

## SEND STRATEGY – HEADTEACHER ROUND TABLE

WEDNESDAY 13 JUNE 2018

2.00 pm – 3.45 pm

Hamptons Sports and Social Club

### 1. IN ATTENDANCE

Clare Kershaw	Director of Education
Ruth Sturdy	ECC Lead School Effectiveness Partner – Inclusion
Notty Stone	Research consultant
Councillor Tony Ball	Deputy Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Harriet Phelps-Knights	EPHA Chair/Headteacher Janet Duke Primary (South)
Pam Langmead	EPHA Professional Officer
David Rogers	Headteacher, Bentfield Primary and Enhanced Provision (West)
Teresa Phillips	Headteacher, Thomas Willingale Primary (West)
Matt O’Grady	Headteacher, West Horndon Primary (South)
Sean Tobin	CE Berlesduna Academy Trust, Merrylands Primary (South)
Simon Thompson	ASHE Executive Director
Andy Hodgkinson	Headteacher, Sweyne Park School (South)

### Apologies

Dan Woodham	Headteacher, Edith Borthwick School (Mid)
Andrew Smith	CEO/Headteacher Lyons Hall (Mid)
Helena Boast	Headteacher, The Thomas Lord Audley School (North East)
Joanne Newitt	Headteacher, Willow Brook Primary (North East)
Catherine Hutley	Headteacher, Philip Morant School and College (N East)
Jason Carey	Headteacher, James Hornsby School (South)
Debs Watson	Headteacher, Tanglewood Nursery
Jo Hickford	Honywood School (North West)
Helen Dudley-Smith	Previous Essex primary headteacher

It was noted that a number of colleagues were attending the Leadership Conference in Birmingham, but it had been agreed that the meeting should continue.

Councillor Tony Ball was welcomed to the meeting. He is particularly interested in the work taking place around the SEND Strategy and Clare felt it would be helpful for him to attend the meeting to hear the discussions first hand.

### 2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting on 18 April 2018 were agreed.

Ruth Bird (ESGA) has not yet been invited to join the Roundtable but Ruth **AGREED** to action this so that she attends future meetings.

RS

### 3. EDUCATION DIRECTOR UPDATE

Clare reminded the group that her editorial in Education Essex on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June focused on the SEND strategy and the timetable for reform. The aim is to implement a new SEND system across Essex by 2020. She included a link to the draft statement for inclusion – to be signed off at this meeting.

There is a need to redesign systems and processes in light of the reviews and consultations that have taken place, into the current SEND system, the review of EHCPs and funding, and the restructure of the County Hall workforce.

The aim is to consider and implement a new SEND workforce by July 2019, and this will be followed by a transition period to ensure that the structure is effective, including training, piloting and trialling the system. The intention is to prepare the workforce, schools and parents for the start of a new system in January 2020.

Alongside and informing these changes will be:

Piloting a new EHCP process;

A new 10 year place planning document in Spring 2019;

Development of the SEND Strategy and preparing for adulthood by the end of 2018;

A brand new Local Offer;

Development of the EnPro and ESSET offer and outreach.

By the end of term Clare will share with schools a progress report on the first “Year of SEND”. There is now a clear direction of travel, significantly informed by the excellent review undertaken by Notty Stone. Clare accepted that it is essential that schools that are wholly inclusive are supported to ensure that they are able to continue their engagement, particularly those that have high numbers of children with additional needs and increasing budgetary constraints.

One headteacher expressed concerns about the impact from the changes to banding descriptors. Whilst this may be a relatively small amount for each pupil, the cumulative effect is having a serious impact on schools’ budgets and school leaders don’t want schools to have to make staff cuts that cannot be recovered and undermine the excellent work that is going on in many schools to support children with additional needs. It was stated that any school that is particularly worried about the financial impact of the new banding descriptors should contact Clare, Ruth or Ralph Holloway, and the system should be kept under review.

The EPHA Professional Officer noted that, despite the challenges faced in the Authority, Essex is considerably further forward in developing a SEND Strategy than some other LAs in the Eastern region, and this attempt to tackle the challenges of SEND and the use of resources in the High Needs Block is recognised and appreciated, although there is still much to be done.

### 3. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK REVIEW UPDATE

Notty Stone reminded the group that the review started in September 2017; the last part of the information that is being gathered is the outcomes of the SEN Parent Survey, which should be finalised by the end of the next week.

The review has drawn on multiple sources, including interviews with a wide range of stakeholders to give as holistic a view as possible. It also includes published and internal data and documents to inform the evidence base and findings, including Government statistics, ECC data, including a review of the number of EHCPs compared with statistical neighbours. Notty explained that analyzing the achievement of individual outcomes was difficult, but she had researched overall pupil results, NEET data, Ofsted outcomes, number of independent school placements etc

Notty researched how other Local Authorities manage EHCPs and the Local Offer and what they do differently.

Essex has the second highest number of EHCPs compared with statistical neighbours. The SEN profile is higher than that of statistical neighbours and there was a huge increase in the number of EHCPs agreed in 2016/17. The population of Essex is increasing at just under 1% a year, and the increase in identified special needs is considerably higher than this. The type of need is changing – moving away from MLD to autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Essex has lagged behind other LAs in identifying ASD – now catching up.

It is worth noting that LAs who haven't set high thresholds have a higher percentage of tribunals – this is the case in Essex, and even more so in East Sussex, which has the highest level of EHCPs and also tribunal cases.

Notty referred to the key findings and recommendations that she has drafted:

Theme	Key Findings	Recommendations
Essex SEN Profile	Essex level of EHCPs is high compared to statistical neighbours, and has been stable for several years, but 2017 saw the biggest single increase in the level of plans for ten years, growing 6% in a single calendar year (12% across the academic year 2016-17) The Profile of SEN in Essex has changed radically over the last ten years, seeing levels of MLD decrease as improvements in	Invest in developments in data analytics to build a predictive model of changes in SEN population size and need type to manage future demand, e.g. The Essex Data Project

	<p>awareness and diagnoses of more specific needs increase. ASD growth is averaging 10% per year over the last 5 years</p>	
Assessment	<p>Other authorities set very clear definitions for severe needs requiring EHCPs, above and beyond the COP definition, and it is this that limits their levels of EHCP. Essex parameters are not seen as clear.</p> <p>Agreement to assess continues to be variable across Essex, due to the lack of guidelines, and four separate teams making assessments differently.</p> <p>Lack of funds in schools and council services, combined with parent's lack of confidence in SEN support is driving EHCP applications.</p> <p>Where there is clear and obvious need, the requirements for two rounds of One Planning before applying for an EHCP causes considerable frustration</p>	<p>Set clear and specific criteria for the level of need that will be considered for assessment</p> <p>In conjunction with setting thresholds, remove the requirement for two rounds of One Planning before applying for EHCPs</p> <p>Invest in more early identification/ intervention systems, including funding, that are easier to access without statutory levels of assessment</p>
Provision	<p>Essex is still a very inclusive county, despite the increasing demand for special school places</p> <p>Enhanced Provisions offer opportunities to increase specialist knowledge, outreach and training, Early Intervention, and inclusivity.</p> <p>The sudden growth in EHCPs is going to outstrip the planned new provision in 3 to 5 years if it continues at its current rate</p> <p>Satisfaction with the quality of provision amongst parents is currently unknown; qualitative evidence suggests it is likely to be poor.</p>	<p>Increase places at Primary Schools enhanced provisions beyond current provision. EPs could be leveraged as providers of specialist services</p> <p>Investigate if lack of local special school provision is proving a disincentive to parents to seek plans.</p> <p>Develop a SEN inclusivity award. A key part of this should be extra support for those who achieve it so success is a victory, not a burden</p>

	Teachers and parents have many examples of schools discouraging applications from CYP with SEN Essex continually strives to improve SEN provision, but plans are of variable quality, effectiveness and execution	
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Theme	Key Findings	Recommendations
Outcomes	<p>ECC currently lacks a robust system to measure if outcomes are missed, met or exceeded, at an individual or county wide level</p> <p>SEN Support students have poorer outcomes than expected compared to those with EHCPs</p> <p>Initial evidence suggests that parents in Essex are particularly dissatisfied with life outcomes compared to nationally.</p>	<p>Improve data capture and reporting of new assessments, annual reviews and other information to determine patterns in achievement and failure to meet outcomes at an individual level</p> <p>Continue to develop the Outcomes framework, ensuring that its ability to capture and manipulate data is sufficient.</p>
Financial Transparency	<p>The HNB provides approximately £13,700 per plan</p> <p>The HNB is not geared towards funding early intervention, but early intervention is key to preventing EHCP levels increasing</p> <p>It is impossible to determine if HNB generates value for money at this time:</p> <p>Most goes to schools over which ECC has no visibility of accounts</p> <p>There are examples of best practise within ECC for holding those who receive money to account</p> <p>Value for money can only be judged against outcomes, and outcomes data is currently not</p>	<p>Create a central document that lists exactly what lines for the budget contain, and includes how and when those decisions were made and or changed,</p> <p>Restructure the STT as a matter of priority. Consider using the Enhanced Provisions as a key element in delivery of the statutory services. Changes should be in place for the 2018-19 academic year</p>

sufficient to enable a judgement  
The money spent on the Specialist Teacher Team is repeatedly questioned by Essex teachers who express frustration at too many poor performers within the service; this is an issue raised multiple times and investigated in depth at the end of 2016. To date, these have not been actioned.

A number of issues were particularly highlighted:

There is a huge rise in identification of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, but MLD referrals continue to be very high. It was agreed that there needs to be a consistent and common understanding of SEND. The agreement to assess continues to be variable across Essex, due to the lack of guidelines, and four separate teams making assessments differently. For example the North East is less willing to assess, whilst in South there are apparently significantly fewer children and young people with speech and language needs, and Asperger's, but this is probably more down to identification and referral rather than actual need.

The group discussed the continuing demand by parents for EHCPs, which is partly driven by available funding (and, in some cases, other benefits) and also by the statistics that show that a child/young person with an EHCP does better than one who is identified as needing Schools Support. There is, in some cases, a belief that "there is no support without a plan".

Current guidelines in Essex demand two rounds of one-planning which adds significantly to the bureaucracy and time that is taken to make an assessment. This system will be reviewed.

Early intervention is recognised as essential and valuable, but resources are not always (or often) targeted towards supporting early intervention.

Notty stressed that despite the challenges, Essex is (in comparison with others) a very inclusive county with a high percentage of children/young people with SEND in mainstream schools. On the whole, parents want their children to attend local schools.

The Enhanced Provisions offer outreach and specialist advice and expertise to schools, and supporting that may be a logical way of using the Specialist Teacher Team.

1000 new plans were accepted in 2016 and 2017, and this figure looks likely to continue in 2018. This growth will create a continuing and increasing pressure on all settings in the system.

An initial look at the fieldwork data returning from the parental survey suggests that responses are more positive than from specific parent focus groups, such as the Family Forum. There are examples of non-inclusive practice, as well as reports of good practice and support.

It was agreed that a problem in the current system is that schools aren't rewarded for being "good at SEND". In fact, the opposite is true, schools are penalised if they are managing well as they are likely to have an increased workload for the same funding. It was concluded that: "succeeding with SEN must be a victory, not a burden."

The group discussed the complexity of determining outcomes for children/young people with SEND, including those that are:  
individual outcomes – e.g. the results of actions stated in a Plan; and  
Data available– NEET figures (Not in Education, Employment or Training), pupil outcomes etc.

There are currently no systems in place to measure quantifiably the success of a Plan, and as such it is hard to determine value for money of support and input.

Essex pupils on SEN Support have poorer outcomes than those in statistical neighbouring authorities, and are significantly more likely to end up NEET than either young people without SEN or even those with an EHCP. For example, in Essex those pupils who had had an EHCP were 2% NEET, while those who had been identified as needing SEN Support were 7% NEET (*last year's Year 11 pupils, assessed in November*). Notty explained that there is not yet a national comparison for this data.

The parental survey suggests that, on the whole, parents of children/young people with SEN do not feel that their quality of life for the future will be great, whereas professionals are more optimistic. The group discussed whether the same could be said of children/young people without SEN, but Notty suggested that there is a more negative outlook from the "SEN" families. It was agreed that there must be better information for families about how SEN support is delivered most effectively, as many parents continue to believe that one to one support for their child is essential and the only and most effective way of supporting them. The headteachers argued that the Local Authority needs to be proactive (and consistent |) about giving information to parents and re-educating their perceptions.

The group discussed the financing of SEN. The report notes that, on average, a child/young person with an EHCP attracts £13,700 of funding, but this does not drill down to the average received by special, secondary and primary schools. Most of the ECC High Needs Block funding is geared towards plans – 67% of funding spent in Essex settings, 20% in out of county placements, and the rest to fund county services including EPs, Specialist Teacher Team, Statutory Assessment Service and so on.

It was noted that the redesign of the STT is a priority for the SEND Transformation Manager over the next year.

The group discussed the ongoing challenge of how SEN outcomes are judged by Ofsted and Regional Schools Commissioners, particularly given that SEN Support outcomes are lower than

statistical neighbours. There were some concerns that schools judged to be outstanding are exempt from inspection and so may never be judged or challenged on their approach and support of children with SEN. Councillor Ball argued that there needs to be some kind of “stick” for those schools that are not inclusive, as well as incentives for those who are. It was suggested that when the Inclusion Statement is agreed and endorsed by schools it will be easier to challenge schools around their practice. However, Clare still needs evidence when asked to challenge non-inclusive behaviour.

It was **AGREED** that the review undertaken by Notty Stone has been very informative and valuable.

#### **4. INCLUSION DEFINITION FOR ESSEX**

A final draft of the position statement had been circulated in advance of the meetings. It was agreed that it should be titled the **Essex Inclusion Statement**, and should now be circulated to schools. School leaders and governors from every school and education setting in Essex should be asked to sign up to and endorse the statement.

It was agreed that schools will be asked to confirm that they have signed the statement and a list of schools that have adopted this will be published on the Infolink. Schools will also be encouraged to include their agreement as part of their local offer.

It was agreed that Clare will write an editorial for Education Essex about the Inclusion Statement, the outcomes framework and other work that has been undertaken for week commencing 25 June.

#### **5. SCHOOL LED SEND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENTS**

##### **i) Universal Offer**

Ruth has been working with colleagues to develop a universal offer – minimum expectations – for SEND. This will be linked with the existing provision guidance.

Ruth noted that she is working with a group of headteachers to consider how high quality teaching is defined in relation to SEN.

##### **ii) Peer Review training**

Training has been delivered by David Bartram and peer reviews will now be trialled. Harriet Phelps-knights attended the training to monitor its usefulness and has been co-opted as a reviewer. She felt it was valuable training, and sufficiently different from the current LA training to add extra value. The Partnership SENCOs and representatives from EnPro planning to undertake the training.

Five “triads” are piloting the review and will feedback their comments to Ruth.

##### **iii) Outcomes framework**

This is well underway with one more meeting planned to finalise the document.

**iv) SENCo bulletins**

Chris Perkins (who was responsible for the bulletins) has retired. The bulletins will continue but will be re-badged as “inclusion bulletins”.

**6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**i) Future agenda items**

- How to incentivise inclusion.
- Consideration of how to measure the success of an EHCP plan (ESSET representatives are keen to share their expertise in this area).

**ii) Further engagement with EnPro**

Whilst there are a number of representatives on the group whose schools include enhanced provisions, it was argued that these meetings and the EnPro meetings often rehearse similar arguments and there should be better engagement between the two groups. Ruth **AGREED** to invite Ceri Jones (Chair of EnPro) to the Roundtable meetings.

RS

**iii) Inclusion logo**

It was **AGREED** that a logo or symbol should be developed in order to “brand” the Inclusion Statement and other documents that are being produced to support the SEND strategy.

**7. DATE OF FUTURE MEETING**

Tuesday 17 July, 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm  
- Hamptons Social Club