

APPENDIX A

SLOUGH LOCAL AUTHORITY
Raising Achievement Strategy
2015-2017

“Today’s education, tomorrow’s future”

FOREWORD

We take pride in what has been achieved in Slough through partnership work between and with schools, early years settings and academies, and a strong focus on providing high quality services to children, young people and their families. Our aim is to provide children and young people with the best possible start in life and we firmly believe that high quality education from the earliest stage is the most important route to ensuring that they receive this.

Evidence shows that children and young people make good progress in Early Years settings, schools and academies in Slough. We recognise the achievements and hard work of pupils, early years settings, schools and academies in Slough. However, we know we can achieve more, and this strategy sets out the ways in which the Council's raising achievement services, delivered in partnership with Cambridge Education, will work with partners such as the Slough Learning Partnership and Teaching Schools Alliance to have a positive impact on the effectiveness and quality of education in Slough. We aim to ensure that all our children and young people receive an education which is good or better, and that they should achieve their potential, no matter what barriers they may face.

We know that elected council members, senior officers, head teachers, early years managers and governors understand the drive for all pupils to attend a good or better school by the end of the 2016/2017 academic year. Partnership and collaboration between schools are helping us to move from central intervention and towards school-to-school challenge and support. Schools and settings are increasingly willing to be open and to share strengths and areas for development with each other. Our school leaders understand their responsibility for raising achievement and that the Council's role is to promote high standards and champion excellence through monitoring, challenge and intervention, providing support as appropriate.

We will build on what has been achieved through the work of the Children and Young People's Partnership: the many services across the Council that support our schools and through our close links with other agencies, businesses and local voluntary sector. In partnership we can demonstrate our continued commitment to improving outcomes for children, young people and their families and ensure that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are able to prosper in the future. We also place the highest emphasis on the promotion of the safety and well-being of children and young people, which is so essential in supporting educational success.

Our Children and Young People's Plan harnesses the energy of all our partners towards our vision that all children and young people should:

- Enjoy life, achieve through learning, be proud of where they live and be valuable members of the community

Key priorities of the Plan are to:

- Ensure that children and young people have access to high quality and effective education, leading to rapid and sustainable progress with high levels of achievement and,
- Offer young people opportunities to access high quality education, future employment and training, lead healthy lifestyles and become responsible citizens as they move into adult life.

Children's Centres, Early years settings and schools contribute so much to ensuring that we can achieve our vision and strategic priorities and develop active, responsible and successful learners who are leaders of the future, working in a thriving local economy. We will do all we can, working with them, to ensure that every educational setting in Slough is good or better.

**Cabinet Member
for Children's Services**

Director of Well-being

INTRODUCTION

This Strategy is based on a strong partnership approach across the Slough education community. It is about working together to strengthen schools and raise standards, particularly related to the needs of vulnerable groups. The emphasis is on collaboration and taking pre-emptive action to avoid the escalation of difficulties. The intention is to have robust schools which can not only improve themselves but can also reach out to support others. The Local Authority will take a strategic overview, supporting and brokering early support for those in difficulty and championing a collaborative and positive approach which involves constructive challenge to drive along a path to all schools being good or outstanding. It will foster a close relationship with Slough Learning Partnership and Teaching Schools Alliance in order to ensure there is strong support for schools.

Slough is an urban area, comprising densely populated and richly diverse communities. It has a strong business sector including the headquarters of several key multi-national companies and a 21st century profile of innovative and creative industries. There are, however, significant pockets of disadvantage and many vulnerable children, with high numbers of new migrants and asylum seekers from more than 70 different countries, unaccompanied minors and transient families. There are also large variations in terms of affluence and deprivation among neighbourhoods across Slough.

Over 140 different languages are spoken across Slough and more than 50 different languages are spoken as a first language by children in Slough schools. Within Slough there are well-established ethnic communities. As well as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, one third of the population was born outside of the UK and one fifth from outside the European Union. In January 2014, children from the 'Any Other White Background' ethnic group (i.e. not White British, White Irish, Irish Traveller or Gypsy/Roma) made up 9.8% of the school roll (*11.4% of the Primary school roll, 8.2% of the secondary school roll, and 6.3% of the Special Schools roll*). Between 2013 and 2014, the total number of pupils attending all schools in Slough rose by 3.53% (from 27,259 to 28,220). This is the third highest increase in this period across all English councils (only Hackney – at 5.25%, and Greenwich – at 3.67%, saw higher proportional increases). Many Slough schools – particularly in the primary phase - experience a high level of pupil turbulence. It is not uncommon for mobility levels to exceed 20 per cent in one academic year.

Schools, early years settings and the Local Authority are working at a time of great change, as many schools move to academy status, and the role of the local authority (LA) is redefined. In Slough, this does not alter the joint commitment to the children and young people. The LA looks forward to a continuing thriving relationship with academies, schools, settings, and other partners as it aims to deliver excellence and high standards for all pupils and their families. The Slough Learning Partnership, Slough Teaching Schools Alliance, multi-academy trusts (MATs), school trusts, children's centre hubs and other school collaborations are significant and exciting innovations, and the LA anticipates working collaboratively with all partnerships as they develop. The LA welcomes any opportunity to work with private, voluntary and independent settings, maintained schools and academies to promote the best possible education for children and young people across the community. The LA will seek ways to link actions within

this strategy to other work across Slough such as the development of apprenticeships and raising participation.

THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

The 1996 Education Act, modified by the 2006 Education and Inspections Act, places a duty on local authorities 'to promote high standards and fulfilment of potential in maintained schools and other education and training providers, so that all children and young people benefit from a good education'

Slough understands the changing role of local authorities in a more autonomous and diverse school system, but the LA recognises that there are expectations on it to support and challenge maintained and non-maintained schools, academies and free schools. The LA recognises its role as a strategic commissioner. The LA's role can be summarised as follows:

- raising expectations about the standards of performance and effectiveness and challenging educational provision in a local authority area
- identifying good or better practice so that it can be shared more widely
- providing a sharp challenge and the impetus to act where raising achievement is needed
- recommending specific priorities for improvement and checking on subsequent progress
- evaluating Slough Borough Council (SBC) performance and capacity to improve statutory raising achievement functions.

This document describes the ways in which the LA and its partners seek to promote high standards and the fulfilment of potential, as well as the LA's main statutory raising achievement responsibilities and sets out a framework within which the LA will work to fulfil these.

VISION - TOWARDS EXCELLENCE

The Authority's vision "Today's Education, tomorrow's future" is to raise the aspirations and improve the life chances of every child and young person, protecting vulnerable groups and promoting an employability and skills agenda. The intention is to maximise the benefits of the collective resolve to create a partnership which gains the confidence of schools in delivering excellent education services for all children and families. The ambition is that every child and young person is educated in a well-resourced and well run school or setting.

In Slough, the aspiration is to have significantly more outstanding schools and no school or setting less than good. By 2016 our aim is for 100% of all Slough schools to be good or outstanding. To achieve this, the LA, Cambridge Education, children's centres, early years settings and schools will work in partnership to build capacity across the system; recognising excellence and support partnership across the Borough.

Context

In Slough there are outstanding, good and improving schools and early years settings. However, some are underperforming and these need intensive support to bring about improvement. Outcomes for pupils are at and above national averages on many measures, but the LA aspires to achieve more. The changing social context with changing patterns of family life, including high mobility and turbulence, alongside technological and global changes, place significant challenges on schools, families and communities. Slough is committed to intervening early to prevent problems, to supporting parents and families and building stronger and united communities.

Alongside this the LA does currently retain a number of key responsibilities:

- sufficiency of school places
- responsibilities in relation to underperforming maintained schools, as described in DfE guidance updated in May 2014
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision
- ensuring assessment is secure and teachers are appropriately trained, including moderation of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
- ensuring that there is induction for new governors and access to information
- involvement with head teacher appointments
- promoting the educational aspirations and achievements of Looked After Children (LAC) across all schools
- tracking of Children Missing Education (CME), ensuring they are safe and provided with appropriate education
- ensuring children with Special Educational Needs across all schools and settings are identified at an early stage, appropriate intervention and assessment is carried out and appropriate resources and provision are made where necessary
- working in partnership with relevant agencies, including schools and early years settings to ensure the safeguarding of children
- building of maintained schools
- finance for maintained schools
- improving outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and narrowing the achievement gap
- developing free early learning places for disadvantaged two year olds
- the establishment and maintenance of a funding formulae for schools and servicing of the schools forum

Key principles

This work is underpinned by the following key principles:

- Educational achievement is the most effective way to improve outcomes and break cycles of deprivation and poverty. Improving life chances for all is therefore the key driver of this work and there is a crucial role for everyone in shifting the focus from dealing with the consequences of difficulties in children's lives, to early identification and intervention and safeguarding them in the first place.

- High quality early education is good for children, with positive short and longer term impacts on their learning and development. Early years education is also good for equality, with the most disadvantaged children reaping the greatest benefits.
- Partnerships have a key role to play because they provide a rich combination of high expectations, innovative thinking and a strong community within which all learners can thrive and achieve.
- While schools are self-managing and autonomous institutions, responsible for their own performance and improvement, the LA will support and challenge them and intervene where appropriate, to improve and sustain improvement, both in attainment and in the achievement and rate of progress of our children and young people.
- Learning must be personalised, and partners will work together to close the attainment gap for all pupils and particularly for our most vulnerable groups.
- All pupils, and in particular the most vulnerable, must have the support they need to overcome any barriers to their learning and well-being.
- The range of high quality opportunities for 14 – 19 year olds (and to 25 for those with SEND who remain in education or training) will continue to be a priority, in order to meet the interests, aspirations and needs of Slough's young people, and to respond to the raising of the participation agenda.
- The LA will continue to work with parents, families, communities and partners to manage delivery of its services through a common approach, resulting in improved outcomes for children and young people in Slough, particularly the most vulnerable.

The Local Authority will:

1. Work in partnership with all schools, academies, children's centres and private, voluntary and independent settings, to assure best possible educational provision in Slough
2. Commission and broker appropriate raising achievement support according to criteria set out in this document
3. Fulfil the LA's specific intervention role in relation to schools causing concern
4. Work constructively to support academies and Free Schools
5. Emphasise the strategic role of partners, inside and outside the Local Authority, especially the private, voluntary and independent sector (PVI)
6. Support the work of Governors in managing change effectively
7. Support succession planning to meet recruitment challenges, and head teacher appointments
8. Promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination
9. Promote race equality
10. Appoint a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).