

**MINUTES OF THE LA AND EPHA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
THURSDAY 11 OCTOBER 2018 starting at 1.00 pm**

<b>In attendance</b>	<b>Representing</b>	<b>email address</b>
Clare Kershaw CK	Director of Education	clare.kershaw@essex.gov.uk
Alison Fiala	Education and EY Lead Mid	<a href="mailto:Alison.fiala@essex.gov.uk">Alison.fiala@essex.gov.uk</a>
Ralph Holloway	SEND Transformation Manager	Ralph.holloway@essex.gov.uk
Shamsun Noor	Planning and Admissions	Shamsun.noor@essex.gov.uk
Lois Ashforth	EPHA Dengie	Head@coldnorton.essex.sch.uk
Sue Bardetti	EPHA Tendring South	admin@hollandhaven.essex.sch.uk
Nicky Barrand	EPHA South Chair	htpa@cherrytree-pri.essex.sch.uk
Isobel Barron	EPHA West Chair	head@roseacres.essex.sch.uk
Liz Benjeddi	EPHA Billericay	head@southgreen-jun.essex.sch.uk
Amanda Buckland Garnett	EPHA South Woodham Ferrers	abg@collingwood.essex.sch.uk
John Clements	EPHA Uttlesford South	jhcle@hotmail.com
Anna Conley	EPHA Witham	head@howbridge-inf.essex.sch.uk
Dawn Dack	EPHA Maldon	drdack@wentworth.essex.sch.uk
Sarah Donnelly	EPHA Halstead	sdonnelly@richarddeclare.essex.sch.uk
Fiona Dorey	EPHA Braintree	Head@greatbradfords-jun.essex.sch.uk
Andy Douglas	EPHA South Vice-Chair	andy.douglas@riverside.essex.sch.uk
Shelagh Harvey	EPHA Brentwood	headteacher@ingatestone.essex.sch.uk
Nick Hutchings	EPHA Vice-Chair/NE Chair	head@hamiltonprimary.com
Pam Langmead	EPHA Professional Officer	pam@langmead.me.uk
Ian MacDonald	EPHA Tendring Mid	headteacher@elmstead.essex.sch.uk
Mark Millbourne	EPHA Harwich and Dovercourt	headteacher@allsaints-harwich.essex.sch.uk
Kate Mills	EPHA Braintree	head@johnrayinfants.essex.sch.uk
Nicola Morgan-Soane	EPHA Mid Chair	head@trinityroad.essex.sch.uk
Hayley O'Dea	EPHA Rochford	head@greatwaking.essex.sch.uk
Donna Parker	EPHA Tendring North	head@st-marys-ardleigh.essex.sch.uk
Paula Pemberton	EPHA Colchester East	paula.pemberton@hazelmere-jun.essex.sch.uk
Harriet Phelps-Knights	EPHA Chair	Head@janetduke.essex.sch.uk
Amanda Reid	EPHA Chelmsford North	admin@perryfields-inf.essex.sch.uk
Angela Russell	EPHA Basildon West	angelarussell@st-anneline-inf.essex.sch.uk
Suzy Ryan	EPHA Colchester South	head@fingringhoe.essex.sch.uk
Karen Tucker	EPHA Canvey Island	head@canvey-jun.essex.sch.uk
Jonathan Tye	EPHA Harlow	head@churchgate.essex.sch.uk

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from:

- |                 |                           |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| • Lehla Abbott  | North East Vice-Chair     |
| • Emma Dawson   | Castle Point and Rochford |
| • Mary Jo Hall  | Uttlesford North          |
| • Amanda Reid   | Chelmsford North          |
| • Chris Jarmain | Epping Forest South       |
| • Julie Lorkins | West Vice-Chair           |
| • Lorna Pigram  | Rayleigh                  |

Clare Kershaw welcomed everyone to the meeting. She congratulated the

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headteachers on the excellent set of pupil results for 2018, and passed on her thanks to schools leaders, teachers and staff for their hard work and efforts. She reminded the Executive that, given the size of Essex and the number of schools in the county, these results impact positively on a huge number of pupils.

## 2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE EPHA EXECUTIVE MEETING

### a) ATTENDANCE ADVICE

One headteacher stated that, on occasion, parents are being given inconsistent or inaccurate advice about penalty notices. Clare noted the transition between the old and new service, but agreed to discuss these concerns with the Attendance Compliance Manager, to ensure that consistent messages are being given.

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### b) ADMISSIONS ADVICE

One headteacher argued that the admissions team needs to ensure that they are following Essex policy and protocols in relation to admissions law; she felt that, at times, the team is unsure or inconsistent about how these are applied. This was noted.

### c) LETTER OF CONGRATULATIONS TO SCHOOLS

A member of the Executive noted that they had received a letter from the Local Authority congratulating her and her school on their pupil outcomes; however, she was disappointed as the letter did not address her by name. This concern was echoed by others. Clare Kershaw apologised for the omission, explaining that the business support capacity in the Local Authority is considerably reduced. She hoped that headteachers appreciated the sentiment behind the letters, which is to acknowledge and thank the many schools that have done exceptionally well in the past year.

### d) SLIS PARTNERSHIP QUADRANT MEETINGS

The Executive had earlier discussed the recently established School Led Improvement Partnership quadrant meetings, and proposed that, in addition to local headteachers (and EPHA representatives), the Professional Officer should attend these meetings in order to gain an overview and understanding of the good practice and developments across the county. This was **AGREED**.

### e) PARTNERSHIP DATA BOOKLETS

It was noted that, following a discussion at the North East SLIS Partnership quadrant meeting, it had been agreed that the partnership data booklets, created by the School Effectiveness team, should be circulated to all partnership leads, in advance of their meetings with the allocated SEP. The distribution of these seems to have been inconsistent, although it was accepted that these may be with the Partnership Lead Headteacher and not yet circulated. Alison Fiala **AGREED** to check that these had been sent out as agreed.

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### f) SALE OF EES

Clare Kershaw explained that a number of bids have been received and have been reduced from a long-list to a shortlist. These bids are being considered by the County Council, and Councillor Ray Gooding will announce the decision in due course. Clare confirmed that, as soon as the announcement is made, a

meeting will be convened with the headteacher and governor associations to discuss the transition phase.

The EPHA Chair reiterated that schools continue to have concerns about the sale of EES and sought reassurance that once the service was no longer part of ECC there would continue to be close collaboration with the Education Director, particularly in respect of HR issues.

### **3. SEND CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND REDESIGN**

Ralph Holloway attended the meeting to give an update on the SEND capital programme and the redesign of services in Essex.

An Inclusion Statement has been developed by headteachers and LA officers on the SEND Headteacher Roundtable, and schools have been asked to sign up to the values in order to agree a collective approach to inclusion in Essex. The Roundtable will review the sign-up later in the term, and also consider a number of issues that have been raised by schools.

Steve Whitfield (Senior EP), Andrew Smith (Headteacher of Lyons Hall and principal of the Professional Learning Network (TSA in mid-Essex) and Ruth Sturdy (SEND School Effectiveness Leader) are in the process of developing a workforce development programme around supporting children with low level behavioural issues and mental health problems. This programme will be developed and delivered free of charge to all schools.

The number of EHC Plans has increased this year by around 500 this year, and the profile of pupils has changed considerably in the last decade; there has been a 400% increase in the diagnosis of autism over the last 10 years.

Ralph also reported a significant increase this term in the number of children who have been placed out of county; 23 children have been referred out of county, at a cost of approximately £50k per pupil. Special Schools in Essex are full or over-full, and there is an increasing number of requests for ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis) Therapy and other support. There are a rising number of permanent exclusions.

The growing numbers are partly explained by the huge growth of population in Essex, including a significant number of families (many of whom are vulnerable) transferred by London boroughs into the county.

However, the recent survey of 1800 parents, suggested that confidence in the provision and support offered by schools was reasonably high (over 60% of parents expressed this), but lower in relation to services from ECC and Social Care.

A comprehensive review is underway of the SEND services, including the Education Psychology team, the Statutory Assessment Service and the Specialist Teacher team. Clare explained that service members are aware of the review; there are around 400 people in the service. The review needs to respond to the

consultation that took place last year and the aim is to have a new SEND service in place by Spring 2020. Headteachers, school staff and SENCOs will be consulted and closely involved with the redesign. Recent surveys and consultation discussions have revealed that the service isn't fit for purpose, despite there being some excellent teams and individuals with the system.

The timeline for the redesign and introduction of a new system is:

- Draft structure proposed – December 2018
- Consultation period – February – April 2019
- Recruitment process – summer and autumn 2019
- Phased implementation of a new service – spring 2020.

It is important to acknowledge that a new service will operate differently, involving not just a change of structure but also of approach. The LA will engage and involve parents in the development of a new service.

The SEND capital programme is underway. ECC has committed £35 million so far, Schools Forum £17.4m, to the SEND capital programme. If the West free school application is successful, this will save £10m.

Ralph gave an outline of the new schools that are being built, or are being proposed.

In Mid:

there will be 3 new special schools, two in Chelmsford for pupils aged 7 – 16 years (one SEMH, one autism and moderate learning difficulties) one in Witham, 75 places for pupils aged 4 – 16 for autism and severe learning difficulties. New SEMH provision is being developed at Newlands Spring.

In North East:

Lexden is relocating to the former Heath School site and expanding from the current 120 places to 200 places, including 30 boarding places – aged 3 -19 Kingswode Hoe is expanding to include Key Stage 1 provision; Langham Oaks to include primary-age pupils, and Monkwick Junior is offering GROW provision.

In South:

Glenwood is expanding to offer boarding places – 20 for children aged 3-19; Briscoe Primary and Ghyllgrove Infants are developing SEMH provision

In West:

Oakview in Loughton – additional 24 places for children and young people with Loughton

Cooks Spinney is developing 8 places for autism.

A free school application is being made in Wave 13 for a 60 place school for children with SEMH.

It was confirmed that free schools are able to admit out-of-county pupils, but the free school applications are mostly from existing local trusts that are committed to Essex children.

Clare Kershaw reminded the group that no other Local Authority has committed this level of investment in a SEND strategy.

The group discussed the challenge of earlier identification of much younger children with severe and complex needs, including four-year olds starting school. There is no place in GROW for these pupils and limited IPRA funding. Headteachers warned that the system is setting up these children to fail. One headteacher stated that her school ran nurture provision for children in Reception, but this had to close as there was no funding to support the group. Ralph conceded that the only way of funding such provision is through the existing school budget. It was agreed that any re-design must take into consideration the needs of the very youngest children, and all new special schools should be offering outreach support to maintained schools. In addition there must be a review of the transition from pre-school to primary, as pre-schools are often depending on the primary school to start the application for an EHCP even if a child needs this at a younger age.

Helen Wall (SEND Operations Leader) is undertaking an appreciative enquiry asking schools what is going well in the annual review, so that this can be included and developed in future practice. Helen can be contacted at [helen.wall@essex.gov.uk](mailto:helen.wall@essex.gov.uk)

#### **4. ADMISSIONS AND APPEALS**

Shamsun Noor was welcomed to the meeting. He accepted the pressures around the appeals process, including the cost of the process and the time that it took. He explained that it was necessary to protect parents' rights in relation to appeal. However, schools have seen an increase in the number of appeals, including relating to pupils wanting to join Reception classes.

Schools that manage their own admissions are responsible for conducting an appeal, and if they use the ECC service this costs £165 for each appeal. Shamsun explained that this covered the costs of the whole process, including administration, the venue and panel, paperwork and so on, and was in fact a very competitive price when compared with other local authorities. However, he accepted that there is no reduction in the cost, even when a school is conducting numerous appeals on one day, or when the meetings are cancelled.

Headteachers noted their frustration that a huge number of appeals are in infant classes, where the class size is limited to 30 and where parents have little chance of success on appeal. Shamsun noted that the current letter provided to parents includes the information that "of this type of appeal, around 5% are successful". Whilst recognising that the LA and schools must follow the legal process, the Executive asked if the explanatory information provided to parents could also include a sentence such as "the cost of each appeal is £165, which comes out of the school's budget". Shamsun agreed to include this, but noted that parents who want their child to be admitted to a school are not necessarily concerned about the school's budget (at this stage).

Shamsun did agree to reconsider the cost of a number of back-to-back appeals,

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recognising that this may reduce some of the costs for the venue and panel.

The Executive discussed the possibility of a triage system for appeals, and Shamsun noted that this has been previously considered by the DfE but the department decided not to proceed with such a system. However, it was **AGREED** that this would be helpful and that EPHA should write to the DfE in support of such a system if another consultation is held to consider triaging admissions. .

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Shamsun confirmed that the national system for admissions from infant to junior schools has changed following adjudication, and it is now necessary for parents to formally apply when their child moves from an infant to a junior school, even if those two schools are on the same site or “linked”. Shamsun confirmed that he will send this information to infant and junior schools in the next month.

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One headteacher questioned if there had been a change to the Essex admissions policy. It was noted that it is not possible to state that any place is “guaranteed”, and the Essex standard criteria continue to be siblings; catchment area and distance.

Executive members noted their concern about the timing of admissions decisions for children with SEND. These may take place during the summer holidays, giving schools little information, resources and time to prepare for the arrival of a child who may have significant and specialised needs. There seems to be little that a school can do to object to SEND placements, however inappropriate they may be. Clare accepted that the balance is not always right, but reiterated the legal rights of parents and the need to adhere to the SEND Code of Practice and the law in relation to admissions.

## 5. EDUCATION TEAM RESTRUCTURE

Clare noted that the restructure of the LA Education teams was implemented at the beginning of the summer term and is now in the implementation phase. The four Assistant Directors have been appointed and are all in post:

Nicola Woolf – West

Lisa Fergus – South

Liz Cornish – Mid

Philippa Holliday – North East

Interviews have taken place for the remaining posts of Head of Early Years and Education, in the West and South quadrant teams. Maz Norman has been appointed to the substantive role in South, and Karla Martin takes over from Jacky Castle (interim head) in West starting in January. Jacky will remain as a School Effectiveness Partner in West. This will leave two SEP vacancies across the county, which the LA will aim to fill.

Clare explained that the structure will include Senior Attendance Specialist Team leaders in each quadrant, who will work with schools to improve and develop effective practice around school attendance; interviews are being held for these roles. Sue Thomas has been appointed in the North East. The Attendance

Specialists will be operational as soon as they are appointed.

Julie Keating has been appointed as the Education Access Manager, overseeing exclusions, children with medical needs, pupils on a reduced timetable, and attendance, including compliance.

The final part of the Education Team restructure is the creation of an Education Hub. A workshop is being held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> November (9.00 am – 1.00 pm, at Hamptons Social Club) to explore the development of this advice line, and the LA is keen to hear the views of headteachers about the service.

## 6. SCHOOL FUNDING

Clare reminded the Executive that the Schools' Forum has agreed an Essex funding formula for 2018/19 that has resulted in a per-pupil increase of £71 for primary schools. Once de-delegated funding has been detracted, schools will still be around £10 per-pupil better off. Clare acknowledged that funding is very tight, but felt that this was a positive outcome for Essex schools.

The Executive members asked if the October 2018 census was determining the teachers' pay grant (payable in the Autumn term), but Clare was unsure, as the DfE has not yet announced that information. A headteacher also asked about the differential between the primary and secondary teachers' grant allowance, as the secondary grant is disproportionately higher. (Percentage wise, it is greater than the usual differential between primary and secondary sectors.) Clare **AGREED** to ask Yannick Stupples-Whyley to provide information about the teachers' pay grant.

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One headteacher asked about funding for children who arrive in the country (from abroad) mid-year, and agreed to forward the query to Clare.

## 7. AUTUMN TERM AREA HEADTEACHER MEETINGS

The following items were agreed for the LA part of the termly meetings:

- Attendance and compliance
- Education priorities
- SEND strategy review update
- EES update

Briefing paper to include information about:

- Small Schools conference
- Teaching Awards
- School meals advisory service – model from April 2019
- FFT training
- SIF bid – good practice from schools in the pilot

## 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### a) Teaching Awards

Clare reminded the Executive that the nominations are open for the Teaching

Awards. She noted that there are a number of new categories, including for new teachers and teaching assistants, and asked headteachers to encourage colleagues to nominate staff and governors so that their hard work and excellence is acknowledged and celebrated.

## 9. DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS FOR THE 2018/19 SCHOOL YEAR

### **Executive meetings** (Chelmsford City Football Club)

Thursday 24 January 2019

Thursday 9 May 2019

### **Area Heads Meetings**

#### Autumn term 2018

N-EAST	Wednesday 7 November	Weston Homes Community Stadium
SOUTH	Thursday 8 November	Holiday Inn, Basildon
MID	Wednesday 14 November	Chelmsford City Football Club
WEST	Thursday 15 November	Weston Homes Business Centre, Takeley

#### Spring term 2019

N-EAST	Wednesday 6 March	Weston Homes Community Stadium
SOUTH	Thursday 7 March	Holiday Inn, Basildon
WEST	Wednesday 13 March	Weston Homes Business Centre, Takeley
MID	Thursday 14 March	Chelmsford City Football Club

#### Summer term 2019

N-EAST	Wednesday 12 June	Weston Homes Community Stadium
SOUTH	Thursday 13 June	Holiday Inn, Basildon
WEST	Wednesday 19 June	Weston Homes Business Centre, Takeley
MID	Thursday 20 June	Chelmsford City Football Club

The meeting ended at 3.20 pm  
Pam Langmead, EPHA Professional Officer