

Suffolk Association of Secondary Headteachers- 2023-24 Report

Dave Lee-Allan

Executive Director

It has been a challenging year for SASH as the fragmentation of the education sector continues to polarise Head's foci inward toward their MAT. This said, SASH continues to have a clear role within County and within local and national media.

In the first term SASH responded to previous requests from members to host a series of CPD events led by eminent author and speaker Marc Rowland on the challenge of maximising potential of disadvantaged students. Working with Unity Teaching School, Marc ran a series of sessions, both online and in person, targeted towards Headteachers and senior colleagues. Marc had previously presented at SASH, and the feedback was extremely positive, hence there was confidence that the combination of a requested speaker, offering high quality CPD for free, would be welcomed by SASH members. Unfortunately, whilst those who did attend all spoke highly of the input, the overall numbers were disappointing. The most cited explanation for not attending was time pressures on the senior teams.

Throughout the year I have attended a range of meetings at led by County, representing the voice of Headteachers. These have included;

Regular SCC,SPHA, SASH and Special Schools online meetings.

Member of Suffolk Education Partnership Steering Group

Attendee at Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership

Attendee at Early Years and Best Start Family Hub meetings

Board Member of Angles Maths Hub

Vice Chair of National Headteacher Association Network

Media work has ensured that the views and opinions of Suffolk Secondary Headteachers on a wide range of topics, from school funding, knives in schools and mobile phones have been heard both locally and nationally. Over 30 interviews have been given on radio, TV and in print media, to organisations such as East Anglian Daily Times, BBC Suffolk radio, LBC, Times radio and Greatest Hits Radio.

The summer term focussed on two key events – working with SEP to help promote a RISE conference at Wymondham College, and the annual SASH conference held again at Dunston Hall. The SEP RISE conference was particularly successful, attracting nearly 150 attendees from Suffolk and Norfolk. The key draw was the outlining from the DFE about the newly established work of chosen RISE Trusts in conjunction with the new Ofsted framework. SASH played a supporting role, helping to promote the conference, in the process building more contacts and opportunities to network.

The Dunston Hall Conference was not as successful as previous years'. Two key reasons for this assessment – firstly, attending numbers of Heads was lower, primarily due to the

Wymondham event. Simply put, Headteachers prioritised RISE over SASH. Secondly, the quality of speakers that we supplied was simply not good enough. Whilst valuable contributions came from the English Speaking Board, SEP and two corporate partners, the lead speakers were received very poor reviews from colleagues. Of course, this was disappointing, particularly as other Headteacher Associations had recommended them. This event highlighted the challenges in getting Heads out of their schools, particularly when Trusts now run their own conferences, sometimes at the same venues. We will consider the venue and timing for the next annual conference, and seek to attract stronger, higher profile speakers, however there is a risk that the costs of such speakers is not justifiable if schools do not sign up.

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