

**COMPOSITE MINUTES OF THE 2022 AUTUMN TERM AREA MEETINGS
OF THE LA AND ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION**

West	Wednesday 22 November 2022	Manor of Groves
Mid	Thursday 9 November 2022	The Lion Inn, Boreham
North East	Wednesday 16 November 2022	Colchester Football Stadium
South	Thursday 17 November 2022	Greenwoods Hotel, Stock

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:

West

Lisa Anstey	Chigwell Row Infants
Tracy Bratley	Rickling and Farnham Federation
Alex Burden	Flitch Green Primary Academy
Rob Calderwood	The Downs Primary and Nursery
Caroline Crompton	Thaxted Primary
Liz Crow	Great Bardfield Primary
Baz Duffy	Newhall Primary Academy and Nursery
Jonathan Furness	High Beech Primary (Executive Head)
Alison Kerrell	Holy Cross Catholic Primary
Kate Mortimer	High Beech Primary (Head of School)
Sarah Rees	White Bridge Academy
Marné Reynecke	Abbotsweld Primary Academy
Helen Smith	Latton Green Primary Academy
Adelaide Yarwood	Lambourne Primary

Mid

Katie Allen	Larkrise Primary
Justine Brooks	Great Waltham Primary
Lisa Cracknell	Parkwood Academy
Sam Dunne	Colne Engaine Primary
James Garlick	Great Leighs Primary (Acting head)
Ceri Jones	CEO Connected Learning
Maggie Loveday	Edith Borthwick School
Nerys Maidment	Elmwood Primary
Dominic Mulholland	Mildmay Primary
Cheryl Noble	Acorn Academy
Lois Osborne	Kelvedon Primary Academy
Emily Penkett	Cold Norton Primary
Debra Price	Rayne Primary
Natasha Robson	Chipping Hill Primary (Head of School)
Sarah Rowe	Holy Trinity, Halstead
Stephen Saunders	Little Waltham Primary
Jane Scawton	St John the Baptist CE Primary, Pebmarsh
Melissa Taylor	Margaretting CE Primary
Debbie Conroy	Maldon Primary

North East

Charlotte Brown	Messing Primary
Teresa Cooper	Hamford Primary Academy
Jamie Whiteside	St Clare's Catholic Primary, Clacton

Simon Wood	Sir Martin Frobisher Academy
Karen Wright	Broomgrove Juniors (Interim headteacher)
Susan Locke	Baynards Primary (Executive head until half term)
Judith Dale	Baynards Primary (Headteacher after half term)
Robert Leach	Willow Brook Primary

South

Phil Andrews	Rettendon Primary
Tom Bottrill	Plumberow Primary Academy
Gary Capps	Ghyllgrove Primary
Gemma Clarke	Westwood Primary (Acting head)
Martyn Clarke	Glebe Primary
Karen Collison	Waterman Primary (Head of School)
Stephanie Crump	Leigh Beck Juniors
Sally Finch	St Margaret's CE Primary, Bowers Gifford (substantive)
Denise Glanville	Hadleigh Infants
Ian Hampshire	Greensted Primary
Dave Jenkins	Hockley Primary
Debbie Loveless	Stambridge Primary
Gill Marrion	Sunnymede Infants (continuing as Interim Head)
Dean Moran	St Thomas of Canterbury CE Infants (Executive Head)
Claire Richardson	Holt Farm Juniors
Nick Rudman	St Luke's Park Primary, Runwell
Lisa Stainsbury	Downham CE Primary
Anne-Marie Taylor	Hogarth Primary (Interim)
Adam Toomer	Ryedene Primary
Simon Weston	Kelvedon Hatch Primary
Don Wry	Stambridge and Waterman Primaries (Executive Head)

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

North East

Natasha Bennett	Two Villages CE Primary
David Larner	Dedham CE Primary
Janet Meacock	Millfields Primary

Mid

Deborah Bailey	John Bunyan Primary
Caroline Shingleton	Wethersfield Primary

West

George Athanasiou	Great Sampford Primary
Bernadette Miele	Tany's Dell Primary

South

John Archer	Westwood Primary
Pauline MacMillan	Oakfield Primary
Angela Russell	St Anne Line Catholic Primary

2. LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

Clare Kershaw
Philippa Holliday and Stephen Chynoweth (North East meeting)
Lisa Fergus and Maz Norman (South meeting)
Nicola Woolf and Ashley Milum (West meeting)
Catherine Hutley and Alison Fiala (Mid meeting)

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Clare Kershaw welcomed headteachers to the meetings, and shared her view of the

current “state of the education nation”. She reminded heads that she had spent at least an hour at the summer term meetings focusing on the DfE White Paper and proposed Schools Bills and these were now all on hold, following two changes of Prime Minister and numerous Education Secretaries.

While the aspirational targets still remain, the implementation of the proposed changes set out in the White Paper and Schools Bills will be much more limited and it is unlikely that there will be new legislation in this Parliament. It is possible that the Government may pick up on the Academy’s standards changes, which would be welcomed and ensure that Trusts can be held to account more effectively; it is fair to say that the leverage that the DfE has over academies is lacking under the current system. The SEN Green Paper remains on the desk of ministers and the Local Authority will continue to lobby for change, which is much needed.

The Local Authority is aware of the challenges that schools face, and is working collaboratively to support schools:

Working together, sharing concern and solutions

Feedback from school leaders and managers

- More children in schools with complex needs, SEND and Early Years
- SEMH challenges around access to specialist support
- Well-being of headteachers and teachers
- Funding pressures: fuel, staff pay
- Recruitment and retention of quality staff, including LSA to support SEND
- Gap widening between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged
- Attendance



What is available to support schools

- Inclusion Framework, SEND Strategy
- Early Years Strategy and targeted support for language development
- Increased resources to support mental health and well-being, Early Help
- Sustainable Schools Dashboard and Toolkit
- Task Force targeted activities
- Disadvantaged clinics, training for leaders including EEF programmes

Attendance Specialists support in schools

CK stressed her continuing belief that schools should focus on the core business of learning and teaching, and raising pupil outcomes. She acknowledged, however, the financial pressures and challenges that schools are facing. (By the time of the fourth meeting the Chancellor had announced an additional £2 billion of funding for schools for this year and next, though it is not yet clear how this will impact individual school budgets.).

The Local Authority also faces considerable financial pressures, and is also struggling the balance its budget for 2023/24. However, the High Needs Block in Essex is in a relatively healthy position, unlike many other authorities, and this is enabling the rollout of a new SEND Strategy and supporting strategies. The LA continues to prioritise SEND, including the rollout of the Inclusion Framework which aims to support pre-statutory support and provision in mainstream schools. The Ordinarily Available Framework has been trialled and well-received by a number of schools across the county, but CK noted that the full rollout has been paused, acknowledging how busy schools are at the moment. The LA will review the size and complexity of the OA and is seeking to align it to the Inclusion Framework and Disadvantage Strategy before it is introduced to all schools.

The Disadvantaged Strategy was first published before the Covid pandemic; it is still

relevant and is in the process of being updated with new data.

CK shared the latest pupil data noting that, as anticipated, disadvantaged children have been most negatively affected by the pandemic and the impact on education. The following education and Ofsted data was shared:

Essex Performance

IMPORTANT: all 2022 data shown is provisional and subject to change. In the case of KS4 & KS5, this does not include special schools or FE colleges and has a small number of secondary schools missing.

EYFS	% GLD	66.8%	KS2	% exp+ RWM	58.1%
Year 1 Phonics	% working at required level	75.3%		% exp+ Reading	74.1%
KS1	% exp+ RWM	55.6%	KS4	% exp+ Writing	70.4%
	% exp+ Reading	69.4%		% exp+ Maths	70.9%
	% exp+ Writing	60.4%		% 9-4 in English & Maths	69.6%
	% exp+ Maths	69.4%	Attainment 8 score	49.2	
			KS5	Average A level grade	B-
				% 2+ level 3 qualifications	95.1%

Source: all primary phase data from NEXUS, secondary phase data as collected from schools - both as at 05 09 22

Key Stage 1 SFR

Measure	Essex	England	Essex rank*	Essex quartile
Phonics - % expected standard	75.4	75.5	76	3rd
KS1 Reading - % expected standard	69.5	66.9	37	Top
KS1 Writing - % expected standard	60.4	57.6	39	2nd
KS1 Maths - % expected standard	69.4	67.6	49	2nd

*of 150 LAs (Isles of Scilly and City of London excluded)

Key Stage 2

% pupils achieving at least the expected standard				
Subject/Measure	Essex	England	Essex Rank*	Essex quartile
RWM	58.3%	58.1%	74	2nd
Reading	74.1%	74.4%	88	3rd
Writing	70.5%	68.8%	53	2nd
Maths	71.2%	71.4%	77	3rd

*of 150 LAs (Isles of Scilly and City of London excluded)

CK noted that Ofsted ratings are largely holding, and 89.6% of Essex schools continue to offer good and outstanding provision, according to Ofsted judgements

Essex Schools

	Academies	Free Schools	LA maintained	Grand Total
Nursery			2	2
All-through	1	1		2
Primary	223	4	221	448
Secondary	69	6	4	79
Special	12	2	6	20
PRU	2	1	3	6
Grand Total	307	14	236	557

Source: Get Information About Schools, 05 09 22

557 schools in Essex

42.4% of these are LA maintained

89.6% graded good or outstanding by Ofsted

	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Not yet inspected	Grand Total
Nursery	1	1				2
All-through			1		1	2
Primary	63	347	29	7	2	448
Secondary	12	49	9	6	3	79
Special	6	10	2	1	1	20
PRU	1	3	1	1		6
Grand Total	83	410	42	15	7	557

Source: Ofsted Monthly Management Information - published inspections as at 31 07 22

3. SEND RE-BANDING SYSTEM

Ralph Holloway, Head of SEND Strategy and Innovation, West, Mid and North East meetings

Clare Kershaw, Director of Education, South meeting

The presentation included the slides used at training delivered to schools in the summer and autumn terms. This reminded headteachers about the context and rationale for change to the SEN top-up funding system.

1. **The current system is unnecessarily complex and confusing** – different approaches, tools and decision-making processes for different sectors / phases, but also unnecessary complexity and inconsistent applications of approaches within sectors / for the same types of settings.
2. **This review is being undertaken from a position of strength** – the aim is to create a sustainable long-term approach to SEN top-up funding, rather than being driven by the need to find financial savings. The high needs block in Essex is currently in a relatively healthy position.
3. **The aim, therefore, is to create a clear-to-understand, transparent, sustainable and universal approach to allocating SEN top-up funding** – where decisions about how top-up funding is arranged are widely understood, and are part of a system that is consistent across phases.
4. **There are important potential benefits, both in terms of SEN funding and wider SEND strategic aims** – the SEN top-up approach is part of the wider SEND system (the “pyramid”) and will reinforce work around OAP, inclusion, EHCNA guidance, EHCP quality, annual reviews etc.
5. **The new approach set out in this pack has been co-produced and widely tested** – there is broad support from representatives of phases, sectors and partners involved in this process, who have been involved in co-producing and testing the proposals extensively.
6. **As we move into the implementation phase, there are important implications for leaders in the Essex system** – focused implementation, consistent decision-making, regular communications to ensure fidelity to original aims and principles, to avoid “drift” or muddle.

The High Needs Block is one of four funding streams for education, along with the Schools Block, Central Block and the Early Years Block.

SEN funding is designed nationally for each type of state-funded provider

Education setting	Funds held within the delegated budgets of education settings		Funds allocated by LAs for individual young people
National framework	Element 1	Element 2	Element 3
Early years setting	Early Years National Funding Formula (including deprivation supplement)		SEN Inclusion Fund Top-up funding
Mainstream schools	Schools National Funding Formula (Age-weighted pupil unit, AWPU)	Notional SEN Budget (school-level)	Top-up funding
Units / resourced provisions		£6k per commissioned place	Top-up funding
Special schools	£10k per commissioned place		Top-up funding
Further education	Post-16 National Funding Formula	Formula funding (SENK) £6k per high-needs learner	Top-up funding

*NB The above does not necessarily reflect every potential source of funding – Pupil Premium, lump sum, DAF.
NB There is a different approach to funding independent providers, who negotiate fees with the commissioning LA.*

The review and change to top-up funding has been undertaken now for a number of reasons:

Overall aim	<p>To create a single, “universal” approach to SEN funding that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applies to all phases and settings, ensuring funding is governed by consistent principles; • is easy to understand, fair, efficient, and transparent; and • is part of a robust SEN system, aligns to key Essex-wide policies (EHCNA guidance, ordinarily-available provision, Panels), and is consistently applied across the county.
Main issue	<p>Put simply, the current top-up funding arrangements in Essex do not deliver on these aims. Current SEN top-up funding arrangements are unnecessarily complex and confusing. Each sector uses a different methodology to decide on the allocation of top-up funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Early years</u> – multiple funding streams, complex, no alignment with school-age funding. • <u>Schools</u> – banding system has compromised by additional elements added (provision, fixed / default top-ups). Inconsistent application. Overly complex. Not transparent. • <u>Post-16</u> – individually-negotiated top-ups not sustainable or equitable. <p>Current arrangements do not offer a robust, equitable and sustainable basis for arranging top-up funding, in the medium term and in anticipation of Green Paper proposals.</p>
Myth-busting	<p>The review is being taken from a position of strength – a case of “fixing the roof while the sun is shining”. The review of SEN top-up funding is not being driven by the need to make financial savings – the high needs block is in a health position, and the current quantum of resource for top-up funding (overall and for each sector) will be maintained. Instead, the aim is to develop a sustainable and effective long-term basis for allocating SEN top-ups.</p>

The work has been guided by a co-productive “Working Group”, whose members have reflected the different phases, settings and partners across the Essex system

The Working Group’s membership has included –

Early years settings | Primary schools (including links with EPHA) | Secondary schools (including links with ASHE) | Special schools (including links with ESSET) | Post-16 colleges (including links with FEDEC) | Essex Family Forum | Leaders of SEND services from ECC and the CCGs.

The Working Group has met monthly since July 2021. At key points during its work, we have also engaged broader groups of practitioners and partners to test and develop the new approach.

The Working Group’s work has followed an iterative process, informed by evidence about the current approach in Essex and approaches to SEN top-up funding used in other areas

Five “design principles” have been agreed:

1. Universality
2. Fairness
3. Needs-based
4. Ease of use
5. Mutually reinforcing

Operational guidance has been produced, summarising the national system and explaining the local arrangements in Essex. This should be used by any partner in the system, but mainly by SENCOs and Inclusion Leads.

The operational guidance document is in three parts.

1. Introduction and context – the national context and how Essex’s local arrangements have been developed and are kept under review.
2. Local arrangements – the Essex approach to SEN top-up funding, including practical information on how the system works (how to band young people).
3. Decision-making – where and how decisions about SEN top-up funding are made, moderation, dispute resolution, exceptional circumstances and oversight of the Essex SEN funding system.

The banding framework

What the banding framework is

The banding framework is a tool that enables settings and professionals to “speak the same language” when talking about levels of need as a means to ensure that the process for allocating top-up funding is fair between settings and sectors.

Each child’s or young person’s case should be considered individually, but the banding framework should help to ensure that decisions about top-up funding are taken in a consistent manner where young people have similar needs and are placed in similar settings. Having a consistent approach across all sectors and settings means that families and professionals do not have to negotiate different funding systems when a young person moves from one setting or phase to another.

What the banding framework is not

The banding framework is based on evidence of young people’s assessed needs – matching evidence of need to a set of descriptors as a fair, transparent and sustainable way of managing the finite, collective resource in the high needs block. **It is not based on “pricing” the cost of provision and seeking a band based on a financial value.**

Equally, **the allocation of a band does not alter or affect decisions about EHCPs through the statutory assessment or annual review process.**

Implementation timeline

Transition will take place across a two-year period (academic years 2022/23 and 2023/24)

This is to strike a balance between speed and system capacity during the transition. All settings will be asked to band their young people at the start of this process, but some sectors will then have their banding moderated in 2022/23 (Year 1) ready for roll-out from September 2023, while others will be moderated during 2023/24 (Year 2) ready for roll-out from September 2024.

	Timescales: Y1	Timescales: Y2
1. Initial financial modelling – agree the quantum of SEN top-up funding for each sector in advance. (Avoids “zero-sum”.)	Spring term 2022	
2. Banding exercise – initial training for all settings on the new methodology. All settings to band their young people.	Training – May-Sept 2022 Banding exercise – June-Nov 2022	
3. Further financial modelling – use the banding exercise to set top-up values, check affordability, benchmark sectors / settings.	Nov-Dec 2022	
4. Moderation exercise – in parallel, moderation of a sample of bandings for each setting. Discussions to ensure consistency.	Nov 2022 – early 2023	November 2023
5. Final financial modelling – use the outcomes of the moderation exercise to set final top-ups, transitional protection.	Dec 2022 / early 2023	Dec 2023 – early 2024
6. Roll-out – communication of top-ups to settings, including any transitional protection). Advice in lead-up to implementation.	March 2023 “Go live” – Sept 2023	March 2024 “Go live” – Sept 2024

Year 1 – special schools | post-16 colleges.

Year 2 – mainstream schools (including Enhanced Provisions) | early years settings.

New assessments – allocated top-up under existing system + band under the new system.

4. SEMH STRATEGY TEAM: FINDING THE RIGHT SUPPORT

Steve Whitfield, West and North East meetings
Beth Brown, Mid and South meetings

The team:

- Steve Whitfield stephen.whitfield@essex.gov.uk
- Lianne Canning lianne.canning@essex.gov.uk
- Beth Brown beth.brown@essex.gov.uk (currently on Maternity leave)
- Deb Garfield deb.garfield2@essex.gov.uk (Tuesdays & Thursdays)

What we are doing:

- Leading collaboration for...
- Developing and delivering relevant SEMH training
- Creating high quality SEMH guidance and resources
- Signposting to alternative or existing SEMH sources
- Commissioning and support for SEMH Enhanced Provisions

TPP Values underpin everything we are involved in. Compassion & Kindness, Hope, Connection & Belonging. Following feedback, a shortened version of TPP has been developed, though schools are encouraged to undertake the advanced version in order to access the benefits:

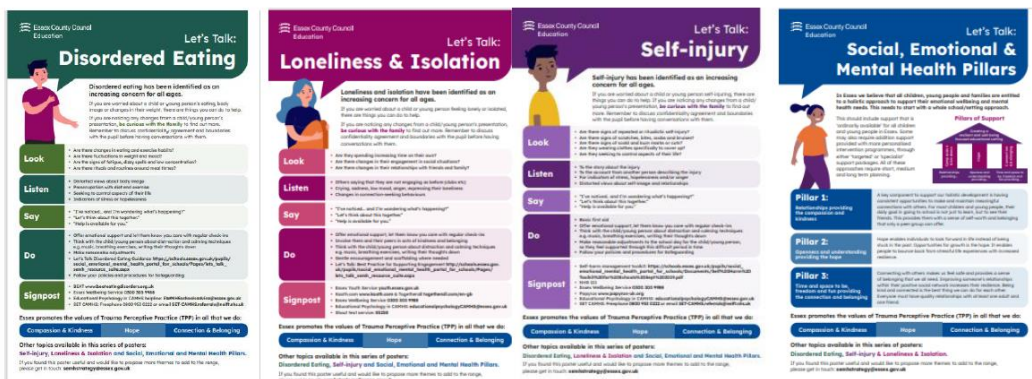
- ✓ Become and be recognised as a Best Practice TPP School because of the breadth and depth of what has been covered
- ✓ TPP for families is available
- ✓ PRICE 3 day train the trainer
- ✓ Achieve and maintain the Healthy Schools Award

SEMH resources can be found on the Essex Schools Infolink

https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/social_emotional_mental_health_portal_for_schools/Pages/default.aspx

Emotional wellbeing and mental health resources

Four posters have been produced to support staff in school/settings to help children and young people who may be experiencing key areas of mental health needs:



School support includes:

Critical incident support schools communications@essex.gov.uk

Designated mental health lead semhstrategy@essex.gov.uk

EPs in CAMHS educationalpsychology@essex.gov.uk

A list of training courses was included in the slide presentation.

SEMH Strategy Team: semhstrategy@essex.gov.uk

Priorities of the EWMHS Strategic Board

Chaired by Clare Kershaw, the EPHA representative is Pam Langmead.

1. Revisiting the thematic review of suicide – what else can be learned when young people take their own lives?
2. Schools attendance difficulties, including emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)
3. Self-care – development of advice and guidance
4. An emotional health and wellbeing conference
5. The Education Policy Institute Pupil Wellbeing Survey – deeper dive in secondary age pupils.

The outcomes of the **Education Policy Institute Pupil Wellbeing Survey** carried out in the summer term were shared at the meeting. All 12 districts in Essex LA were represented in the survey. 38 schools responded to the survey, pupils surveyed were from years 6, 7 and 11.

Most pupils in Essex report wellbeing scores broadly in line with results observed in the most similar survey of pupils in the UK, the Good Childhood Report. However, pupils in Essex have lower wellbeing relating to their appearance. 26.7% report low wellbeing for this in Essex compared with 11.7% nationally; and Pupils across Essex feel less happy about how they use their time.

Younger pupils report higher rates of wellbeing than older pupils: 10.6% of pupils in Year 6 report low wellbeing, compared with 21.1% of Year 11 pupils. From Year 7 onwards girls report lower rates of wellbeing than boys.

Average wellbeing scores across ethnicities are broadly similar.

In Year 6, the data suggests a weak positive correlation between free school meals (FSM) quintiles and lower rates of wellbeing. Average scores for “choice” and “appearance” are significantly lower in the most deprived quintile (6.2 and 6.3 respectively) when compared with the least deprived quintile (8.1 and 7.1 respectively).

5. ATTENDANCE GUIDANCE AND EXPECTATIONS

The DfE non-statutory guidance, Working Together to improve attendance, was implemented in schools in September. The aim of the guidance is to help maintain high levels of school attendance and improve consistency of support.

To do this the guidance focusses on managing attendance by:

- preventing patterns of absence from developing by promoting good attendance;
- intervening early by using data to spot patterns of absence before they become persistent and working with families to remove the barriers to attendance; and
- targeting support for persistent and severe absentees with all local partners working together to re-engage pupils.

The five key changes:

- Clarity of expectation – clearly defined statutory roles for schools, trusts and local

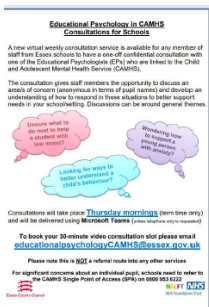
authorities.

- Earlier intervention – legal responsibilities to proactively improve attendance, beyond existing recording requirements.
- Support first – before any legal action is taken.
- Targeted whole family support.
- Independent schools – data will be collected for the first time and will receive the same support from the local authority.

Schools are urged to take advantage of existing and continuing support:

- Access to Early Help Drop-Ins – held weekly, one per quadrant, key partners available to assist/signpost – positive feedback has been received. This is on a Wednesday in South.
- **Every Wednesday 12:30- 13:30pm**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)



- Maximising School Attendance Toolkit – reviewed and updated to be with schools soon – *“Let’s Talk We Miss You.”*
- CAMHS provide free 30-minute consultation to, for teachers/ leaders, to discuss/ support individual cases re. pupil wellbeing. TC book a Thursday morning consultation email educationalpsychologyCAMHS@essex.gov.uk



At the Mid and South meeting, headteachers shared their strategies for improving school attendance.

Amanda Buckland-Garnett, Collingwood Primary

Amanda spoke about various strategies that are used by her school to promote good attendance, including using the competitive nature of parents, and pester power!

Promoting good attendance:

- ▶ asking children in assembly good and bad reasons for not being at school
- ▶ publishing class % in newsletters

Surprise 100% letter send in the summer holidays (the power of showing off on social media)

Strictly, no term time holidays are authorised and weddings (including abroad) are only given 1 day for travel, 1 for the wedding and 1 for travel back as authorised.

The Woodham schools have a Partnership attendance leaflet to avoid parents playing one school off against another.

The school will phone the parent if they have ignored a text, to say that an email has been sent. Amanda stressed the importance of informing both parents to get penalty notices through, so it is always mentioned on the school newsletter (including lifting wording from policy about returning in September).

Monitoring attendance:

Amanda explained that the process takes her 10 minutes each fortnight: the office generates a report from SIMS for all pupils with attendance below 95%, highlighted to show if that has improved since last monitoring, and a column populated with reasons

for absence where relevant, and previous actions that the school has taken e.g. a SAM meeting held, or social worker aware, or the case to be discussed at a TAF meeting etc. She circles all below 90% and note on what she has done/what the office staff should do etc. The school sends PA letters as a result of this i.e. not waiting until the end of term, but adding a note if sent so that only one is sent per half term. The PA letter is sent first, followed by an informal supportive SAM with Amanda, then SAM paper work sent home in advance of a formal SAM meeting to indicate seriousness, then regular TAFs. All action is followed up in writing and kept as a record to evidence support given.

Amanda stressed the importance of looking for patterns e.g. a child who is ill the same week every year; she lets parents know that she has noticed and approaches them at the beginning of Year 6 etc

Other tips:

- ▶ Involve others e.g. invite everyone to TAF meeting including siblings' schools, nurse, both parents any other carers, SENDCo. parent advocates etc
- ▶ Report as missing after 10 sessions regardless of advice from advocates and social workers to do otherwise as temporary housing often isn't temporary.

Clare Branton, Willowbrook Primary

Clare stressed that her school's approach to attendance emphasises high expectations and consistency of approach.

- School profile/policy.
- Clear and unwavering expectation of pupils and parents.
 - Message delivered during parent tours/parent meetings/workshops.
- Persistency and consistency.
- Tracking and monitor.
- Willingness to conduct home visits.

Communicating the vision

Parents (including prospective parents)

- intervene early
- When parents phone children in sick if it is going to push their attendance below 95% they are told over the phone that letter 1 will be issued.

Letters

- Letter 1 - Aim is to send attendance letter when children fall below 95%.
- Letter 2 – (attendance meeting with HT and SENCO if relevant) sent when children fall 90% or below or after Letter 1 when there has been no significant improvement.
 - Notes are made prior to the meeting with relevant facts and information to support HT in seeking best form of action needed for improvements. Children's voice also obtained before the meeting. Parents advised that supporting medical evidence for further absences required.

Meetings – identify barriers/action plan for improving attendance/Collecting from home.

- Children with medical conditions who have low attendance are often on the PA report we invite in by letter to attendance support meeting – paper trail.
- Letters sent to GPs to support further evidence of absence.

Monitored for signs of improvement – every 2 weeks.

If no improvement and legal action warning letter not given in initial meeting – parent is requested to come in for a further meeting where legal action warning letter is issued.

Other key strategies

- Information on newsletters/parents have easy access to the staff.
- School uniform sales – some parents are conscious of sending their children in without the right uniform.
- Late gate.
- Support provided through breakfast and after school club without charge where we feel parents may keep their children off school due unforeseen circumstances. For example (had to move house therefore not living in the area/sibling unwell, able to bring but before school hours/parents completing degree.)

Pupils

- ✓ Celebrated in assembly
- ✓ Rewards
- ✓ Targeted support (SEND)
- ✓ Conversations around absence
- ✓ Curriculum – PSHE
- ✓ 3PR
- ✓ Breakfast club
- ✓ Collect from home

Staff

- As part of staff induction we brief new staff on the school's philosophy on attendance and introduce them to their responsibilities for attendance management on SIMS.
- Parents Evening – teachers have a list of all attendance % and key children highlighted with hours of missed learning.
- Welcoming children into the class who are late.
- Ensuring work is adapted to help them catch up.
- Staff vocabulary - "Every school day is a great day."
- SLT on the gate every day.

Willowbrook Team

- Positive and supportive working relationship between AO and myself.
- Close tracking of individual pupil absence that allows for early identification of attendance concerns and therefore ability to engage in early support/intervention where required.

LA Support

- Engage regularly in the support offered by the Attendance Specialist Team to help guide us when managing attendance concern cases.
- Support from James always available either via phone or email.

6. ESSEX YEAR OF READING

Support for Early Reading and Phonics – Spring 2023

The Essex Education Task Force has made funding available:

- All schools will be able to access the advice and training to support Early Reading and Phonics teaching, including Junior and Special Schools
- Phonics/English leads in each schools will be invited to 3 sessions commencing January 2023, led by specialists from Essex Teaching Hubs and supported by the partnership SEP, to supporting the auditing of reading and phonics materials in

schools through peer review.

Alison Fiala, Head of Education and EY (Mid) will be writing to schools shortly, outlining key details, contacts and timelines. Partnerships will be invited to attend these sessions by the partnership SEP, there is no cost to schools, training is funded by the Task Force as part of the Essex Year of Reading.

Essex Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education


Copies of Essex RE Syllabus should have arrived in schools early November. This syllabus, to be implemented by LA maintained schools from September 2023, reflects significant developments in education in religion and world views.

The training has been rearranged for the spring term.

This training is for all schools who use the current Essex Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education which is changing from Autumn 2023. There is no charge for the training. Booking and Zoom link available from Ruth Everett, consultant to Essex SACRE. reverett@chelmsford.anglican.org

7. NORTH EAST QUADRANT UPDATE (North East meeting) Philippa Holliday

Tendring Levelling Up Proposal...



- Elklan Communication Friendly Setting (CFSe) award to create **1 additional Communication Hub** – to work alongside Chase Lane and Alresford to become a centre of excellence in speech, language and communication and provide leadership and support for the Language and Communication Support Networks - <https://www.elklan.co.uk/Training/Settings/>
- **An additional 50** Teachers, TAs and EY Practitioners funded to attend Elklan Speech, Language and Communication Level 3 accredited training (3-5 yrs, 5-11yrs or 11-16 yrs) to become **Communication Champions** - <https://www.elklan.co.uk/Training/Practitioners/>
- Potential for additional roles within the local authority to support the implementation of the above
- Training available from Spring 2023

Colchester Levelling Up Proposal...



- Elklan Communication Friendly Setting (CFSe) award to establish **1 Communication Hub** to become a centre of excellence in speech, language and communication and provide leadership and support for the Language and Communication Support Networks - <https://www.elklan.co.uk/Training/Settings/>
- **50** Teachers, TAs and EY Practitioners funded to attend Elklan Speech, Language and Communication Level 3 accredited training (3-5 yrs or 5-11yrs) to become **Communication Champions** - <https://www.elklan.co.uk/Training/Practitioners/>
- Elklan **Lets Talk** training for parents - <https://www.elklan.co.uk/Training/Parents/>
- Training available from Spring 2023

7. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Termly headteacher meetings

Spring term 2023

WEST	Wednesday 1 March	Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth
SOUTH	Thursday 2 March	Greenwoods Hotel, Stock
N-EAST	Wednesday 8 March	Colchester Community Stadium
MID	Thursday 9 March	Lion Inn, Boreham

Summer term 2023

WEST	Wednesday 14 June	Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth
SOUTH	Thursday 15 June	Greenwoods Hotel, Stock
N-EAST	Wednesday 21 June	Colchester Community Stadium
MID	Thursday 22 June	Lion Inn, Boreham

EPHA Conferences

Headteachers' Conference

Friday 24 March 2023 Chelmsford City Race Course

Deputy/Assistant Headteachers' Conference

Friday 13 October 2023 Colchester Football Stadium

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