

Kent Primary Forum

Notes of a meeting of the Primary Forum, held at the Russell Hotel, Maidstone on Monday, 4 October 2010.

Present: Peter Edgesmith (Chair) and 15 Head Teachers (a list of those heads who signed the attendance sheet is attached to these notes).

Also present: Merrill Haeusler, Molly Norley, Simon Please, Sue Rogers, Bob Smith and Lynne Miller.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from

Jane Macey – Hamstreet Primary, Melanie Williams – John Mayne CEP, Anne Hooker – Herne Bay Infant, Ian Sheppard – Aycliffe Community Primary, Bridget Fogarty – St Joseph’s Catholic Primary, Helen Comfort – St Margaret’s-at-Cliffe Primary, Tricia Sherling – Painters Ash Primary, Ruth Doughty – Culverstone Green Primary, Karen Dhanecha – Park Way Primary, Helen Jones – Chevening CEP, Ann Blunt – St Peter’s CEP, Nigel Utton – Bromstone Primary, Laura Pearson – Trottiscliffe CEP, Richard Sutton-Smith – Claremont Primary, Rosalind Turner – KCC Managing Director CFE and Mrs Jenny Whittle – KCC Deputy Cabinet Member for CFE.

2. Traded services

Molly Norley presented a discussion paper on service provision for schools. The paper reflected the need to review services given the changes expected from the Comprehensive Review (CSR), the impact of new Academies and changes to the dedicated schools grant. In particular, the Local Authority needed to look at priorities for services and viability of traded services. With the expectation of all of the funding, or a greater proportion of it going to schools, views were sought on questions such as what services do schools value and what services would schools want to buy back, and how should these be packaged?

Comments arising during the discussion by headteachers on this included:

- There was concern that it was difficult to comment when budgets were not known and that there might be an adverse impact on ‘claw back’ if budgets were further delegated.
- It was recognised that while primary schools may wish to buy back provision through the LA, this may not be the case for secondary schools.
- Given schools would be able to buy services from a range of providers and that the LA would need substantial buy back if it was to provide ‘traded’ services there was concern about whether needs would be met.

- Clustering of schools, geographically or with secondary schools may have potential for sharing resources and shared buy back arrangements.
- Particular services that were valued included Finance and Personnel.
- Schools would need a directory of services.

Molly advised that the LA is setting up a group of headteachers to look at this with a view to completing the consultation in December. She asked for two or three nominations from the Forum. The first meeting of the group would take place on 14 October at 2 pm. Heather Kemp expressed an interest in joining the group. Debbie Hines agreed to let Molly the names of any further nominations.

3. Revision to terms of reference

(a) Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Headteachers considered appointments for chair and vice chair. For the latter, it was proposed, that as two nominations had been put forward for vice chair, it would be beneficial to the Forum to have two vice chairs. This was subsequently confirmed by a vote. The following appointments were confirmed:

Chair: Debbie Hines (Joy Lane Primary School)
 Vice chairs: Rowena Linn (Marden Primary School) & Nigel Utton (Bromstone Primary School).

At this point of the meeting, Peter handed ‘the chair’ to Debbie who then, on behalf of the Forum, thanked Peter for all his hard work and commitment.

(b) Development of the Forum

The Forum considered the Terms of Reference and agreed the following:

- The Primary Forum would be re-named to: Kent Primary Headteachers Executive. It was noted the Executive Group of the (former) Forum may need to be re-named to avoid confusion.
- The phrase “except where a head teacher leaves a school” in 1. under Membership should be amended to read “except where a head teacher leaves a district”.
- Agenda papers should be sent out two weeks prior to the meeting taking place.
- The (new formerly) Kent Primary Headteachers Executive would need to consider District representation. It was suggested that names were put forward to see where there were gaps in representation.
- There was no change to the district representatives on the Executive (these are in place until April 2011).

- The revised Terms of Reference would be circulated to schools, along with a letter from the new chair, via the e-bulletin and Kent Trust Web.
- The Executive Group would meet at 9.30 am on 18 October 2010 to consider the agenda for the meeting on 29 November 2010.

4. School to school level support

Merril Haeusler outlined a proposal for improving the quality of teaching in Kent schools which was based around the principle of schools improving schools. This reflected the expectation that the forthcoming white paper would include proposals for schools to support other schools. Merrill sought feedback from headteachers on the model which was based on:

- Establishing Leaders of Learning schools in each district.
- Support through training and development materials by the National College (a six to eight week programme).
- A one step move from satisfactory to good.
- Broadening teachers understanding of good practice.

The model draws on the good will of schools and willingness to engage and has seen an 80% improvement where it had been used in other areas. There would be some funding available to support this proposal either for a Learning School to run a programme of support or for supply cover for the recipient schools.

Headteachers gave feedback on the proposal, including:

- Kent already supports a network of Lead Teachers and this works well (Merril advised that funding for Lead Teachers and ASTs may be withdrawn). There is also work going on in districts through different support networks to raise practice.
- There is outstanding teaching across districts and not just in one school. We should not draw on one school too much.
- Teachers need training on how to do observations. They need to know what a good lesson is.
- How do you work with teachers who are not good enough (this needs to be dealt with outside of this proposal)?
- Identifying outstanding teachers is key. Attainment does not always mean outstanding practice.

Andy Sparks spoke about some work in his school to support other schools and offered to talk to Merrill about this outside of the meeting.

5. Primary conference

Merril Haeusler sought feedback from the schools on the next Primary Conference. It was noted that the Local Authority (LA) could not provide

funding and that schools would have to pay for it. However, the LA could provide support. It was agreed that:

- The content needed to be inspirational rather than informative. Speakers need to be able to draw heads in. A particular suggestion for a speaker was Steve Mumby.
- The new district managers should be invited.
- A small group would meet to progress this. Peter Edgesmith and Carol Townsend would represent headteachers on the group. Sue Rogers would represent the LA.
- Merrill would feedback to Rosalind Turner.

6. Bold Steps for Kent

Merril Haeusler advised about the KCC discussion paper and proposals: Bold Steps for Kent. Bold Steps for Kent takes account of the significant changes facing local government in the external financial and policy context and sets out a draft strategic vision for Council. It runs alongside plans for the transformation of the Council's operating framework. In particular these changes will impact on the whole of the County Council, including the Children Families and Education Directorate. The new (draft) structure of the County Council will be out to consultation on 11 October 2010.

The following points were noted:

- The OfSTED framework – if you have a three in effectiveness of leadership you could be inspected in the next nine months. Bullying behaviour is an area that will be looked at (safeguarding audit). Pupil progress is new. Inadequate progress on satisfactory will be looked at (District Heads will be working with these schools).
- SEF has not gone yet and schools will still be expected to evaluate.
- Satisfactory schools will be offered a mini review by the LA.
- Academies don't need to have SIPs.
- Headteachers were concerned about the way assessment is made at KS1, where pupils can be assigned a higher level than their actual ability causing a pressure on pupils to achieve their predicted results at a later stage.

7. Any other business

(a) Forward plan (policy updates)

The following items were agreed for the forward plan/next agenda:

- Admissions – It was agreed Debbie Hines would write a letter on behalf of the Kent Primary Headteachers Executive to Scott Bagshaw expressing headteachers' concerns about this issue.
- Primary Conference

- Finance update (Bob Smith & Simon Pleace)

(b) Budget formula review consultation

Bob Smith & Simon Pleace presented a paper, along with a sample budget, on the approach and content of consultation with schools on changes to the mainstream formula. The context for the consultation was that the three funding cycle is drawing to a close and consultation needs to take place on a more simplified approach in preparation for the mainstreaming of grants. The consultation will run from mid October to the end of November 2010. Bob and Simon outlined what is being looked at, transitional arrangements and changes proposed due to loss of specific grants (e.g. KPSM Broadband). Headteachers were concerned about schools going into deficit and whether the proposals will make this worse; a more detailed budget sheet is needed to help schools plan. They also queried if the impact of the proposed changes may be worse for smaller schools; this needs to be predicted and protection factors built in.

There would be a better indication of future funding following the CSR announcements and schools would be provided with a more detailed update in January. Ratification of budgets and detail of individual school allocations would take place in March 2011. Simon and Bob offered to put information on Kent Trust Web on Mosaic.

8. Future meetings

Dates (and venues) of future meetings were noted:

- Monday 29 November 2010 (The Russell Hotel, Maidstone)
- Monday 7 February 2011 (Oakwood House, Maidstone)
- Monday 16 May 2011 (venue to be arranged)
- Monday 4 July 2011 (venue to be arranged).

All meetings will commence at 2pm and have a 4.30 pm finish time. Lunch will NOT BE PROVIDED.

ATTENDANCE LIST 04.10.10

Name	School
Carol Burse	Victoria Road Primary School
Liz Willis	St Simon of England RCP School
Debbie Hines	Joy Lane Primary School
Carol Townsend	Canterbury St Peter's Methodist Primary School
David Metcalfe	Capel-le-Ferne Primary School
Andrew Sparks	Cecel Road Primary School
Rowena Linn	Marden Primary School
Freda Denyer	Thurnham Infant School

Dave Walsh	Eastling Primary School
Barbara Conroy	Queensborough Primary School
Cathy Walker	Lower Halstow Primary School
Heather Kemp	Holy Trinity & St John's CEP School
John Letts	St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School
Vanessa Dunnet	Leybourne, St Peter & St Paul CEP School
Peter Edgesmith	Sandhurst Primary School