pearson*)
- Transition coaches from year 6 to Year 7 – to have specific transition coaches to support young people transition into secondary school in order to prevent permanent exclusion. (*EETF leads: Harriet Phelps-Knights and Carole Herman*)
- Early Years – pre-school language – Building on the work being done as part of the Early Years Strategy training to be provided to settings on early language development, and to invest in the development of Communication Champions ensuring sustainability of above (*EETF lead: Jo Nice*)
- Year of reading – Every Essex child a confident reader. EETF will focus on reading programmes for years 6/7. (*EETF lead: Project group*)
- Outdoor education – Martin Solder to send nomination forms to schools via Task Force (*EETF lead: Martin Solder*)
- Research EPI – Impact of Taskforce on education in Essex. Wellbeing survey. (*EETF lead: Roy Blatchford*)
- Young people wellbeing – Mental Health support to secondary schools, investment in training additional mental health leads. TPP principles to drive this work. Survey developed to track individual children over a 3 year period. (*EETF lead: Carole Herman*)
- Leaders' wellbeing – Headteacher wellbeing; a designated wellbeing governor in each school; toolkit to be created and distributed. (*EETF lead: Linda Robinson*)

The Task Force has made a £1 million investment in reading, with a focus on the primary/secondary transition years: Years 6/7. Links to Essex Year of Reading 2022.

The aims of the Task Force reading programme are set out as:

- **Renewal:** to support children and young people who have fallen behind with their reading over the past year.
- **Equality:** to read confidently is the golden key to being a successful learner
- **Ambition:** to ensure that every Essex child leaves school able to read at their age level or better.

The aim is to second a team of senior leaders from schools to offer expertise and experience, and to support a menu of activities, with a particular focus on staff training. Roy noted that, on the whole, secondary schools don't teach reading, expecting or assuming that all pupils arrive in Year 7 able to read. Ofsted is aware of this gap and is very focused on how secondary schools will address those children who are unable to read at their chronological age.

c) RESEARCH SCHOOL NETWORK OFFER

RSN programme offer utilising EEF Improving Literacy Recommendations				
	Modules 1 & 2	Modules 3 & 4	Modules 5 & 6	Modules 7 & 8
EY/KS1	1. The foundations of literacy 2. Language acquisition in the early years	3. Early development in speech and language 4. Excellent Oracy practice in EY/KS1	5. A balanced Reading diet in EY/KS1 6. Developing Reading fluency	7. SSP as a cornerstone of early literacy 8. Promoting fluent transcription
KS2/3	1. The foundations of literacy 2. Approaches to explicit vocabulary instruction	3. AccountableTalk in practice 4. Tackling deficits in spoken English and Oracy	5. A balanced Reading diet in KS2/3 6. Developing Reading fluency	7. Effective communication across the curriculum 8. Supporting struggling students
KS4	1. The foundations of literacy 2. Approaches to explicit vocabulary instruction	3. AccountableTalk in practice 4. Oracy as a vehicle for excellent outcomes across the curriculum	5. A balanced Reading diet in KS4 6. Active engagement with complex texts	7. Disciplinary literacy in a KS4 context 8. Supporting struggling students

- remote delivery with school based gap activity
- each session is 2 hours in duration and covers two modules, scheduling as one session per half term: Spring 1, Spring 2, Summer 1 and Summer 2
- an alternative structure, for a group of schools who would prefer to consolidate the modules may be to group elements in to three full days: Oracy / Reading / Writing – subject to confirmation/logistics



The cost of the programme will be £120 per person, 2 hours per module, starting in the spring term. It is suitable for all staff responsible for developing literacy and language across a key stage or wider. It is preferential that participants are involved in shaping policy and practice, and is linked to teacher development.

d) SEND STRATEGY UPDATE: CURRENT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

CK noted that the improvement work around SEND continues behind the scenes; she is committed to developing the best SEND system for children and young people, their families and for schools in Essex. The SEND inspection in October 2019 informed the key areas for improvement. Ralph Holloway has led on the SEND Strategy developments along with the Assistant Directors and SEND leads in each quadrant team. Like schools, the LA has experienced challenges in the system during the pandemic. They are currently waiting re-inspection, though this may be delayed by around 6 months.

CK reminded the Executive that the three work-streams resulting from the inspection are:

Quality of EHCPs – work-stream led by Clare Kershaw

- End to end process review and re-engineering to deliver improved EHCP processes (including annual review)

- Develop options for new processes
- Review funding options
- Implement practices to drive improvement in quality of plans (including training, multi-agency moderation, quality assurance)

Over identification of MLD/ Accurate Identification of Need – work-stream led by Ralph Holloway

- Understand the scale and reason for over-identification of MLD
- Deliver training, support, guidance and resources to improve identification of need across the system
- Develop and deliver guidance around recording of CYP needs on the census
- Implement process to highlight and respond if data deviates from expected

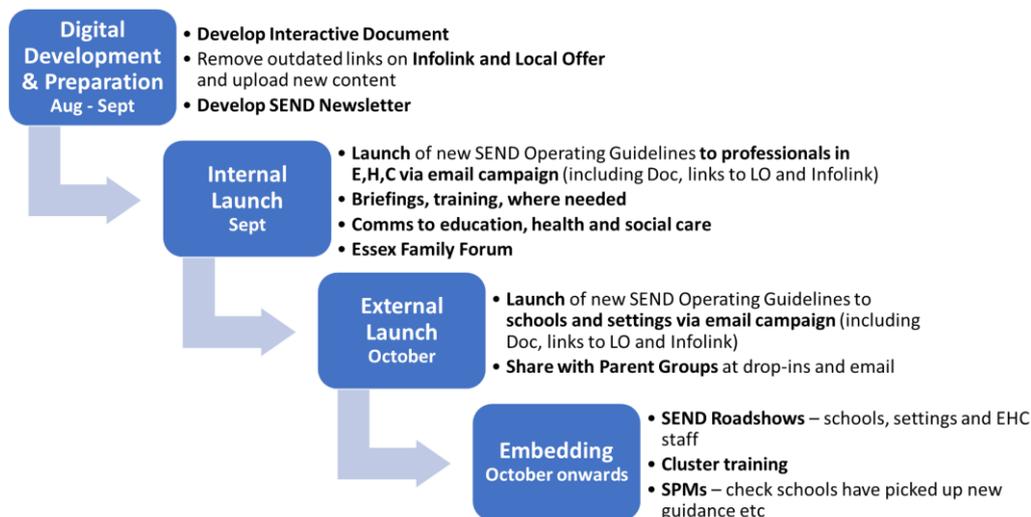
Joint Commissioning – work-stream led by Richard Watson - Deputy Chief Executive / Director Strategy and Transformation (NECCG) and

Chris Martin – Director Of Commissioning & Policy (ECC)

- Develop SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy
- Develop SEND joint data set
- Undertake mapping and gap analysis of services across the local area
- Jointly commission services around:
 - ASD/ADHD
 - Therapies: Speech and Language, Physio and OT
 - Equipment
 - SENDIASS
 - Local Offer

High Level Implementation Plan

The below outlines the implementation approach and timescales for the initial set of outputs in the Autumn term. The LA will keep the approach under review and take the same/ similar approach for future outputs, which will be released in January.



SEND Strategy

Overview	Timescales
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A local area strategy that sets out our vision, aims and ambitions for the SEND System in Essex, how we will achieve them and how we will measure our success.• The strategy includes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose/ Introduction• Our Pledge• Vision for SEND in Essex• The strategy test• Actions• Outcomes• Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation March 2019• Further discovery work throughout 2020• Draft strategy content June – Sept '21• Design work September '21• Governance October '21• Launch Late Autumn Term

The North East Chair stressed the pressure on the system due to a lack of places in Special Schools, and the impact of inclusion on the mainstream system.

At the Mid meeting (following the presentation of the headteacher wellbeing survey outcomes) there was a discussion about the link between parental complaints and SEND. It was agreed that a further survey could be carried out to find out what proportion of complaints are linked to SEND provision. One headteacher noted that parents continue to be told by Health professionals that their children should have an EHCP, and this adds a huge amount of pressure to the system.

Another headteacher noted that a huge stressor in mainstream schools is children who are at risk of permanent exclusion, and the number of schools that are coping with children who are a danger to themselves and others. This creates an impossible situation for headteachers, who are often turned away by SEND Ops, and the increased levels of anxiety and complaints from other parents.

It was **AGREED** that it would be helpful for schools to have a SEND Ops flowchart with clarification of the process and contact details for officers in each quadrant.

e) ECC RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES

- Councils are working closely with central government on resettling evacuees from Afghanistan, securing longer term accommodation options.
- The DfE report approx. 300 children and young people have been transferred since the summer, with 4 in 5 LAs taking at least one child.
- Children's services teams across the country are supporting a very small number of young evacuees who are unaccompanied.
- The government has confirmed additional funding to facilitate new school enrolments as well as additional support in the classroom.
- DfE reported that the MoD is working with the Home Office on a detailed census of everyone accommodated in bridging hotels (expected to complete by mid-October).
- This data will then inform funding, £12 million has already been committed to the creation of additional school places as part of 'Operation Warm Welcome'
- ADCS reported safeguarding concerns are beginning to emerge requiring a different response than originally anticipated e.g. the rising numbers of children who travelled here with another family coming forward.
- The Home Office is offering increased rates to agency social workers in the southeast to undertake age assessment work. This risks destabilising children's services. It is unclear how these social workers are being supervised and

regulated.

Afghanistan Relocation Assistance Programme (ARAP)

Afghanistan refugees have been housed temporarily in three hotels in Essex, the Rose and Crown in Colchester, the Atlantic Hotel in Chelmsford, and the Harlow Hotel (the former Park Inn), and about 50 children are living in this temporary accommodation. The ECC team has assessed the families, and are providing EAL courses and advising the families of how to apply for a school place. However, school placement is unlikely to happen soon as the families don't yet know where they will live permanently. Families have been given the information about how to apply for a place in primary schools, but most are waiting until they know where they will be living permanently.

A fourth hotel in Stansted, the Ibis, is being used to house asylum-seeking refugees. Their situation is even more temporary, as the Home Office may move them to another location at any point. ECC is also assessing the families in this accommodation.

CK was asked what support there would be for children with English as an Additional Language. She explained that the LA has recently been informed that £12million will follow these families, and that she would investigate what additional support might be given to schools for EAL, such as access to interpretation services.

CK confirmed that applications will be processed as normal mid-year admissions, and are not prioritised above other applications.

f) IN-YEAR (MID-YEAR) ADMISSIONS FROM APRIL 2022

From 1 April 2022, parents will need to apply directly to a school's own admission authority (i.e. academy, foundation and voluntary aided) infant, junior and primary schools for an in-year (mid-year place).

- Parents will still apply to the LA for community and voluntary controlled schools
- The change in no way affects the normal admission rounds for starting Reception for the first time, or infant to junior (Year 2- 3) transfer
- All these applications will still be handled by the LA Template application form and example offer and refusal letters, along with a process map, sent out by Shamsun Noor by email on 2 November 2021
- Further briefings will be arranged via EPHA for the spring term 2022

Any queries in the meanwhile can be directed to Shamsun Noor at shamsun.noor@essex.gov.uk

3. SAFEGUARDING

Jo Barclay, Head of Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing at Essex

Jo started her presentation by acknowledging the challenges that headteachers have faced over the pandemic, including managing many safeguarding issues in their schools.

i) Links to key documents

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2021\)](#)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges \(DfE, 2021\)](#)
- [Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills \(Ofsted, 2021\)](#)
- [ESI / Understanding and Supporting Behaviour](#)
- [Positive environments where children can flourish \(Ofsted 2018\)](#)

She stressed that if schools published safeguarding documents on their website, they should ensure that the most up to date versions of documents are used.

JB is in the process of updating a model behaviour policy for schools, based on the Essex Understanding and Supporting Behaviour document. In addition, she suggested that if a school has a standalone Use of Reasonable Force Policy, they might want to check and cross-reference to the ECC document.

The Ofsted document, Positive Environments Where Children Can Flourish, was updated in October.

ii) Updated training and safeguarding resources

- [Level 2 training presentations](#)
- Model Child Protection Policy
- Confirmation of Child Protection Documents Received
Jo noted that if there is an allegation against a member of staff, it is particularly important that the school can evidence that they received key safeguarding documents, as required by Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Safeguarding information for visitors to school

These videos from Children and Families may be useful to complement staff training:

- [Welcome to the Children and Families Hub - YouTube](#)
- [Request for Support guidance for professionals - YouTube](#)
- [The Windscreen of Need - Essex Children and Families Hub - YouTube](#)

iii) Safeguarding forums

The spring term 2022 Safeguarding Forum presented by Jo Barclay and her team is taking place virtually on Tuesday 22 February 2022 and/or Wednesday 23 February 2022. The forum will provide the opportunity to share safeguarding updates and key information to support settings in safeguarding. These sessions contribute to the CPD for Designated Safeguarding Leads (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads). To log in, search events and book your place via the Education Essex online booking system, please click here.

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/info/tradedservices/Pages/education-essex-online-booking-system.aspx>

iv) Education and Information Sharing Protocol

The current Overarching Education Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) 2018-2021, which governs the sharing of personal information between ECC, schools and education providers, expired at the end of last term. The ISP and the service addendums to the Protocol for 2021 – 2024 have been updated and the new documents are now available on [Essex Schools Infolink](#). Please review the new documents and sign up to the Protocol using the link provided as soon as possible.

v) Prevent Training for Schools

Jo noted that there was still no update from the Government about what would replace the former WRAP training (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent). An online training event will take place on Monday 6 December 2021 via Teams; this session will support schools and education settings to meet the Prevent Duty. Colleagues from ECC and other agencies will be presenting on a range of issues related to the Prevent Duty. This session will provide the opportunity to ask questions and share information.

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/info/tradedservices/Pages/education-essex-online-booking-system.aspx>

vi) Harmful sexual behaviour – peer on peer abuse

- further training for secondary settings (Spring 2022)
- training for primary settings (Spring 2022)
- training for governors (Spring 2022)
- updated model HSB Policy
- updated HSB checklist / audit
- HSB guidance
- Support with [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(DfE, 2019\)](#) curriculum delivery

A number of headteachers fed back about recent Ofsted inspections, and what information they had been asked for in relation to harmful sexual behaviour and safeguarding.

One headteacher explained that the Ofsted inspection team had considered 3 different case studies. In one, Social Care had closed a grooming case, arguing that a safety plan was in place. The headteacher of this school had showed the Ofsted inspectors an email that he had sent to Social Care challenging their decision, to demonstrate that he was not happy with their response.

Jo noted that the model template for recording and reporting concerns is lengthy, but acts as a comprehensive prompt for schools to gather and record relevant information.

Another Executive headteacher noted that in 2 recent inspections in Greenwich schools the inspectors had spoken to groups of Year5 and 6 girls to find out their experience of harmful sexual behaviour, the school's response, the RSHE curriculum.

In a number of inspections there has been a focus on hate crime and racist incidents. Inspectors have asked for records and the key actions taken, even for alleged incidents.

One Mid headteacher noted that there was no focus on safeguarding until halfway through the inspection; then there was a strong focus on harmful sexual behaviour. She noted that the inspectors wanted data broken down into victim and perpetrator.

vii) ESCB audit

Jo will circulate the new audit soon. The completion date will be the end of the Spring Term – schools are required to submit the completed audit this academic year.

viii) Serious Case Review recommendations

A headteacher asked if there had been any recent summaries of SCR recommendations. Jo confirmed that there are a number of reviews taking place in Essex, and once they are published a summary report can be produced.

ix) Early Years settings safeguarding arrangements

Jo noted that there is a need to strengthen child protection in early years settings, and the ECC guidance used by schools is being adapted for early years' settings.

x) Accessing support

At the North East meeting there was a discussion about how schools can access support, particularly when Social Care determine that an individual case doesn't meet their threshold for intervention. The starting point should be a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting, and there are a number of services available including Family

Solutions. Social Care have suggested that if schools have a concern about a child, but this doesn't meet their criteria, the school should ring the police.

It was noted that the Effective Support for Children and Families document has been updated and will be circulated soon.

It was **AGREED** that Nicky O'Shaughnessy, Local Delivery Director for the North East, would be invited to the next North East meeting in March.

xi) Safeguarding for governors

Governors/ trustees are invited to a Safeguarding update webinar session on **Tuesday 23rd November 6.00pm – 7.00pm.**

The training will provide:

- an opportunity to learn more on the latest safeguarding updates for schools and governing bodies;
- an update on Harmful Sexual Behaviour in schools, including National and Local responses;
- LA materials available to support effective safeguarding in schools; and
- An update on training opportunities for governing bodies next academic year 2021-2022.

The webinar training will be 60 minutes and will be led by Jo Barclay, facilitated by Stephen J. Chynoweth (Head of Education & Early Years, NE).

The webinar session can be accessed using this link:

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81204252706?pwd=cUJKVkiYVkpYXVVo0MnRzUT09>

Meeting ID: 812 0425 2706

Passcode: 378741

4. EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE STRATEGY UPDATE

Carolyn Terry, EYCC Sufficiency and Sustainability Manager, gave a detailed update on the EY and Childcare Strategy.

- The previous Early Years and Childcare Strategy (EY&CC) 2015–2018 set out the specific commissioning and operational approach that delivered the strategic direction for the Authority, and the Council's early years and childcare statutory duties in working with children aged from 0 to 19 and key partners such as health, local councils, voluntary sector, early years settings and schools.
- As part of the initial Discovery phase for the new strategy, the project team undertook an;
 - Analysis of the Essex Good Level of Development (GLD) data.
 - Initial engagement with schools, early years' settings and parents.
 - Initial review of the impact of Covid-19.
 - Horizon scanning.
 - A series of workshops with key ECC staff
- A draft of the new EY&CC Strategy 2022 has been developed with all key stakeholders during stakeholder engagement sessions and is currently going through ECC's Governance to approve launching in January 2022.

Carolyn explained that they have used this engagement to develop their thinking and have shared back what we have been planning to do to ensure it makes sense to everyone and reflects what they think are the things they should be focusing on. They also spoke to families through a survey, to which over 1200 parents responded.

There are many other strategies, plans and programmes of work which they will take

account of and ensure alignment with, including the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy, the work of our Education Task Force, Educational Disadvantage Strategy, Inclusion Framework, Early Help Offer, the Levelling Up Agenda and the Working Families Programme

It is critical that this is seen as a long-term commitment that builds on previous success to ensure positive changes are embedded in a child's formative years to improve outcomes throughout their Education.

At this point it is anticipated that the current budget allocated to Early Years and Childcare will be sufficient for its delivery but there may be projects or activity that might need additional funds. Business cases will be produced to request additional funding if needed.

The six aims of the Strategy

1. CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL WITH SUPPORT FROM AN EFFECTIVE AND CONNECTED EARLY YEARS SYSTEM THAT HAS A CLEAR VISION, PURPOSE, AND DIRECTION

2. ALL CHILDREN HAVE A POSITIVE JOURNEY THROUGH THEIR EARLY YEARS AND ARE WELL SUPPORTED TO TRANSITION TO RECEPTION AND START YEAR 1

3. CHILDREN WHO MAY BE AT RISK OF POOR OUTCOMES ARE PRIORITISED FOR HIGH QUALITY TARGETED SUPPORT

4. CHILDREN'S EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IS EXPERTLY SUPPORTED BY A STRONG, SKILLED, AND KNOWLEDGEABLE EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE SYSTEM WORKFORCE

5. PARENTS CAN ACCESS AFFORDABLE, SUFFICIENT, HIGH QUALITY AND FULLY INCLUSIVE CHILDCARE PLACES THAT SUPPORT EARLY LEARNING AND WORKING PARENTS

6. FAMILIES ARE ENABLED TO BE THE BEST THEY CAN BE

Key priorities for Year 1 of the new Strategy?

The insight we have at this point tells us we need to focus our year one plan on the following elements;

- Continue to build on the good outcomes we have achieved so far in the last strategy, with an ambition to further increase the % of children achieving GLD
- Focus on identifying those children as early as possible that will need more support, ie improved assessment at the 2 year check, focusing on the cohorts we know generally do not achieve a GLD ie summer born / SEN
- Increase the take up for eligible 2 year olds to access a funded learning place.
- Focus on economically disadvantaged children to help narrow their word gap
- Contributing to the Levelling Up Agenda with a focus on the Strong Foundations in Early Years goal
- The impact of Covid-19 on young children's learning
- Making sure our Parents are as informed as they can be in order to make the right choices
- Launch of a new Essex Early Years and Childcare Charter

5. PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY – REFRESH AND RELAUNCH

School partnerships are strong strategic alliances between two or more schools and/or organisations.

These partnerships can be formal or informal, and help all educational settings benefit

by sharing their knowledge, experience and resources, so that they can provide better learning outcomes for their students through a self-led, self-improving school system. Over the years, data has shown considerable positive benefits that come from schools coming together to share in mutually beneficial partnerships.

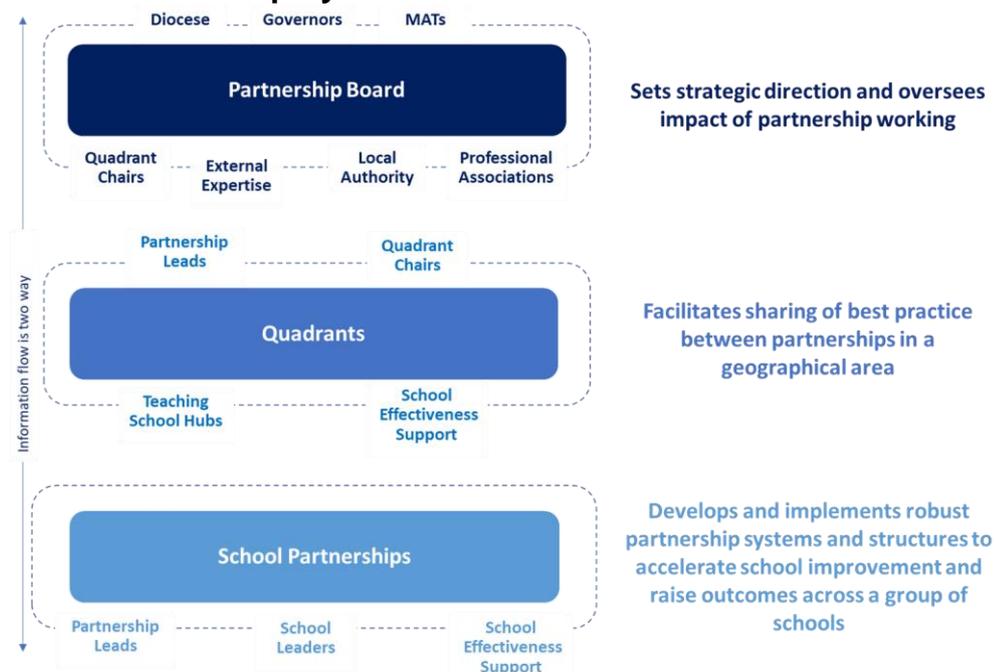
The vision for the refreshed strategy, developed by the Schools' Partnership Board

We believe that every school in Essex should actively engage in a formal school partnership with a number of schools. Children and families of school communities will benefit from the strength of schools working in collaboration with each other rather than in isolation, particularly in these challenging times. Partnerships will also provide a key role in supporting leader wellbeing, which is essential at this time.

The type of partnership is less important than its ability to share practice and capacity, hold schools within the partnership to account in mutually reinforcing ways, and enable schools to access the support they need. The aim is to have a positive impact on school improvement and outcomes for children.

Within these partnerships, schools will work together to develop and share best practice, utilising a system of peer reviews and self-evaluation. System Leaders will play a key role in enabling schools in the partnership to improve and empower schools across Essex to own and develop their own future.

Essex Partnership System



Partnership Evaluation and Development Tool

- To enable partnerships to evaluate their collaboration
- To help establish a dialogue and way of working that builds challenge, support and trust
- To generate useful information that helps partnerships make best use of their resources and guides improvement
- For the tool to be intuitive, flexible and easy to use

The School Partnership Board has agreed a series of actions to achieve the broader outcomes of the new Essex Partnership Strategy

- Set a clear Strategic Direction for partnership working in Essex
- Agree an annual set of priorities, which is informed by the work of the partnerships and quadrants and agreed by the board as county priorities

- Strengthen the focus on cross-phase working
- Enable partnerships to share best practice
- Enable partnerships to evaluate their impact, through models such as peer review
- Clarify the partnership system, the roles and responsibilities of each part and the resources available to support partnerships e.g., co-ordination and facilitation
- Review the membership and representation of the Board
- Take an active role in the promotion of partnership working
- Support development of focus groups to take forward specific actions and feedback to the board
- Continue development of tools and support for partnerships around school improvement
 - Peer review
 - Partnership evaluation development tool
 - Leadership handbook

6. ASSESSMENT AND MODERATION

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) are planning for a full programme of primary assessments to take place in the 2021/22 academic year. This will include the introduction of the statutory multiplication tables check for year 4 pupils.

To support schools to carry out primary assessments in summer 2022 the Local Authority is offering a full programme of training that will cover Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 assessment and moderation, the administration of the phonic screening check and the multiplication tables check.

Primary Statutory Assessment Traded Package

The training sessions are:

- Termly Primary Statutory Assessment Briefings (Autumn 2, Spring 2 and Summer 1)
- Administering the phonic screening check
- Managing the statutory assessment process for KS1 and KS2
- Administering the multiplication tables check
- Understanding the KS1 Teacher Assessment Framework
- Understanding the KS2 Teacher Assessment Framework
- Assessment and moderation in Year 2 refresher course
- Assessment and moderation in Year 6 refresher course

	Annual subscription for Sep 2021/22	Individual training events for non-subscribers
Essex LA maintained schools	£315	£55 per session for 2 members of staff
Essex Academies	£395	£65 per session for 2 members of staff
Outside Essex Schools and academies	£495	£75 per session for 2 members of staff

These training events will run in the spring term. Each one will be for up to 3 hours to allow time to cover all the aspect of assessment and moderation in depth.

All schools can attend these training events but if schools have signed up to the package they can attend at a reduced rate. If schools are interested in the whole package, or just aspects of the training, they should contact Workforce Development or follow the link on the end of key stage statutory assessment page on Essex Schools Infolink.

7. NORTH EAST QUADRANT LA UPDATE

Philippa Holliday and her team gave an update on specific activities taking place in the North East of Essex. Janine Hanson was introduced as the new North East SEND Quadrant Manager.

a) NE Early Help Drop In sessions

The weekly Early Help drop-in sessions are run by the NE Essex Children and Families Partnership (led by Lee Bailey, Lead for Partnership Delivery). These are run online on Tuesday lunchtimes (12 noon – 1.00 pm). The weekly drop-in offers peer support, signposting for anonymised cases and help to answer general questions.

<https://www.community360.org.uk/early-help-drop-in-sessions-2/>

b) Colchester and Tendring Education Forum

These provide a forum for school representatives to:

- Discuss and exchange local safeguarding and child protection information, policies, practice, procedures, concerns and practice development initiatives from ECC Children and Families and NE Essex schools;
- To discuss and agree feedback on education related safeguarding and social care queries or concerns, and to work collaboratively to find resolutions to any potential conflict.

The forum meetings are held at least once a term in Colchester and Tendring.

Email Lee Bailey at lee.bailey@essex.gov.uk to be added to the list of attendees.

c) SEND Strategy – current actions in North East Essex

Send Operations/Inclusion and Psychology

- Working with the central Strategy Team to implement and embed the revised policies and practices as a result of the Joint Written Statement of Action. Includes improving panel representation on the EHCNA requests and Local Resource Panel from health, social care and schools.
- Commitment to improved communication and support for schools where there is a “direction to take” – where a school is named on Part 1 of an EHCP.

SEND Operations

New temporary staff will be employed to focus on statutory timescales including EHCNAs, response to Annual Review, EHCP amendments.

Inclusion and Psychology

- Alistair James appointed to a new interim role as Quadrant Senior Educational Psychologist. He will line manage North East Eps, attend key panels and support the professional development of Inclusion and Psychology staff.
- A continued commitment to SEND training offer
- Engagement Facilitators working with parents of preschool children (with a Section 23 notification from health) when no setting identified, to support confidence and early identification of need.

Tendring Strategic Education Board Twinning Offer

The presentation gave detail of the projects underway to support Tendring Schools. These include:

- Communication Champions
- Communication hub schools
- Learning Behaviour Leads

- Emotional Literacy Support Assistants

The slides included information about the partnership representation on the Tendring Strategic Education Board and details of the leaders and schools represent on the Board.

8. CLOSE OF LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETING

Clare Kershaw closed the LA part of the meeting thanking headteachers once again for their continuing efforts and hard work this term. She was thanked for her ongoing support from the Local Authority, and in particular the School Communications Team.

9. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Area Heads Meetings

Autumn term 2021

N-EAST	Wednesday 10 November	Colchester Community Stadium
MID	Thursday 11 November	Lion Inn, Boreham
WEST	Wednesday 17 November	Online
SOUTH	Thursday 18 November	Holiday Inn, Basildon

Spring term 2022

N-EAST	Wednesday 2 March	Colchester Community Stadium
SOUTH	Thursday 3 March	Holiday Inn, Basildon
WEST	Wednesday 9 March	Manor of Groves
MID	Thursday 10 March	Lion Inn, Boreham

Summer term 2022

N-EAST	Wednesday 15 June	Colchester Community Stadium
MID	Thursday 16 June	Lion Inn, Boreham
WEST	Wednesday 22 June	Manor of Groves
SOUTH	Thursday 23 June	Holiday Inn, Basildon

EPHA Conferences

Headteachers' Conference

Friday 25 March 2022 Chelmsford City Race Course

Deputy/Assistant Headteachers' Conference

Friday 7 October 2022 Colchester Football Stadium

Pam Langmead

EPHA Professional Officer

pam@langmead.me.uk

01621 786359

07791 143277