

Kent Primary Forum

Notes of a meeting of the Primary Forum, held at the East Malling Conference Centre on Monday, 11 May 2009.

Present: Peter Edgesmith (Chair) and 29 Head Teachers (a list of those heads who signed the attendance sheet is attached to these notes).

Also present: Mark Dance - Cabinet Member for Operations, Resources and Skills, Rosalind Turner, Keith Abbott, Jonathon Gershon, Peggy Harris, Ann Lewis, John Mitchell, Richard Murrells, Keith Ransom and Alex Duncan.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Richard Barham – St Mark's CEP (Tunbridge Wells), Graham Bissett – Barham CEP, Carol Burse – Victoria Road Primary, Barbara Conroy – Queensborough Primary, Mark Fisher – Dymchurch Primary, David Hares – Swalecliffe Community Primary, John Letts – St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary, Kate Love – St Martin's CEP (Folkestone), Tricia Sherling – Painter's Ash Primary, Stella Suds – Trotiscliffe CEP, Colin Turtle – High Firs Primary, Alan Barham – Secondary Forum Chair, Leyland Ridings - Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Educational Standards, and Peter Gilroy - KCC Chief Executive, Rob Semens and David Adams – ACSO (Ashford & Shepway).

2. Rosalind Turner, welcome & introduction

Peter Edgesmith welcomed Rosalind to her first meeting of the Primary Forum and expressed the Forum's appreciation that Rosalind had been able to set aside time in her first day as the new CFE Managing Director to attend the Forum's meeting. Rosalind thanked Peter and said that she looked forward to working with the Forum and meeting headteachers and other Kent Children's Trust Partners across the county. Rosalind said she had been pleased to attend the two recent Primary Headteacher Conferences. Rosalind's initial priority was to get out and about and meet as many people as possible and she confirmed she would visit each of the 23 LCSPs in the course of her first year. Beyond that she would be concentrating immediately on reviewing the structure of the CFE SMT, planning for the first annual review of the Kent Children & Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) and working with the new KCC administration following the County elections on 4 June.

A copy of a presentation given to the CFE Extended Management Team, including details of Rosalind's initial impressions of Kent and early plans, is available from the link below:

http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/UserFiles/CW/File/Policy/EMT/14_May_2009/Rosalind_Turner.ppt

3. Primary Conferences feedback

Peggy Harris circulated summaries of the evaluation form responses for the 2 Primary Conferences. Feedback had been particularly positive about the thought-provoking and inspirational keynote speech on Motivational Leadership given by Humphrey Walters. Many Heads had also complemented the LA on the quality of the conference organisation. However, Heads had been disappointed that costs of hotel accommodation had not been met as in previous years which meant attendance at the conference dinners was markedly down on previous years, with a noticeable impact on opportunities for networking between Heads. Some Forum members commented that it might be time to rethink the basis of the headteacher conferences for the future, as it might be better to develop more localised events for LCSPs and to include key partners from other agencies in the delivery of wider Children's Services, better to reflect the need to focus on maximising and developing the benefits of integrated working across Children Services in localities.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Forum held on 2 March 2009 were approved.

5. Follow-up items from previous meeting:

Schools legal advice/insurance scheme Keith Abbott invited Forum members to e-mail him with suggestions for circumstances which an improved insurance scheme should cover ahead of a further discussion with Geoff Wild at the July meeting of the Forum. Initial suggestions included the costs of SENDIST tribunal proceedings.

Teachers pay issues Alex Duncan provided an update on behalf of Rob Semens on the letter sent to DCSF seeking clarification on T&LR payments and progression by teachers up the upper pay scale issues identified at previous Forum meetings. Unfortunately, DCSF had not yet responded. Details of the DCSF response would be circulated to Forum members when available.

Action: Forum members to e-mail Keith Abbott with suggestions for circumstances which an improved insurance scheme should cover. DCSF response to KCC letter on teachers' pay issues to be circulated to Forum members when available.

6. Funding sources for schools & support for small schools

Keith Abbott circulated a briefing sheet listing all funding sources available for Kent schools in 2009/10. The list indicated whether the individual funding streams were available to all schools or whether they were for targeted

schools. The list also provided a breakdown of the value of each grant, where known, and the notes column provided additional information e.g. allocation basis for schools/LCSPs etc.

Keith responded to individual Forum members queries around individual funding streams and the Forum again raised the issue of securing Primary Forum representation on the Schools (Funding) Forum. Keith indicated that there was likely to be a Schools Forum vacancy for a primary school head from an all-through primary with 150-400 pupils, which would be advertised in the E-bulletin to schools shortly.

Rosalind commented that it seemed sensible to achieve better synergy between the various Forums and Keith said that he had previously offered to talk to the Chair of the Schools Forum to confirm that it would be possible for the Primary Forum to send an observer along to Schools Forum meetings.

Action: Keith to follow-up with Schools Forum chair and advertise Schools Forum vacancy via the E-Bulletin.

7. Primary Curriculum – Reports and Consultation

Peggy Harris circulated copies of the Executive Summary and recommendations from the Final Report of the Rose Review together with the consultation proposals for curriculum reform. Peggy also circulated a further document providing a comparative analysis of the Rose Review and the independent Cambridge Primary Review report.

The closing date for the main consultation on the curriculum review proposals was 24 July and Peggy indicated she would welcome comments from primary schools by 3 July to inform the KCC response. The Forum could then consider the KCC response at its July meeting. Peggy highlighted recommendation 6 (iii) for the additional INSET day in 2010 to help schools prepare for the changes, and commented that it might make sense for this to be done on a co-ordinated day in each LCSP. ASK would be happy to support such an arrangement.

In discussion, Forum members raise a number of issues including:

- The proposals to strengthen the teaching and learning of ICT and to embed ICT throughout the primary curriculum would have significant cost and resource implications, particularly for small schools;
- An increased need for dedicated ICT support/managers in primary schools and/or better links to ICT expertise and resources already available in secondary schools and/or increased ICT procurement capacity within LCSPs;
- The lack of focus on assessment issues alongside the proposals for curriculum reform;

- The risk of an even narrower curriculum resulting from the proposal to drop KS 2 science assessments, despite the welcome emphasis that children should still receive a broad and balanced curriculum; and
- The underlining imbalance and pressures often felt by individual schools resulting from the National Strategies which run counter to the ability of schools to tailor aspects of the curriculum to their individual needs.

8. CFE Health Update

Richard Murrells provided an update on the focus of areas of work in the last 4 or 5 months. The second version of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) had been completed in March and this identified issues based on an assessment of local needs requiring action and investment. The JSNA highlights 'health' and specifically 'public health' and it will inform the review of the Children and Young Person's Plan (CYPP) as well as priorities for the two Kent PCTs. Both PCTs had drawn up revised action plans to address key areas for development and improvement in response to the JSNA findings.

Common themes in the two PCTs' Strategic Commissioning Plans included:

- health inequalities
- universal services (& immunisation/vaccination)
- mental health
- disabilities and long term conditions
- vulnerable children and young people (incl. LAC, DAAT, teenage pregnancy, safeguarding & obesity)
- Targetted localities: Gravesend, Swale, Thanet & Shepway

The LCSPs needed to help shape local operating plans and support service redesign. Forum members were encouraged to approach their relevant PCT health contacts direct if they had particular issues or problems and Richard circulated lists of the key contacts in the PCTs for information.

9. Mentoring Scheme for new headteachers

Peggy Harris briefed the Forum on the changes that had been made to the new proposed Mentoring Scheme for new headteachers in Kent, which would be launched in September. The new scheme sets out a more formal set of procedures that should bring improved consistency to the recruitment, training and allocation of mentors for new headteachers. It should provide high quality support for new headteachers, complementing the highly successful Induction Programmes for headteachers in Kent and the National College for School Leadership's own national Early Headship Programme.

Forum members welcomed the changes that had been made to the scheme which appeared to address many of the concerns identified by the Forum over elements of the previous scheme. Forum members said they would welcome a similar mentoring programme to support new Deputy and Assistant headteachers, as it was vital that the authority maximises the numbers going

forward into headship. Forum members also asked if experienced heads taking on broader leadership roles across more than one school e.g. new federations would have access to equivalent support. Peggy said that this had not been specifically identified in the revised scheme, but was certainly something that should also be considered. She would take this back to the Leadership Strategy Group. Forum members also asked if there was adequate primary representation on the Leadership Strategy Group.

10. CAF/Lead Professional/ContactPoint – update

John Mitchell provided the Forum with a detailed update on the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Lead Professional functions which were being rolled out through the LCSPs in line with plans agreed by the Kent Children's Trust (KCT) Board. Phase 1 had involved 6 LCSPs. The new processes would be used across all age groups and in all localities by the end of July. The number of assessments undertaken using the CAF was increasing and just over 300 CAF assessments had been completed to date. An initial analysis revealed 72% of assessments were on boys compared to 28% for girls. 37% of children were under 8 years, 47% were for 8 – 13 years olds and 16% for children over 13. Schools were playing a significant role in initiating assessments, as had been anticipated.

John also provided an update on ContactPoint, the national on-line directory of all children and young people intended to provide practitioners with access to the records of all children and young people indicating which other Children's Trust partner agencies were involved with individuals. Some 10,000 potential ContactPoint users and 24 data systems that will feed information into ContactPoint had been identified in Kent. ContactPoint would go live later this year

In discussion, Forum members expressed concerns at the quality of the early CAF training, the additional pressures on school staff when they were identified as Lead Professionals where schools believed they were increasingly being asked to take on the Lead Professional role by default because other Children's trust partners agencies argues their services were already at capacity and unable to take on this key role. Rosalind Turner acknowledged the impact on the workload of school staff and suggested there was good evidence already to suggest that in part this was because the new processes were picking up children who had previously fallen in the gaps between services. Better co-ordination of partner agencies' existing resources and increased numbers of staff in para-professional roles were needed to ease the load on schools. Improved access to preventative services was also needed. Better mapping of multi-agency resources in individual localities would enable improved co-ordination of services, but it was clear that there was still a long way to go in transforming the way children's services across the Children's Trust partners worked better together. CFE had identified some

additional resources to enhance co-ordination and administrative support capacity in LCSPs in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

11. School Workforce Census

Ann Lewis gave a further update on preparations and support available to schools for the School Workforce Census which all schools would be expected to complete as a dry-run in October. New resources and guidance materials were being added to the SWC pages on KentTrustWeb to capture and disseminate useful tips and answer common queries being identified by the pilot SWC schools. Regular updates would also continue to be provided via the E-Bulletin, but schools should check the following website for up to date information:

<http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/personnel/swc.cfm>

Forum members expressed continuing reservations as to the necessity and benefit to schools from the SWC. Some Forum members had heard that schools personnel services in other LEAs were undertaking the SWC returns for their schools. Ann responded that there was a detailed explanation as to the rationale for the SWC provided by the DCSF which was available in the FAQs section of the SWC information page. The SWC remained a statutory requirement and governing bodies and headteachers had a duty to provide the information requested in the SWC. Although much of the SWC data would be held by the Schools Personnel Service, SPS did not hold all the information required for the SWC, so SPS could not undertake the completion of the SWC return for schools. Schools were also ultimately responsible for checking and verifying the accuracy of the data they provide in the SWC return.

12. Admissions – Headteacher briefing meetings

Alex Duncan circulated a briefing note on behalf of Scott Bagshaw inviting the Forum's view on a proposal to bring forward the next round of briefing meetings for headteachers from September to July 2009. Forum members supported the proposal but said the briefings needed to be in early/mid June to be of maximum use, as that was the peak time for them to field enquiries from parents once registration for testing opens. They also asked that a copy of any PowerPoint briefing used at the briefing meetings is posted up on KentTrustWeb and flagged up in the E-bulletin to alert schools to its availability.

13. Extra day's leave issue for schools

Forum members raised concerns at the difficulties schools would now face as a result of the advice to schools to grant an additional day's leave only to support staff in schools, which followed the decision to grant an extra day's leave to KCC staff in recognition of the achievement of 4 stars by KCC in the 2008 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) by the Audit Commission. Forum members were disappointed that KCC had repeated the award of the extra day's leave despite the previous commitment that this would not happen again following the previous decision to award an extra day's leave. Forum members felt the award should be made to teachers as well as this would be fair and equitable and recognise the contribution made by teachers to the achievement of the Audit Commission rating. Awarding the additional day to teachers by suggesting that schools could use one of the 5 INSET days was contrary to teachers' employment conditions under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD). There appeared to be little recognition that releasing support staff who support individual pupils with AEN/SEN posed difficulties for schools during term time. Many schools would find it difficult to find the additional resources to fund cover for support staff. Also, the deadline for the award of the additional day's leave before the end of the 2009 calendar year would be problematic for schools where INSET days had already been planned. The Forum Chair undertook to write to KCC Leader, Paul Carter to express the Forum's profound concerns.

Action: Forum Chair to write to KCC Leader, Paul Carter.

14. Future meeting date(s) and possible agenda items

Possible agenda items identified for the next meeting on 6 July included:

- Rose Review Report & KCC response to consultation
- Legal advice/insurance scheme
- Future meeting dates for 2009/10

ATTENDANCE RECORD

| Name | School |
|-----------------|--|
| Liz Willis | St Simon of England RCP School |
| Deb Hines | Joy Lane Primary School |
| Carol Townsend | Canterbury St Peter's Methodist Primary School |
| Peter Edgesmith | Sandhurst Primary School |
| Mike Cooke | Sissinghurst CE Primary School |
| David Edwards | Wentworth Primary School |
| Maggie Cox | New Ash Green Primary School |
| David Metcalfe | Capel-le-Ferne Primary School |
| Ian Sheppard | Aycliffe Community Primary School |
| Bridget Fogarty | St Joseph's Catholic Primary School |
| Helen Comfort | St Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School |
| Andy Sparks | Cecil Road Primary School |

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| Tricia Sherling | Painters Ash Primary School |
| Rowena Linn | Marden Primary School |
| Kathy Spencer | St Michael's CE Junior School |
| Karen Dhanecha | Park Way Primary School |
| Peter Hellman | Senacre Wood Primary School |
| Freda Denyer | Thurnham Infant School |
| Vanessa Dunnett | Leybourne CEP School |
| Stella Sudds | Trottscliffe CEP School |
| Helen Jones | Sundridge & Brasted CEP School |
| Ann Blunt | St Peter's CEP School |
| Kate Love | St Martin's CEP School |
| Susan Hill | Brookland CEP School |
| Dave Walsh | Eastling Primary School |
| Hugh Greenwood | Boughton-under-Blean & Dunkirk Primary School |
| Angela Edwards | Kemsley Primary School |
| Heather Kemp | Holy Trinity & St John's CEP School |
| Nigel Utton | Bromstone Primary School |