

For the Attention of Essex Headteachers

Ref: CK/SM
Date: 22 May 2017

Dear Colleague,

Over recent months I have used opportunities presented by headteacher conferences, governor briefings and meetings to outline the implications of significant national funding reductions on the education services provided by the Education Team within the Council. I am today specifically writing to you to outline proposed changes to the current Standards and Excellence Commissioner Team.

The proposed changes affect the Primary, Secondary and Inclusion Standards and Excellence Commissioner (SEC) teams as well as the Schools Communication team and Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement service. The principles of the proposed new structure are:

- to create a single crossed phase team (primary and secondary) within each of the four quadrants;
- to retain specialist SEND expertise in a separate team that will support the transformation of SEND across Essex but with reduced resources;
- all schools will continue to be supported but we will allocate a significant amount of time to support the School-led Improvement Partnerships and other school partnerships (e.g ASHE groups) across Essex. We will work with the partnerships to agree the key priorities to take forward;
- schools causing concern will continue to be supported on an individual basis;
- safeguarding, critical incidence and media support will be retained in its current level;
- an element of the service that is currently free will be traded from September 2017;
- we will work towards gaining approval to open an LA Initiated MAT.

The proposed new model, which we are consulting with staff on, and is still subject to approval, has taken full account of formal and informal feedback from school leaders about their priorities and what aspects of a school improvement service are of greatest value. We will aim to retain as much expertise as possible within a reduced financial envelope due to the ESG cuts.

As stated above an element of team members' time will be available to schools on a traded, paid for basis, on a competitive daily rate. The range of traded activities will be confirmed during the summer term. They are likely to include:

- support/training for peer review;
- quality assurance of governance;
- support and advice for governors conducting headteacher performance management;
- support for governors in headteacher recruitment –and for headteachers appointing deputies;
- bespoke curriculum reviews;
- collaborative reviews:
 - for new headteachers;
 - focussed on current improvement priorities or any strand of the work of the school.

Although I appreciate change can be unsettling, it is vital we are well positioned to tackle the future challenges and demands faced by both local authorities and schools. I see this as an exciting opportunity for further development of our partnership working with schools.

Please do provide me with any feedback or concerns you have regarding these proposed changes which I will duly consider. I will continue to discuss the proposed changes with the teams affected and with schools during the course of this term.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clare Kershaw".

Clare Kershaw

Director of Education

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