

## **Kent Primary Forum**

### **Notes of a meeting of the Primary Forum, held at the East Malling Conference Centre on Monday, 2 March 2009.**

Present: Peter Edgesmith (Chair) and 25 Head Teachers (a list of those heads who signed the attendance sheet is attached to these notes).

Also present: Keith Abbott, Scott Bagshaw, Ralph Gardiner, Jonathon Gershon, Peggy Harris, Kerena Hunter, Ann Lewis, Keith Ransom, Rob Semens, Andy Sheppard, Nic Wood and Alex Duncan.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Helen Comfort – St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe, Dave Edwards – Wentworth Primary, Peter Hellman – Senacre Wood Primary, Frances Nash – Woodchurch CEP, Simon Temple – St Peter's CEP, Dave Walsh – Eastling Primary, Alan Barham – Secondary Forum Chair, Leyland Ridings, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Educational Standards, Mark Dance, Cabinet Member for Operations, Resources and Skills and Ian Craig.

#### **2. Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Forum held on 26 January 2009 were approved.

#### **3. Matters arising**

**Schools Legal Advice & Insurance Scheme** the Forum asked for an update on the issue of whether KCC could develop an improved legal advice and insurance scheme for schools following the discussion at a previous meeting. Keith Abbott confirmed this had been discussed at a Schools Forum meeting, but a more detailed discussion with Geoff Wild, KCC Head of Legal and Democratic Services was needed.

#### **4. Follow-up items from previous meeting:**

**T&LR payments** Rob Semens and Kerena Hunter provided an update on the follow-up discussions KCC had been having with Headteachers, local union representatives and the National Employers' Organisation over the question of interpretation of the circumstances when T&LR payments should be made, in the light of the change made to the wording of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD). It was clear that some local union representatives were seeking to use a particular interpretation of para. 65 of section 3 of the STPCD to argue that where a teacher was asked to co-ordinate resources and the curriculum across the school in a given area, they should be eligible for a T&LR payment. This was contrary to KCC's

understanding, which had been checked with both the National Employers' Organisation and the DCSF. In discussion, Forum members identified that the difference in interpretation appeared to rest on whether or not the individual teacher was being asked to take on responsibilities beyond those expected of other teachers and whether the teacher, rather than the Headteacher, was accountable for pupil progress in the relevant curriculum area beyond their own class. The Forum highlighted that this problem over T&LR payments resulted from the fact that the T&LR payments had originally been modelled on how secondary schools operate.

KCC would ensure that consistent advice was available to schools from the Schools Personnel Service and Headteachers would be advised to seek advice from their personnel provider if they were challenged over this issue. KCC would continue to liaise with the National Employers over this issue and would keep schools informed of any national or local developments to ensure consistency and clarity for schools as far as this was possible while the disagreement over the interpretation of the changed wording was being resolved.

Forum members also sought clarification over the process that schools should be using to enable teachers to progress from U1 to U2 and for those seeking to progress to U3. Rob stated that it was clear in the STPCD that eligible teachers should be considered and assessed against the relevant post-threshold standard for progression to U2 or U3 as part of the usual performance management process and there was no requirement for teachers to apply for progression. Where Headteachers were not satisfied that a teacher could evidence that they met the relevant standard, the reasons for their assessment decision should be explained to the teacher.

Guidance on Post-Threshold Assessment was available on the TeacherNet website at:

[http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/12838/Round%209%20Threshold%20Guidance%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/12838/Round%209%20Threshold%20Guidance%20(English).pdf)

Forum Members were unhappy that the performance management system should be used for post-threshold progression assessments of teachers and asked Rob to follow this issue up with the DCSF.

Action: Rob Semens/Kerena Hunter to follow-up T&LR Payments dispute issue with SPS and further advice to be issued to schools and Rob Semens to write to DCSF to pass on the Forum's concerns about the use of the performance management system for post-threshold assessment.

## **5. Kent Learning Zone (KLZ)**

Nic Wood and Andy Sheppard from EIS provided a presentation on the Kent Learning Zone. A copy of the EIS presentation will be available to download

from the Primary Forum website together with these minutes (***AD to insert URL when available***).

Forum members took the opportunity to raise issues and concerns relating to potential e-mail compatibility problems between KLZ schools, non-KLZ schools, and over similar Blackberry e-mail compatibility issues which were affecting schools ability to communicate with each other, and with KCC staff using Blackberrys. Nic Wood undertook that EIS would investigate the problems identified and follow these up with the affected schools.

Action: EIS to follow-up on issues and problems raised by affected schools.

## **6. SIMS User Group presentation**

Ralph Gardiner gave a brief presentation showing what SIMS could do. A copy of the presentation will be available to download from the Primary Forum website together with these minutes. (***AD to insert URL when available***).

Forum members took the opportunity to raise issues over:

- the costs and timetable for enabling SIMS access via KLZ;
- inter-operability issues between SIMS with Raise online; and
- DCSF restrictions which limited the amount of pupil information which could be transferred between schools as part of the Common Transfer File (CTF) and whether a more comprehensive SIMS file could be developed to transfer information on individual pupils.

## **7. School Workforce Census**

Ann Lewis gave a brief update on work with the 80 pilot schools who had participated in the January dry-run of the SWC. A Forum member expressed his appreciation for the support his pilot school had received in preparing for the dry-run. Forum members expressed continuing concerns at the disproportionate workload burden imposed on primary schools' administrative staff in comparison to secondary schools and questioned the benefits and value of the information that schools themselves would receive as a result of these types of DCSF initiatives. Keith Abbott acknowledged the burden being imposed by the SWC and said KCC in common with other LEAs sought to protect schools from the impact wherever possible, but DCSF did not always appreciate the impact on schools despite the advice and representations made by LEAs.

Ann Lewis undertook to provide further SWC updates at future meetings.

Action: Ann Lewis to provide further SWC updates at future meetings.

## **8. CFE Update**

Keith Abbott briefed the Forum that Rosalind Turner, the current DCS at Suffolk County Council had been appointed as the new CFE Managing Director. It was expected she would start work on 11 May, although it was unlikely she would attend the Forum's next meeting on that day, as a comprehensive induction programme was already being prepared for her first weeks in Kent. The Forum's July meeting was already in her diary and Rosalind would attend that meeting, although she would meet Kent headteachers at a variety of events before that date. Keith also provided a brief update on school budgets, confirming that schools should receive their budgets later in the week.

## **9. Casual admissions**

Scott Bagshaw briefed the Forum on future changes to casual admissions arrangements where it was expected that LEAs would take over responsibility for the co-ordination of all casual admissions to schools from September 2010. Despite strong representations from many LEAs against the proposed change, DCSF had decided to proceed in face of the significant opposition to the proposal.

Scott invited Forum representatives to join a working group which would be established shortly to help plan for this substantial change. A casual admissions scheme had to be ready for January 2010. Scott circulated a draft document prepared by Admissions & Transport outlining the range of issues that would need to be included in the detailed procedures and illustrating how complex the system would need to be community and controlled schools as well as for aided and foundation schools which controlled their own admissions arrangements. DCSF did not appear to acknowledge the scale of the challenge large LEAs and schools would face in preparing for such a significant operational change to admissions procedures, and very limited DCSF guidance had been made available to date.

Mike Cooke (Sissinghurst CEP), Rowena Linn (Marden Primary) and Helen Jones (Sundridge & Brasted CEP) volunteered for the working group.

## **10. Local Learning Networks update**

Jonathon Gershon updated the Forum on the development of the Local Learning Networks across the county. Some 54 events had been held across Kent in terms 1 & 2, involving approximately 1,600 school staff. Jonathon also invited the Forum to nominate a representative to join the LLN steering group which would meet between 3 and 6 times each year. Deb Hines (Joy Lane Primary) agreed to join the steering group.

## 11. Ian Craig

The Primary Forum expressed its appreciation for the support received from Ian Craig and for his commitment and contribution to education and schools throughout his time in the county. The Forum wished him well for his new role as Chief Schools Adjudicator which he would be taking up from April.

Action: Peter Edgesmith to write to Ian Craig to express the Forum's appreciation for his work and contribution to education in Kent.

## 12. Future meeting dates and possible agenda items

Future meeting dates were confirmed as 11 May & 6 July.

Possible agenda items identified for the next meeting(s) included:

- Jim Rose National Primary Review Final Report & Cambridge Primary Review Report
- Health Update (Richard Murrells)
- Integrated processes and working update (John Mitchell)
- Headteacher mentoring scheme update
- 1:1 tuition/personal learning

### ATTENDANCE RECORD

Name	School
Carol Burse	Victoria Road Primary School
Liz Willis	St Simon of England RCP School
David Hares	Swalecliffe Community Primary School
Deb Hines	Joy Lane Primary School
Graham Bissett	Barham CEP School
Carol Townsend	Canterbury St Peter's Methodist Primary School
Sarah Waters	Petham Primary School
Peter Edgesmith	Sandhurst Primary School
Mike Cooke	Sissinghurst CE Primary School
David Metcalfe	Capel-le-Ferne Primary School
Ian Sheppard	Aycliffe Community Primary School
Bridget Fogarty	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Andy Sparks	Cecil Road Primary School
Ruth Abbott	Culverstone Green Primary School
Rowena Linn	Marden Primary School
Kathy Spencer	St Michael's CE Junior School
Karen Dhanecha	Park Way Primary School
Freda Denyer	Thurnham Infant School
Vanessa Dunnett	Leybourne CEP School
Helen Jones	Sundridge & Brasted CEP School
Hugh Greenwood	Boughton-under-Blean & Dunkirk Primary School
Barbara Conroy	Queensborough Primary School
Angela Edwards	Kemsley Primary School
Nigel Utton	Bromstone Primary School
John Letts	St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School