

**LA /ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION WEST AREA  
WEDNESDAY 9 MARCH 2022**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

Agendas and minutes for these meetings available at [www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk](http://www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk)

<b>Attendance List</b>																			
<b>DISTRICT AND EPHA AGENDA (a.m.)</b> <b>(Notes below)</b> <b>Isobel Barron, Chair</b>	<p><b>Welcome to the following Headteachers:</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Shaun Kelliher</td> <td>Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy (Acting Head)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sarah Noden</td> <td>Chigwell Row Infants (Executive headteacher)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marnie Tait</td> <td>Manuden Primary (Acting Head)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Justine Brooks</td> <td>Thaxted Primary (Acting Head)</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Farewell to the following headteachers:</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Amy Dowling</td> <td>Chigwell Row Infants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sonia Strickland</td> <td>St Mary's Hatfield Broad Oak/Little Hallingbury</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nikki Willis</td> <td>Fitch Green Academy</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>HOLDING FIRM TO WHAT MATTERS: THE PROFESSIONAL IMPERATIVE EPHA UPDATE</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Professor Mick Waters</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Isobel Barron</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Shaun Kelliher	Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy (Acting Head)	Sarah Noden	Chigwell Row Infants (Executive headteacher)	Marnie Tait	Manuden Primary (Acting Head)	Justine Brooks	Thaxted Primary (Acting Head)	Amy Dowling	Chigwell Row Infants	Sonia Strickland	St Mary's Hatfield Broad Oak/Little Hallingbury	Nikki Willis	Fitch Green Academy	Professor Mick Waters		Isobel Barron	
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p 1 -11	<p><b>AREA AGENDA</b> LA updates on current priorities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work of the Essex Taskforce and the Year of reading</li> <li>• Essex RE syllabus</li> <li>• Leadership wellbeing update</li> <li>• Bringing the inclusion framework to life: case studies from pilot schools</li> <li>• SEND workstream focus</li> </ul>																		
p 12	<p><b>Key dates</b></p> <p><b>WEST headteacher meetings 2022/23 – Manor Suite, Manor of Groves</b>          Wednesday 22 June 2022          Wednesday 9 November 2022          Wednesday 1 March 2023          Wednesday 14 June 2023</p> <p><b>Headteachers' Annual Conference 2022</b>          Friday 25 March 2022      Chelmsford City Race Course</p> <p><b>Deputy Headteachers' Annual Conference 2021</b>          Friday 7 October 2022      Colchester Football Stadium</p>																		
*Page numbers refer to the full minutes (posted on the EPHA website) of the Spring term Education Team update, held online on 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2022																			

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**Present**

Gina Bailey	William Martin Schools	Alison Kerrell	Great Bardfield Primary
Isobel Barron	Roseacres Primary/ West Chair	Llewellen Lawson	Dr Walker's CE Primary
Dale Bateman	Coopersale & Theydon	Ian Kendal	Our Lady of Fatima Trust
Nikki Batt	Moreton CE Primary	Lucy Mawson	Stebbing Primary
Anne Marie Black	St Alban's CE Primary	Christine Peden	Pear Tree Mead Primary
Justine Brooks	Thaxted Primary	Teresa Phillips	Thomas Willingale School
Casey Cox	St James CE Primary	Colin Raraty	Rodings Primary
Matt Curzon	St Mary's CE Primary	David Rogers	Bentfield Primary
Michael Doughty	Milwards Primary	Helen Russell	Chipping Ongar Primary
Mary Evans	Henry Moore Primary	Marnie Tait	Manuden Primary
Elizabeth Gelston	Hatfield Heath Primary	Linda Todd	Elsenham CE Primary
Lisa Gibbs	Leverton Primary	Joanne Willcox	Hillhouse CE Primary
Katie Henson	St Andrew's North Weald	Nikki Willis	Fritch Green Academy
Chris Jarman	St Mary's CE Primary		
Claire Kearney	William Martin Schools		

**In Attendance**

Pam Langmead	EPHA Professional Officer
Sarah Cowley	Henry Moore Primary
Professor Mick Waters	Education Consultant

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

## WEST EPHA AREA MEETING MINUTES 9 MARCH 2022

### 1. WELCOME

Isobel Baron, the West Area Chair welcomed headteachers to the meeting, in particular the following new heads:

Shaun Kelliher	Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy (Acting Head)
Sarah Noden	Chigwell Row Infants (Executive headteacher)
Marnie Tait	Manuden Primary (Acting Head)
Justine Brooks	Thaxted Primary (Acting Head)

#### **Farewell to the following headteachers:**

Amy Dowling	Chigwell Row Infants
Sonia Strickland	St Mary's Hatfield Broad Oak/Little Hallingbury Primaries
Nikki Willis	Fritch Green Academy

Isobel noted the tragic and untimely death of Sue McGuiggan, former head of Holy Cross Catholic Primary in Harlow, who passed away in October. She was the headteacher for over 20 years and will be much missed by her colleagues and the whole community.

If you are leaving please make use of the EPHA new heads' checklist, and complete it for your successor. This is available on the EPHA website at

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/good-practice/>

### 2. HOLDING FIRM TO WHAT MATTERS: THE PROFESSIONAL IMPERATIVE Professor Mick Waters

The last couple of years have been incredibly challenging for everyone connected with schooling. The levels of demand on individuals have been significant and maintaining a healthy and optimistic outlook is vital for both sustaining teams and planning future development. So many have recognised the important role that schools play within their community and, as we move forward, there is a growing awareness of the possibility of meeting the future with a renewed emphasis upon hope, ambition and collaborative partnerships.

This session reflected on the role of leadership in moving the learning agenda forward at a time of challenge whilst showing due care for all colleagues and ourselves. Of course, what matters most is children's learning and the session will explore issues to do with how teachers can be supported in effective teaching and implementing the intent of curriculum. The session referred to some of the issues raised in Mick's very recent book (written with Tim Brighouse) called 'About Our Schools: improving on previous best'.

Mick Waters has consistently been a down-to-earth voice in the increasingly complex world of education for many years. He has regularly endeared himself to school communities in the UK and overseas by talking the sort of sense they needed to hear - practical, challenging, inspiring, insightful, engaging. His unique perspective, closeness to the classroom and ability to see innovation in terms of its impact on learners mean his views are always worth listening to.

Mick explained how his book was created: he and Tim Brighouse talked to over 100

contributors, including education secretaries, school ministers, and other education leaders from the past 40 years. The book examines in detail the turbulent years of education policy and practice from the last 1970s to the present day, and sets out what policy-makers and education leaders can do to enable their schools to improve on their previous best. Through revealing and forthright interviews with 14 secretaries of state – from Kenneth Baker to Michael Gove and Gavin Williamson - together with many other leaders in education – they provide fascinating insights into the various evolutions and revolutions that have taken place in English state education since 1976.

He described leadership in schools as “dancing on a shifting carpet”. There are a number of levers that leaders use to persuade others in order to get things done:

- The promise of an enhanced professional lifestyle e.g. efficiency, more effective way of working
- Reference to others e.g. Ofsted, Local Authority, MAT, governors, DfE
- Professional conscience
- Reasonably argued case for change

Mick suggested that these four drivers will vary depending on circumstances, approach and so on. During the pandemic, the levers have been dominated by reference to others – i.e. Covid regulations, and a professional conscience – a need to protect and support children, particularly those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable.

The ages of state education

1870 – “provider of last resort” - state education introduced for all children up to the age of 11

1944 – “optimism and trust” – a hierarchical system introduced

1968 – “doubt and distrust”

1988 – increased centralisation, markets and managerialism

2020 – hope, ambition and collaborative partnerships

	<b>Headteacher role</b>	<b>Leadership shift</b>	<b>Structural change</b>
<b>2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answerable to LA or MAT</li> <li>• Responsible for outcomes</li> <li>• Safeguarder</li> <li>• Responsible for the performance of staff</li> </ul>	2012 end of NCSL 2011 NEL 2005 ECM 2002 DCS (Climbie) 2000 NCSL 1998 floor targets	2012 RSCs 1010 academies 2005 flexi-pay 2003 SIPs 2001 Assistant HTs 1999 Threshold 1998 STP&C document
<b>1995</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School manager to leader</li> <li>• Responsible for quality</li> <li>• Responsible for site</li> </ul>	Data sets 1992 ofsted 1991 SATs 1989 GCSE 1988 Nat Curriculum  1980 computers	1990 LFM (local financial management)  1984 HT appraisal 1978 Warnock 1977 Governors 1974 Houghton
<b>1970</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEA contact in school</li> </ul>		1971 ROSLA (rise of school leaving age) to 16

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff voice and rep</li> <li>• Organiser</li> <li>• Resourcing</li> </ul>	PTAs	1965 advisers 1961 DHTs in primaries
<b>1944</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community figurehead</b></li> </ul>	1950 phase change	1947 ROSLA (rise of school leaving age) to 15

We live in a changing world, notably:

- An aging population
- The gap between rich and poor
- Global shifts of people
- Artificial intelligence and nanotechnology
- Climate change and sustainability

Education must take account of the opportunities and challenges. Mick noted some real strengths of today's system:

- Accomplished leadership
- Business-like, efficient teachers
- Collaboration between schools
- Concern for the wellbeing of pupils
- A belief in communities and the role of SEND

However, there are some key areas to address:

- SEND
- Admissions
- Key Stage 3
- The Achilles heel of transition
- The start of formal learning
- Family and community ills
- Technology challenges

Mick shared some of his ideas and techniques for writing and cross curricular work, such as EXHIBITION 250, a project that was taken up over 25 days by 10 schools.

A curriculum framework – the start rather than the end

- Developing a curriculum takes a long time of it is done properly
- Curriculum never stands alone
- The curriculum is only real when it meets the child
- Teachers unintentionally distort the curriculum
- Leadership has to ensure it meets its aims
- Flexibility needs respect for the principle

Mick's presentation went on to explore current problems for leadership, does the detail match the big picture, the integrity of a unit of work, and considering what we want pupils to know how to do...

He gave guidance about "ten steps to a skiving school" and the intent and implication of an in-depth curriculum.

Mick referred the last chapter of his book, which shares 39 steps to success, for the future of the education system.

The presentation slides are available from the EPHA Professional Officer – email [pam@langmead.me.uk](mailto:pam@langmead.me.uk)

### 3. WEST EPHA MEETING

Isobel Barron shared the following information:

- a) **The Spring term EPHA newsletter**, including dates for the 2021/22 school year, was circulated to headteachers in advance of the meeting -these can also be found on the EPHA website [www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk](http://www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk).

b) **Evaluations of the area meetings**

Isobel acknowledged the changed format this term, with the usual LA Education Team update online rather than at the beginning of the headteacher meeting. We will be going back to “normal” next term, with the LA update in the morning and the safeguarding forum, led by Jo Barclay, in the afternoon.

The Professional Officer will send out a questionnaire after the meeting to ask everyone’s opinions about the termly headteacher meetings and, in particular, the format used this term.

c) **Conferences**

The annual Headteachers’ conference will be held on Friday 25 March 2022 at Chelmsford City Race Course. Please note the change of date and venue, to enable us to accommodate everyone who wants to attend. The programme and booking form for the conference has been emailed to headteachers – please contact Pam Langmead if you want to attend. Key note speakers include Lady Marie Stubbs, Gillian Bridge and Ben McBean.

Next year’s Deputy Headteachers’ conference will be held on Friday 7 October 2022, at the Colchester Football Stadium. Presenters will include Jonathan Bond and Lee Parkinson (of Mr P fame).

d) **WEPHA meetings**

The dates of the WEPHA conferences (held in the Collonade Suite, Manor of Groves) are:

- Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022 – Andrew Hall presenting
- Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022
- Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023
- Friday 19 May 2023

e) **Managing Complaints**

EPHA has had a key focus this term on the management of complaints, recognising how challenging and time consuming they can be for headteachers.

Alongside two training sessions, delivered by Natasha Taylor, EPHA has developed a number of resources:

- Refreshed model complaints policy/procedures;
- Updated concerns/complaints leaflet;

- Rewrite of the Complaints Toolkit, now in line with the DfE 2019 guidance;
- A 7-minute staff meeting on managing complaints.

All of these resources are available on the EPHA website.

The online training session was also recorded – the link to the recording can be found at <https://youtu.be/p8bXEMFzExE>

**f) Small Schools Support group**

There are 59 schools in Essex with fewer than 120 pupils on roll; the smallest currently has just 40 children. Running a small school comes with its own unique challenges, the size of the budget being just one.

Other problems include the limited number of staff, including the size of the leadership team, the fact that a small-school head often has a timetabled teaching commitment, lacks administrative and support staff, and often has no caretaker – all of these pressures have to be managed and it is usually the headteacher who fills the gaps.

In addition there are logistical challenges, including how to deliver and lead the curriculum, educational visits and trips and so on. Parents of children with special educational needs often feel that a small school will offer a nurturing and secure space for their child – and they often do – but this adds hugely to the pressure on an already limited budget. Many of these schools are rural and the difficulty of accessing support from other services adds to their workload.

Finding and recruiting good governors is a challenge for all schools, but may be even harder in a small school in a rural location, with a limited local population.

EPHA recognises all of these issues, and so has decided to set up a Small Schools group, to support these headteachers and to offer a regular forum for discussion, as well as a chance to share ideas and expertise. The first meeting of the group will be on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March at 3.30 pm – the Professional Officer has sent an invitation out to the small-school heads; we look forward to developing the group and offering support to these schools.

**g) SEND Strategy – please try to complete the survey about Early Intervention and Inclusion**

Following on from the recent Education Essex editorial and agenda items at EPHA and Headteachers Round Table meetings on the Inclusion Framework, the LA is completing a wide reaching piece of research and evaluation related to early intervention and the Inclusion Framework.

The **research and literature review** looks at statutory processes, provision in Essex and pupil life trajectories. The conclusion supports a shift in culture and practice across the local area towards early and timely intervention.

There is now an online **survey** to all schools to build on the research and determine what this could mean in practice in Essex, particularly what support, processes and initiatives are needed to enable and enhance inclusion in mainstream settings. The survey is an online activity with closed questions for the purposes of data analysis. This will be combined with qualitative information, feedback and case studies to inform recommendations going forwards.

#### **4. FUTURE DATES**

##### **WEST headteacher meetings 2022/23 – Manor Suite, Manor of Groves**

Wednesday 22 June 2022

Wednesday 9 November 2022

Wednesday 1 March 2023

Wednesday 14 June 2023

##### **Headteachers' Annual Conference 2022**

Friday 25 March 2022      Chelmsford City Race Course

##### **Deputy Headteachers' Annual Conference 2022**

Friday 7 October 2022      Colchester Football Stadium