

ESSEX PRIMARY HEADTEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE EPHA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 5 OCTOBER 2023 at 11.00 am – 12.30 pm at The Lion Inn, Boreham

Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Dawn Baker *Sue Bardetti *Isobel Barron *Liz Bartholomew *Dale Bateman *Liz Benjeddi Heidi Blakeley *Julie Braithwaite *Amanda Buckland-Garnett *Luke Bulpett *Dida Burrell *Anna Conley Matt Curzon *Dawn Dack Ceri Daniels *Paula Derwin *Sandra Dorrington *Mary Evans *Richard Green Mary Jo Hall Bridget Harris *Nick Hutchings *Clare James *Chris Jarman *Becky Keitch *Pam Langmead Ian MacDonald *Diana Mason *Richard McIntosh *James Newell *Jinnie Nichols Hayley O'Dea *Matt O'Grady Katherine Parker *Nicky Patrick *Richard Potter *Harriet Phelps-Knights *Colin Raraty *Amanda Reid *Gary Soars Sarah Stevenson *Nicky Stone-Riley *Joanne Willcox 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chelmsford West/Mid Treasurer Tendring South West Chair Harwich and Dovercourt Epping Forest Rural Billericay Wickford Basildon West South Woodham Ferrers South treasurer Braintree/Mid quadrant partnership lead Witham Uttlesford South Mid Chair/Maldon Colchester South (Tiptree & Stanway) Colchester East Canvey Island Harlow South Vice-Chair West Treasurer/Uttlesford North North East Treasurer EPHA Vice-Chair/North East Chair/ Colchester West Dengie West Vice-Chair Tendring North EPHA Professional Officer/County Treasurer Tendring Mid Castle Point and Benfleet Chelmsford South Tendring North Halstead Rochford Brentwood South quadrant partnership lead North East quadrant partnership lead North East Vice-Chair EPHA Chair West quadrant partnership lead Mid Vice-Chair/Chelmsford North Rayleigh Colchester South (Tiptree & Stanway) South Chair/Basildon East & Pitsea Epping Forest South
---------------------	--	---

Also in attendance

Emily Welton

ESSET

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Action

Harriet Phelps-Knights, the EPHA Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. New colleagues on the EPHA Executive include:

- Mary Evans representing headteachers in Harlow
- Kerry Malcolm and Nicky Patrick, Lead Partnership Headteachers for the North East quadrant
- Colin Raraty, Lead Partnership Headteacher for the West quadrant

Katherine Parker, Lead Headteacher for the South quadrant, has also joined the Executive, but was unable to attend the meeting. Dida Burrell is the Lead Partnership Headteacher for Mid, and already sits on the Executive.

Apologies were received from:

- Heidi Blakeley Wickford
- Matt Curzon Uttlesford South
- Ceri Daniels Colchester South (Tiptree & Stanway)
- Mary Jo Hall West Treasurer/Uttlesford North
- Hayley O'Dea Rochford
- Katherine Parker South quadrant partnership lead
- Sarah Stevenson Colchester South (Tiptree & Stanway)

At the AGM earlier in the day, Harriet noted that this would be Dawn Baker's last meeting on the EPHA Executive as she retires at half term. Dawn has been working in Essex since 2004 and joined the Executive in June 2015. She has also represented primary headteachers on key groups such as Schools Forum. Dawn was thanked for her contribution and commitment to her primary colleagues. She has put forward a new representative to take her place.

Following the meeting Ceri Daniels (Tiptree and Stanway/South Colchester) and Hayley O'Dea (Rochford) both contacted the Professional Officer to explain that, due to other commitments, they are no longer able to be on the Executive. The Tiptree and Stanway Consortium is well represented by Sarah Stevenson and Ceri Daniels, and Hayley has put forward a new representative to take her place.

2. BUSINESS INTERESTS REGISTER

All Executive members in attendance completed a business interests' form. It was **AGREED** that Executive members who were not at the meeting should be asked to complete a form at the earliest opportunity.

Executive members not in attendance

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 24 May 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

4. EPHA REPRESENTATION ON GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

i) EPHA Chair's report and Schools Forum

The EPHA Chair referred to her report given at the Annual General Meeting earlier in the day. She noted that a number of Executive members attended a recent Schools Forum meeting. They were informed that the government's High Needs Block settlement will be lower than promised. There will be a one-off payment of uplift place funding, depending on school balances. The Local Authority has promised to look at the pooled balances in academy trusts.

The de-delegated funding retained by the Education Team and for statutory functions has shifted additional funding to support the Education Access team.

ii) Small School Support Group

Jinnie Nichols, Chair of the Small Schools Support Group, reported that the meetings during the 2022/23 school year had been reasonably well attended, in particular the meeting that Clare Kershaw took part in, in May, when she stressed the LA's commitment to small schools. Jinnie noted that the support from EPHA is appreciated by the small school headteachers. The next event will be the Small Schools' headteacher conference on 18th October.

iii) Professional Officer report

The report gave details of the meetings attended by Pam Langmead on behalf of EPHA. In addition to the attendance at meetings (and writing follow up reports), her work for EPHA has included:

- Information, emails and communications with all headteachers;
- Responding to queries and actions from the Executive, ECC, other association officers, interested companies;
- Individual support for headteachers when issues arise;
- Identifying and supporting new headteachers;
- Managing the Colleague Supporter programme and capacity support opportunities;
- Briefings to headteacher groups – 28 partnerships/clusters hold termly briefings – researching and writing briefing notes and presentations –and keeping them up to date as new directives, guidance and documents are introduced;
- Managing the Small Schools Support Group, running those meetings, planning October conference;
- Writing and delivering training to governors, focused on exclusions;
- Planning and organising Deputy headteacher conference and WEPHA conference;
- Planning Headteacher conference;
- Updating support materials for schools, including statutory policy lists, website checklists, and the Support Directory;
- Organisation and management of the area meetings in the spring and summer terms;
- Managing requests for headteacher wellbeing support;
- Managing the EPHA finances: paying claims and invoices (including from Colleague Supporters), supporting area treasurers, producing reports, paying in

Professional
Officer

- cheques;
- Updating EPHA records and website;
 - Other tasks as required.

The EPHA Professional Officer was thanked for the amount of work that she does for the Association.

iv) Penalty Notice Code of Conduct Steering Group

The Professional Officer noted that a steering group meeting was held on 17th July to discuss the Essex approach to penalty notices. Feedback from numerous headteachers has suggested that the current use of penalty notices does not have much impact on term time holidays, and results in huge amounts of administration, and causes conflict with parents. A number of suggested changes were proposed, which were put to Clare Kershaw during the summer.

However, at the beginning of October the DfE wrote to all local authority Attendance Service Leads to announce that they will be holding three face to face events at which Attendance Service Leads will come together to discuss the DfE's plans to introduce a "National Framework on Attendance Legal Intervention." The sessions will allow an opportunity for colleagues to comment on the following:

- The final draft proposals on the thresholds at which fixed penalty notices should be considered,
- The role of fixed penalty notices in the wider 'support first' model set out in *Working together to improve school attendance*,
- and, the specifics of introducing the National Framework from September 2024.

Anita Patel- Lingham has confirmed that she will be attending the first of these sessions on 24th October 2023 to contribute to these discussions and gain an understanding of the timeline that the DfE are hoping to work to when introducing their National Framework. She has promised that she will share any permitted feedback with key colleagues once I have more updates to share.

5. PRIORITIES FOR EPHA FOR THE 2023/24 YEAR

The EPHA priorities were considered at the Annual General Meeting, held prior to the Executive meeting.

6. YEAR 6 – 7 TRANSITION

The EPHA Chair noted that Carole Herman, the ASHE (Association of Secondary Headteachers in Essex) was unable to attend the meeting, but it had been agreed that we would gather feedback from Executive members about the transition arrangements for Year 6 pupils, that had been jointly introduced by ASHE and EPHA.

Headteachers gave the following feedback about engagement with the new arrangements:

It was noted that some primary schools had not taken into account the agreed transition week (last week in June) and had booked Year 6 residential that week. It was

agreed that primary schools should be reminded that the transition week in 2024 will be the week commencing 24th June, and they should be asked to keep that available. Most, but not all, secondaries held their transition events in the last week of June.

However, a number didn't, including Clacton County High and Manningtree High School.

Mary Evans reminded the Executive that Harlow schools have different arrangements including what information is asked for, though they did hold visits in the last week of June.

The EPHA Chair noted her concern about sending personal data on pupils to schools where they may not even end up.

It was noted that Harwich and Dovercourt School has not engaged with the process, and didn't use the agreed form.

Bridge Academy Trust used to have a much more complex system, but followed the ASHE/EPHA agreed form and timeframe, which was very positive.

It was agreed that most secondary schools did use the form, though some then asked for additional (or repeat) information.

Some headteachers noted that they have problem at the beginning of the academic year, as secondary schools hold open day visits (usually lasting around 2 hours), and Year 6 pupils often attend those visits with their parents, sometimes missing numerous sessions right at the beginning of term. There were mixed opinions about the value of these visits, but heads did agree that it was very unhelpful when they took place in the first couple of weeks of term. In addition, an increasing number of secondary schools are extending these to Year 5 pupils, which is not thought to be necessary and disrupts the learning in this year group as well.

It was AGREED that ASHE should ask secondary schools to avoid holding these visits in the first two weeks of term and not to include Year 5 pupils. It was noted that primary schools may not authorise these visits for Year 5 pupils.

7. OTHER CONCERNS TO TAKE TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Landlord consent

A number of headteachers expressed their concern about the challenges of obtaining landlord consent. This can take many months, even for the simplest of tasks, such as adding plug points in a room. The process may be even more complicated for church schools who have to seek permission from the Diocese as well, and there are sometimes disagreements between them and the LA about how is the landlord and is giving consent.

One headteacher gave an example of needing to install a fire door, for safeguarding purposes, and being unable to do so as she had not obtained consent many months after applying.

In one case Mitie has told schools that they need to follow CDM regulations which has added thousands of pounds to the cost of building work, meaning that the project was then unable to go ahead.

8. ESSET OUTREACH TO MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

Emily Welton, the Professional Officer for ESSET, was welcomed to the meeting. The group discussed the recent Inclusion conference run by the Local Authority to introduce the Inclusion Strategy and related projects, such as the Inclusion Framework. There were some concerns that there had been no opportunity for attendees to ask questions, and also that the venue itself was unsuitable for a conference (access, parking etc.).

Emily reminded the Executive that she had attended the last meeting in June to outline the progress of the outreach, and apologised for the delay in introducing the offer from special schools; this had been promised for the start of the autumn term, but had been delayed as she had been unable to complete the business case during the summer holidays. Emily explained that she was meeting with Ralph Holloway the following day (6th October) to discuss the plans and, hopefully, to secure agreement and funding from the Local Authority. The intention is to start the offer in January.

Emily had completed provision mapping across the county, but this is still being checked by the LA so she was unable to share the information at this stage.

The plan is that the outreach offer will be quadrant focused. The timetable of rollout is intended to be:

Phase 1 –

- Recruitment of staff. This is going to be a challenge, but there is some capacity in special schools to start the process. From January 2024 the intention is to have outreach leads in each quadrant.
- Telephone helpline to offer advice and support
- Face to face support in schools (with the involvement of the Inclusion Partner/Educational Psychologist beforehand)

Emily reminded headteachers that if there is a request for outreach, parental consent will need to be obtained.

There is a proposal to have a website for the outreach offer so that the information is in one place and readily accessible.

Phase 2: training offer – hopefully Easter 2024, may be September 2024
e.g. bespoke pieces of work

The plan is to enable funding to schools to enable them to release staff to attend training.

Phase 3 – in-reach into special schools – September 2024

The processes that will be developed will include a number of documents, such as request for outreach. Emily explained that there needs to be a level of strategic oversight, including a need to track the origin and impact of these proposals. Monitoring and quality assurance will be built into the proposal, and Emily accepted that the funding will be subject to review, based on the impact of the support that is offered. Data collected to evidence the impact will include soft data, such as staff confidence and increased expertise, as well as hard data including attendance, exclusions, EHCP needs assessments etc.

The ESSET proposal is asking for 3 years of funding, to make the project viable. Emily accepted that special schools will need to be scrutinised on how they are meeting the offer, and ESSET will have termly meetings with the Local Authority, alongside monthly meetings with key stakeholders.

The immediate timeline is:

- 6th October Emily meets with Ralph Holloway, Clare Kershaw and Philippa Holliday
- Proposals and business case finalised before half term.
- Proposal to School Forum – second half of term
- Process design and information sharing – second half of term
- January 2024 – rollout

It was agreed that any consultation could be done using the EPHA Executive headteachers.

The EPHA Executive discussed the autism hubs that have been established in Essex; quite a few heads were unaware of their existence, or how they could take advantage of this provision. Emily explained that the autism hubs have been in place for 7 years. In each quadrant there is one based in a secondary school, a primary school and a special school. They are located as follows:

South quadrant

- Castledon – special school
- Merrylands Primary – primary
- Bromfords High School – secondary

North East quadrant

- Market Fields– special school
- Hamford Primary – primary
- Tendring Technical College – secondary

West quadrant

- Oak View– special school
- ? – primary
- Passmores – secondary

Mid quadrant

- Thriftwood - special school
- Kelvedon St Mary's Primary – primary
- Honeywoods – secondary

It was felt that there had been a real lack of communication and information about these provisions, and the quality assurance was questioned. Emily noted that these hubs have been set up to offer provision for children or young people who have the cognitive ability to access the mainstream curriculum, but cannot cope with the mainstream environment.

Emily was thanked for attending the meeting. It was agreed that it may be helpful to hold an online Executive meeting in the next few weeks, to hear an update on the proposal.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business discussed.

9. DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS FOR THE 2023/24 SCHOOL YEAR

Executive meetings (The Lion Inn, Boreham)

Thursday 18th January 2024

Thursday 9th May 2024

Area Heads Meetings

Termly headteacher meetings

Autumn term 2023

WEST	Wednesday 8 November	Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth
MID	Thursday 9 November	The Lion Inn, Boreham
N-EAST	Wednesday 15 November	Colchester Community Stadium
SOUTH	Thursday 16 November	Greenwoods Hotel, Stock

Spring term 2024

WEST	Wednesday 28 February	Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth
SOUTH	Thursday 29 February	Greenwoods Hotel, Stock
N-EAST	Wednesday 6 March	Colchester Community Stadium
MID	Thursday 7 March	The Lion Inn, Boreham

Summer term 2024

WEST	Wednesday 12 June	Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth
SOUTH	Thursday 13 June	Greenwoods Hotel, Stock
N-EAST	Wednesday 19 June	Colchester Community Stadium
MID	Thursday 20 June	The Lion Inn, Boreham

Conferences

Deputy Headteachers' Conference

Friday 13 October 2023 Weston Community Homes Stadium

Headteachers' Conference

Friday 22 March 2024 Chelmsford City Race Course

.....
Harriet Phelps-Knights
Chair of EPHA

Pam Langmead
EPHA Professional Officer