

## ESSEX SCHOOL-LED IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM PROJECT BOARD MINUTES

Date: Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018  
Venue: Hamptons, Tydemans, Chelmsford CM2 9FH  
Time: 10:00am to 12:00pm

### Attendees

Clare Kershaw	Director, Education
Simon Thompson	ASHE
Pam Langmead	EPHA
Dianne Ryan	ESSET
Rod Lane	ESGA Primary
Ruth Bird	ESGA Secondary
John Hunter	Governor of a Special School
Lyn Wright	Link to Teaching School Alliances
Ruth Sturdy	LA lead School Effectiveness Partner for Inclusion
Nicola Woolf	LA Lead for the School Led Improvement System Strategy
Tim Elbourne	Diocesan C of E representative
Colin Raraty	Chair of West Quadrant meeting, Headteacher at Rodings Primary
Sue Jackson	Chair of South Quadrant meeting, Headteacher at Lee Chapel
Lisa Feldman	Chair of Mid Quadrant meeting, Headteacher at Finchingfield
David Bome	Chair of North-East Quadrant meeting, Headteacher at Mersea Island
Gillian Cawley	Independent Chair
Simon Rea	ISOS EDT

### Item 1 – welcome and apologies

Gillian Cawley welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that the key stakeholders to promote the school-led system were around the table.

Rob Simpson was not present from the Catholic Diocese

### Item 2 – notes from last meeting 28 June 2018

**Action: Simon Thompson to liaise with Dianne Ryan about the potential for secondary phase special schools to link to the work of ASHE triads.**

Page 2, item 3: SLIS Board had agreed five key points from the previous meeting for members to feed back to their networks; this process would continue.

Page 2, item 3: Clare Kershaw had featured the development of the school-led improvement system in her newsletters and regular updates.

Page 2, item 3: Simon Thompson had sent examples from Ofsted inspection reports of secondary schools about effective partnership working. The Ofsted summary would continue to be updated.

**Action: SLIS Board to consider the updated Ofsted summary at its meeting in March 2019.**

Page 3, item 5: the summary of SLIS development in Essex was being discussed under item 5. The document was available on Infolink and had been discussed at the partnership leads' meeting.

**Action: SLIS Board to consider the links between SLIS and other strategies, including school-led SEND and recruitment / retention, at its meeting in March 2019.**

Page 3, item 5: governor peer review to be discussed under item 6.

Page 3, item 5: Nicola Woolf had shared the list of SLIS partnerships.

**Action: Nicola Woolf to consider how the SLIS partnership information could be as clear as possible on the website, for example by being located on a separate page.**

Page 3, item 5: SLIS Board had a brief discussion about the use of the term “SLIS”. It was agreed that the “SLIS brand” was widely recognised and therefore should be retained. The challenge would be to re-define “school-led improvement system” to be more inclusive to encompass other Essex partnerships such as AHSE triads, special school partnerships, and the work of MATs. This would describe more accurately how school improvement was working across Essex. The Board agreed this would need to be considered carefully and they might add value by considering protocols or terms of reference that might help other groups to be as inclusive as possible.

**Action: SLIS Board to consider this issue at its meeting in March 2019**

Page 4, item 6: Pam Langmead was attending all four Quadrant meetings.

Page 4, item 7: there had been discussion at the recent partnership leads’ meeting about re-energising peer review through further training. SEND peer review training would also be taking place.

**Action: Clare Kershaw reminded the SLIS Board of the idea of an Essex conference on peer review and partnership working in 2019. She said it would be useful before the end of this year to suggest a date in the summer term 2019. Nicola Woolf had contacted Maggie Farrar about the possibility of Christine Gilbert being the keynote speaker. The conference might involve other LAs.**

Page 4, item 9: progress of disadvantaged pupils to be discussed under item 9.

**Action: Nicola Woolf and Dianne Ryan to share information on primary and special schools with the SLIS Board at its meeting in March 2019.**

#### **Items 3 and 4 – review ToR and remit and priorities for the forthcoming year**

Gillian Cawley explained that this was a reminder of the purpose of the SLIS Project Board: “...to come together to support the formation of school-led improvement partnerships across the county... and promote and support the embedding and developing maturity of the school-led improvement system across the county and act in an advisory capacity, developing innovation, sharing good practice and identifying solutions where barriers exist.”

The three-year priorities for 2017-19 had been summarised under four main headings:

1. Developing and communicating the SLIS vision
2. Building capacity of partnerships
3. Growing the maturity of the SLIS system, and growing leadership capacity and succession planning
4. Engaging regional and national priorities and stakeholders

The Board agreed to add to the actions:

- Look at innovative ways to support capacity within partnerships
- Continue the identification and inclusion of the range of partnerships in Essex
- Share knowledge of strategy with the RSC

**Action: Nicola Woolf to update SLIS priorities for 2018-19**

### **Item 5 – review of SLIS Journey document**

Simon Rea summarised the document that had been written to explain the development of the school-led improvement system in Essex since 2015. He said the summary included a diagram of how the school-led system was working at different levels across Essex. He said significant progress had been made since 2015 and that this had been achieved through the partnership between schools, the LA and other key partners; a consistent focus on developing the maturity and capacity of the SLIS Partnerships; and learning from other areas. Practice in Essex was now being shared with other LAs and schools in other parts of the country.

In discussion the following main points were made:

- the document provided a helpful summary of the journey to date, and had been useful already in explaining and promoting what had been achieved;
- SLIS Board members should promote and share the summary with their networks to highlight the progress achieved;
- the summary could be seen as ‘chapter 1 of the journey’. There should be further updates, for example, after the 2019 conference and to illustrate the progress made by the Quadrants in 2019;
- social media could be used to engage the system about progress;
- the journey of the school-led SEND system could also be described alongside this document.

**Action: Clare Kershaw suggested that a separate button about the school-led improvement system could be added to Infolink, and this summary and other key documents could be posted there.**

### **Item 6 – feedback from the Quadrant Chairs**

David Bome said there had been a common purpose from attendees at the **NE Quadrant**: it had been powerful to have 17 like-minded partnership leads in one room. They had shared how they were using their SEP days, although recognising that differences in size of partnerships meant this was an issue for some groups. Strengths that had been discussed were the work of SENCOs leading clusters, sharing local knowledge, and looking at local SEND provision. Development needs that had been identified included support for disadvantaged pupils and provision for the more able in maths. Peer reviews had been very helpful in sharing data and needs, and there had been openness between schools. He said that the TSAs in this Quadrant were considering what they might do to respond to needs.

Lisa Feldman said that 50% of partnerships had attended the most recent meeting in the **Mid Quadrant**. There had been a positive response from the partnership leads attending. The Quadrant wanted to create a directory of the skills and capacity available across the partnerships. Strengths that had been discussed included the action plans for each partnership, peer review opportunities being extended to deputies and SENCOs, and the research projects that some partnerships were engaged in to review and share practice. Development needs that had been identified included TSAs responding more quickly to needs, greater transparency in the local offers from TSAs, and SCITT training. The Quadrant had also discussed how to prioritise when schools were involved in several partnerships.

Sue Jackson said that there had been good attendance at the recent **South Quadrant**. All five TSAs had attended. The Quadrant was considering how to engage schools that were part of non-Essex MATs; they wanted to involve all schools. Strengths that had been discussed included peer review and coaching, sharing data, and safeguarding and SEND reviews. Development needs that had been identified included SEND provision and ASD provision, EYFS, support for disadvantaged pupils, and recruitment and retention of both teachers and governors.

One member of each partnership would be trained in supporting pupils with ASD to enable them to train others. The five TSAs were offering a similar list of professional development (including ITP and OTP courses) and in response to the needs identified by the partnerships they had agreed to meet and review how their offers could respond better.

Colin Raraty said that there had been good engagement from partnerships in the **West Quadrant**, with a very positive response and a clear desire for the Quadrant discussions to work. It was helping partnership leads to come together and have strategic conversations. Time had been spent establishing the group and considering an MoU and data-sharing protocols. Strengths that had been discussed included the action plans for the partnerships with clearly identified roles, peer review, and the openness and trust between the leads attending. Partnerships had been developing over recent years and were now seen as mature. He said that the Quadrant needed to consider how to engage MATs and stand-alone academies, and how the offer from their two TSAs could meet the needs of the schools and promote the work of partnerships.

In discussion, Board members said that:

- it was very positive that there had been such strong engagement from partnerships at the Quadrant meetings and that the discussions had been seen to be so useful;
- it was also positive that TSAs were considering how they could better respond to the needs of local schools in light of feedback. It would be useful for the Board to hear how successful this was at future meetings;
- engaging all schools was important. This was a particular issue for some stand-alone academies, some MATs, and some schools that were part of non-Essex based trusts. Some partnerships were cautious about engaging MATs that were seen as acquisitive ‘empire-builders’. Quadrants might therefore adopt an incremental approach and perhaps engage smaller local MATs that might be keen to engage first. This might help to break down barriers: the more that partnership leads and MAT CEOs could work productively together on similar local challenges, the more likely it would promote an inclusive approach and mutual understanding, and avoid boundaries between schools or rules preventing them engaging each other;
- many partnership leads had expressed the challenges for schools (particularly small schools) of belonging to multiple groups and networks and therefore having to prioritise the time that school leaders spent out of school. One of the aims of the Quadrants should be for schools to see the value of meeting to consider local challenges, regardless of the other groups or trusts they might belong to. School leaders should be thinking ‘where can I best access the school improvement support that my school needs?’ Peer review was a positive way of helping school leaders to identify those needs;
- some schools might feel loyalty to long-standing partnerships. It would be important for Quadrants to look from the perspective of these schools that might be anxious about engaging with colleagues in new groups rather than their usual networks. Quadrants might consider how best to engage these colleagues through, for example, being seen to be the place where they could come and explore how to meet significant local needs. It would also be important that this was seen as a genuinely “schools-led” approach; and
- practice in sharing data varied between partnerships and this was an area where the SLIS Board might support work on data-sharing protocols.

#### **Item 7 – updates and feedback from leads of partnership meeting**

Nicola Woolf updated the SLIS Board on the recent partnership leads’ meeting. She said there had been good attendance and engagement with a positive response and commitment from the leads. The meetings were important professional development in partnership working.

They also were an opportunity to share tools and model approaches that the leads could use with their own partnerships. Five partnerships had offered to trail the new web-based Partnership Evaluation and Development Tool.

#### **Item 8 – feedback on T&F Groups**

Simon Rea said the SLIS Board had used Task and Finish Groups on specific issues (for example, system leadership, communications, and the evaluation tool) to help develop the work of the Board. The current System Design Task and Finish Group supported the work of the Board on developing system-wide approaches. It had met this term to review the SLIS priorities, consider data packs going to schools, and consider peer review case studies.

#### **Item 9 – local, regional and national updates**

Lyn Wright said that TSAs had been keen to be part of the Quadrant discussions; they should be focussed on supporting the school improvement needs of local schools. The TSAs were looking to the Quadrants to identify those needs and then they could consider how best to respond. There remained some existing contracts (such as for national leadership qualifications) that they needed to continue delivering.

Lyn Wright said that the Maths and English Hubs had not been assigned to TSAs. The Herts and Essex Maths Hub was for the Eastern Region. Schools could apply for the free training in Shanghai maths. The English Hub for the Eastern Region was based at a primary school in Colchester and would focus on supporting specific schools. The SLIS Board agreed it was important that these opportunities were better advertised to schools via the Quadrants and link up the work.

**Action: Lyn Wright to circulate information to Quadrant chairs about the Maths and English Hubs to share with their partnership leads.**

David Bome said 48 governors had recently been trained in peer review. Governor peer review should be an item on future governing body agenda.

**Action: SLIS Board to discuss governor peer review at its meeting in March 2019.**

Gillian Cawley reported that the application for an Essex MAT had been submitted and would be reviewed by the Headteacher Board on 6 December.

Clare Kershaw said secondary schools had been involved in a DfE pilot on supporting children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This work would be shared through the ASHE networks.

#### **Item 10. ACTION FOR ALL BOARD MEMBERS**

1. Promote the SLIS journey summary
2. Share information about maths and english hubs
3. Highlight the positive recent Quadrant discussions
4. Plans to engage local MATs in the Quadrant conversations
5. Plans to align the School-Led SEND strategy with SLIS

#### **Item 11. Agenda Items for next meeting**

- Governor Peer Review
- Link with the Recruitment and Retention

#### **Item 12 – dates for 2018/19 meetings**

Dates confirmed below – all 10 to 12 at Hamptons, Chelmsford

- 28 March 2019
- 27 June 2019