

School improvement provision

SBC, Cambridge Education, Slough Learning Partnership & Slough Teaching School Alliance

Paper for Schools Forum - 25 March 2015

Introduction

Responsibility for raising achievement in Slough has been broadly transferred from Slough Borough Council (SBC) to Cambridge Education (CE) under the contract for the latter to deliver education support services. In terms of school improvement this means CE is responsible for monitoring, challenging and, where necessary, intervening in schools – although it cannot intervene in academies unless invited. SBC retains responsibility for school improvement, including ensuring that maintained schools have access to high quality support, though it is for schools to determine where they source their support.

The purpose of this paper is to set out a shared view of how best to provide support to Slough schools, including academies, when there is no obligation for schools to do anything other than determine their own needs and to meet those needs from wherever they choose.

Background

Raising pupils' achievement has always been the day-to-day responsibility of schools. However, since the 2010 election the broader picture has become very complicated, with the growth of the academies and the development of a 'school-led system'.

The spectrum of monitor-challenge-support-intervention is one familiar to schools and LAs over the last 15 years or so. The majority of these activities are the responsibility of CE in Slough, are well documented and understood and will be dealt with later in this paper. However, at the outset of the outsourcing of education support services there was a very clear message – aligned to the national political direction - that CE's responsibilities extended only to the maintained schools (and particularly those in an Ofsted category or thought to be vulnerable) and not to academies, who were responsible for sourcing their own support. It was recognised that many aspects of support for schools would fall within the remit and interest of the Slough Learning Partnership/Slough Teaching School Alliance.

However, Local Authorities continue to have a residual responsibility under the 1996 Education Act to ensure high education standards across the area for which they are responsible. Notwithstanding the political drivers which suggest the complete independence of academies, OFSTED adheres to what it considers to be the letter of the law and holds LAs to account for its 'general responsibility' for promoting high standards of education by conducting reviews of LA's school improvement arrangements.

This raises questions about:

- Relationships between SBC, SLP/STSA, Slough schools and CE
- The extent of the responsibilities and remit of CE and the STSA/SLP, and the capacity of each to provide support.
- The sources and extent of funding which could be provided to SLP/STSA and other school improvement activities

The funding issue alone is complicated. SBC has delegated to CE the funding for school improvement, to include support for schools, from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - yet the extent and purpose of that funding has to be agreed by the Schools Forum.

Who is responsible for what?

a) Slough Borough Council

SBC is the local authority with a duty to promote high educational standards across the borough. The council has commissioned Cambridge Education to provide a range of educational support services including statutory responsibilities.

b) Cambridge Education

CE has an unambiguous role in monitoring and challenging and, where appropriate, intervening in maintained schools. CE's annual cycle begins with analysis of the draft results from the previous academic year and the 'Autumn Visit' which follows. That is now an established part of the annual cycle and one which is well

understood by maintained schools, involving challenge to the school about its results from the previous year. A School Action Group (SAG) is formed after that visit if the school is estimated to be less than Good, using OFSTED criteria and categories. The SAG meets twice each term until matters have been put right or it is superseded by the Autumn Visit the following year. Intervention is invoked if there are substantial failures of leadership and management on the part of the governing body or the Head teacher.

Since the start of the contract, many academies have become more engaged in relation to CE's school improvement offer, such that nine of them have received an 'autumn visit' and CE is actively promoting a closer relationship with academies. In 2015/16 CE will continue to offer the 'Autumn visit' to academies at no charge. Any support work for academies arising from the 'Autumn visit' will be a chargeable service. CE also offers schools a range of traded services which schools can purchase.

c) Slough Learning Partnership

The Slough Learning Partnership was established in January 2012 using grants from DSG headroom to support staffing costs. The SLP was set up with a three-fold remit focusing on

- Development of CPD activity
- Brokering school-to-school support
- Utilising economies of scale to gain advantageous terms in contracts.

Although an independent and pre-existing organisation, the SLP is a strategic partner within the Slough Teaching School Alliance (established in April 2013) and acts as the operational and administrative arm of the Alliance for a number of aspects of the national Teaching School remit. Additional income has been generated through an affiliation fee, the development of traded services, and a proportion of the Teaching School grant from the DfE.

d) Slough Teaching Schools Alliance

Teaching Schools work with others to provide high-quality training and development to new and experienced school staff. They are part of the government's plan to give schools a central role in raising standards by developing a self-improving and sustainable **school-led** system. By March 2016, the government's goal is to have a network of 600 teaching schools across the country, making significant improvements in the quality of teaching, leadership and pupil attainment.

In Slough, three schools were designated as National Teaching Schools in April 2013, working in association with the SLP as a strategic partner. Each school acts as the lead for two particular strands of the Teaching School 'Big 6' remit, with the SLP providing the operational and administrative capacity to deliver many of the activities and programmes.

The majority of schools in Slough are affiliated to the Slough Learning Partnership, and hence represent the wider network of schools working with the Teaching School Alliance. The headteachers of all three schools in the Slough Teaching School Alliance are designated as National Leaders of Education, and their schools are designated National Support Schools. Langley Grammar School and Lynch Hill Primary Academy are also

Teaching School 'Big 6' allocation		Current Teaching School Alliance programmes and activities include:
Langley Grammar School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Leaders of Education recruitment and deployment • School-to-school support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools Direct salaried and unsalaried teacher-training programmes • NQT induction, support and quality assurance • National College leadership development programmes – NPQML and NPQSL • CPD events covering a range of subjects and school improvement themes • Action-research projects • Recruitment and deployment of Specialist Leaders of Education
Lynch Hill School Primary Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing Professional Development • Leadership development and succession planning 	
Upton Court Grammar School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Teacher Training • Research 	

Appropriate Bodies for NQT induction.

Teaching School alliances are independent of LA boundaries, overlap geographically and provide opportunities to link together to enhance provision. The Slough Teaching School Alliances works in partnership with a number of other Teaching School alliances in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire and is part of a strengthening Pan-Berkshire TSA network.

School improvement and development

“School improvement” can mean different things to different audiences and to different providers. In thinking about the respective roles of the Local Authority, Cambridge Education, the Slough Teaching School Alliance and the Slough Learning Partnership, it may be helpful to adopt the following distinction:

Aspect	What does it mean?	Who does this?
School improvement	Moving schools to good Preventing vulnerable schools from declining. Working with vulnerable schools to improve.	Schools themselves Slough Local Authority working through Cambridge as its commissioned provider.
School development	Maintaining schools as good. Moving schools from good to outstanding and keeping them there.	Schools themselves through access to providers including the Slough Teaching School Alliance/Slough Learning Partnership

The Local Authority has a role in promoting school *development* insofar as it has a statutory remit for “promoting improvement, high standards and the fulfilment of potential”.

With the Local Authority’s responsibility for the strategic overview of school improvement, the proposal is for Cambridge Education to work alongside the Slough Teaching School Alliance/Slough Learning Partnership and the Slough Teaching School Alliance to provide a range of school improvement and development programmes/activities. The SLP/STSA would be commissioned to provide specific school development activities and services, funded from the LA school improvement budget through Cambridge Education.

Many schools are unclear about the remit of Cambridge Education, and the role STSA/SLP despite the latter’s best efforts at market research and providing for perceived demand. Thus SBC recognises the need for greater clarity about support for schools. The roles and responsibilities of the various parties could therefore be summarised as set out in the following table:

Organisation	Responsibilities
Slough Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic overview of school improvement and development. Overall standards in maintained schools and academies. Promoting improvement, high standards and the fulfilment of potential of children and young people.
Cambridge Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory services as the LA’s commissioned provider. Monitoring, challenge and support for maintained schools, and academies by agreement. Intervention where maintained schools are in Ofsted category or vulnerable. Funded commissioning of specific school development programmes from the SLP/STSA
Slough Teaching School Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of activity under the Teaching School ‘Big 6’, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial teacher training, induction and early career development Staff development through CPD Leadership development, succession planning School-to-school support and deployment of SLEs Development of school-based research Development of networks and links with other TSAs to enable schools to access wider development programmes.
Slough Learning Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational delivery of aspects of the Teaching School programme, specifically those relating to school-to-school support, CPD and the Appropriate Body function. Other aspects of school development as requested by the community of schools through the SLP steering group. Specific school development programmes commissioned and funded by Cambridge Education.

Support for school improvement and development from September 2015

There will be a mixed economy in Slough for school support.

Cambridge Education will

- continue to provide the **support, monitoring and intervention programme to maintained schools** in Slough as outlined in the SBC Policy for Raising Attainment. Appropriate intervention support and SAG meetings will be available for qualifying maintained schools. This function will be available to academies as a traded service from CE.
- offer a range of **purchased support and training activities**. Schools will treat these as they would from any outside provider.
- provide maintained schools with **targeted support for a range of performance areas**. These will be determined after analysis of schools data but will include support and work with schools on particular groups of vulnerable pupils. CE will continue to be commissioned by SBC will continue to deliver the Autumn term visit to all maintained schools, and in 2015/16 to academies at no charge.
- commission one or more schools to provide systems leadership to other schools where such support is appropriate – usually as a result of an adverse Ofsted inspection but this may be a result of an Autumn visit or unforeseen set of circumstances.

SBC proposes to commission STSA/SLP through CE for 2015/16 in three specific areas of work.

- a) **Support and development of two primary and two secondary curriculum networks for English and Maths**. Whilst facilitated by STSA/SLP these networks will be owned and driven by the member primary and secondary schools. There will be funding to promote involvement in the networks and a focus upon school to school support by sharing good practice. SLP's facilitation of the networks will be monitored by CE against agreed performance indicators set by SBC. These fit into the SBC Strategy for Raising Attainment by commissioning school to school support available to maintained schools and academies
- b) A Slough specific **governors support and training programme** to recognise the important roll governors play in the management and development of schools. Schools will still buy their detailed support from any provider but Slough specific governor induction and training on issues on Safeguarding will be offered to all schools across Slough. There will be funding to promote involvement in the networks. SLP's facilitation of the governors training programme will be monitored by CE against agreed performance indicators. CE will also explore the provision of a 'governors helpline' from an outside agency..
- c) **A headteacher induction and development programme** will engage newly-appointed headteachers through a series of induction meetings/briefings and ongoing support. CE and STSA/SLP will work together to coordinate the headteachers' conference and a series of termly meetings.

STSA/SLP will continue to offer a range of activities as outlined in appendix A.

School Improvement Funding

In January 2015 School Forum agreed that a sum of £855,031 should be allocated for a range of school improvement activities within the overall £1.2 million budget held by Cambridge Education. The proposal is to reduce this to around £650,000 for the financial year 2015/16, to include the commissioned school improvement activities outlined in the previous section. The detailed breakdown of these activities is outlined in Appendix A.

Indicative budget lines will be confirmed by Cambridge Education in May 2015.

Appendix A

School Improvement activities provided or commissioned by Cambridge Education on behalf of Slough Borough Council

The centrally retained 'school improvement' budget (approx. £1.2 million originally allocated for 2015/16) will support:

Area	Budget
Admissions	tbc
Littledown Outreach	tbc
School Support	tbc
Schools' contribution to Local Authority Safeguarding Children Board	tbc
Children Looked After Support worker	tbc

The 'school support' work can be considered under the following broad headings:

Function	Budget
Autumn visits 2 days per visit, all schools including academies	tbc
Maintained schools needing support and intervention during the year as a result of Ofsted inspection or issues arising from the Autumn visit.	tbc
Targeted consultant support on areas of agreed curriculum focus and vulnerable pupil groups.	tbc
Budget to support schools in intervention. To facilitate school to school support.	tbc
STSA/SLP facilitated school-to-school networks	tbc
Systems leadership – development of support networks available to schools facing significant and unexpected leadership and management issues.	tbc
Head teacher development.	tbc
Supporting head teacher termly meetings and consultation groups.	tbc
Governors support programme partly delivered by SLP and partly delivered by consultants/outside agency.	tbc
Contribution to subscription to Fischer Family Trust – LA access	tbc

A final breakdown of the proposed budget lines for 2015/16 will be provided by Cambridge Education in May 2015.

Appendix B

Slough Teaching School Alliance (STSA) / Slough Learning Partnership (SLP)

STSA/SLP funding

As an independent not-for-profit company the SLP's sources of funding are from DSG and traded services:

- a) Ad-hoc allocations from DSG 'headroom' and underspend.
- b) Affiliation fees, paid on a per-pupil basis by schools from their individual school budgets (ie DSG discretionary spend)
- c) Income from traded services (eg courses) to balance expenditure as activity run on not-for-profit basis.

The Slough Teaching School Alliance has three sources of funding:

- a) Teaching School core grant (£60k in 2013-14, decreasing to £50k in 2014-15, and £40k in 2015-16).
- b) Access to occasional small grants to support research or delivery of particular activity on behalf of the National College – these grants are intended to support staff release from schools.
- c) Appropriate Body fees for NQT induction
- d) Income from traded services eg CPD or SLE

The significant majority of income from the STSA is passed to the SLP to offset the staffing costs of the SLP's role as the operational arm of the Alliance.

At Schools Forum in September, funding of £60k was granted from DSG underspend to secure the financial viability of the Slough Learning Partnership for the remainder of the academic year 2014-15. An additional sum of £100k was granted to allow the SLP to extend its activities during the year by employing additional staff. Funding for the Slough Learning Partnership in 2015-16 and beyond will continue to be dependent on a mix of sources and may require a further allocation of up to £75k from DSG underspend in 2014/15 depending on the current year's outturn.

Proposed areas of commissioned activity

A number of specific areas of commissioned school development activity are proposed. These would be funded from Cambridge Education's school improvement budget. The funding would essentially support:

- Central SLP staffing costs to organise and run activities and programmes
- Staff release from schools to participate in or lead development activities
- SLE deployment costs (repaid to schools where SLEs are employed)
- Whole or partial funding for activity costs eg conference or course venues, speakers etc.

The main proposed areas of commissioned activity are:

a) **Subject development networks**

These would build on existing networks such as those for secondary mathematics and include additional subjects or strands as appropriate. Essential features would include:

- facilitation and leadership by SLEs or other local subject leaders
- regular meetings with teacher-release costs supported
- links and access to wider programmes and initiatives eg Maths Hubs, NCETM, TSA networks
- school-to-school support for subject development through identification and spreading of best practice with funding for SLE or other leader deployments
- locally-based subject-specific training and events

b) **Headteacher induction, network and development programme**

This would be open to headteachers of both maintained schools and academies and organised in consultation with the primary and secondary headteacher associations. Activities would include:

- a series of induction meetings for newly appointed headteachers
- development of HT buddy/mentor system and 'new to headship in Slough' toolkit
- financial training workshop programme
- conference and termly meeting programme

c) Governor recruitment, induction and development programme

This strand would seek to complement the provision in to which many schools buy for generic governor training and ongoing development. Rather than 'being a governor' this programme would be focused on 'being a governor in Slough' – for governors of both maintained schools and academies - and would include:

- local Governor recruitment campaign
- governor induction workshops (Slough focus)
- annual Chairs of Governors conference
- termly twilight governor conferences
- development of Slough context governor website-based handbook/toolkit

Commissioned school development work – indicative annual costings

Primary subject/strand development networks		
SLE/local leader facilitation	Salary backfill 6 days @ £375	£2,250
School subject leader release for termly whole-day meeting	3 x 36 schools @ £175	£18,900
3 x CPD events	Subsidised to reduce school costs	£4,500
SLP support and administration	Operations Director time, Backroom admin costs	£7,500
Typical total costs		£33,150

Secondary subject/strand development networks		
SLE/local leader facilitation	Salary backfill 6 days @ £375	£2,250
School subject leader release for termly whole-day meeting	3 x 13 schools @ £175	£6,825
3 x CPD events	Subsidised to reduce school costs	£4,500
SLP support and administration	Operations Director time, Backroom admin costs	£5,000
Typical total costs		£18,575

Headteacher development		
New head induction meetings	Event costs and presenter time	£1,500
HT buddy/mentor development	5 days @ £500	£2,500
New to Headship toolkit	5 days @ £500	£2,500
Financial workshops	Event costs and presenter time	£1,500
Organisation of Headteacher conference programme	10 days @ £500 10 days @ £200	£7,000
Typical total costs		£15,000

Governor recruitment, induction and development		
Recruitment programme	5 days @ £500 5 days @ £200	£3,500
Governor induction events	3 days @ £500 3 days @ £200	£2,100
Governance toolkit	5 days @ £500	£2,500
Organisation of Governors conference programme	5 days @ £500 5 days @ £200	£3,500
Typical total costs		£11,600

Slough Teaching School Alliance / Slough Learning Partnership – school development strands		
Strand 1 - Teachers' professional development pathway	Strand 2 - Support for general school development	Strand 3 - Support for subject development
<p>Initial teacher training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for ITT recruitment • Schools Direct training year CPD to supplement HEI provision and provide focus on local issues. • Support for Assessment-only route (potential growth?) <p>Post-ITT professional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NQT support programme and network • Appropriate Body administration and support • General local CPD programme • Improving and Outstanding teacher programmes (franchised or local bespoke) • Wider subject-based CPD programmes. • School-based action research <p>Middle leadership development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPQML licensed programme • Inspired to Lead programme • Subject/phase/theme networks • Bespoke leadership training <p>Senior leadership development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPQSL & NPQH licensed programmes • Masters' programme - linking with additional HEI 	<p>School-to-school support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brokerage of S2S support • Directory of local expertise and available support <p>Discounted resources and online training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data packages (FFT) • Online safeguarding (Educare) <p>General local CPD programme –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic CPD eg Literacy, numeracy, assessment etc • Training for support staff – role specific or generic skills <p>Networks and Conferences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteachers' network and conference programme • Senior leaders • Chairs of Governors <p>Induction support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate Body administration and support, mentor training. • Local Governor induction and CPD • Headteacher induction programme and ongoing CPD <p>Audit and review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pan-Berkshire peer review programme utilising system leaders 	<p>Core subject development networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Subject Leader network and CPD ○ Linked to NCETM and emergent Maths Hub ○ SLE support and facilitation • English <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Subject Leader network and CPD ○ SLE support and facilitation <p>Other subject development networks, eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science • Modern Foreign Languages • Computing /ICT • Early Years <p>Deployment of Specialist Leaders of Education</p> <p>CPD programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject or theme-specific CPD events and programmes <p>Teacher Recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a 'Slough presence' at university recruitment fairs • Developing links with HEI ITT providers <p>Subject review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer-led subject review and audit

SLP/STSA Funding model 2015 onwards

Potential funding sources to support the activity of the Slough Teaching School Alliance/Slough Learning partnership:

- An affiliation fee per pupil in Primary and Secondary schools.
- Grants from DSG underspend, approved by Schools Forum
- School improvement funds currently held by Cambridge Education as part of their contract with the Local Authority, to support commissioned school development programmes.
- A proportion of the Teaching School Core grant (maximum £50k in 2014-15 and declining)
- Appropriate Body fees

Predicated on the following organisational model.....

Core organisation staffing	Strategic business development Organisational lead	1.0 FTE
	Administration lead CPD development	1.0 FTE
	Bookings, invoicing and financial control	0.5 FTE
Programme support staffing	Network development	0.5 FTE
	NQT support	0.20 FTE
	Headteacher & governor development	0.20 FTE
	Website maintenance	0.1 FTE

Provisional funding requirement....

• Organisational overheads and core staffing costs	£175,000
• Programme support staff	£50,000
	£225,000

Which could be funded in 2015-16 by:

• 2013-14 DSG underspend	<i>Assume no carry forward</i>
• 2014-15 DSG underspend	£75,000*
• Affiliation fees	£30,000
• Teaching School grant	£30,000
• Appropriate body fees	£30,000
• Commissioned School Improvement funding	£60,000
	£225,000

**Requirement for funding from 2014/15 underspend reduced if there is carry forward from 2013/14 underspend allocation*