

Scrutiny Panel Report

Introduction

The four grammar schools in Slough operate a consortium for testing purposes. Pupils are able to take one 11+ test for the consortium. Most pupils sit the test in September of Year 6, although late testing is available. The test consists of two equally weighted papers; one verbal reasoning and one non-verbal reasoning. The scores are standardised by the test paper provider and results sent to parents during the third week of October in time for them to complete the Common Application Form. The eligibility score for the consortium is 111 or more. This equates to the top 30% of the ability range as measured by the test and is broadly consistent with other selective areas such as Buckinghamshire and Kent.

The consortium has consistently tested approximately 3500 pupils each year, with approximately 1000 gaining the eligibility mark or above. The four grammar schools provide 540 places each year. Of the 3500 tested in 2013 approximately 1100 were pupils based in Slough primary schools (65% of whole Year 6 cohort) and 223 of those achieved the eligibility mark. This represents approximately 20% of the Slough children who took the test, and 13% of the total population of Year 6 pupils in Slough primary schools. Over recent years there has been a marked increase in interest from applicants living further afield.

What level of preference is given to Slough students applying for a grammar school place?

All grammar school pupils have to have achieved the eligibility mark or above, but each of the four grammar schools have different admissions policies with different over-subscription criteria, which reflect the individual ethos of the school.

Langley Grammar School is located on the eastern edge of Slough close to the borders of Buckinghamshire, Surrey and the London Borough of Hillingdon. The school operates an admission area defined by postcodes which reflects the areas students have come from over a number of years. The Admissions Area covers the whole of Slough. Applicants from within the area are admitted using rank score, but the school also makes 10% of places available for applicants who meet the eligibility score of 111 and who do well in the school's musical aptitude assessment.

St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School uses rank score and has faith criteria.

Herschel Grammar School take 58% of pupils on rank score first and then take 42% on distance from the school. For 2012 entry the distance cut off from the school was 7.4 miles and in 2013 it was 7.2 miles.

Upton Court Grammar School take 69% of pupils on rank score first and then take 31% on distance from the school. For 2012 entry the distance cut off from the school was 27.7 miles and in 2013 it was 15.5 miles.

In the last 3 years, all Slough pupils who have achieved 111 or more and who have put the schools with distance criteria on their CAF have been given a place at a grammar school. Since 2012 parents have had to know the test results before the CAF deadline. This means they are able to make a more informed choice. Unfortunately, Upton Court have not been able to fill their 45 allocated places for Slough children with Slough children, as they have not had 45 students from Slough who have achieved the eligibility score in the 11+ and put the school on the CAF form.

What is your impression of the differential in numbers of Slough/Non-Slough pupils attending grammar schools in Slough and the reason for this?

There are a number of reasons that the 540 places offered by the four grammar schools in Slough are not filled by entirely Slough pupils.

- Only 1100 Slough pupils sat the test (58% of the Year 6 cohort). The top 30% would only be 330 pupils. In 2013 223 achieved the eligibility score.
- The proximity of the Buckinghamshire grammar schools, in particular Burnham Grammar School which appeals to parents on the west of Slough because of geographical convenience.
- The proximity of Langley Grammar School to the London boroughs of Hillingdon, Ealing, Hounslow and Harrow, which makes it the school of choice for many parents in those boroughs.
- St Bernard's faith criteria, which makes it a school of choice for Catholic parents who may not live in Slough
- The relatively low numbers of Slough pupils achieving the eligibility mark in the consortium test, which is in line with the below average Key Stage 2 results for Slough. Grammar schools are selective and so the students who do not achieve expected or better than expected levels of progress at KS2 will find it a big challenge to succeed at the 11+. Consequently, the number of Slough students attending the Grammar Schools is obviously not as high as it should be.

What partnership working is taking place where the grammar schools are supporting the non-selective schools in Slough?

Firstly, the 11 secondary school Headteachers, together with those from Arbour Vale and Haybrook College work consistently collaboratively through the Slough Association of Secondary Headteachers (SASH). We all share the same vision and values which are about ensuring the absolutely best education for every child in Slough despite the very different types of school we lead.

There is no hierarchy. The partnership work is mutually beneficial. The list below is by no means exhaustive, but exemplifies the very high quality collaboration between us;

- The SASH Free School which will open in September 2014 is the collaborative vision of all 13 headteachers and a means by which to address some of the huge need for secondary school provision in Slough over the next few years.
- St Bernard's, Wexham School and St Joseph's federation which focuses on literacy through a joint Y9 Poetry Day, and an exchange programme to Township schools in South Africa.
- Upton Court Grammar School are supporting Foxborough School through a multi academy trust arrangement to ensure the school comes out of Ofsted category.
- Joint post-16 provision between Herschel Grammar School and Baylis Court School gives students a greater range of courses than would be otherwise viable.
- Herschel Pupil Training Centre was set up with capital funding from Langley Grammar School and the running costs are heavily subsidised by Herschel Grammar School and Haybrook College. This provision is very successful in ensuring Slough's permanent exclusion figures for Key Stage 3 pupils are very low.
- Joint recruitment initiatives across all the schools, such as the i-day planned for the spring next year.
- Slough Learning Partnership founded by SASH and developed into a highly effective CPD/ procurement agency for both phases; it is currently based at Langley Grammar School.
- Successful National Teaching School accreditation for the town led by Langley Grammar School, Upton Court Grammar School and Lynch Hill School. This provides opportunities to support all the schools in Slough, helping to train and recruit new teachers in both secondary and primary, provide school to school support, engage in educational research projects (closing the gap) to support national/local agendas, identify and develop potential leaders and subject leaders which will all help to improve the education across Slough.
- Upton Court are the school improvement champion for St Ethelbert's' supporting with leadership, professional development, mentoring and training to cater for Gifted and talented students.
- Numerous examples of school-to-school support by advanced skills teachers based in the grammar schools; for example the Maths AST at Langley Grammar School organises training for Heads of Maths across the area, while the school's MFL AST works in a number of primary schools to support KS2 language teaching.
- An experienced Maths teacher from Herschel Grammar School delivers weekly lessons to gifted and talented pupils at Godolphin Juniors and plan are in place to deliver Computing from January.
- St Bernard's have pupils delivering History lessons in local primary schools; one of their English teachers teaches public speaking in a primary school and they host a debating project for primary children.
- The Director of Languages at Upton Court Grammar has led extensive training for teachers within Slough primary schools to deliver a highly effective programme for the Primary Language Strategy. The Director of Science has delivered extensive training to build capacity in science teaching both in primary and secondary schools. Similar to the work completed on the Primary Language Strategy, science teachers at UCGS developed capacity within primary schools to deliver high-quality science lessons. This has been particularly successful

through the work completed with Khalsa Primary School. The Head of Art and the Head of Technology have delivered workshops in primary schools. For the past two years the school has run gifted and talented summer schools for students in Y5 from Slough Primary Schools. The English department also delivers a young writers workshop for students in Y6.

- Langley Grammar School's award winning Digital Schoolhouse project has enabled primary pupils from across a range of Slough primary schools to experience advanced lessons in ICT band computer programming.

With the grammar schools reaching high attainment levels and the non-selective schools improving year on year, what do you see as the most important factor for ensuring high attainment across the education spectrum in Slough going forward?

As you have indicated in this question, at Secondary level the students from both the selective schools and the non-selective schools are making excellent progress. Slough is ranked in the top 10 Local Authorities for achievement at Secondary level. Slough & Eton has a value added score of 1046.6, The Langley Academy has a value added score of 1013.3; both of these scores are mathematically significantly above average. All the secondary schools, except one are rated either good or outstanding by Ofsted.

Therefore we believe the most important factor for ensuring high attainment across education-spectrum in Slough is to ensure an upward trend in Key Stage 1 and 2 attainment. This requires a focus on leadership practice and on the quality of teaching and assessment in the schools where it is inadequate or requires improvement and the leadership teams in underperforming schools need to be held accountable.

Grammar schools are already involved in this challenge formally as in the case of Upton Court and Foxborough and informally through for example, the Catholic alliance and the Grammar schools' advanced skills teachers working in primary schools. Grammar schools will continue to support this work and respond to local need as it arises.

Given the levels of non-Slough students attending grammar schools in Slough, what role do you see the schools playing in the local community?

The SASH School, the Slough Learning Partnership, the National Teaching School Alliance, the direct work we do with primary schools, the Herschel Pupil Training Centre, post-16 joint provision, involvement in the tendering process for outsourcing education services...

In addition, SASH provide representation for;

- School Forum and its working parties
- Slough Schools Education Forum

- Safer Slough Partnership
- Slough Local Safeguarding and Children’s Board and its sub groups
- Slough Schools Sports Network
- LDD Strategy Group
- 14-19 Education Board
- Slough Wellbeing Board Community Cohesion Priority Delivery Group
- Channel
- Learning to Work
- Activate
- Traffic Congestion Working Party

Furthermore, grammar school facilities are regularly used by the local community. Langley Grammar school provides a venue for children’s and adult leisure activities in the evenings and at weekends. The community has full use of Herschel’s sports centre evenings, weekends and holidays and is a key part of Slough’s sport and leisure offer. St Bernards’ field is used by an archery club every week; the local Catholic church use the chapel each week for an early morning service during Lent and Advent and they run a ‘silver surfers’ computer club delivered by their Y10 students.

To conclude, the four grammar schools in Slough are all very committed to ensuring the best education for all Slough children and young people, and are proactive in ensuring this happens.

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