

# Local authority and schools in moments of crisis

*where we place ourselves at times of challenge and controversy*

# History of RAAC in Essex

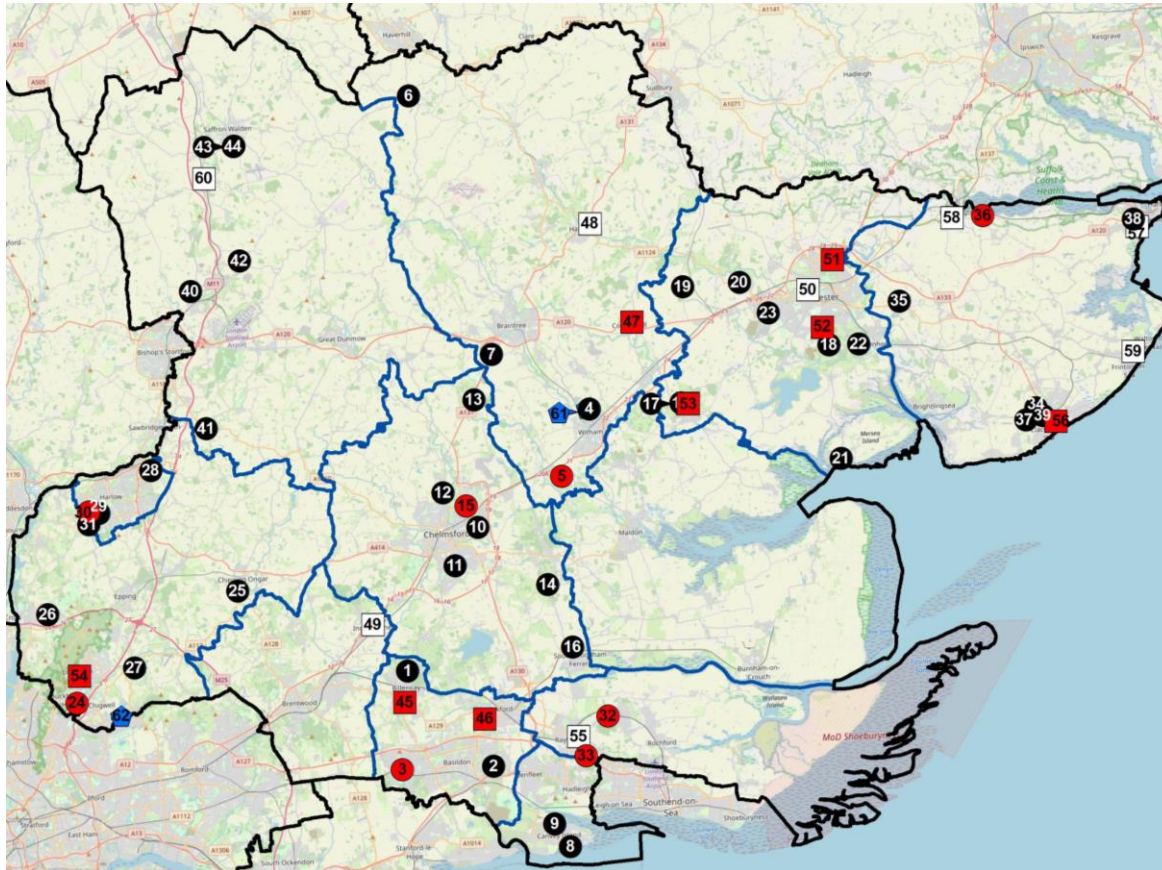
- The **major growth and development seen across Essex** post-war saw public infrastructure, including schools, being built using RAAC, at which point there were not the concerns about the material there are today.
- In 1999 ECC undertook a **mapping exercise to identify RAAC** across its schools' estate and following this, surveys were undertaken to establish its condition.
- The RAAC condition information was used to develop a **programme of supporting works** to ensure roof structures remained sound.
- By 2010, all schools where the condition of the RAAC was "below average" had mitigation works completed to ensure the strength and safety of the roof.
- ECC continued its programme of RAAC works, prioritised based on condition, which was due to complete next year with the final two maintained schools to be addressed (works have been brought forward).
- Over this period of time, many schools became academies, at which point the responsibility for the buildings, including any RAAC, transferred to the academy trust.



# How We Responded to the RAAC Policy Change

- We immediately **brought together headteachers** of the schools affected by RAAC, maintained, academy or voluntary aided, and **offered the support and resource of the local authority**.
- This offer of support was taken up by a number of schools, with ECC both **leading on projects and engaging in project discussions** with the DfE to support the achievement of the swiftest possible resolution to any disruption.
- We formed an **Education RAAC Response team**, seconding an experienced senior leader to lead the team and engage with schools, the DfE, and internal and external stakeholders.
- We agreed that a **single senior point of contact in the DfE** would liaise directly with our RAAC Response Team, to share information, collaborate on communication and stakeholder engagement, and unblock any stalling projects.
- The Education RAAC Response Team **brings together the expertise and resources internally and externally** to ensure progress is being made to not just have all staff and pupils back in face-to-face learning full time (which they are), but to **ensure that progress is being made** to get them back into their permanent buildings with access to their usual facilities.
- We commissioned additional **thorough surveys of all our schools with RAAC** to confirm the condition of the material, and that our existing structural mitigations remained effective
- There had been **no roof collapses in Essex**, and the survey work provides additional assurance on the safety of the school buildings.

# Confirmed RAAC in Essex



- Primary Schools
- Secondary Schools
- ◆ Special Schools

Schools highlighted in red needed to use alternative sites and/ or remote learning.

- Within the administrative boundary of Essex County Council **62 schools have had RAAC confirmed** (of a total of 550 state schools).
- Of these there are 16 secondary schools, 44 primary schools, and 2 SEND schools.
- 17 of those schools with confirmed RAAC are maintained by the LA.
- The **majority of schools did not need to close buildings** in response to government policy change as they had suitable mitigations in place, with ECC having started a programme of RAAC mitigation in the early 2000s.
- However, there were still **16 schools** where either **alternative sites** were needed to continue education, **remote learning** was required for a period of time, or a combination of both.
- This in total will have affected some **13,000 pupils, their families, and hundreds of school staff**.

# Unique strength of local authority

- As a local authority we can **engage in a more meaningful way** with school leaders, school communities and other stakeholders to provide assurance and support.
  - Our timely and effective responses to MPs, parents, headteachers and local councillors was and is only possible because of our local connection.
- We are able to set up processes and governance to enable **a response that is specific to our schools** and the needs faced in Essex.
  - The resources offered to support academies and schools from the DfE, while welcome, were not sufficient or effective in some cases to address the problems created by RAAC.
- We are able to provide **a voice for our local schools** so that needs are met.
  - We have convened a successful meeting with headteachers and the DfE to discuss other help needed (beyond building works) to support staff and pupils in terms of wellbeing and education outcomes.
- We are **agile**. Able to mobilise resources and support quickly to **remove concerns and burdens from school leaders** and **ensure the best outcomes**.
  - We recently stepped into another project where we now lead on delivering RAAC mitigations, unblocking barriers that were preventing progress between the academy and the DfE.

## The role of Local Authorities in supporting education through challenging times

- For local education systems to operate effectively in the face of adversity and challenges, there needs to be strong communication, clear advice and guidance and support with decision making
- Essex deployed a similar response to RAAC and COVID in that we communicated with schools from the outset, this provided a reassurance to schools that support and help with dedicated resource is on hand to assist them with yet another unknown factor to deal with
- Schools and academies both need support to navigate the DfE and to manage intense scrutiny from parents and the local community including MP's. ECC was able to quickly mobilise communication to MPs and manage the media through taking the lead on interviews etc.
- As we COVID we are tracking our RAAC journey:
  1. Stage 1 – manage the emergency, particularly through communications and advice
  2. Stage 2 – stable to situation and create the plan
  3. Stage 3 – track all schools to be fully open ( either in their buildings, in alternative accommodation or in temporary classrooms
  4. Stage 4 -track the return of all pupils
  5. Stage 5 – monitor the return and impact on staff and pupils - education, wellbeing and resilience
- We will now embark on termly meetings with the most affected schools to continue to track progress

# Local Authorities at their best..

- Roy Blatchford – Chair of the Essex Education Taskforce - *“Essex does not do anything by halves”*
- The Taskforce was set up in response to supporting children and young people’s educating recovery posy Covid. In total ECC has invested £3m to support the work of the Taskforce
- 3 key aims:
  - The Essex Year of Reading 2022/23
  - The Essex Year of Numbers 2023/24
  - Wellbeing of pupils and outcomes for disadvantage pupils
- 3 key outcomes:
  - All children in Essex reading at least in line with their age (YOR)
  - 80 - 85% of pupils at 11+ and 16+ reaching expected national standards in English and maths (YOR + YON)
  - All schools in Essex having good pupil attendance, well-being and personal development. (Well-being Census)

## Enjoy

- Choosing some books
- Out of school activities
- Homework help
- Free computers and lots more with your brand new Essex library card

 Essex County Council  
Libraries

Everyone's  
Library  
Service



Just take this to any Essex library to get started!



Head to our website [libraries.essex.gov.uk](http://libraries.essex.gov.uk) to discover everything you can do with an Essex library card!

This bookmark belongs to:

  
Essex County Council

## Essex Year of READING

Where will your book take you?

Essex Year of  
READING

Where will your book take you?

Name: .....

Essex Year of  
READING  
Where will your book take you?

Essex Year of Reading aims to inspire every child to become a confident reader and develop a lifelong love of reading. It includes a programme of exciting events and initiatives to help children and adults with their reading.

You can also download the free Essex Year of Reading app to discover reading materials, fun activities and competitions for children and families to take part in. Visit [www.essexyearofreading.co.uk](http://www.essexyearofreading.co.uk) for more information.

  
Essex County Council



# Reading in Unusual Places Challenge

 Essex County Council

Essex Year of  
**REAding**

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This summer, as part of the Essex Year of Reading, we want families to share their photos of the weird and wonderful places they love to read. Use the hashtag **#ReadingInUnusualPlaces** on Twitter and Instagram or tag **@EssexCountyCouncil** on Facebook.

Find out more: [www.essexyearofreading.co.uk](http://www.essexyearofreading.co.uk)



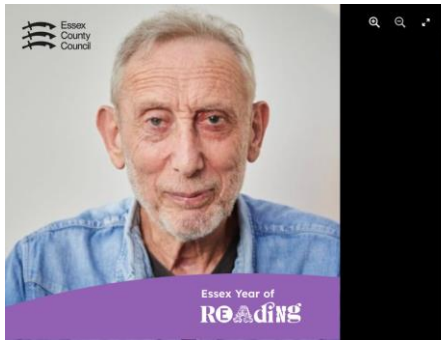
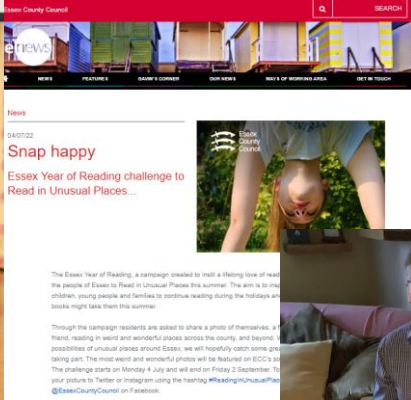
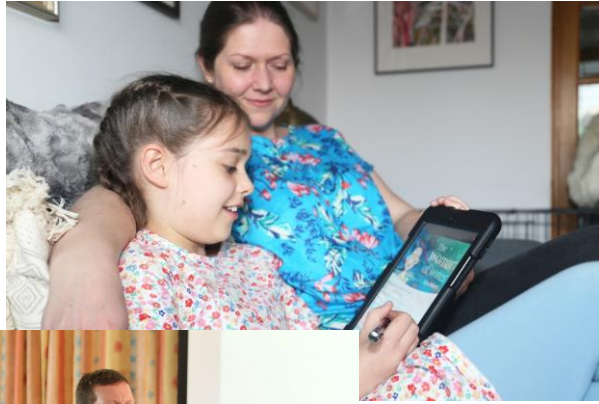
# Essex Year of Reading – Successes

## Multiple cross council initiatives delivered including:

- Library card for every child (150K cards delivered)
- Large range of author visits including Michael Rosen (1000 children at MR event)
- Parent ambassadors in conjunction with ACL (2 Ambassadors, 60 volunteers, 600 parents onto courses etc)
- Dementia/memory cafes alongside library children's events
- Literacy corner in every library (74 libraries)
- Year of Reading app including stories, teaching materials and signposts to other resources
- Intergenerational poetry publication
- Keeping it REAL/Phonological awareness in Early Years
- Hailed as an excellent example of non-siloed working
- Lasting collaborations built

## Extensive programme of teacher CPD:

- Reading fluency – 4 trainers trained, Year 1, 96 schools trained so far impacting approx. 600 pupils and will be ongoing (2 more cohorts of teachers will be trained by close of YoR)
- KS2 – average comprehension age increase was 2 years and 2 months, average fluency age increase was 1 year and 2 months
- KS3 – average comprehension age increase was 1 year and 1 month, average fluency age increase was 10 months



# Essex Year of Numbers approach



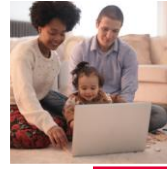
## Maths Populism

- Working with key public figures to make maths palatable and exciting
- Events and activities for all audiences that boost interest in maths



## Numeracy and maths skills

- Working with key educational players to deliver high quality CPD for teachers
- Secondment of four teachers to support the CPD work
- Events, activities and interventions to boost maths skills in students



## Parents and caregivers

- Collaborating with Multiply, ACL, libraries and businesses to develop parental skills and address the vulnerabilities low numeracy skills causes.
- Supporting parents to help their children develop their maths skills.



## Numeracy and industry

- Encouraging employers to assess the skills they need and how these maths messages can be promoted in schools and communities.
- focus on Green industries, Financial services and wider skills agenda.
- Sponsorship of projects by large employers, eg Microsoft, Ford, Biotech companies

# Essex Year Of Numbers - Launch activity: interventions

The interventions currently underway are:

- **Number Stacks:** a unique combination of stackable place-value counters and video tutorials to enable any adult, regardless of teaching experience, to help children master the foundations of the number system
- **Essex Educational Psychology Service Maths Intervention (EPS MI):** research and evidence-based intervention to double the rate of children's early number development.
- **Read and count with me under a tree:** resources available to loan at Essex Country Parks for tips on using maths outside for fun.
- **Lab in the Library:** engaging maths and science-based sessions in the library for children.
- **Maths Games:** maths based games in the library for loaning to families or to use in the libraries.
- **Youth Advisory Board:** launching a new Youth Advisory Board across Essex creating volunteering opportunities for Duke of Edinburgh Silver Applicants.
- **Cricket4Maths:** 19 dedicated projects delivering Essex Cricket's tailor made programmes, reaching over 215 junior schools.
- **Library Memory Café:** supporting intergenerational maths learning opportunities through creativity, art and games.
- **Every Move Counts:** supporting learning through movement and dance.
- **Place4Numbers:** community supermarkets within disadvantages communities provide a safe environment for real-life experiences around maths, numbers and budgeting.
- **Lego Education with Essex Libraries:** workshops taking place over an academic term using Lego to build STEM skills.
- **Count me in:** year-long project focused on using music production and DJ skills to explore numbers.
- **Essex School Games:** Active Essex facilitating maths through movement festivals in schools.
- **HSBC Education:** HSBC will visit schools to deliver ready to go finance sessions which are aimed at a wide range of age groups
- **Ministry of Defence STEM project:** the RAF STEM team will provide 26 schools with the Coding Success package and associated teacher CPD.
- **First Words Count:** training for a total of 40 library staff, giving them the confidence and skills to support parents in the language of maths for Early Years children.
- **Year of Numbers app:** developing a 'year of' app to collate all 'Year of' activities

