

# AD EDUCATION NETWORK MEETING

## Notes

7<sup>th</sup> May 2021



**Present:** Kate Reynolds (Reading), Christine McInnes and Michelle Stanley (Kent), Chris Hilliard (Bracknell Forest), Kim James (Oxfordshire), Mike Stoneman (Portsmouth), Rebecca Smith (Medway), Mark Storey (B&H), Brian Pope (Hants), Simon James (Bucks), Louise Ling (Surrey), Marie Denny (Milton Keynes).

**Apologies:** Lucy Butler (DCS, W Sussex), Carol Cammiss (DCS, Wokingham), Sal Thirlway (Wokingham), Clive Haines (RBWM), Jane Winterbone (Surrey), Hayley Good (Oxfordshire), Clodagh Freeston (Southampton), Chris Kiernan (Medway), Ian Pearson (W Berks).

NOTES	Action
<p><u>Key actions and decisions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Much shorter version of Local Strategic Education Systems Framework, with contextual introduction from CH &amp; CO to be circulated by 14<sup>th</sup> May. Pairs of LAs to complete and discuss together before June meeting.</li> <li>- Request opportunity to share presentation about in-year fair access with DCSs, with a view to recommendations being made to the DfE, with a view towards an update of the schools admissions code.</li> <li>- CO to do some research on the issue of falling numbers in reception: is this just a South-east phenomenon?</li> <li>- MarkS to share the latest B&amp;H Trans Toolkit following consultation and approval, for update at June meeting.</li> </ul>	<p>CO / CH All</p> <p>CO / LB / CC</p> <p>CO</p> <p>MS</p>
<p><b>Welcome and matters arising.</b></p> <p>Chris thanked Kate for agreeing to chair today's meeting since Lucy and Carol had to send apologies. Kate welcomed all to the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No further responses had been submitted for the Schools Forum survey. This will be picked up at the June meeting.</li> <li>- Brian Pope was thanked for agreeing to co-chair the CME Group, alongside Mike Stoneman.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>1. Local Strategic Education Systems: draft principles &amp; LA role</b></p> <p>The draft was reviewed in groups.</p> <p>Revised aim: a framework to support LAs to discuss together current strategic structures and future thinking. The ambition is to be able to summarise, with examples of local practice, to evidence the future thinking taking place locally and demonstrate the continuing role of LA in local education systems (and share this with DCSs, ADCS and the DfE).</p> <p>Recommendations about the key principles and functions were fed back, including the importance of moral purpose and enabling local partnerships. CO will prepare a further, shortened, iteration; to include a contextual paragraph to be prepared with Chris H. Circulation by 14<sup>th</sup> May.</p> <p>Pairs of LAs to then summarise their own local 'elements and challenges' and liaise / share practice before 18<sup>th</sup> June.</p>	<p>CO / CH</p> <p>ALL</p>

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<p>School Improvement Grant consultation: highlighted this has implications for future school improvement capacity in LAs. Consultation is due to close on 26<sup>th</sup> May; link to materials will be included in this week's update. Some uncertainty, due to the wording of question 2 in the consultation, whether the proposed revised grant will have more focus on school attendance.</p>	
<p><b>2. Children Missing Education</b></p> <p>MS presented the good practice summary and recommendations about In-year Fair Access. His slides will be shared across the Network.</p> <p>Broadly the recommendations received the support of the group. The wording for recommendation 1 should add the relevance to effective safeguarding of LAs having responsibility for all school admissions. Lucy and Carol will be asked about taking these to the DCS Steering Group and to ask the DCSs to promote them to the DfE, with the aim of influencing the work on a revised Admissions Code.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EHE: The CME Group has another development project on elective home education (EHE). This group's work will be shared at the June meeting. Meanwhile the DfE leads for EHE are to present to the next CME Group meeting, on 9<sup>th</sup> June. CO will circulate the invite to that meeting if ADs wish to join.</li> <li>• Mike provided an update about the judicial review that Portsmouth is facing from a few parents who take exception to the LA's expectations for evidence of suitable education being provided. Despite a judge opinion that the LA expectations were reasonable in law, this is proceeding to court hearing. Portsmouth will be seeking support from DfE, including towards the legal costs.</li> </ul>	<p>CO</p> <p>CO</p> <p>CO</p>
<p><b>3. Learning recovery / start of term</b></p> <p>General themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All experiencing high levels of attendance</li> <li>- Some variation in response of secondary schools to the summer schools initiative; in some areas headteachers are making plans for an offer to new year 7s, in other areas there is no appetite with staff welfare being a key consideration.</li> <li>- Many LAs report keeping a close eye on headteacher resignations, which have increased in some; although applicant numbers have remained strong (although some RC schools are harder to recruit to).</li> <li>- Many LAs are watching exclusion numbers. Some have noted a recent increase.</li> <li>- Some worries about the number of secondary schools that are allowing years 11 and 13 students to leave at the May half-term.</li> </ul> <p><u>Transitions</u> (year 6 to year 7): there was a strong view that this has benefited from the strong local partnerships over recent months and good systems are in place and being actioned.</p> <p><u>Dialogue with DfE</u>: topics being raised by the Dept include collective worship, schools playing a role (in the autumn) in vaccinating 12 to 18 year olds and guidance for emerging from lock-down restrictions (should schools maintain bubbles? What about school trips and visits? What about school events such as summer fairs?).</p> <p><u>Strong partnerships</u> with headteachers and others in the LA: these have continued in all areas and a routine of online meetings is established and paying dividends in aspects of education over-and-above the pandemic.</p> <p><u>Reception numbers</u>: several LAs noted a significant drop in admissions to reception for September onwards; a reduction greater than the projected demographic changes. Such falling rolls have</p>	

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<p>financial implications for primary schools for some years. CO will both ask for views across the SESLIP LAs and explore if there is any evidence for this trend elsewhere in the country.</p> <p>The issue of <u>increasing NEET numbers</u> was also raised. Several LAs are finding an increase and are looking to explore reasons (and to challenge a 'passive' position that it is "just due to covid-19"). Rebecca, Marie and Mike can update in June.</p> <p>MarkS raised his work leading the development of a <u>Strategy for Disadvantaged Children</u> and Young People in Brighton &amp; Hove (B&amp;H). There was interest in this work and a request for a presentation from Mark later in 2021, once the strategy has been launched.</p>	<p>CO</p> <p>RS/MD/MS</p> <p>MS</p>
<p><b>4. Relationships and sex education policies / trans toolkits</b></p> <p>Hants shared about a legal challenge they are facing led by a very small number of parents to their inclusive policies, in particular about their Trans Toolkit. Members are committed to their stance on inclusivity and are prepared to defend the judicial review, though they will be seeking DfE to come alongside if the matter goes to court.</p> <p>Portsmouth and B&amp;H confirmed their LAs are committed to a continued supportive and inclusive position. B&amp;H took counsel's advice in the light of legal challenges elsewhere. The key advice was to have consulted on policies to a wide range of stakeholder and evidenced that this consultation has taken place and, if necessary, communicate responses from the LA. This has been actioned and B&amp;H plan take their Toolkit and consultation report to members on 14<sup>th</sup> June. MarkS will share the paper and Toolkit with the group after this date (possible update item on June 18<sup>th</sup>).</p> <p>The group will return to the question of whether there is value in developing a South-east position at the June meeting.</p>	<p>MS</p> <p>CO</p>
<p><b>6. Future meetings and possible themes</b></p> <p>Dates for future meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>June 18<sup>th</sup> 2021</u> – including: shared work on the Local Strategic Education framework, report back from the development projects from CME Group members, update on RSE policy and Trans Toolkits.</li> <li>• <u>Sept 17<sup>th</sup> 2021</u>. Pencilled in for a joint meeting with the SE19 SEND Network: we want have opportunities to consider the DfE's SEND Review if it is published in time.</li> <li>• <u>Nov 12<sup>th</sup> 2021</u>.</li> <li>• <u>Jan 28<sup>th</sup> 2022</u>.</li> </ul>	