

**WEST ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION TERMLY CONFERENCE
MANOR OF GROVES HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTRE
FRIDAY 6th MAY 2025**

MEETING SUMMARY: ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

p 2 **ATTENDANCE LIST AND APOLOGIES**

p 3 **Outstanding behaviour** Helen Youngman

p 7 **EPHA update** Chris Jarman and Pam Langmead

p 8 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS 2024/25/26** **WEPHA Conferences, Colonnade Suite, Manor of Groves**
Friday 26th September 2025
Friday 30th January 2026
Friday 15th May 2026

**WEST meetings with the Local Authority officers
2024/25/26**

Manor Suite, Manor of Groves

Wednesday 18th June 2025

Wednesday 5th November 2025

Wednesday 4th March 2026

Wednesday 24th June 2026

Headteachers' Annual Conference 2026

Friday 20th March 2026 Chelmsford City Race Course

Deputy Headteachers' Annual Conference

Friday 10 October 2025 Colchester Stadium

Small Schools Headteacher conference

Wednesday 15th October 2025 The Lion Inn, Boreham

Wellbeing conference – reducing the risk of burnout

Wednesday 22nd October The Lion Inn, Boreham

WEST ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION TERMLY CONFERENCE

FRIDAY 16 MAY 2025

Headteachers and school staff

Rob Aiken	Katherine Semar Schools	Chris Jarvis	Churchgate CE Primary
Ros Allsop	Clavering Primary	Claire Kearney	Dunmow St Mary's Primary
Liz Bartholomew	Mayflower Primary	Lissy Nixon	Henry Moore Primary
Nikki Batt	Moreton CE Primary	Tracy O'Donnell	Epping Primary
Justine Brooks	Great Waltham Primary	Sophia Pardalis	Limes Farm Juniors
Jennifer Burdett	Great Waking Primary	Claire Phillips	Takeley Primary
Vicky Childs	Matching Green Primary	Teresa Phillips	Thomas Willingale School
Sarah Cowley	Henry Moore Primary	Andrew Price	Manuden Primary
Casey Cox	St James CE Primary	Colin Raraty	Rodings Primary
Matt Curzon	St Mary's CE Primary, Stansted	David Rogers	Bentfield Primary
Sophie Denyer	Roach Vale Primary	Marne Raybould	Ashdon Primary
Sharon Derbyshire	St Pius X Catholic Primary	Kelly Sheern	Barling Magna Primary
Michael Dougherty	Milwards Primary and Nursery	Linda Todd	Elsenham CE Primary
Lisa Gibbs	Leverton Primary	Sharon Vessey	Birchanger CE Primary
Liz Gill	St Teresa's RC Primary	Lisa Waters	John Bunyan Primary
Katie Henson	St Andrew's CE Primary, North Weald	Kevin Watts	Great Dunmow Primary
		Sam Lambert	Milwards Primary
Carolyn Hunt	Felmore Primary	Victoria Marrow	Learning Partnership Trust
Chris Jarman	St Mary's CE Primary, SW/ Vice Chair	Mark Millbourne	Prettygate Schools

In Attendance

Pam Langmead	EPHA Professional Officer
Helen Youngman	Educational Consultant

Apologies

Debbie Attridge	Ongar Primary
Alison Kerrell	Holy Cross Catholic Primary
Claire Jackman	Great Easton Primary
Elaine McNally	St Thomas More Catholic Primary
Harriet Phelps-Knights	EPHA Chair

Note: If your attendance or apologies have not been noted please contact the EPHA Professional Officer at pam@langmead.me.uk for amendment.

**NOTES OF THE SUMMER TERM WEPHA CONFERENCE HELD ON FRIDAY 16 MAY 2025
COMMENCING AT 9.15 AM**

Action

1. EPHA WELCOME

Chris Jarmain, Acting Chair of West EPHA, welcomed colleagues to the meeting.

He noted that this was the first WEPHA conference that has been opened up to headteachers from the other three quadrants in Essex, and he welcomed those headteachers in particular.

2. OUTSTANDING BEHAVIOUR

Helen Youngman was welcomed to the meeting. She is the founder of Helen Youngman Education, an educational training company providing innovative training solutions to primary school leaders and teachers across the country.

The company was founded in October 2015 by Helen who passionately believes that every child has the right to receive a first-class education.

A strong and consistent approach to behaviour is crucial for a high-quality school culture which promotes excellence in personal, social and academic learning for the children and a calm productive teaching environment for staff. This course explored current models of behaviour and considered how to develop whole school 'behaviour curriculum', leadership vision and behaviour management approaches, enabling schools to create a positive culture for behaviour that enables pupils to thrive including those who exhibit very challenging behaviour.

The course also enabled headteachers to reflect on their approach to behaviour management and understand how factors such as trauma, relationships and belonging can affect children's behaviour and how to share this with staff to ensure empathy and a nurturing approach as opposed to hostility.

Full of practical ideas and strategies, this course was designed to give senior leaders and their staff tools and strategies to feel more confident in establishing positive classroom behaviour systems and respond proactively to challenging behaviours to remove some of the fear of these situations.

Helen shared an extensive slide presentation with colleagues: the full presentation can be found on the EPHA website at <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/helen-youngman-behaviour-presentation.pptx>

The presentation also included Helen's focus on how to achieve outstanding behaviour in Ofsted, although she acknowledged that this is only one of the reasons that schools will want to ensure good behaviour in their schools. The most important priorities will be to ensure that

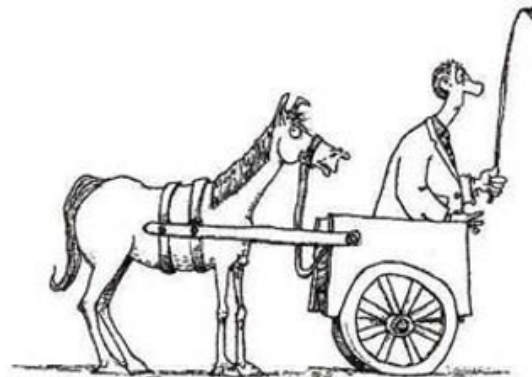
every child is learning, that they have secure relationships with both peers and adults, and are good citizens who understand right from wrong.

Helen argued that:

- The management of behaviour in schools is one of the elements that keeps SLT and teachers awake at night.
- Most believe that it is the handful of 'very challenging' children that are going to make or break any inspection or accountability process.
- This is not necessarily the case!
- Your school's ability to create a purposeful learning environment with behaviour and attitudes '**conducive to learning**' will make the difference. Low level disruption will trump the management of the 'most challenging children' any day of the week.

Priority Order for Schools

1. Behaviour
2. Curriculum
3. Teaching



Priority Order for Ofsted/Gov

1. Progress, standards attainment
2. Winning the next election
3. Making ourselves look 'good and tough' to the electorate

Helen suggested that sanctions such as lunchtime detentions leads to children only behaving well when adults are watching. Why do schools decide to crush bad behaviours with punishment when the alternative is to grow positive behaviours with kindness and love?

- **Visible/tangible consistency with visible kindness** allows exceptional behaviour; however the missing link in most schools is - **consistency between adults**.
- Behaviour management is a team sport, discipline and there must be no gaps between adults on what matters.

Importantly, she stressed that the behaviour culture is set by the way adults behave.

Characteristics of effective schools

- Strong and visible leadership
- Clear culture and vision
- All staff and attributes, dispositions, empathy
- Clear high expectations/routines
- Consistently applies

Policies that make a difference

- Behaviour
- Teaching and learning
- Safeguarding

Helen stressed the importance of making the development of the behaviour policy a whole-staff activity, even updating this every year. She stressed that the best Behaviour Policy starts with a blank piece of paper. Then includes the following:

1. Culture/Aims
2. School systems and social norms
3. Pupil transition – around school
4. Pupil support – challenging behaviour
5. Staff induction, development and support

“A behaviour curriculum defines **the expected behaviours in school**, rather than only a list of prohibited behaviours. It is centred on what successful behaviour looks like and defines it clearly for all parties. For example, ‘pupils are expected to line up quietly outside a classroom. A behaviour curriculum does not need to be exhaustive, but represent the **key habits and routines** required in the school.”

DfE, ‘Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers’, 2022

Teachers need absolute clarity about

1. Routines - high expectations of classroom routines. “I would like all students/teachers to do” – standardising routines
2. What do I want the children to believe about themselves, each other, the school?
3. What learning behaviours do children need to be successful?

Low level disruption

- Talking unnecessarily or chatting
- Calling out without permission
- Being slow to start work or follow instructions
- Showing a lack of respect for each other and staff
- Not bringing the right equipment
- Using mobile devices inappropriately

Make your expectations very clear and rigorously check they are being implemented consistently.

Behaviour must be taught explicitly

The best schools teach and re-teach expected behaviours. In primary school flash points such as time between activities behaviour must be retaught until it becomes habit. In a lot of classes children play guessing games which leads to a lot of wasted time

Ferocious punishment – drives poor behaviour underground. What is important is the **immediacy** of response. 2 minutes at end of lesson is inconvenient for them to take notice, fast enough to let them know they have stepped over the line and the child has the inconvenience being last out. That is often sufficient to deal with minor issues rather than a detention in a week, which they will have forgotten all about.

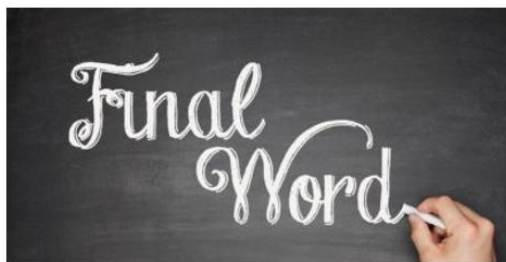
When a child misbehaves give them the opposite to what they are expecting – **a cool calculated emotionless response**. Save your excitement for when good things happen.

Helen talked at length about childhood trauma and the impact that this will have on behaviour. It is important that key staff understand what a child is going through, while respecting confidentiality and appropriate information sharing.

Effective staff recruitment is essential

- Emotionally mature, flexible enough to change, patient and kind.
- Calm and build rapport with children.
- Never drop expectations
- Always in control of themselves before they try to control others

We don't get to decide if we have challenging behaviour in our classrooms. We do get to choose how we respond. Tomlinson



Queries about course resources – info@helenyoungman.co.uk

Contact Helen directly – helenyoungman73@gmail.com

Helen was thanked for sharing her extensive experience and resources with headteachers.

3. EPHA UPDATE

- a) The Professional Officer shared several future EPHA conference dates and highlighted a wellbeing conference being held on Wednesday 22nd October at The Lion Inn, Boreham. This will be led by Dr Emma Kell, who will focus on “reducing the risk of burnout”.

Pam also referred headteachers to a recently published document:

Coping with the Challenges of Primary Headship -

Ideas and Support from the Essex Primary Headteachers' Association (EPHA)

This new document was launched at the annual headteacher conference in March 2025. The role of the headteacher has never been more demanding and EPHA's first priority is to support the primary headteachers in Essex, including those who are new to the role and acting headteachers, alongside the most experienced heads. **There is no “one size fits all” solution to the challenge of headship: every school is different and every headteacher has their own unique personality and approach to the role.**

We recognise the challenges, pressures and stresses of the job and this paper aims to acknowledge those, but also offer support and ideas to cope with the role. We look at this in four sections:

- Stressors
- Coping strategies
- How to gain confidence in the role
- Support mechanisms

The document can be found on the EPHA website

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/1745328168-coping-with-the-challenges-of-primary-headship-epha.pdf>

b) **SEND funding proposal**

The Professional Officer explained that at the recent EPHA Executive meeting a proposal was discussed around allocating top-up funding at 20 weeks during the process of a needs assessment, without the need to wait for the final approval of an EHCP. The following minute of that item at the meeting explains:

Ralph outlined a proposal that will go to Schools Forum later in the term, paying an agreed amount to a school at 20 weeks, in advance of the EHCP being approved. The proposed set amount would be based on the average current rate of top up funding, of £5,800. This amount would be paid, whatever banding was eventually agreed, and any “overpayment” wouldn't be clawed back by the authority. The proposal recognises the cashflow pressures in schools who need to support children with complex needs, whether or not the EHCP has yet been agreed.

A number of concerns and comments were raised. One headteacher suggested that her school doesn't currently apply for EHCPs for children on Band 1 or 2, as the eventual funding doesn't justify the amount of time and paperwork it needs to process a needs assessment; if there was a guaranteed amount of funding at 20 weeks, this might change the school's decision to go ahead with a needs assessment.

It was agreed that exceptional circumstances might need to be built into the system, such as if a child is at risk of exclusion. Headteachers also questioned if it was legal to withhold agreed funding when an EHCP is eventually granted. There was concern that children who needed support at the higher bands would miss out on funding.

Ralph suggested that different funding models should be modelled, for example:

- *a flat rate of funding (e.g. £5,800) at 20 weeks*
- *higher and lower rates of funding better reflecting the needs assessment*
- *a lower amount of funding e.g. band 2 rate, at 20 weeks, with adjustment at a later date.*

Any model would need to be reasonably straightforward to process and apply.

Ralph said he would welcome any more thoughts and views about this funding proposal.

The professional Officer asked headteachers to share any comments or views they have about the proposal, in advance of the Schools Forum meeting on 9th July.

c) Future dates

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The meeting ended at 12.20 pm