

**SEND STRATEGY – HEADTEACHER ROUND TABLE****WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 2019****2.00 pm – 4.00 pm****Hamptons Sports and Social Club****1. IN ATTENDANCE**

Ruth Sturdy (RS)	ECC Lead School Effectiveness Partner – Inclusion
Ralph Holloway (RH)	SEND Transformation Manager
Philippa Holliday	Assistant Director, North East Essex
Liz Cornish	Assistant Director, Mid Essex
Lee Bailey	Lead for Partnership Delivery North East
Councillor Tony Ball	Deputy Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Jo Barclay	Safeguarding Manager for Schools
Pam Langmead (PL)	EPHA Professional Officer
Matt O’Grady (MO’G)	Headteacher, West Horndon Primary
Andrew Smith	CEO/Headteacher Lyons Hall
Deborah Bailey	Headteacher, John Bunyan Primary
Alison Cole	Headteacher, St Peter’s CE Primary, Coggeshall
Becky More	Headteacher, Rivenhall Primary
Mike Wood	Headteacher, Elm Hall Primary
Andre Rall	Headteacher, Theydon Bois Primary
Debs Watson	Headteacher, Tanglewood Nursery
Simon Thompson	ASHE Executive Director
Andy Hodgkinson (AH)	Headteacher, Sweyne Park School
Miles Bacon	Headteacher, Thurstable School
Rob James	Headteacher, Ramsey Academy
Dan Woodham	Headteacher, Edith Borthwick School
Jen Grotier	Headteacher, Shorefields School
Ruth Bird	ESGA
Rod Lane	ESGA

**Apologies**

Clare Kershaw	Director of Education
Councillor Ray Gooding	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Jane Bass	Executive Headteacher, Connected Learning MAT
Harriet Phelps-Knights	EPHA Chair/Headteacher Janet Duke Primary (South)
Joanne Newitt	Headteacher, Willow Brook Primary (North East)
Jason Carey	Headteacher, James Hornsby School (South)
Jo Santinelli	St Benedict’s Catholic College
David Rogers	Headteacher, Bentfield Primary and Enhanced Provision (West)
Helen Dudley-Smith	Previous Essex primary headteacher
Sean Tobin	CE Berlesduna Academy Trust, Merrylands Primary (South)
Teresa Phillips	Headteacher, Thomas Willingale Primary (West)
John Hunter	ESGA

Ruth noted that Helena Boast has resigned from the group due to other work commitments, and thanked her for her contribution.

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

Ruth noted that there were no formal minutes of the last meeting, but recapped the content based on notes taken. Discussions included:

- i) An update on the SEND workforce consultation process.
- ii) The need to include the Early Years sector in any redesign, crucial to the effective development and support for children with SEND.
- iii) Is the SENCo accreditation sufficient to ensure effective practice?
- iv) Update on the inclusion statement sign-up. It was noted that Andy Hodgkinson had spoken to Peter Malcolm (NAHT branch officer) and they had amended the statement, which subsequently received endorsement from NAHT. There continued to be some reluctance from headteachers to sign the statement, and they had asked that the Local Authority should also commit to signing the statement. Councillor Tony Ball confirmed that LA officers would do so.
- v) A reminder that it is essential that parents are aware and on board with the changes to the SEND system in Essex.
- vi) A discussion about the overspend of the High Needs Block, and the need to work more closely and cooperatively with Health.
- vii) Information about the number and cost of EHCPs for adults from 19 – 25 years of age (with no additional funding available).
- viii) The EHCP banding matrix is being paused, to enable a review of the cost and effectiveness of the current system.
- ix) SEMH an ongoing concern for all schools.
- x) Colleagues will attend future meetings to inform the group of current issues:  
Philomena Cozens – PRUs  
Julie Keating – exclusions  
Steve Whitfield – roll out of the Trauma Informed Practice workforce development training.

## **3. ESSEX SEND REDESIGN**

Ralph Holloway gave an update on the SEND redesign and, in particular, the public consultation that starts in the week commencing 25 March. RH reminded the group that there is a statutory obligation to consult when reviewing SEND provision in a local authority, and the Headteacher Associations will be asked to help roll out the consultation.

The consultation will state that Essex County Council has embarked upon a programme of change for provision and services with the ambition to profoundly improve the outcomes and life experience of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The ambition is for a SEND system which accurately identifies and assesses need at an earlier stage and which provides appropriate and impactful support without such a high level of dependence on the statutory system.

This survey gives parents and school staff the opportunity to comment on:

- The vision for SEND in Essex
- The proposed ways of working
- The proposals for an Essex SEND Strategy as we move forward

For more information, see [Developing a Strategy for SEND in Essex](#)

The engagement period will last for ten weeks and will run until 31st May 2019. The LA will then consider responses and make an announcement of how it intends to proceed in Summer term. RH noted that they will be working closely with the Essex Family Forum, who will help facilitate workshops in order to gather views and comments.

A formal consultation of the SEND workforce will start in April, with the aim of creating two key teams:

- i) SEND inclusion team; and
- ii) SEND operations team (which will include assessment, targeted support, training etc).

RH noted that it is likely that some parents will have real concerns about the potential loss of some staff members (particularly if their own child works closely with an individual, such as a member of the Specialist Teacher Team for example).

RH gave an update on the SEND capital programme. The 4<sup>th</sup> free school application, for SEMH provision in Harlow, has been approved by the DfE. Miles Bacon questioned if, given that significant part of the cost of the new special school estate is being funded by DfE, some of the funding from the Schools Block agreed by Schools Forum to support the capital programme would now be returned to schools. RH explained that funding has not been transferred until needed, but this may mean that less funding is needed in future to complete the project. Schools Forum will discuss and may decide not to commit more funding in the coming years.

#### **4. EARLY INTERVENTION**

Liz Cornish and Lee Bailey attended the meeting to discuss what early intervention is needed to support schools. They referred to a paper published by the Early Intervention Foundation – “Early Intervention – realising the potential”. Liz noted that one of the purposes of the SEND redesign is to divert more resources into anticipatory work, and less into recovery.

Lee showed an example of the Essex “windscreen” of support (universal, additional intensive and specialist) linked to available provision for a specific area (in this case, early help). It was agreed that there needs to be better commissioning of services, and these need to be communicated more effectively, particularly in relation to universal services.

ECC is in the process of considering the future of the NELFT (EWHMS) contract. They made a lot of promises at the outset of the contract which have not been realistic or possible to deliver (for example, promising to provide professional supervision for all staff).

Rob James (Ramsey Academy) noted that there is an expectations that schools will run and lead the TAF (Team Around the Family) meetings, and he argued that this is unreasonable given the constraints on staffing capacity and expertise in schools. Lee Bailey agreed that it would be helpful to have feedback and suggested that the Children and Families hub monitors who leads the meetings; however, it was suggested that this was not the case. TAF officers have been appointed to offer support and advice to practitioners, but this does not solve the fact that schools are having to pick up the whole responsibility for vulnerable children.

Schools are also constrained by the need to gain parental consent when accessing additional support services.

Liz explained that the LA want to find out from schools what support they need. However, it was pointed out that a huge amount of research and discussion has already gone on over many years and there was a need to move things forward, rather than simply talking about provision.

## **5. INCLUSION STATEMENT**

A spreadsheet setting out which schools have signed the inclusion statement was circulated in advance of the meeting. To date around 117 primary schools have signed (26%), 22 secondary schools (28%) and 15 special schools (out of 19). It was suggested that a number of schools may be planning to discuss this at spring term governor meetings, which should increase the numbers.

Ruth suggested that there should now be individual conversations with schools that have not signed. Pam Langmead questioned whether there is too much focus on the statement itself, and not enough on whether schools are truly inclusive in practice.

## **6. ESSEX PEER REVIEW**

A review is taking place in the first week in April, conducted by neighbouring authorities, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Norfolk. The key question for the review will be:  
*What are the current challenges facing the LA and schools in tackling rising numbers of exclusions and what are the possible solutions beginning to emerge?*

It was noted that meetings will be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April (primary and early years, followed by secondary) and members of the SEND Roundtable will be asked to attend a meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> April from 10.35 – 11.30 am to give their views.

## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **a) Essex schools SEND review document**

Information was circulated in advance of the meeting.

### **b) Ruth Sturdy**

Ruth has led the SEND Headteacher Roundtable since its first meeting in November 2017. She is leaving the Local Authority to become the CEO of SEAX Trust. It was confirmed that Ralph Holloway will take over the leadership and chairing of the SEND Headteacher Roundtable. Ruth was thanked for the work that she has done on behalf of the Roundtable, and her work in developing SEND provision and support for Essex schools.

### **c) Andy Hodgkinson**

Councillor Ball noted that this would be Andy's last meeting, as he retires from headship at Easter. Andy has been a valued member of the SEND Headteacher Roundtable since its inception, and in particular has championed and promoted the inclusion statement. He was thanked for his contribution and commitment to the group.

## **8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May

10.00 am – 12 noon

Hamptons Sports and Social Club