

AD EDUCATION NETWORK MEETING

10th November 2023, 10.00am for 10.30am start –3.00pm

Faraday Room, Broadway House, Tothill Street, London.

Present: Deb Austin (BHCC), Kim James (Oxfordshire), Michelle Sancho (W Berks), Michelle Stanley (Kent), Natalie Smith (Hants / IoW), Steve Nyakatawa and Sarah Clarke (W Sussex), Ming Zhang (Wokingham), Jo Lyons (BHCC), James Fowler (Bucks), Alison Talbot (MKC), Mary Burguieres (Surrey).

In attendance: Lee Selby (Ofsted)

Apologies: Elizabeth Funge (E Sussex), Clive Haines (RBWM), Marie Denny (MKC), Rebecca Smith (Medway), Brian Grady (Reading), Mike Stoneman (Portsmouth), Liz Smith (Surrey), Neil Hoskinson (Slough), Clodagh Freeston (Southampton), Gareth Drawmer (Bucks).

Item	Actions
Welcome and introductions / apologies	
<p>1. Joint discussion with Ofsted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Safeguarding complaints:</u> Lee talked through Ofsted’s formal role with respect to safeguarding complaints communicated to them by parents / carers that then have to be passed to the LA. Nearly all of these are category 3 complaints. Category 1s require an HMI to investigate and category 2 are passed to the LADO. The number of complaints received in the South-east in the first half of term was shared, with some LAs reporting a notable uptick since half-term. • Key points from discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Request to Ofsted to rephrase some wording on their online complaints form: describe that parents are expected to “have used the school’s formal complaints procedures” before raising a complaint to Ofsted, including the date of when the parent submitted their complaint to their school. These pieces of information should be included in information passed to an LA. ○ Now there is a named HMI for each LA, Ofsted hope it is easier to communicate to clarify uncertainties about complaints. ○ Discussion about how stressful heads can find such complaints, but to what extent they also want to know where there are interactions with parents. Lee will discuss striking the right balance with Ofsted’s headteacher reference group. ○ Suggestion Ofsted include wording that parents need to include as much specific information as possible, such as dates of all communication with the school. The more specific the information, the more effective any investigation can be. ○ Remind LAs that a reasonable finding, if there are few specifics to go on, is: not enough information to proceed. • “Ofsted in the area” trial in Southampton June/July 2023: view from the LA and from Ofsted. Pressure and some helpful, coordinated, learning which was shared with headteachers and senior LA officers; for example on approaches to inclusion. The ADs expressed the view that there should be a proposal and discussion between Ofsted and SESLIP DCSs if this “in the area” approach is going to be trialled further. • Dates shared in the presentation for face-to-face workshops for those involved in school improvement. Also Ofsted are keen to run more ‘outstanding roadshows’ in local areas, but need a school to be willing to host at no charge to Ofsted. Contact Lee if you are interested. Lee.Selby@ofsted.gov.uk • Next steps: Chris to circulate slides; Lee to be invited to March Network meeting; 	All LS /CO
<p>2. Notes and matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notes were agreed as being accurate. - Outline of Southampton writing project was circulated with this agenda and the slides from the AP presentations have been circulated. 	

Item	Actions
<p>3. Strategic Education and Skills Boards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ming Zhang (Wokingham) shared experiences from a previous role in Plymouth, which was an initiative supported by the SW DfE Director following the Schools White Paper. The national policy agenda has evolved since then, due to the withdrawal of legislation to support aspects of the white paper. W Sussex, with its scoping, and Surrey and BHCC and Oxfordshire also shared their respective partnership thinking and arrangements. Discussion about chairing: independent chair or rotating? Core documents include: memorandums of understanding, terms of reference for the strategic board and also the strategy document that communicates the partnership's priorities. A challenge is so the partnership can streamline decision-making, not result in duplication. Agreement that this is an important strategic theme to start exploring with the potential for some change in national policy after the General Election. Next step: colleagues with strategic education partnerships are invited to send core documents to Chris; he can then explore how best to batch them together for sharing. Chris to explore options for a presenter to input and aid our thinking about the future shape of middle tier strategy and arrangements across education. 	All
<p>4. From the CME Group: including DfE home education guidance consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group discussion first impressions of the draft guidance on home education which is currently under consultation (until 18th Jan). There was a general sense of disappointment with fewer aspects clarified than could have been, plus some alarm that certain statements could raise expectations among parents. Specifically there is no attempt to mandate a register of children being home educated and little new about measures to safeguarding the small number of children where there are risks. A group are meeting to draft common statements of response to certain consultation questions and these will be shared with the AD Network when available. Group members also discussed exclusions and suspensions. Most areas expressed concerns about the numbers of exclusions being higher this time of year than at the same point in 2022. Concerns were also expressed by several about the numbers of suspensions in some of their primary schools, notably in years 3 and 4. 	CO
<p>Next meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sub-groups in afternoon: Michelle / Kim invite those with an interest in school improvement to meet after lunch. 26th Jan meeting: Paul Schofield from DfE will join for the first hour. Questions to raise include: DfE position regarding new trusts, and revisit the issue of re-brokering schools (2 x RI) and other academies that are without a trust. Discussion on school sustainability issues (do we include an update on this for the DfE as well?) (BHCC, Hampshire and W Sussex) Focus on secondary places / capacity (Wokingham and W Sussex) 15th Mar meeting: request to plan to be in London. As well as session with Ofsted, to have a focus on headteacher wellbeing, in the light of Ruth Perry (Brian from Reading). In the afternoon to have a 'round robin' with 3 or 4 LAs showing one or more aspect of their support arrangements for the wellbeing of headteachers. 	CO to liaise Jo / Natalie / Steve Ming / Steve CO to liaise with BG