

**FEDERATION OF LEADERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION  
EAST REGION  
REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2009  
ELC, Cambridge. 9.30 a.m. – 12.30p.m.**

**MINUTES**

- 1. Welcome and Apologies**  
Barry Payne in the Chair welcomed back Richard Byers from the Faculty of Education, Cambridge University.  
PRESENT: Denis Baldry, Barry Payne, Jackie Mullan, Jennie Moran, Sue Upson, Phil Pike, Richard Milligan, Richard Byers  
APOLOGIES: Malcolm Reeve and Pauline Miller, Judith Chamberlain, Ron Babbage, Peter Skingley, and a deflated Steve Lord
- 2. Minutes of the meeting on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2009**  
The minutes were discussed. There were no amendments. Passed unanimously on proposal of Phil Pike, seconded by Richard Milligan.
- 3. Matters arising (and not on the following agenda)**  
None
- 4. Identify any additional business for this agenda**  
The issue of 5 statutory training days and the ever increasing, more often statutory, demand for this time. (Jennie Moran)
- 5. Dates for FLSE(E) Executive Meetings – 2009/2010 (reconfirm)**  
2010  
29<sup>th</sup> January at ELC. – 9.30 – 12.30 followed by lunch  
18<sup>th</sup> March at Wyboston Lakes Conference Centre – 1.30 – 4.30 (followed by the conference)  
23<sup>rd</sup> April at ELC – 9.30 – 12.30 followed by lunch. A decision about pm time/business will be taken at the previous meeting.  
7<sup>th</sup> July at ELC – 9.30 – 12.30, lunch then pm business/seminar
- 6. Feedback from FLSE National Steering Group and related activities (DB)**  
Building on the information given by Chief Executive Garry Steel at the October meeting, DB informed the committee of recent changes to the membership of the new national SDG: Facilitator: Denis Baldry will take over from John Lowe  
Lorraine Peterson, Chief Executive of Nasen joins the SDG.

DB reported on the recent work of the SDG in developing a more firmly based and directed business development plan for FLSE. Building membership remains a critical task with very variable uptake across the regions. Fundamental to this, regional reps report the lack of time/support to generate effective contact and communication within their region.

DB reported on progress with the new FLSE web site. Garry Steele and DB will shortly receive training from the web designers. It is expected that a go-live date early in January will be achieved.

DB reported on the common concerns and issues that arose from the recent 'Region Assessment'. The executive agreed that there is a common set of concerns that must form the heart of FLSE's negotiation with the relevant bodies.

Dates for the National Conference – 30<sup>th</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010, to be held at the National College, Nottingham. Dates for 2011 and 2012 to be confirmed at the next National Executive on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

Future National Executive meeting are scheduled for:

17<sup>th</sup> March 2010

24<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

The committee received this news positively and reiterated their position that FLSE must be able to demonstrate a genuine presence and impact in the debate.

## **7. Feedback from Local Authority representatives on local issues (LA reps)**

### Cambridgeshire – Jennie Moran

JM spoke of the high level of concern and frustration amongst her LA colleagues that the pressures on the 5 training days were ever increasing to the point where statutory duties and other directed activities minimised or even precluded any opportunity for genuine school-based, pupil-focused developmental activity.

She reported 'patchy' experiences re: SIPs amongst Cambridgeshire schools although the LA had been inclusive in making selection/appointments.

Comments from the committee showed that the SIP link-arrangement involving Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire are valued by HTs.

She raised an issue about clear guidance on matters of statutory/discretionary policy and practices. The potential for FLSE to build a 'library' of model policies was discussed and encouraged.

Jennie noted the continuing change in the nature of the pupil intake with a growing proportion of pupils having significant medical needs. This had an impact on classroom organisation. She raised concern that class numbers could not be maintained at what had become the level of expectation/budget capacity because of the equipment/resources which these pupils need to have with them at all times. The meeting noted that there has been no change in guidance on this issue since the publication of DES Guidance 11/90.

Cambridgeshire is now without an inspector for SEN/Inclusion. The LA is negotiating at common agreement/contract on Outreach provision with all of the special schools.

Cambridgeshire/Peterborough colleagues have arranged a Leadership development programme with John Yates International – places are still available. DB to circulate the details as supplied by JM.

### Suffolk – Sue Upson

Sue reported that the review into special education/special school organisation and provision continues within the county. Few changes have been agreed – one is the merging of Heathside School and Belstead Lodge wef September 2010, although both sites will remain open in the immediate future. A new 6<sup>th</sup> Form centre is to open shortly in this area. The centre will be fully-inclusive and accommodate all pupils/students at Post 16.

### Southend – Jackie Mullan

Jackie reported the recent appointments of 2 new HTs leaving just 1 of the Boroughs special schools to appoint in the coming week. She noted that the 'short-stay school', formerly PRU, had become a member of FLSE. The recent locally organised SEN

conference had been very well evaluated and successful. The question of budgets was again on the horizon, any plans to adjust the formula having very different impact on each of the 5 schools. Jackie reported the difficulty of recruiting effective/well qualified staff to LA advisory/quality assurance posts. Dialogue with neighbouring Thurrock is exploring the potential of joint-appointments. (Phil Pike confirmed similar concerns for Peterborough)

#### Thurrock – Richard Milligan

With the job only one-third done (the re-location of Treetops) Thurrock's bid for further BSF development has been declined. This leaves Beacon Hill in premises which were described as 'inadequate' several years ago. Thurrock Borough is receiving close scrutiny due to general underachievement at Key Stage 2. AS a specialist school (SSAT), Beacon Hill has received contradictory information about future periods/criteria for continuing assessment and registration. (JM- TSCS- (Southend) has also had this problem).

#### Peterborough – Phil Pike

There has been a pro-active campaign against H1N1 (swine flu) in the Borough which has had an impact on schools. Peterborough's most recent 'JAR-equivalent' inspection has identified weaknesses. The Borough has had 7 directors over the past 4 years. There is an on-going scoping exercise aimed at reducing the 'haemorrhage' of funding to 'out-borough' places.

#### Norfolk – Barry Payne

Leadership of the recently amalgamated Churchill School, Kings Lynn (formerly Alderman Jackson and Ethel Tipple) is being supported by a seconded HT from within the county. LA SEN policy has established 40 specialist resource bases (SRB's) around the county. The Boundary Committee is to convene shortly to determine the future structure of local government involving Norfolk, Norwich and, (I think!) Great Yarmouth. Barry commented on the burgeoning number of 'consultations' and the expectation that headteachers can just 'find the time' to participate. There is no planned BSF activity in the county.

At the conclusion of this session DB asked members to express a view on the level and quality of support/guidance and direction for their sector of education that they now received through the LA's. Common views are that:

- Leadership at the LA level is lacking
- Strategic direction is weak
- There is a lack of meaningful and direct contact and consultation
- Responsibility and reporting has become fragmented – there are too many people to report to and no one to take a stand and lead
- The LAs are over-stretched and under-resourced
- LAs continue to make ever-more demands on special schools without accepting a resource need imperative – e.g. Outreach and support to mainstream on issues like 'P-scale assessments'.

#### **8. Feedback/Update from SEN Hub activity**

**Angela Scott**

Angela reported briefly on the on-going work in Strand 1, with the participation of 7 special schools in a regional initiative, and Strand 2, Progression Guidance, where further professional development materials are becoming available. (check the usual websites)

Angela introduced Margaret Palmer who is working with the SEN Hub on Strand 3 – Transition Support programme. Margaret made a presentation of this work which drew considerable comment from the meeting. (presentation PowerPoint will follow once received).

In summary, the feeling of the meeting was that it would now be very timely to review all aspects of documentation/expectation relevant to this area of work (PCP, Statements, CAF, etc.) to attempt to rationalise rather than continue to burden schools, which remain the key and proactive agency in this essential task. Of continuing concern is the inability of Health professionals to engage and the limited commitment from social care.

**9. Feedback/Update on HE related developments** **Richard Byers**

a) Richard reported on the SENCO training programme to start in January 2010. This is collaboration between the Faculty, ELC, SEN Hub, Cambridgeshire and Essex. Richard responded positively to the suggestion that FLSE may choose to use this opportunity to 'recruit' membership.

b) He spoke of a new Doctorate in Education programme – 5 years of part-time research-based study and using the vehicle of 'learning communities to gain cross-school/cross-phase insight. This course offers an alternative to the more academically biased PhD programmes. Themes around which communities might be based include:

- i) SEN/Inclusion
- ii) Special Education settings and contexts
- iii) Psychology

Entry to this programme will require a good pass at Masters level or scrutiny of a body of work/experience at this level. This adds to the faculty's continuum of training provision from CFPD through to Doctorates.

c) The Faculty, in common with other HE providers had chosen not to engage in the Masters in Teaching and Learning programme.

d) Research interests for the faculty and Richard are:

- i) Ethnicity and Disability – the impact on a sense of self. Focus on pupils from Indian sub-continent backgrounds
- ii) University and School Partnerships – focus on school-based enquiry/research through a strategic partnership between the university and a cluster of schools. (a strong model for this approach is found in Hertfordshire)
- iv) Richard is working with U of Northamptonshire Annie Ferguson) and with EQUALS on new work linked to assessment of pupil progress linked to the P-scales. Richard 'hints' at a ray of light in that QCDA are 'backing off' from hard-line interpretations to ensure good quality assessment based upon teacher judgements and professionalism. He agrees that it will be good to hear a common message on this from DCSF, the Government etc. Work is on-going with guidance anticipated to be available by mid spring 2010.

e) Richard reported the strong international links, especially with Hong Kong and emphasised the mutual advantages that such arrangements enabled.

**10. ELC updates** **Grant Bage**

Grant reported that the ELC programmes were running as planned and at this time there was little for him to add to the report given to the October meeting. In response to a question from BP he and Richard Byers expressed interest in working with local special school groups around issues of leadership development and training.

**11. FLSE East – business issues and year planning.**  
**Issues for consideration may include:**

- o **FLSE and national/regional development**
  - 1. What does FLSE need/need to do next to grow the region?

2. What are members and prospective members looking for from FLSE? – What do members see as the 'big issues' that FLSE should take up?
3. What are the 'good news stories' from this region?
4. Are members involved in national/regional developments which, through our newsletters and web site, might be helpfully explained to a wider membership?

*With the agenda running over time it was agreed that items 1 to 4 above would be held over until the January meeting*

- **Annual Conference 2010 – Theme, speakers and programme planning**  
FLSE (E) has contracted with Wyboston Lakes to host the conference which will be a 24 hour event with overnight accommodation on site.

DB reported on progress and shared a detailed programme of events. Key Note speakers will include Eric Craven, HMI and Professor Barry Carpenter. With Progression Guidance becoming a key issue for FLSE, Malcolm Reeve and David Bateson are to develop a module which will be delivered to the conference. Nine schools have applied to show-case their innovative work through the World Café seminar session. Dave Stott has been engaged to provide a rather- more light-hearted look at educational issues and ourselves in an 'after-dinner' slot which will follow the Federation Annual Dinner.

A range of booking options will be available when the Conference is formally publicised immediately at the start of the Spring term. For the 24 hour package rates will be:

Members: £240

Non-members: £340

Other rates will offer the same proportionate charges for members and non-members.

Denis and Margaret Baldry will again provide conference administration and organisation.

- **Seminar programme**  
Consensus of the meeting was that regular seminars were unlikely to be well attended. Finding speakers/presenters at a minimal cost has proved extremely difficult. Having to cover the speakers costs, in addition to the costs of room hire etc at ELC would drive up charges and be a further dampener of interest. It was agreed that no seminar would be offered in the Spring Term and options would be left open for the July meeting date.
- **Regional staff development opportunities**  
These were largely covered by Richard Byer's presentation. Jennie Moran asked about training for school leadership teams to improve and standardise lesson observation outcomes. Phil Pike mentioned a 5-day programme run by Cambridge Associates and Jennie herself mentioned a package developed by Buckinghamshire LA entitled 'What is good teaching'. It was suggested that cross-moderation of observations, involving visits from leaders between pairs/clusters of schools, might possibly be facilitated by FLSE on a regional network basis.
- **Issues raised by members with the Facilitator**
  - **DCSF report card** – Lorraine Dupen (Ashley School, Lowestoft) is involved in this work. She recommends that FLSE monitors suggestions and outcomes to ensure maximum value for special schools.
  - **14 – 19 Reforms** Sue Upson (Hillside School, Sudbury) is involved in a 5-year longitudinal study (QCDA) and will bring regular updates as and when available

- **Progression Guidance** DB reported that this is a focus for FLSE at a national level, with Malcolm Reeve to the fore in development of appropriate information sharing and training opportunities.
- **Model Policies** The meeting embraced the suggestion made by Judith Chamberlain (Lakeside School, Welwyn G C) that FLSE might collect, co-ordinate and provide a service to members by building a library of model policies and guidance. The meeting strongly supported this suggestion.
- **Inspection Guidance** Jennie Moran (Highfield School, Ely) offered to make immediately available a package of guidance materials relating to Inspection that she has recently compiled. This will be circulated to all member schools in the region during the week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> December.
- **Target Setting** The meeting largely agreed with Judith Chamberlain who raised concerns about the accuracy and reliability of pre-populated data in the Target Setting paperwork. FLSE to keep this issue open to comment and scrutiny.

## **12. Any other business**

No other business.

**Date and time of the next FLSE (E) Executive – 9.30 a.m. Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2010 at ELC. The meeting will close with lunch at 12.30 p.m.**