

## SEND STRATEGY – HEADTEACHER ROUND TABLE

WEDNESDAY 18 APRIL 2018

2.00 pm – 4.20 pm

Essex Records Office

### 1. IN ATTENDANCE

Clare Kershaw	Director of Education
Ruth Sturdy	ECC Lead School Effectiveness Partner – Inclusion
Harriet Phelps-Knights	EPHA Chair/Headteacher Janet Duke Primary (South)
David Rogers	Headteacher, Bentfield Primary and Enhanced Provision (West)
Dan Woodham	Headteacher, Edith Borthwick School (Mid)
Teresa Phillips	Headteacher, Thomas Willingale Primary (West)
Helen Dudley-Smith	Previous Essex primary headteacher
Andrew Smith	CEO/Headteacher Lyons Hall (Mid)
Simon Thompson	ASHE Executive Director
Andy Hodgkinson	Headteacher, Sweyne Park School (South)
Scott Holder	Headteacher, The Stanway School (North East)
Jennifer Grotier	Headteacher, Shorefields School (North East)

### Apologies

Helena Boast	Headteacher, The Thomas Lord Audley School (North East)
Joanne Newitt	Headteacher, Willow Brook Primary (North East)
Pam Langmead	EPHA Professional Officer
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)
Matt O’Grady	Headteacher, West Horndon Primary (South)

### 2. UPDATE SINCE THE LAST MEETING

A report and action plan arising from the High Needs Block review, undertaken by research consultant, Notty Stone, will be shared with the Roundtable once produced. This report will also be considered by Schools Forum. A SEN Parent Survey is underway (targeting around 6,000 parents) and the outcomes from that survey will be included in the report.

Ruth noted that she had met with small schools representatives, and asked if there should be a separate SEN strategy to meet their specific challenges.

Ruth met representatives from Barnet to discuss their SEN Kitemark – on the agenda for the meeting.

The outcomes framework has been developed and is in draft form – there may be an additional meeting convened to finalise the documents.

The SEN Peer Review training was cancelled due to the snow in March – this has been rescheduled for May.

There will be the first meeting of partnership SENCos in the week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

The LA and partners are continuing to identify good practice in relation to SEND, and the key challenge will be how best to share this with all schools and practitioners.

### **3. EDUCATION DIRECTOR UPDATE**

Clare reminded the group that SEND is the LA's number one priority this year, with a key focus on inclusion, and the capital and strategic improvements needed to support the improvement and development of SEND provision. The issue of exclusion is a priority for the LA and Headteacher Associations. She noted that there are two linked, but different debates around "inclusion" and exclusion", both producing their own challenges.

The Education Team restructure is designed to better equip services to support SEND work, to offer additional capacity and to move the delivery teams into the quadrant teams. There are new SEND leaders within each quadrant team; this restructure has already started to have a positive impact. The redesign of services has taken place over 6 months, in consultation with the Headteacher Associations, to ensure the right systems are in place, with sufficient capacity to support schools and parents. The system design work took place from July – October, followed by consultation with 400+ staff through to January, followed by interviews and appointments leading up to implementation in April. Hopefully this will now result in improved funding, places and services that will drive improvements.

The deadline for transferring all children and young people with an SEND Statement to an Education, Health and Care Plan was Saturday 31 March 2018. With great team effort from all schools in Essex and the Transfer Review Team and all other SEND colleagues, the LA managed to transfer 99% of statements to either full or draft EHCP's. This equates to more than 7300 plans. All remaining plans will be finalised by the end of April 2018.

The local area review to be carried out by Ofsted and CQC will prove something of a distraction for LA staff.

Clare noted that the SEND governance restructure is underway, led by Ralph, with a key focus on working with social care and health. It was noted that the system is not yet compliant, due to a lack of agreement with health.

The Specialist Teacher Team function needs to be reviewed to both reduce the cost of the service, whilst improving the quality of provision. There was a discussion about who should manage and deploy the STT – possibly centrally by the LA, or ENPro, or ESSET. This has not yet been decided.

### **3. INCLUSION DEFINITION FOR ESSEX**

The group discussed whether the inclusion definition statement was now fit for purpose, and what should the next steps be. Members of the group gave the following feedback and suggestions:

An additional comment about admissions and inclusion;

Do headteachers know all the possible options to help avoid exclusion? A checklist with the minimum expected entitlement for pupils would be valuable.

It was accepted that when presenting a case for exclusion school leaders need to be confident and able to demonstrate that the school has explored every option and strategy to support a pupil, as they will be challenged on every stage of the process.

HDS noted that not all children who are excluded are identified as SEND and asked if the reasons for exclusion could be analysed, including:

- Behaviour – persistent, disruptive;
- Physical verbal assault.

It was agreed that the SENCo manual has historically been very helpful and informative for schools staff, and it was suggested that it may be useful to have an updated version, including signposts to additional support and alternative provision.

It was agreed that once the Inclusion Statement was agreed and signed, it would be a powerful document to present to social care and health, to seek their response and how they would address the principles in relation to inclusion and SEND.

The group members were asked for further/final comments with the aim of finalising the Statement by half term. In order to adopt the statement widely, it was agreed that it should be launched by the Associations, as a joint launch and using the headteacher meetings. The expectation will be for the headteacher and chair of governors of each school/academy to sign the statement (with the agreement of staff and governors). It was noted that Ruth Bird (ESGA) should be invited to the Roundtable meeting to discuss this further.

The group discussed how to use this joint agreement to exert pressure on those schools/academies who are not inclusive. The following ideas were suggested:

- Visits to MAT CEOs and regional directors to encourage their involvement and agreement;
- Discussion with Ofsted and the Regional Schools Commissioner to raise awareness of the document and expectations in Essex;
- Share the document with the MAT2MAT group.

It was agreed that the Statement of Intent might not be signed by all, but could destabilise those involved within different groups who fail or refuse to sign up.

#### **4. BARNET DOCUMENT – ORDINARILY AVAILABLE EDUCATIONAL PROVISION**

Ruth noted that she had visited SEN colleagues in Barnet. This is a small local authority and communication and collaboration is possibly easier than in an authority the size of Essex.

The London Borough of Barnet has produced (in 2016) guidance about their “ordinarily available” education provision for children and young people with SEND in maintained schools, academies, early education settings, sixth forms and FE colleges. The guidance documents describes the provision that should be available in state funded education settings and provides a baseline and common set of expectations about the provision for SEND.

Barnet has very clear thresholds, which schools have adopted and accept. They have a leading edge group, including parents, EPs, specialist teachers, education leaders and social care worker (but not health) who share and develop good practice.

Ruth noted that she plans to speak to EPs about redrafting the Essex provision guidance. The group discussed the need to collaborate and consult with parents openly, honestly and realistically. It was suggested that the Parent/carer Forum could be approached to exchange views and share ideas with education professionals.

There was a discussion about SEND reviews – should they be traded?  
It was agreed that specific criteria/thresholds would be key, and consideration of prior working.

The following actions were agreed:

- the group needs to see and compare the Barnet and the Essex provision guidance – or, ideally an audit and summary of the documents highlighting the differences – Roundtable to discuss this at the next meeting;
- Ruth to organise a working group of staff from the Statutory Assessment Service and Specialist Teacher Teams to review the provision guidance;

The aim is to reach a state where there is consistency of understanding and provision to meet the needs of children. In the longer term, the ideal will be to have/need no (or very few) EHCPs, instead offering interim funding and support, a common language and agreed expectations. It was noted that, currently, the provision and support across Essex varies, and parental expectations also vary.

#### **5. NEXT STEPS**

**Reflecting on our key questions which were :**

- Development of a strategy to support SEND in mainstream settings;

- A focus on inclusion in every school and academy, and how can we best challenge schools who refuse to admit, keep or support SEND pupils;
- Effective working between partners;
- Best use of scarce resources to ensure the most effective provision and outcomes.

It was agreed that at the next meeting the group should consider:

- how can we incentivise inclusion, and
- how do we enhance all provision rather than just relying on enhanced provisions in mainstream schools?

How do we develop a directory of schools that are effective and how do we ensure this good practice is used, shared and capitalised on.

It was noted that ESSET members are meeting to consider what outreach will look like, and how to capture practice and progress to enable mainstream schools to benefit and learn from their expertise.

## **6. SEND PEER REVIEWS**

Five key aspects considered:

- Expectations;
- Embedded
- Effective
- Engagement
- Experience

David Bartram is leading training with SENCos and ESSET leaders to trial the SEND Peer Review in each other's schools. It was agreed that Harriet Phelps-Knights would attend the training to compare it to the wider SLISS partnership peer review and consider whether there is overlap between the two processes.

## **7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Wednesday 13 June, 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm

Tuesday 17 July, 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm

- Hamptons Social Club