

## The Strategic School Improvement Fund Boys reading project

The recently announced £140 million 'Strategic School Improvement Fund' over the next two years aimed at ensuring resources are targeted at the schools most in need of support to drive up standards and that they are used effectively to deliver more good school places. Essex LA successfully submitted a co-constructed bid with Essex Teaching School Alliances to implement a sustainable school-led approach to improving boys reading. The overall purpose of the project is to improve the outcomes particularly for boys in English through improving the teaching of phonics, vital reading comprehension and fluency skills which enable pupils to make rapid and sustained progress in reading.

We are really pleased that thousands of pupils in Essex will benefit from a new project aiming to improve boys in reading. Essex LA, one of 55 successful applicants, has been awarded £500,000 from the Government's Strategic School Improvement Fund for a project to help improve educational outcomes, particularly for boys, in Key Stages 1 to 3.

Essex 2016 data identified boys' outcomes in phonics and reading at KS2 and KS4 as a key improvement focus. The collaborative project between the Council and Essex Teaching School Alliances (TSAs) will run for two years. The new grant funding will enable three separate phases of the programme to be run, with each one focused on a specific key stage and initially led by a different TSA. Each of these TSAs (Centres of Excellence) will also train other TSAs in order to roll out the programmes thus developing capacity and sustainability across Essex.

The purpose of this project is to improve the outcomes, particularly for boys in English, through improving the teaching of phonics and the vital reading comprehension and fluency skills which enable pupils to make rapid and sustained progress in reading. The bid comprises of three research informed programmes each one is specifically targeted at each key stage: phonics, reading, comprehension and fluency. The schools identified within the bid will access the relevant programme according to need and phase.