

## **SEND STRATEGY – HEADTEACHER ROUND TABLE**

**TUESDAY 17 JULY 2018**

**2.00 pm – 3.00 pm**

**Hamptons Sports and Social Club**

### **1. IN ATTENDANCE**

Ruth Sturdy	ECC Lead School Effectiveness Partner – Inclusion
Harriet Phelps-Knights	EPHA Chair/Headteacher Janet Duke Primary (South)
Pam Langmead	EPHA Professional Officer
David Rogers	Headteacher, Bentfield Primary and Enhanced Provision (West)
Andrew Smith	CEO/Headteacher Lyons Hall (Mid)
Simon Thompson	ASHE Executive Director
Debs Watson	Headteacher, Tanglewood Nursery
Dan Woodham	Headteacher, Edith Borthwick School (Mid)
Jennifer Grotier	Headteacher, Shorefields School (North East)

### **Apologies**

Clare Kershaw	Director of Education
Helena Boast	Headteacher, The Thomas Lord Audley School (N 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)
Jo Hickford	Honywood School (North West)
Helen Dudley-Smith	Previous Essex primary headteacher
Teresa Phillips	Headteacher, Thomas Willingale Primary (West)
Matt O’Grady	Headteacher, West Horndon Primary (South)
Sean Tobin	CE Berlesduna Academy Trust, Merrylands Primary (South)
Andy Hodgkinson	Headteacher, Sweyne Park School (South)

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

The minutes of the meeting on 13 June 2018 were agreed.

Ruth Bird (ESGA) has been invited to join the Headteacher Roundtable to represent governors. She was unable to come to this meeting but will attend in future.

Ceri Jones, Chair of EnPro, has also been invited to attend the Roundtable, although it was noted that both David Rogers and Matt O’Grady are headteachers of schools with enhanced provisions, so the sector is represented.

Notty Stone is in the process of completing the parent SEN survey which went out to around 600 parents of children with special educational needs. Preliminary findings are partially positive, and parents generally have concerns about what is offered for School Support rather than for EHCPs. Once the survey has been finalised Ruth and Ralph Holloway will write a report which will consider the parent response.

### 3. REVIEW OF THE SEND STRATEGY PROGRESSED DURING THE YEAR

Ruth summarised the progress of various projects during the year.

#### a) **Essex Inclusion Statement**

The Essex Inclusion Statement was finalised at the last meeting and has been sent out to schools accompanied by an article in Education Essex. A number of schools have responded already, and it was **AGREED** that it will be re-sent at the beginning of the term via ASHE and EPHA, with a reminder to schools that this is not solely a Local Authority position, but is endorsed by the Headteacher Roundtable and the Associations. Ruth noted that one school has questioned the legal status of the Statement, but the group agreed that it is not legally binding but rather a statement of principle, which schools choose to endorse.

#### b) **Universal Offer**

Ruth has been working with colleagues, including LA and school staff and Educational Psychologists to develop a universal offer – minimum expectations – for SEND. This will be linked with the existing provision guidance. The aim is to complete this in the first half of the autumn term.

#### c) **Peer Review training**

Training has been delivered by David Bartram and peer reviews have now been 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. Training has been arranged for 12 September for the Partnership SENCOs. Special school and EnPro staff are also planning to do the training at some point.

#### d) **Partnership SENCOs**

Formerly “Super SENCOs” – there are now 28 Partnership SENCOs, from both the primary and secondary sector. Ruth confirmed that they are reasonably spread across the County, although there is no secondary Partnership SENCO in West. More are needed across the whole of Essex. The purpose of the Partnership SENCOs is to offer support, to take part in specialist training which they can then disseminate or use to support other schools. On the whole, schools have welcomed the concept, although it was felt that there needs to be more explanation and understanding of the role. Debs Watson asked if there were any Partnership SENCOs specifically focused on the Early Years Foundation Stage. Ruth explained that there aren’t, currently, and Debs volunteered her school’s SENCO to become involved.

#### e) **SENCO bulletins**

Chris Perkins (who was responsible for the bulletins) has retired. The bulletins will continue but will be re-badged as “inclusion bulletins”. Ruth noted that the aim is to produce the first bulletin in the second week of the autumn term, and the focus will be on including case studies, good practice and research reports, as well as operational information.

#### f) **SENCO cluster groups**

Ruth is trying to map these groups. It may be possible to find out through the SLIS Partnership Leads if their group has a SENCO cluster (**RS to contact**), but it was accepted that they have been

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established over the years by a number of routes, including by the EP team. It was agreed that it is a challenge ensuring that a consistent message around training and good practice is sent out to all SENCo/schools. Although the SEND staff restructure will have an impact on the delivery of practice, Ruth anticipates that EPs will continue to support the cluster groups. SENCo forums are delivered by the Specialist Teacher Team; meetings are due to take place at the end of September.

**g) Outreach work**

ESSET is working on developing a consistent outreach offer. This focuses on four sections, including occupational therapy, speech and language, general support and outreach into mainstream schools. There will be a mixture of free help and other support that will need to be paid for.

Pam asked if Special School headteachers are having the conversation about a universal offer for outreach, in an attempt to avoid the current “postcode lottery” (and/or the ability to access support depending on who you know). Jen Grotier confirmed that this conversation is taking place and Special School heads recognise that their staff are the ultimate experts in responding to special educational needs. However, the capacity and willingness to offer outreach does vary across ESSET. It will be important to map the available support, and ESSET plans to develop a flowchart to help schools know how to access support and at what point.

**h) Outcomes framework**

Ruth explained that this is just about completed. The framework has been trialled by the Dengie Partnership and their first comments appear to be positive. Ruth noted that this is a focus for her over the summer. It was agreed that this framework is much needed and will be welcomed by schools.

**i) SEMH support training package**

Steve Whitfield (Senior EP) is working with Lyons Hall TSA to develop a whole school training approach to managing social, emotional and mental health issues. This is being developed from the approach used by GROW and Thrive.

Pam noted that she (and Simon, if available) is meeting with Jo Barclay and representatives from EWHMS during August to discuss the EWHMS training offer for the coming year. She is concerned that this might duplicate this work, and it was suggested that it may be helpful for Steve Whitfield to attend that meeting. Pam agreed to discuss this with Jo Barclay – if she is in agreement, SW to be invited to that meeting.

**j) Working collaboratively with parents**

Ruth noted that there is a big piece of work to be done on this, in particular ensuring that parents understand what SEN support is available and what actually makes a positive difference. It was agreed that many parents of children with SEN continue to believe that the only effective support is for their child to have a 1:1 LSA. This may be a solution and an option for some children, but is often not the right support for the child and may not in any event be possible for the school to offer, because of funding or recruitment limitations.

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## **k) Small schools**

It is recognised that small schools often have particular pressures in relation to SEND. Parents often believe that a small school will be the best environment for their child, but this puts huge pressure on the staff and budgets of small schools. This will need to be taken into consideration in any SEND strategy.

## **l) Exclusions**

Ruth noted that she attended the ASHE Council, followed by the four EPHA meetings in June and discussed the challenge and support needed to avoid exclusions.

The ASHE Council discussed the issue of exclusions and came up with a number of proposals.

These included:

- Develop a managed move protocol across the County including when they are appropriate, when they can be terminated, when pupils transfer to their new schools
- Protocol for when elective home educated children return to school
- Seek a commitment from schools to admit a pupil returning from a PRU, managed move or PR1's every time they use permanent exclusion
- Ensure county- wide data is made available at each EPHA meeting from the LA.
- There is a need to address social factors which are leading to exclusions – gangs, county lines, drugs, knives
- Develop an expanded offer from PRUs – outreach and short-turn around provision
- We need to review the arrangements for anxious school refusers and pupils with mental health needs
- We need transition plans for primary pupils in PRUs, GROW or those at risk of disengagement in Year 7
- Look at other models to learn from them and adapt them to our needs

The following comments were made at the primary headteacher meetings:

### **South**

- There is a need for mental health services in schools
- There is a need for staff support (supervision) when they are working with complex children
- Funding – pupils with SEMH needs often need high levels of support and schools struggle to find this. It costs a lot when they are “holding” children while different provision is found for them
- The system plays on the morality of HTs- who worry about the impact of children with SEMH needs on others
- Mainstream schools are about education – these complex pupils affect others and their education
- Quality first teaching is not going to solve some of the needs of our most complex children- sometimes it feels like people are saying it will
- Parents need support too
- Geography can affect whether agencies will get involved with a family (family moving from one LA to another due to eviction and no one taking responsibility for their needs)
- Funding for EHCPs – the banding has resulted in reduced funding – reduced support follows and then increased exclusions

- Limit to capacity in schools
- Complex SEMH needs has an effect on recruitment and retention- it's difficult to recruit staff and when you do they are often inexperienced and therefore do not have the skills to meet needs and they leave- cycle
- Need to invest more money
- There was a concern that at secondary school the pastoral support and care pupils get is not as good as at primary – significant numbers excluded in yr 7 – is this true?? Primaries say they know it's going to happen and to which pupils
- EWMHS “abysmal”

### **North East**

- Heads are desperate to avoid exclusions
- Need for an holistic approach to families not just the child
- Need more resources
- Complex ASC is a challenge – often families have complex needs too- need more genuine expertise and funding
- KS2/3 transition – secondary schools don't meet need and children are vulnerable
- No funding when the issues are social
- SAS needs to take account of context when placing pupils
- Outreach support from schools with expertise would be great – we need practical support
- There are staff implications in meeting the needs of some pupils – safeguarding complaints following some situations
- Essex Steps got a positive mention
- Some of the situations all pupils witness are traumatic for them – need access to counselling for them
- Early years are letting children down – they are sending us children who are non-verbal and still in nappies
- There is a lack of identification of need at the earliest stages, including medical needs
- What are health professionals doing?

### **West**

- Essex Steps effective intervention but very expensive to keep two trained people in school – it does lead to whole school approach though which means exclusions are decreased
- Concerns about Essex admissions not having enough information about pupils before they start in schools and so no time to plan for their needs. This can lead to a fixed term exclusion while schools try to re- group and plan for some complex pupils
- One headteacher described a form she had from another LA which required comprehensive information about a child who was moving to their LA
- Concerns were expressed about other councils buying offices to turn into housing for families and that no planning had been possible for this as there did not seem to have been any communication about this to any services. This is putting a strain on schools as some of the children from these families have high levels of need

- There is sometimes tension between governors approach to pupils with high levels of SEMH needs and the headteacher's approach
- It would be useful to have a "menu" of what support is available and where there are possible sources of funding for the work schools want to do. At the moment it's not information everybody has
- Suggestion that we adopt the Suffolk model of half termly "clinics" where schools can present cases and get support and advice
- Concerns expressed about the transition from Primary to Secondary school and the increase in exclusions which were seen to be related to changes in support offered
- Concern that information from primary schools was not being shared and that class teachers were unaware of the needs of pupils as a result. This is leading to them not being aware of the barriers to learning and not planning to remove them

## Mid

- A lot of SENCos (and support staff) are delivering excellent intervention, nurture and support groups. Where schools struggle is managing the Band 4 children, who need intensive support, are often aggressive. GROW provision is effective, but numbers are extremely limited.
- There are inconsistencies across schools around how much they will tolerate. One head said that the only time he got a reaction (and support) from the LA was when he threatened permanent exclusion.
- Fixed term exclusion gives brief respite to staff and other pupils but doesn't help or address the problems that the excluded child has.
- There is very little therapeutic help available
- Advice from different teams, e.g. Statutory Assessment Service, Specialist Teacher Team, differs and is sometimes contradictory.
- No doubt that the LA wants to improve things, but the available support just isn't there. Schools need funding and resources to provide the support that these children need; there is very little choice for parents.
- One head noted that her school is well-supported by SEN, but she is frustrated by having to "prove" what is SEN and what is SEMH. Lack of trust in the professional understanding and experience of school staff.
- One headteacher has just had to go through a tribunal which has cost the school £10k, and with no support from SAS
- Schools want more support and decisiveness from the LA when giving parents advice. They understand the right of parental choice, but noted that there seems to be a reluctance from the LA to state any view, so parents are getting mixed messages about what provision is suitable for their child
- Parents who work with the school to support their child make a huge difference to how problems can be addressed
- Problems are not identified early enough – there are an increasing number of very young children with significant problems
- When excluded pupils transfer to secondary, schools are often not given sufficient information to ensure effective transition

#### 4. REVIEW OF THE SEND HEADTEACHER ROUNDTABLE KEY QUESTIONS

Ruth circulated the key questions developed by the SEND Headteacher Roundtable. These include:

##### **The development of a strategy to support SEND provision in mainstream settings**

- a) What does a School Led SEND system look like? How do we develop it? What needs to change? What are the barriers to inclusion in Essex schools?
- b) What systems do we need in the Local Authority to support schools in developing approaches to SEND which result in high quality teaching for all leading to positive outcomes?
- c) What is the outreach offer from our Special Schools and how can this be extended in the future?

*It was felt that the SEND strategy is in the early days of being developed, but the SEND capital programme and the planned review and restructure of the LA SEND teams are key parts of progressing this. The outreach from Special Schools is being discussed and developed.*

##### **A focus on inclusion in every school/academy – how can we best challenge schools who avoid or refuse to take and support schools with SEND?**

- a) How do we ensure all schools provide high quality provision that meets needs? How can we effectively challenge schools in a changing landscape of education organisation where we need to?
- b) The agreement of common terms of reference for SEND and minimum expectations for every school.

*The Inclusion Statement will go some way towards encouraging inclusion in every setting. In addition, the Peer Review, outcomes framework and minimum expectations framework will support this. There is still work to be done but this aspect is critical.*

##### **A focus on effective working between partners, schools and teams in the LA (including SAS, STT, SENCAN, Early Years and SENDIASS).**

- a) How do we develop and sustain meaningful partnerships between school leaders and the local authority, so that there is swift and easy access to support and resources when it is needed?
- b) How do we develop systems which identify and assess need which are universally trusted and are transparent in their delivery and decision making?
- c) How can we best work with health and social care to ensure that they meet their statutory funding obligations and work co-operatively with education?

*In development – again, the review and restructure of the LA SEND teams will be a key aspect of this. There is still a real concern about the lack of cooperation, understanding and engagement from health.*

##### **A focus on how to best use scarce resources to ensure the best, more effective provision and outcomes for the young people of Essex.**

- a) How is the Local Authority reviewing and ensuring a transparent and detailed analysis of the use of the high needs block and the additional funding from the schools block to support SEND provision and outcomes in mainstream schools?

- b) How is it best to ensure value for money from the High Needs Block spend? How can we measure the impact of the spend – how is it being used to ensure that provisions and outcomes for young people in Essex with SEND are positive and prepare them for adulthood?

*The work undertaken by Notty Stone has been very helpful and informative. There is still no clear understanding of the allocation and impact of the High Needs Block fund.*

## 5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### i) Membership of the group

Mid and West secondary headteachers (or school representatives) are still needed on the group – Simon will follow this up at the respective area ASHE meetings.

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Deborah Bailey, headteacher at John Bunyan Primary, is keen to join the group, and it was agreed she would be very welcome.

It was agreed that there should be an article in Education Essex early in the new term outlining the work of the Roundtable over the year, and inviting headteachers to join the group if they wish to become involved.

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### ii) National Association of SEN

Adam Boddison, the CEO Of NASEN, is visiting Essex on 12 October and is keen to see the provision in schools. Harriet suggested that he could visit Janet Duke Primary. RS to arrange.

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## 6. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Suggested dates for the 2018/19 school year to be circulated by Ruth.

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