



EXEC MEETING – 22ND MARCH 2019

Location: Priestfields (ME7 4DD)

Time: 0900- 1245

Present: Heidi Barton - Burnt Oak (Chair); Rishi Boyjooauth - Chattenden; Christine Easton - St Mary’s Island; (from Item 2) Gavin Evans – Greenacre Trust; Nickie Forrest – New Road ; Sophie Hill – Woodlands (from Item 4) Steve Geary - Horsted; Gisele Johnson -St Nicholas ; Alex Moir – Park Wood (from Item 7) Anna Pattenden – St Margaret’s Junior; Angela Sandow – Saxon Way;

Apologies: Lisa Lewis – Miers Court

| Item | Focus | Actions |
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| 1 | <p>Welcome / Apologies The chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Lisa Lewis. Members noted the anticipated late arrival of Alex Moir and Sophie Hill</p> | |
| 2 | <p>Minutes of the meeting held 8th February 2019 Approval for Accuracy The minutes of the meeting held 8th February, 2019, were agreed as a true record.</p> <p>Review of Actions All actions from the meeting were complete or otherwise provided for on the agenda, with the exception of a query as to whether the powerpoint presentation from Paul Clark had been received.</p> <p>Matters Arising.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encompass forms were no longer relevant as the information was now being shared by phonecall. • The working party set up in respect of The Beeches had met. RB provided an update advising that the headteacher was very keen to work closely with primary headteachers and that pupil placement at The Beeches was intended to be short-term with the expectation of reintegration to their mainstream school. Executive committee members were asked to update zones and ask that any comments or ideas were forwarded to the headteacher at The Beeches. Members recognised the need for details to be confirmed, including clarity over whether funding for placements was being met by the school or Medway. The assumption was that in most cases, this would be the former. • The position of vice chair was deferred pending the arrival of Alex Moir. Anna Pattenden confirmed that he had raised the matter with Zone 2. She also advised that she would be stepping down from her role on MELA at the end of her term. Members briefly discussed arrangements for Zone elections. | Zone chairs |

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| | <p>While awaiting arrival of the first invitee, members took the opportunity to receive an update from each of the zones as follows: Members noted that Kevin Smart and Rebecca Smith had attended all the meetings that had taken place to talk further about data sharing, which Zone 4 had agreed to.</p> <p>Zone 1 Had met recently with 8 attendees and had welcomed the new headteacher at Danecourt to the Zone; received an update on SEND from Genni Cherriman and Wendy Vincent; David Watkins had attended to outline his role; Headteachers discussed intentions for spending of additional funding, which it was thought was likely to be firmed up after the conference though probably curriculum development focussed – this was echoed across the zones; writing moderation had taken place across the Zone.</p> <p>Zone 2 Had also met recently and received an update from Jean Ross regarding social work; In respect of FFT data sharing, the Zone chair had advised on opt out arrangements; a discussion had taken place about deputy heads and projects they were involved in; MELA arrangements had been discussed; thoughts for the next agenda were around varying academy trust leadership style and strategies</p> <p>Zone 3 Not met yet having only met shortly before the previous MELA executive meeting.</p> <p>Zone 4 Had met with 13 attendees and had discussed SSG not yet having a provision for primary head representation to attend; David Watkins had been unable to attend but was expected at the next meeting when the Zone hoped to discuss budgets, feedback on gaps from January review in the JTIE, communication around MARAC and email encryption; John Watkins had attended reference the secondary transfer form and discussions had taken place around the timing and consultation. This was discussed further by the group, who while recognising the challenges of the timing and the hope this could be adjusted in the future, agreed on the importance of early transition information being available to secondary schools in the interests of the children;</p> | |
| 3 | <p>Medway Community Healthcare update Carole Campbell joined the meeting and provided an update on progress.</p> <p>She explained the background to the challenges being faced by her team through the transition in service in terms of: the backlog of cases that had been inherited; the number of highly agitated parents she and her team were having to deal with; the sheer number of phone calls from both parents and schools, which impacted on the capacity to respond to calls; and the staffing challenges arising from a) these issues leading both to individual and organisational exhaustion and b) as a natural result of transition to a new organisation.</p> <p>She advised that additional specialists and agency staff had been employed to address the backlog, though this was not without its own challenges, a triaging mechanism was in place to ensure the most urgent cases were dealt with as a priority and addressed clinical risk, which had been reduced from a factor of 16 to 9; the children’s admin</p> | |

team had been re-sited to the MCH hub to build greater resilience and an extensive recruitment campaign was being launched in April; the commissioning group now understood that due diligence had not been sufficiently thorough and had increased funding to enable the backlog to be cleared by February 2020.

She commented on the superb standard of clinician support which the service had been able to retain and that Doctors were also being recruited to the service, which in totality she was confident would lead to the services being amongst the best in the country in the fullness of time.

Ms Campbell confirmed that when school called with specific information about a child, this should be recorded on their notes by admin staff. She believed issues of getting through by phone were easing and in respect of notes being lost, she thought this was more likely related to ASD and ADHD questionnaires not being received rather than lost notes, which she was working with IT colleagues centrally and at school level to resolve.

Ms Campbell also recognised that the current referral form was not fit for purpose and was working on remedying this.

Ms Campbell emphasised her wish to work in partnership with schools. She commented that a great deal of her time was spent dealing with complaints, initially the majority from parents but now mainly from schools. She asked that when contacting her team, schools asked for and noted the name of the person they were dealing with so that any subsequent issues could be traced back to source and addressed. She also asked that when raising a concern or complaint, schools tried to be much more specific about the precise issue they were raising e.g. on which date, in relation to which child rather than general complaints.

In response to a question about the validity of complaints from schools, Ms Campbell commented that while understanding the frustration levels, the general nature and language of complaints was not helpful. She reiterated the need for specifics and that a more measured approach would be beneficial. She also recognised the pressures both her service and schools were under in terms of the behaviour of some parents particularly related to ADHD needs and that addressing this required effective partnership working within the financial confines that existed.

Members noted that the service was running parent support groups which were getting good feedback. A comment was also made on how successful SALT, occupational therapy and mind plans had been in providing clarity in terms of what schools needed to do. It was suggested that it might be helpful for MCH to have a list of SENCOs to facilitate communication. Ms Campbell agreed it would be helpful but also confirmed that admin staff had been told they if the SENCO was mentioned on the referral form, they could share non-medical information with them. Those SENCOs would be able to speak to the duty clinician if further information related to diagnosis was required and they would make a judgement about what they able to release. The regularity of

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| | <p>reports was discussed and it was noted that there was a requirement that reports were send to a named person in the school.</p> <p>In response to a comment about locums telling parents that they were temporary and would not be seeing families again, Ms Campbell advised that this should not be an issue because the intention was that ASD/ADHD diagnoses would be made in a single day and unless there were complicating factors patients would be passed on to a nurse led service and so wouldn't be expected to see a doctor again. She also advised that she was keen to put extra support in place for long term conditions and the aim was that these pupils would be receiving annual reviews, which would be copied to schools.</p> <p>Members were advised of a meeting that was being hosted at Halling Primary school on 3rd April to which some SENCOs were invited. The aim was to reduce workload involved in making referrals that were then rejected by ensuring schools implemented and recorded the early intervention strategies for communication, sensory, physical and behaviour needs. This would help provide necessary evidence if subsequent referral was made that they were already some way down the diagnostic pathway.</p> <p>Anyone interested in their SENCO attending should contact Wendy Donnelly</p> <p>Members were also advised of a school nurse recruitment drive and a recently appointed a lead nurse. Schools should have had a visit from the nominated nurse for their school. Ms Campbell confirmed that the school nurse should be involved before referrals were made. In answer to a question, she also confirmed that the school nurse service began at age 7 because transition to school was a safeguarding vulnerability and the continuity of the health visitor service at that point was beneficial.</p> <p>In response to a question about further work with GPs being required to stop the practice of ASD/ADHD being sent back to school for referral. Ms Campbell advised that GPs had been spoken to to confirm that they could refer, but that it was advisable to liaise with the school who would have much of the necessary information. It was agreed that Ms Campbell would maintain contact with the chair who would ensure any key messages were disseminated to the rest of the group.</p> <p>Action: Members to feedback current status to Zones. This should particularly include the need for specific rather than general issues being raised; the request to advise her of any notes that schools believed were missing; and the requirement for a named individuals at the school to receive any reports.</p> <p>Members thanked her for her presentation and Carole Campbell left the meeting.</p> | Zone chairs |
| 4 | <p>School Support Group</p> <p>Lynn Sims joined the meeting. She advised of 9 permanent exclusions at primary being issued, which was more than the previous period. 3 had been retracted in favour of managed move, 4 were awaiting governor review panels and 2 had been heard and had</p> | |

gone to independent review. 1 had been quashed and for 1 the governing board directed to reconsider their decision.

In response to questions, she advised that the majority of parental appeals to independent review were related to SEN; there had been further pupils at risk but she had supported headteachers to reflect and give alternative sanctions, including fixed term exclusion had been issued instead; and there had been several permanent exclusions issued in the first couple of terms in Y7 at secondary school; the data as not yet available to confirm whether overall exclusions were reducing, but commented that her team had been very busy recently.

Members asked for an update on school support group SSG. Mrs Sims advised that it had now been rebranded. From this week a social services representative would attend joining representatives from the attendance service, youth, early help, SEN and school improvement. Other outreach services would submit reports as required. Individual social workers would be invited for CP and CHIN cases. Members noted that place every Tuesday afternoon during term time from 1.30pm. There had been some difficulty obtaining referral paperwork in advance and **it was now expected that when a slot has been offered, a completed referral with parental consent was submitted via secure mail to inclusion.ssg@medway.gov.uk by the preceding Thursday afternoon**, otherwise the booked slot would be adjourned. Mrs Sims commented that it was important that if delegated, any attendance was by someone of sufficient seniority to make decisions about the support a child could receive and that a feedback form was issued after an appropriate period seeking feedback on the actions that had been recommended. She believed that the presence of SEN and social services at the meeting should make a difference.

Members noted that the inclusion of headteacher representation at SSG was being discussed, which headteachers appeared broadly in favour of as a principle. Concerns around confidentiality were recognised as was the draw on headteacher time unless a rota system was adopted. Mrs Sims commented that representation would only be required when primary cases were being discussed, which was unlikely to be every week.

Fair access Panel

The working party had met to consider whether a primary panel should function in the same way as secondary. A process and protocol were being drawn up which would be circulated with the expectation that the panel would launch in September. When asked if a skeleton process existed, Mrs Sims advised of her understanding that a primary head would sit on the panel for a specified length of time. If a school had been named by a parent as a preference, that headteacher could attend to give context but the final decision on placement was the panels. Parents would have a right of appeal if they did not get their preferred choice. It was noted that the panel was to agree placement of 'hard to place' pupils but this did not include SEN and may not include LAC. The expectation within secondary was that pupils who were returning from home education

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| | <p>went back to their original school unless there were over-riding reasons why not. Members also noted that the secondary panel met monthly and tracked where pupils had been placed to ensure a level of parity across the schools. Members discussed arrangements for agreeing the protocol and ensuring sufficient notice of panel dates. It was agreed that John Watkins and Simon Harrington needed to liaise and should be invited to the next executive meeting to provide an update</p> <p>Lynn Sims asked that she was notified of any pupils that were removed by parents to educate at home. She highlighted the requirement that parent needs to inform school that they are taking responsibility for education in their letter. She went on to advise that there were currently some 450 pupils being home educated in Medway. With a part time advisor and without any right of entry the challenges of ensuring they were safe and being educated were significant, although every effort was made to insist children on child protection plans were returned to school.</p> <p>Lynn Sims left the meeting</p> | <p>HB</p> <p>Zone chairs</p> |
| 5 | <p>EYFS data for the 2017/18</p> <p>Caroline Webber joined the meeting and provided an update. Piloting was underway for revised ELGs and was happening throughout the whole year. One school was known to be involved in Medway. If accepted, a government review of the early years curriculum would be required to accommodate the apparent significant shift towards a numeracy and literacy focus, which was an interesting contradiction with the direction of the proposed Ofsted framework.</p> <p>Ofsted are consulting on EYFS framework for PVI's with a high level of synergy with school framework. The big change for schools with nursery within the proposed framework will be that Ofsted will report specifically on two and three year old provision and the appropriateness of the nursery curriculum in matching the need of children.</p> <p>A cross party review of first 1000 days of young children's lives was taking place revisiting the loss of children centres and subsequent paucity of provision. The children's centre infrastructure in Medway is still in situ so would be in a good place to pick up agenda if the outcome of the review requires this.</p> <p>Performance in EYFS took a dip in 2017/2018 for first time. This was possibly cohort related. Outcomes were still good and as outcomes had improved over several years it was unrealistic to expect that they continue to do so at the same rate. Some conversations as to other possible reasons had taken place at Medway and also within Ofsted review conversations. As schools were now working with a range of partners around EYFS support it was difficult to provide a reliable overview, though Ms Webber could confirm that that year on year data would be comparable due to her company carrying out statutory moderation. She suggested that the executive may wish to avail themselves of the report into the impact of the removal of EYFS funding and</p> | |

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| | <p>consequent change of service. She advised that Medway Early Years had also been commissioned for PVI briefings and further work with public health and early years.</p> <p>Anecdotally she could report that it appeared the children were entering school in 2017/2018 with poorer language skills and poorer school readiness, which may be the impact of the removal of children centres. She was fearful for 2019 entry data. Her service was trying to where possible through early help but that remit mainly related to CHIN rather than low performers more generally.</p> <p>She advised that she had written to schools seeking commissioning for the following year and to date response was positive, so expected to be continuing to offer support.</p> <p>She had also revisited with Andy Willets that early help briefing for schools hadn't happened and confirmed the intention that these would still take place.</p> <p>Alex Moir arrived</p> | |
| 6 | <p>Safeguarding update Kate Barry joined the meeting.</p> <p>She advised that a new person, Danielle Mitchell, had joined her and would be dealing with MASH on Wednesday – Friday, which was freeing Kate Barry up to work on educational safeguarding on those days.</p> <p>Approximately 50% of provisions were able to utilise the safeguarding generic inbox and Ms Barry was in discussion with Marc Dermody to overcome issues for the remainder. Members discussed the difficulties and suggested resolving the issues before chasing other late responders. In the meantime, Ms Barry was happy for schools to use Egress until she advised otherwise or to make contact by phone.</p> <p>Ms Barry advised that she was working with The Education People to provide DSL training and asked whether there were any particular issues those present felt needed addressing. Members had particular concerns around online gaming and increasing Whatsapp use between groups of children sometimes whole class. They were keen that the contact for the PC who could come into school and talk to the children was made available.</p> <p>The Safeguarding audit form was being redeveloped to be more purposeful for schools and Ms Barry suggested she may make contact to test ideas.</p> <p>Feedback from MARAC had been good but there had been some confusion over constantly changing venues. It was suggested schools email MARAC co-ordinator to check before attendance. It was also confirmed that there is no need to attend for 'case is for mention' as these will not be discussed.</p> | |

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| | <p>In future, timescales for MASH will be more prescriptive in order to enable better analysis and decision-making takes place. The importance of the information from schools in the decision making process was highlighted and the team would take information over the phone. It was suggested that schools were phoned if information doesn't come back as school staff were not always near their PCs. Members also requested that for peace of mind, schools received feedback on MASH outcomes. Ms Barry was looking at developing an automated system but in the meantime heads were welcome to call her when she could check the data base or pass to relevant colleagues.</p> <p>In summary Ms Barry said she was very keen to work with schools to ensure a solid education safeguarding service and welcomed input from schools to achieve this.</p> | |
| 7 | <p>MELA Conference planning update Lawrie Rose joined the meeting</p> <p>He circulated a draft letter of invitation together with details of proposed workshops and costs. Members noted that having received a proposal from Maundene, the proposed Park Wood workshop had been withdrawn and that Derek Bleaze had been approached who was unable to help but that Lawrie Rose had approached Vanessa Young from CCCU as an alternative.</p> <p>Members discussed the proposals and agreed that if possible it would be good to run all workshops but that ideally the workshop featuring Abbey Court's feedback from an Ofsted pilot inspection should be built into the morning session alongside the Ofsted input from Clive Dunn. It was suggested that it would be easier if Lawrie Rose liaised directly with Clive Dunn to arrange this rather than through Rebecca Smith.</p> <p>Members reviewed income and expenditure and on the basis of attendance at the previous year's conference, were content that it was feasible.</p> <p>Members determined that the proposed letter should be sent to schools the following week asking for a response by the end of the week.</p> <p>It was also agreed that a programme be devised and circulated ahead of the event and that colleagues from the same school be kept together throughout the day but tables should provide for mixed zones.</p> <p>Members were encouraged to impress upon colleagues the need for shared transport as far as possible.</p> <p>It was agreed that Lawrie Rose should attend the next meeting on 3rd May, when all details would be checked.</p> | <p>LR</p> <p>HB</p> <p>LR</p> |

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| 8 | <p>MELA Finance</p> <p>Steve Geary tabled a summary of income and expenditure. Members noted that a start-up fund of £15k had been received from Medway and at this point a balance of £9275 remained, which had meant it had not been necessary to ask for further subscriptions from schools. In response to a query raised from a Zone, it was confirmed that the plan for the money was to meet the ongoing costs of running MELA. The consensus was that for an expenditure of less than £6k over 18 months, schools had received good value for money.</p> <p>It was agreed that finance be added as a standing agenda item and that subject to minor narrative amendments the accounts to be made available for circulation with the minutes.</p> <p>Steve Geary also took an action to ensure the MELA website was updated</p> | <p>HB SG SG</p> |
| 9 | <p>Associate membership of independent / free schools</p> <p>A member advised of an independent school that had joined their Zone and wanted to clarify that it was appropriate to invite them to events that were funded by Zone funding. Members discussed and agreed that MELA had been set up to encourage outward looking collaboration between schools for the benefit of all children in Medway and it was therefore perfectly acceptable. A discussion ensued about voting and independent school leaders sitting on the executive committee. It was agreed that zones were responsible for their own voting and that if no other candidates stood subject to terms of reference there would appear to be no reason for an independent candidate not to sit on the executive. Members discussed a further provision that was keen to join one of the zones and agreed they should be welcomed.</p> | |
| 11 | <p>AOB</p> <p>Gavin Evans advised of a parenting group that had contacted him with a view to getting the message out about the parent forum groups they were offering. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to schools to pass this information on to them.</p> <p>Action Gavin Evans to forward the information to Heidi Barton for onward circulation to schools</p> <p>A query was raised as to whether everyone had received notifications about the new locally agreed RE syllabus as only 9 schools had appeared at the recent briefing and there was a concern that it hadn't been received by all. There was a mixed response and a further launch was recommended with the advice that details were circulated via SIB.</p> <p>In response to a query the chair confirmed that she was meeting Medway on 28th March. From discussions with Medway, she was aware that two zones had invoiced for funding and confirmed that each zone needed to nominate a school to hold funds on its behalf and raise an invoice. The funding formula was on the agenda for next week and also on the agenda for next executive committee meeting.</p> | <p>GE</p> |

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| | <p>Alex Moir reported on transition for Zone two suggesting that the new person came along to the next meeting as a handover and asked about the arrangements in other zones. It was agreed that elections should take place at the next Zone meeting.</p> <p>The matter of executive committee vice chair was raised. Alex Moir advised that he had spoken to two Zone members that may be interested in standing for the executive and becoming chair of the Zone, who would then be able to vice chair. In the meantime, he would serve as vice chair.</p> <p>In response to a question it was confirmed that the plan from next year was that Zone chairs held the chair for a period of 12 rather than 6 months.</p> <p>Members were advised of a SEND review taking place at Greenvale on Monday 25th from 1pm. It was agreed that Nickie Forrest would attend.</p> <p>Agenda items for next meeting were confirmed as Transition Programme (confirmed) Funding formula (awaiting response); Children’s University (awaiting response); Attendance (not yet invited due to not having taken up post); Safeguarding (confirmed) Conference planning (confirmed); standing finance item (confirmed) Fair access Panel (to be invited).</p> <p>It was agreed that the election of chair would take place at the last meeting of the year.</p> | <p>Zone chairs</p> <p>NF</p> <p>HB</p> <p>HB</p> |
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