

ESSEX HEADTEACHER INCLUSION ROUND TABLE - MINUTES OF MEETING**TUESDAY 29 MARCH 2022****9.30 am – 10.30 am Online****1. IN ATTENDANCE****ECC**

Ralph Holloway (RH) Head of SEND Strategy and Innovation
Philippa Holliday Assistant Director, North East
Alex Abercrombie ECC SEND Strategy and Innovation
Vanessa Hockley SEND Innovation Delivery Partner

Primary

Andrew Smith (AS) CEO/Headteacher Lyons Hall – Chair
Alison Cole St Peter's CE Primary, Coggeshall (Mid)
Claire Jackman Headteacher, Great Easton Primary (West)
Ceri Jones Headteacher, Chipping Hill Primary (Mid)
Rebecca More Headteacher, St Nicholas CE Primary School, Tillingham (Mid)
Matt O'Grady Headteacher, West Horndon Primary (South)
Harriet Phelps-Knights EPHA Chair/Headteacher Janet Duke Primary (South)
David Rogers Headteacher, Bentfield Primary (West)
Pam Langmead (PL) EPHA Professional Officer

Secondary

Andy Hodgkinson (AH) CEO Zenith Multi Academy Trust
Vic Goddard Headteacher, Passmores Academy
Jo Santinelli Headteacher, St Benedict's Catholic School

Special

Emily Welton (EW) ESSET Professional Officer
Jen Grotier Shorefields School
Ruth Sturdy CEO SEAX Trust

AP

Philomena Cozens (PC) Chief Executive Officer, Keys Co-operative Trust

Governors

Ruth Bird ESGA
Rod Lane ESGA
John Hunter ESGA

Apologies

Clare Kershaw (CK) Director of Education
Deborah Bailey Headteacher, John Bunyan Primary (Mid)
Marie Staley Headteacher, Moulsham Juniors (Mid)
Mark Farmer CEO Bridge Academy Trust
Chris Fluskey Harlow Education Consortium
Rob James Executive Headteacher, Ramsay Academy
Simon Thompson ASHE Executive Director

Andrew Smith (Chair) welcomed colleagues to the meeting. He referred the group to the agenda and purpose of the meeting, to consider the following issues:

- Multi-Schools Council
- Exclusions and EHE
- Plans for a summer term inclusion conference

It was noted that the Government Green Paper resulting from the SEND Review had been published that morning, and agreed that a summary would be included during the meeting.

2. MULTI SCHOOLS COUNCIL

Kierran Pierce attended the meeting to give an update about the Multi-Schools Council. The Multi Schools Council was established by Kierran in 2012. He was a teacher at Market Field School in Colchester. During a school council meeting the pupils felt that not enough was being done to break down perceptions around special needs and mental health difficulties. They decided that arranging collaborative, multi-school council meetings would be a good way to start breaking down negative perceptions.

The MSC set up a project called The Good Practice Seekers. This is a project co-designed with the Essex Youth Service and SEND IASS.

Twelve children from both primary/secondary and mainstream SEND education came together to design an “Inclusion Framework” of what best practice should look like within education. The group received six weeks’ training which, in addition to designing the Framework, include: expectations on visits, team building exercises, safeguarding understanding and practice observations.

Following the training the group visited four schools, using the framework to look at inclusive practice. Each group wrote up their findings with a covering letter and a maximum of 5 stars was awarded to each school. Schools then had a term to respond to any of the recommendations. A re-visit was then organised where potential improvement were made and more stars awarded. Kierran gave an example of a school where, initially, the front reception was not as welcoming as might be hoped; on their return the group found that the staff had been re-shuffled so that the front office staff were welcoming to visitors.

Since the first tranche, another group of eight children undertook three weeks of training with another four school visits. The framework has subsequently been updated based on the new group’s feedback. A three- hour virtual training session was delivered to a group of children from one school. The Good Practice Seekers from the one school will now visit five local schools in the summer term, and re-visit in January 2023.

Overview of the project

It is designed to:

- Offer a chance to share good practice
- Give children a voice
- Improve inclusive practice

- Worker closer with local schools
- Respond to child feedback

It is not designed to:

- Be a tick box exercise
- Catch schools out
- Be an adult-led agenda
- Be an Ofsted inspection
- Be a one size fits all project

Next steps

- Development of three models: 6 weeks, 3 weeks or a 3-hour introductory session
- Training could be delivered via the Multi Schools Council in person or virtually
- Working with a cluster of schools or on an individual basis
- All schools – primary and secondary – are welcome to be involved
- The framework can be adapted if required
- Children could eventually lead the training itself
- It should merge into other projects linked to SEND, inclusion, whole school good practice
- Using Essex as a model of success

EW asked if schools that were involved with the Good Practice Seekers and Multi Schools Council were publicising this on their websites; Keirran noted that they were keen to promote.

A couple of the primary headteachers, Claire Jackman and Matt O’Grady, noted that their schools had been involved with the project and they were very positive and enthusiastic about it.

AN noted that this project could be included with the Inclusive Schools best practice document. RH and PH noted that the LA has a SEND score card system, and this could be added to that checklist.

It was agreed that the Multi Schools Council and, in particular, the Good Practice Seekers, could be promoted once again at the summer term inclusion conference, and possibly through other headteacher meetings.

Contact details

mschoolscouncil@gmail.com

www.multischoolscouncil.org.uk

The website includes a list of schools who are signed up to the Multi Schools Council.

<https://www.multischoolscouncil.org.uk/good-practice-seekers/>

www.facebook.com/multischools

3. INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS PRACTICE

Chris Fluskey (HEC) has raised concerns about the use of exclusion, and noted that this is not solely linked to pupils who have special educational needs. He argued that the Inclusion Roundtable should include a focus on pupils excluded from education for all reasons.

Vic Goddard reiterated his concerns about students who are in some MATs who may be moved around the system until parents are worn down and remove their child from a Trust.

PC noted her concern that both of the Pupil Referral Units she runs are well over capacity and are facing an influx of 85 pupils in September. 35 of these referrals are medical Anxious School Refusers, and she noted that there is nowhere for these young people to access help and support. For the first time 50% of the intake will be girls. She argued that the current system is inadequate and not fit for purpose.

PL noted that a number of MATs (and some individual schools/academies) have been identified numerous times for demonstrating non-inclusive practice, and asked if this has been raised with the DfE; it is simply not possible for the Inclusion Roundtable to hold these Trusts to account with any effect or impact, however concerned we are about inclusion. RH noted that poor practice and issues have been raised with the RSC, the DfE and Ofsted, but with no useful outcome. VG noted that parents simply stop applying to these MAT schools as they know that their children will inevitably be refused places.

VG argued that until the accountability structure changes there is little that can be done to change practice; the Local Authority currently has no levers or legal power to challenge these MATs.

EW argued that the Inclusive Schools document could be more hard hitting and tougher than it currently is. It was suggested that the ESGA logo should be included in the document, to demonstrate the involvement of governors.

4. PLANNING AN INCLUSION CONFERENCE

It was agreed that the summer conference would provide an opportunity to share the Inclusive Schools document.

PH felt that the Headteacher Associations should play a greater part in holding non-inclusive schools to account. However, PL and HPK (Professional Officer and Chair of EPHA) both said that this was not the role of the Associations, although they were certainly in support of more inclusive behaviour.

PH noted that Margaret Mulholland is still very keen to be involved with the Inclusion Conference.

There was some concern that only schools that are demonstrably inclusive would attend the conference. PL suggested that there could be a focus on the implications of the SEND Green

Paper, so that all schools were engaged. It was noted that other groups, such as governors and SENCos could be invited, to encourage participation.

RH and PH will lead a working party to develop the conference, and volunteers were asked to join them (*volunteers to email*).

5. PUBLICATION OF THE SEND GREEN PAPER

The Department for Education has today published the long awaited SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time; the green paper, and details of the consultation process, can be read in full at [SEND review: right support, right place, right time - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/SEND-review-right-support-right-place-right-time) . A summary can be read at [Summary of the SEND review: right support, right place, right time - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/SEND-review-right-support-right-place-right-time) . The key headlines from the paper are below.

The review has identified 3 key challenges facing the SEND and alternative provision system.

1. Navigating the SEND system and alternative provision is not a positive experience for too many children, young people and their families.
2. Outcomes for children and young people with SEND or in alternative provision are consistently worse than their peers across every measure.
3. Despite the continuing and unprecedented investment, the system is not financially sustainable.

A single national SEND and alternative provision system

The review concludes that there is a need for much greater consistency in how needs are identified and supported, so decisions are made based on a child or young person's needs in co-production with families, not where they live or the setting they attend.

The DfE proposes to:

- establish a new national SEND and alternative provision system setting nationally consistent standards for how needs are identified and met at every stage of a child's journey across education, health and care - parents and carers will be confident that their child's needs will be met effectively in the most appropriate local setting, they will be clear about what support their child is receiving and will be engaged in decision-making at every stage
- create new local SEND partnerships bringing together education, health and care partners with local government to produce a local inclusion plan setting out how each area will meet the national standards - when specialist support is needed, the local inclusion plan will set out the provision that is available within the local area, including units within mainstream, alternative and specialist provision
- support parents and carers to express an informed preference for a suitable placement by providing a tailored list of settings, including mainstream, specialist and

independent - they will continue to have the right to request a mainstream setting for their child

- introduce a standardised and digitised EHCP process and template to minimise bureaucracy and deliver consistency
- streamline the redress process to make it easier to resolve disputes earlier, including through mandatory mediation, whilst retaining the tribunal for the most challenging case

Excellent provision from early years to adulthood

The review has heard there is a need for a more inclusive education system to ensure that children and young people with SEND are set up to thrive.

The DfE intends to:

- increase the total investment in the schools' budget, with an additional £1 billion in 2022 to 2023 to support children and young people with the most complex needs
- improve mainstream provision, building on the ambitious schools white paper reforms, through excellent teacher training and development and a 'what works' evidence programme to identify and share best practice including in early intervention
- build expertise and leadership, by consulting on a new SENCo national professional qualification (NPQ) for school SENCos, alongside increasing the number of staff with an accredited SENCo qualification in early years settings
- invest £2.6 billion, over the next 3 years, to deliver new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with SEND or who require alternative provision
- deliver more new special and alternative provision free schools in addition to 60 already in the pipeline
- set out a clear timeline that, by 2030, all children and young people will benefit from being taught in a family of schools, with their school, including special and alternative provision in a strong trust or with plans to join or form one, sharing expertise and resource to improve outcomes
- commission analysis to better understand the support that children and young people with SEND need from the health workforce so that there is a clear focus on SEND in health workforce planning
- fund more than 10,000 additional respite placements and invest £82 million in a network of family hubs so more children, young people and their families can access wraparound support
- invest £18 million, over the next 3 years to build capacity in the supported internships programme

- improve transition at further education by introducing common transfer files alongside piloting the roll out of adjustment passports to ensure young people with SEND are prepared for employment and higher education

A reformed and integrated role for alternative provision

The review has identified that the role of alternative provision is not always clear and can be used too late or in a way which is not focussed on a young person's needs.

The DfE proposes to:

- make alternative provision an integral part of local SEND systems by requiring the new SEND partnerships to plan and deliver an alternative provision service focused on early intervention
- give alternative provision schools the funding stability to deliver a service focused on early intervention by requiring local authorities to create and distribute an alternative provision specific budget
- develop a bespoke performance framework for alternative provision which sets robust standards focused on progress, re-integration into mainstream education or sustainable post-16 destinations
- deliver greater oversight and transparency on children and young people's movements into and out of alternative provision
- launch a call for evidence, before the summer, on the use of unregistered provision to investigate existing practice

System roles, accountabilities and funding reform

The review has heard the need to align system incentives and accountabilities to reduce perverse behaviours that drive poor outcomes and high costs in the current system.

The DfE propose to:

- deliver clarity on roles and responsibilities for all partners, across education, health, care and local government through the new national standards - with aligned accountabilities, so everyone has the right incentives and levers to do their role and be held to account
- equip the Department for Education's new regions group to take responsibility for holding local authorities and trusts to account for delivering for children and young people with SEND locally through new funding agreements between local government and the Department for Education
- introduce a new inclusion dashboard for 0 to 25 provision giving a timely, transparent picture of how the system is performing at a local and national level across education, health and care

- work with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission to deliver an updated local area SEND inspection framework with a focus on arrangements and experiences of children and young people with SEND and in alternative provision
- deliver funding reform through the introduction of a new national framework of banding and price tariffs for funding, matched to levels of need and types of education provision set out in the new national standards - providers will have clarity on how much funding they should expect to receive for delivering support or a service, whilst ensuring the right pricing structures are in place, helping to control high costs attributed to expensive provision

The publication of the green paper marks the start of a 13-week consultation process, closing on 1 July 2022. Later this year, following the completion of the consultation, the DfE will publish a national SEND delivery plan, setting out the government's response to the consultation and how the proposals will be implemented.

It was noted that the outcome of the consultation and resulting White Paper will be significant for the future direction and purpose of the Inclusion Roundtable.

6. MEETING DATES FOR 2021/2022

The following dates have been set – meetings to start at 9.30 am:

Tuesday 17th May

Tuesday 5th July