

Draft Notes
AD EDUCATION NETWORK MEETING
4th February 2022, 10.00am – midday



Present: Deb Austin (B&H), Jo Lyons, Mark Storey, Ashley Seymour Williams (B&H), Michelle Stanley, Christine McInnes (Kent), Hayley Good, Kim James (Oxfordshire), Marie Denny (Milton Keynes), Jane Winterbone (Surrey), Celia Buxton (Medway), Brian Pope (Hants), Yvette Thomas (Bucks), Clodagh Freeston and Derek Wiles (Southampton).

Apologies: Simon James (Bucks), Cheryl Eyre (Bracknell Forest), Elizabeth Funge (E Sussex), Mike Stoneman (Portsmouth), Heather Tomlinson (Wokingham), Clive Haines (RBWM).

ITEM	Actions
<p>1. Matters arising</p> <p>The notes from the previous meeting were agreed as accurate.</p> <p>Looking to March meeting with RSCs: discuss the new school improvement offer brokered by RSCs.</p> <p>Portsmouth home education JR – support statement was submitted by DfE; judgement found LA was acting reasonably and within the law regarding evidence sought about suitable education.</p> <p>Afghan refugees: summary points were raised by Lucy at the SESLIP DCS meeting in December. DCSs did not advise on further action for the time-being.</p>	
<p>2. School Improvement and Monitoring Grant – update on replacing funds</p> <p>Most LAs in South-east reported having consulted with all schools, not just maintained, about the challenges and have agreed de-delegation of funding to cover the 50% funding withdrawal for 2022-23. Two LAs have not held discussions with Schools Forum due to likely refusal and concerns over a disproportionate impact on the few LA maintained secondaries. At least one other has arrangements to fund school improvement that were not dependent on the DfE grant.</p> <p>Positives have included agreement with headteachers about an enhanced school improvement partnership between schools and LA.</p> <p>One or two LAs voiced concerns about the size of the shortfall for 2023-24 school improvement budgets.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> LAs to send examples of materials used to gauge schools’ views (e.g. surveys) and school improvement structures to CO. Chris will then circulate to the Network.</p>	ALL CO
<p>3. Trans Toolkit JR Update</p> <p>Hants faced a hearing to seek court permission to review their Trans Toolkit: it was allegedly illegal and politically driven. Judge refused permission on the grounds the Toolkit is guidance and falls within the role of the LA to advise schools.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> BHCC offered to send its update toolkit and consultation report to CO for sharing with Network LAs.</p>	Mark S
<p>4. Small schools</p> <p>Continue the discussion. Majority of small schools in Oxfordshire and BHCC are maintained. Practice shared included half-termly meetings with all identified small schools</p>	

ITEM	Actions
<p>to encourage collaboration and support closer working between schools e.g. shared back office, governor liaison, plus sharing research about federations.</p> <p>Weaknesses in safeguarding culture and systems has emerged as an area of concern, particularly for small schools that have been inspected since Sept 2021 (a number have dropped at least one judgement). Managing curriculum leadership is another area of challenge for small schools.</p> <p><u>Actions:</u> Examples of safeguarding concerns raised during inspection or in other support for small schools should be sent to CO by end of Feb. DA will then raise these concerns about safeguarding systems and culture with SE DCSs and with Ofsted who will attend their March meeting.</p> <p>To include inspections in the topics to discuss with RSCs: safeguarding, plus difficulties being reported by special schools and AP, who are particularly highlighting Ofsted's lack of recognition of the long-tail of pandemic effects.</p>	<p>DA</p> <p>CO</p>
<p>5. Children Missing Education update</p> <p>BP presented the changes to the DfE 'Build Back Better' grant project: to seek a partner to conduct some research with parents about the process of moving to home education and, for those who return children to school, about that transition. This was agreed by the group.</p> <p>BP also updated about discussions about suspensions and exclusions. Improving practice in schools to try harder for pupils with an EHCP and who are CIN was flagged.</p> <p>BHCC provided update about the Children's Commissioner Deep Dive project they have been invited to participate in which is focused on persistent absence and drift from school rolls, with 9 other LAs.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> Confirm amendments to grant proposal. Please let CO know any suitable consultants who might be interested in the work</p>	<p>CO & ALL</p>
<p>6. Forward Plan</p> <p>March: Items to discuss with RSCs: School improvement strategies, Ofsted inspections, schools white paper, challenge to academies about offer for pupils with EHCPs.</p> <p>Items for future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-review using Strategic Role of LA in Education toolkit; revised version informed by Schools White Paper? • SEND Green Paper and High Needs Funding (especially for LAs with a safety valve agreement) • Role of virtual school • Levelling up – impacts for SE schools <p><u>Action:</u> DA and CO to rework items into a plan for 2022's meetings</p>	<p>DA / CO</p>
<p>Future meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18th March • 6th May • 1st July • 14th Oct 	