

LA /ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION WEST AREA

WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2023

MEETING SUMMARY: ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Agendas and minutes for these meetings available at www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk

Attendance List

DISTRICT AND EPHA AGENDA (a.m.) (Notes below)

Dale Bateman, EPHA Executive member

Welcome to the following Headteachers:

Marné Reynecke

Amy Reis
substantive)

Luke Wilding

Farewell to the following headteachers:

Claire Berry

Andrew Coslett

Neil Coster

Kim Hall

Lesley Hester

James Kenyon

Chrissi Kalli

Todd Miladinovic

Rebecca Pine

Natasha Thake

Tim Voss

Jethro Bogdanov

Dale Bateman, Nick Hutchings, Pam Langmead

Chair

Vice-Chair

Treasurer

Harlow

Uttlesford North

Uttlesford South

Epping Forest South

Epping Forest Rural

Garnon Primary)

Round table discussion to gather ideas that support wellbeing

Ashdon Primary (Interim headteacher)

Great Sampford Primary (was acting, now substantive)

Little Parndon Academy

Birchanger CE Primary

Takeley CE Primary

Pemberley Academy

Henham and Ugley Primary

White Bridge Primary

Water Lane Primary

Upshire Primary

Little Parndon Academy

Newport Primary

Wimbish Primary

Hare Street Primary

Power Project Update

WEPHA meeting and AGM

Election of Officers and Local Delivery

Group representatives

EPHA updates

Headteacher wellbeing

p 1	AREA AGENDA LA updates on current priorities including:	
p 2	• Director's welcome and update	Clare Kershaw
p 2-6	• National and local Policy updates	
p 6	• School Communications update	
p 6 -8	• School improvement traded offer	Nicola Woolf
p 8 -10	• SEMH support offer	Steve Whitfield
p 10	• LA Strategic Priorities	Clare Kershaw
p 11-12	• Social Care update	Michelle Hayden-Pepper
p12 -14	Essex Year of Numbers	Gareth Honeyford
p 15	Key dates	WEST headteacher meetings 2023/24 Wednesday 8 November 2023 Wednesday 28 February 2024 Wednesday 12 June 2024 Deputy Headteachers' Annual Conference 2023 Friday 13 October 2023 Colchester Football Stadium Headteachers' Annual Conference 2024 Friday 22 March 2024 Chelmsford City Race Course

*Page numbers refer to the full minutes (posted on the EPHA website) of the Summer term Area meetings with LA Officers and Headteachers.

LA /ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION WEST AREA
DISTRICT AND AREA MEETING
WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2023
ATTENDANCE

Present

Gina Bailey	William Martin School	Sophia Pardalis	Limes Farm Juniors
Emily Bartram	Radwinter CE Primary	Rebecca Pine	Newport Primary
Dale Bateman	Coopersale & Theydon Garnon Primary	Teresa Phillips	Thomas Willingale School
Anne-Marie Black	St Alban's CPS	Julie Puxley	Katherine Semar Junior & Infants
Alex Burden	Fritch Green Primary	Colin Raraty	Rodings Primary/Fritch Green Academy
Sarah Cowley	Henry Moore Primary	David Rogers	Bentfield Primary
Caroline Crompton	Thaxted Primary	Linda Todd	Elsenham CE Primary
Elizabeth Gelston	Hatfield Heath Primary	Emma Vincent	RA Butler Academy
Lisa Gibbs	Leverton Primary	Adelaide Yarwood	Lambourne Primary
Kim Hall	Henham and Ugley Primary		
Katie Henson	St Andrew's North Weald		
Claire Jackman	Great Easton CE Primary		
Anne-Marie Kendall	St Luke's CPS	In Attendance	
Llewellyn Lawson	Dr Walker's CE Primary	Pam Langmead	EPHA Professional Officer
Lucy Mawson	Stebbing Primary	Nick Hutchings	EPHA Vice-Chair

LA Officers

Clare Kershaw	Director of Education
Nicola Woolf	Assistant Director West
Ashley Milum	Education Manager - West
Jo Barclay	Education Safeguarding
Anthony Sapping	SEP
Daisy Alexander	Attendance Specialist
Jima Fotopoulou	ECC Early Years
Derai Lewis-Jones	ECC Attendance Specialist
Debbie Makepeace	ECC
Gareth Honeyford	Education Taskforce
Jethro Bogdanov	Power
Michelle Hayden-Pepper	Director of Local Delivery, West

Apologies

Isobel Barron	Roseacres Primary/ West Chair
Nikki Batt	Moreton CE Primary
Clare Charter	Dunmow St Mary's Primary
Neil Coster	Pemberley Academy
Matt Curzon	St Mary's CE Primary, Stansted
Alison Kerrell	Holy Cross Catholic Primary
Chris Jarman	St Mary's CE Primary
James Kenyon	Water Lane Primary
Kevin Watts	Great Dunmow Primary
Joanne Willcox	Hillhouse CE Primary

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

WEST EPHA AREA MEETING MINUTES 14 JUNE 2023

1. WELCOME

Isobel Barron, the West Area Chair sent her apologies for the meeting. Dale Bateman (a member of the Executive) welcomed headteachers to the meeting.

Welcome to the following Headteachers:

Marné Reynecke	Ashdon Primary (Interim headteacher)
Amy Reis	Great Sampford Primary (was acting, now substantive)
Luke Wilding	Little Parndon Academy

Farewell to the following headteachers:

Claire Berry	Birchanger CE Primary
Andrew Coslett	Takeley CE Primary
Neil Coster	Pemberley Academy
Kim Hall	Henham and Ugley Primary
Lesley Hester	White Bridge Primary
James Kenyon	Water Lane Primary
Chrissi Kalli	Upshire Primary
Todd Miladinovic	Little Parndon Academy
Rebecca Pine	Newport Primary
Natasha Thake	Wimbish Primary
Tim Voss	Hare Street Primary

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. POWER PROJECT UPDATE

Jethro Bogdanov was welcomed to the meeting. He explained that Power is a targeted early intervention and prevention service across Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) funded by NHS England Mental Health & Justice Pathways via CAMHS collaborative. It is now the prevention offer within Essex Youth Offending Service.

The project is voluntary, offering free 12 x 1 to 1 support to children and young people aged 8-13, and their parents, to help them develop the emotional resilience to cope with challenging situations.

The following criteria apply when accessing Power:

- Youth Justice: will have had contact with or be known to the police (perhaps as a victim, or an 'involved person') but not convicted of an offence
- School: struggling to engage at school, attending irregularly, at risk of exclusion, on reduced timetables, may have unmet SEND / additional needs
- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health: indicators of need include emotional dysregulation, various trauma responses such as fight, flight, freeze.

The main aim of Power is to support children and young people to develop their emotional resilience
The key objectives are:

- To help reduce school exclusions (both fixed term and permanent)
- To support children transitioning from primary to secondary education where possible
- To work with families, schools and other agencies to help scaffold effective on-going support post-intervention

- To prevent the criminalisation of children and young people

POWER is a sub-statutory threshold service (level 2 in Essex County) but many families have significant experience of social care, and co-work cases with ECC Early Help (Family Solutions, Level 3 in Essex County) and TAFSO service

Support siblings of those under YOS' supervision, inc. Out of Court Disposals (Community Resolution+)

Part of the wider CAMHS pathway for youth justice:

Affinity (MH&J pathways) within ECFWS (HCRG+ Barnardo's 0-19 service)

To support the wider local authority to deliver Trauma Perceptive Practice training to schools

POWER Manager jethro.bogdanov@essex.gov.uk

Practice Supervisor chloe.potter@essex.gov.uk

3. WEST EPHA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

a) CHAIR'S REPORT

Nick Hutchings, the Vice-Chair of EPHA read Isobel Barron's chair report on her behalf.

Review of the year

Well, how do we sum up this year in terms of all the educational challenges we have faced?

The business of schools is not 'just' education any more- schools more and more, have to do it all- there is no other support for us or our children and families. The challenge for public service to do even more, always for less and less, and to maintain quality of provision and standards is beyond impossible.

Floyd Woodward, decorated SAS major and leadership coach spoke recently at the last WEPHA meeting of a 'compass for life' philosophy. One of 'values, integrity and compassion.' Well head teachers have it in abundance and more!

Last year, we ended with a degree of hope and optimism, in the anticipation of a more 'back to normal,' but it has been far from it!

SAS selection is tough- but try being a head teacher! Our strategic weaponry- skills of multi-tasking; negotiation, people, resilience and perseverance in the face of immense and sometimes insurmountable obstacles, and still deliver results, is testament to dedication and commitment of our profession. YOU!

Whilst there have been some positives and success, it has been a year full of immense and continued challenge; stress and an uphill battle juggling all the balls and keeping it all going for everyone all of the time. Relentless!

I don't know about you but I am certainly utterly exhausted!

We have all been working longer and harder and trying to do our best for the children and community we serve. We are working with ever tightening budgets, being asked to do more with less and trying to retain or recruit staff into a system that is now very clearly broken. The uptake of staff into senior leadership roles is dwindling and heads in this room are spending more and more time talking about early exit, escape plans or reviewing what their skills set could be used for in other employment. It really is of no surprise.

The return of the 'critical worker list' just served to remind us that even though a strike is taking place, we must be made to feel guilty about how this impacts the rest of society.

Our new Secretary of State for Education has done little to support schools and short of placing a massive injection of money into SEMH provision, I just don't think there is an answer.

Many in the room have had to carry out redundancies or significantly trim budgets to ensure our survival for another year - these are some of the hardest decisions we have to make.

This horror story could be played out for pages and pages, but to what end?...

For our own health and well-being we must seek out the 'bright spots' of our weeks; the *raison d'être*, for us being headteachers. The child that 'finally gets it', the dysregulating child that has learnt to re-regulate by themselves without the support of a member of staff, the non-attending child who has returned to school, the staff who have followed an instruction without the need for follow up, the smiles and tears that we have shed as a team and the sense of making a difference... however small.

These are the reasons that we continue in the job. This is why we chose to do what we do.

Throughout this year EPHA has been there for colleagues again. We are unlike any other Local Authority in the way we come together as one voice in Essex. Our combined drive to improve outcomes for children and staff, as a group, is unmatched. At this point I would like the members of the Executive to stand up and be congratulated for representing schools of the West at County level. Please give them a round of applause!

Also Pam, for all her support and hard work for the heads of Essex again this year. From being the 'google' of Essex to a shoulder to cry on, from finding that document we have lost, to recalling what was said in a schools forum meeting, from providing the termly briefing to training governors - we could not manage our jobs as well without you. Please put your hands together for Pam!

What is to come?

This year I am not sure.

None of us could have expected the level of debt and wider impact created by the energy crisis or the sad return of strike action, or the many changes in government, all making our jobs harder and harder to do.

As ever, we are leaders with great fortitude and resilience; with amazing resourceful problem solving skills! We prove time and time again that we can turn our hand and skills to resolve anything! A very talented bunch indeed! However, I know only too well the toll this can have on our own mental health and wellbeing. For me the comradeship and support that I receive from the West Heads in my role as Chair, has been invaluable and has certainly kept me going. It remains a real privilege to represent you and trying to make a difference- making your voices heard, of your daily experiences and challenges, in a very uncertain and challenging educational climate.

Something inside of us, keeps us going when we feel that we have no more to give- keep doing what you are doing as YOU are valued, YOU are important and YOU are worth it.

Floyd Woodrow reminded leaders that we need to take care of ourselves- how can you take care of others if you are not sustaining yourself? In his presentation, he asked us to score ourselves out of 10 for the following healthy habits:



What score would you give yourself?

I scored very low- but what I have changed since then is making sure that I stay hydrated and drinking water.

This summer – is a time to redress the balance- to score that illusive 10/10 – though I would settle for 5/10- or at least more than a couple of hours sleep!!

This summer give yourself some well-earned time off, shut the laptop, lock your office door and try your best to switch your mind and body to interests, experiences and family life and enjoy the summer break as you have truly earned it!

For some reason you keep voting me in as the chair of this group. I am more than happy to stand down to allow someone else to take the role on if they would like. I actually cannot remember how long I have been in this role but it is the majority of my 22 years as a head in West Essex. If this is something you would like to do, please speak to Pam or myself. I feel privileged and proud to represent you at meetings, to get the best that we can for the children of West Essex. Thank you for your support- I could not do it without the support or Pam, the wider Executive and You. Happy summer holidays!

b) ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND LOCAL DELIVERY GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

Chair	Isobel Barron (Roseacres Primary)
Vice-Chair	Chris Jarman St Mary’s CE Primary)
Treasurer	Mary Jo Hall (St Thomas More Catholic Pri)
Harlow	Mary Evans (Henry Moore Primary)
Uttlesford North	Mary Jo Hall (St Thomas More Catholic Pri)
Uttlesford South	Matt Curzon (St Mary’s CE Primary, Stansted)
Epping Forest South	Joanne Willcox (Hillhouse CE Primary)
Epping Forest Rural	Dale Bateman (Coopersale and Theydon Garnon Primary)

The officers and Local Delivery Group representatives were thanked for the hard work that they do on behalf of headteachers in the West Area and for agreeing to continue in their roles or taking on new positions.

4. EPHA UPDATES

- a) **The Summer term EPHA newsletter**, including dates for the 2023/24 school year, was circulated to headteachers in advance of the meeting -these can also be found on the EPHA website www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk.
- b) **EPHA Annual Subscription**
Funding for EPHA will be continue to be top-sliced from the Delegated Schools Grant. Area meetings will continue to be “free” to all primary headteachers, as will the website, headteacher briefings and advice and support from the Professional Officer.
<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/what-headteachers-get-in-return-for-their-epha-contribution-2022-23.pdf>
- c) **EPHA County Annual General Meeting**
The EPHA county AGM will be held on Thursday 5th October at the Lion Inn, Boreham.
- d) **Conferences**
Headteachers were reminded that the Deputy Headteachers’ conference will be held on Friday 13 October 2023, at the Colchester Football Stadium (key note speakers Andrew Moffat and Bobby Seagull) and next year’s annual Headteachers’ conference will be held on Friday 22 March 2024 at Chelmsford City Race Course.

The programme and booking form for the Deputy Conference will be emailed to schools at the end of June.

There will be a conference for the Small Schools Support group on Wednesday 18th October 2023 at the Lion Inn, Boreham.

- e) **Governor and staff online training**
We’re pleased to report that around 250 governors, trustees and staff have attended recent online training focused on exclusions meeting a real need in the county.

The Professional Officer will be running another session on the latest suspensions and exclusions guidance, with a particular emphasis on the governor’s role in the process.

The date/time of the **exclusions training** is Tuesday 11th July 2023, at 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm.

She will also run a training course on **managing complaints**, again focused on the role of governors.

Two dates are available (course repeated, pick one):

- Tuesday 27th June 2023, at 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm; OR
- Wednesday 5th July 2023, at 4.00 pm – 6.00 pm.

Please ask any interested governors to contact Pam Langmead, at pam@langmead.me.uk indicating which training session they want to attend –she will send them a confirmation email with the Zoom link, and slides in advance of the session.

5. HEADTEACHER WELLBEING – ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

At each area meeting headteachers were asked to identify what activities actually help to support headteacher wellbeing – has the partnership, or have you as an individual, found something that really works? The following suggestions were collated, and will be included within the EPHA Support Directory:

Formal coaching, counselling, supervision

- ✓ DSL supervision
- ✓ Hearth Health programme- Maria Brosnan

- ✓ Professional supervision (this was mentioned a lot)
- ✓ Life coach
- ✓ “Positive” Neil – 2 sessions <https://positiveneil.com/>
- ✓ Counselling sessions from Southend Extended Services – headteacher supervision available
- ✓ Headteacher counselling 1:1
- ✓ “Inside Out” – Maggie Farrar – leadership resilience programme
- ✓ Headspace

Dedicated Leadership Time and work-life balance

- ✓ Non-contact time for headteacher- weekly/fortnightly/half termly
- ✓ Work from home on a scheduled basis
- ✓ One late start “in school” a week – start work at home at 7.00 am/get to school at 10.00 am
- ✓ No evening meetings!
- ✓ Keeping some meetings online, including governors and parents
- ✓ Get the worst things off your list!
- ✓ A target for performance management
- ✓ Not having email on your phone
- ✓ No emails before 8 am, after 6 pm or weekends – making sure you are disciplined about this
- ✓ One day a weekend with no work
- ✓ No parent direct access – emails go through admin
- ✓ Shorter Friday afternoons
- ✓ 2 week October half term
- ✓ Delegate well, but take an interest in everyone
- ✓ Spending time with the children

Networking, partnerships and colleague support

- ✓ Being with other heads and spending time informally, chatting about commonalities – know you all share the same “issues”
- ✓ “Bitch and a Bun” sessions
- ✓ WhatsApp group to share problems
- ✓ Half termly partnership meetings and share experiences – often over lunch.
- ✓ Attending conferences as a partnership group.
- ✓ Very informal meetings- no agenda meetings
- ✓ Partnership meetings
- ✓ Headteacher conferences – including Partnership conferences, EPHA, national
- ✓ Fortnightly Zoom meetings
- ✓ Off-site meetings e.g. EPHA – sharing and meeting
- ✓ Formal and informal networks of headteachers
- ✓ Residential – 2 nights planning for group
- ✓ Pub lunch before partnership meetings
- ✓ Twitter (find like-minded colleagues)
- ✓ Attending conferences e.g. Inspiring Leadership, NGFL, EPHA
- ✓ Setting boundaries – shut the door if you need to
- ✓ Consortium wellbeing event
- ✓ Allocated mentor within the Partnership
- ✓ Shared humour

Physical activities

- ✓ Wellbeing Walks – for some, followed by breakfast.
- ✓ 10 minutes’ walk during the day – know your signs and regulate
- ✓ Staff wellness package
- ✓ Deep Breaths – we hire a pod at Gridserve
- ✓ Star wellbeing days <https://starwellbeing.co.uk/>
- ✓ Meditation and Reiki – breathwork

- ✓ Meditation and prayer
- ✓ Singing in a choir/playing in an orchestra
- ✓ Activities that mean you have to focus and NOT think about school
- ✓ Dog walking
- ✓ Gym
- ✓ Cycling
- ✓ Run twice a week
- ✓ Park Run
- ✓ Playing football
- ✓ Yoga
- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Sleep well
- ✓ Positive affirmations daily
- ✓ Celebrating what you love about the job
- ✓ Deliberate strategies to try and keep a sense of perspective.
- ✓ Scream pillow!

Support for the role

- ✓ EPHA headteacher briefings
- ✓ Facilitator for the partnership (accepted that this is not financially viable for many schools)
- ✓ Dedicated Mental Health Lead employed across the MAT for staff
- ✓ Supportive Chair of Governors/CEO
- ✓ Making governors aware of wellbeing needs of headteacher
- ✓ EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) – 24 hours staff support service
<https://www.hrdept.co.uk/services/employee-assistance-programme/>
- ✓ Welbee survey
- ✓ Phone a friend – formal and informal
- ✓ Diocese “Sabbath Day” for church school heads (maybe a version of this could be run for non-school heads?)

Tangible rewards

- ✓ Perk Box – commercial package
- ✓ Chocolate and wine (came up a lot, as did swearing!)
- ✓ Stash of healthy snacks in your top drawer
- ✓ Bringing pet into school
- ✓ Taking time for yourself – sketching, riding
- ✓ Animals/hobbies/music playing
- ✓ Rescue remedy
- ✓ Family events – e.g. attending own kids’ sports day

6. FUTURE DATES

WEST meetings with the Local Authority officers 2023/24

Manor Suite, Manor of Groves

Wednesday 8 November 2023

Wednesday 28 February 2024

Wednesday 12 June 2024

WEPHA Conferences, Collonade Suite, Manor of Groves

Friday 29 September 2023

Friday 2 February 2024

Friday 17 May 2024

Deputy Headteachers' Annual Conference 2023

Friday 13 October 2023 Colchester Football Stadium

Headteachers' Annual Conference 2024

Friday 22 March 2024 Chelmsford City Race Course