

APPENDIX C

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL (SBC) WORKING WITH ACADEMIES AND FREE SCHOOLS IN SLOUGH

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out the broad relationship between Slough Borough Council including Cambridge Education (working with and on the behalf of Slough Borough Council) and academies in the Borough of Slough. This will enable greater clarity about respective roles with an unequivocal view to enabling all children and young people attending all Slough schools to fulfil their potential. There is a shared objective to sustain the strong relationship both among schools and between them and the Council, and it is in everyone's interest that that relationship be preserved and that the relationship between schools and the Council, directly and through Cambridge Education is developed and built upon. This protocol explains how all parties will continue to work together and how any problems can be resolved. A close and robust relationship will create the environment in which attainment is raised for all Slough pupils, continuous improvement in performance and inclusion is achieved and in which concerns can be dealt with at the earliest opportunity. In an increasingly diverse educational landscape, SBC will exercise a range of roles and responsibility, largely but not exclusively in line with its statutory duties. SBC is committed to working with academies and sponsors, especially to ensure vulnerable pupils can access their nearest appropriate school and receive the support they need to make good progress.

SBC as the Local Authority continues to have a statutory responsibility to promote excellence and address underperformance in education across all settings and providers. It would always be the intention to deal with matters at a local level and the Council will do our utmost to do so, but ultimately the Council has a duty to refer serious or persistent concerns to the Department for Education or the Education Funding Agency (EFA). The preference however, is to work collaboratively with schools to prevent under performance and support all schools to continuous improvement. In this respect the Council would welcome this protocol being embraced by all academies and free schools in Slough.

2. Underlying principles:

All academies and SBC recognise they have a part to play in ensuring the best possible provision for all young people living in and/or being educated in Slough. This applies especially to vulnerable groups such as those who suffer deprivation, have special needs, are children in need or are in care or those from a minority cultural or ethnic group. To that end everyone will:

1. Work in partnership on all matters relating to the education and welfare of young people
2. Raise matters about academy performance openly
3. Act fairly and show respect
4. Be aware of the impact of any action on schools and other providers
5. Participate in local partnerships and other fora related to developing local education provision
6. Share data in line with the existing protocol and not use that data to criticise other schools and providers
7. Promote safeguarding in all circumstances

3. Statutory roles and responsibilities for Academy Trusts

The key responsibilities of Academy Trusts are to:

- Ensure provision of high quality education
- Ensure the Academy is fully inclusive
- Monitor and challenge performance, especially in relation to achievement, curriculum, behaviour, attendance, staffing, budget and the community
- Act as a critical friend
- Employ staff
- Set the Academy's budget
- Comply with company and charity law
- Manage and comply with the funding agreement
- Manage the Trust's finance and property
- Determine the admissions policy and participate in the LA's co-ordinated schemes
- Arrange for admissions appeals to be heard
- Promote the safeguarding and welfare of all children and young people
- Play an active part in the wider community

4. Responsibilities retained by the Local Authority

The Local Authority retains responsibility for a variety of services for all schools and academies:

4.1 School improvement

- LAs have a statutory duty under Section 13a of the 1996 Education Act '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'
- Monitor results across schools and academies particularly those for vulnerable groups of pupils
- Challenge maintained schools, starting with 'the autumn visit' and offer the same service to academies
- Intervene in maintained schools as required in the Lent and summer terms and as commissioned by academies

4.2 Home-to-school transport

- Consult on and determine and promulgate a home-to-school transport policy
- Assess pupils' eligibility for home-to-school transport
- Make appropriate provision for eligible pupils
- Manage an appeals process and deal with complaints
- Maintain safety standards for pupils, including behaviour on transport
- Ensure best value in commissioning transport

4.3 Assessing pupils' educational needs as part of their Education, Health and Care Plans (including the work of educational psychologists):

- Consider requests for statutory assessments of pupils' special educational needs
- Decide upon a setting which meets the pupils' needs, in conjunction with other agencies as necessary
- Conduct statutory annual reviews of pupils' needs to re-assess them and to determine whether they are being met
- Appearing before SENDIST in relation to parental appeals

4.4 Monitoring of SEN Provision

- Collect information that enables the LA to judge: pupils' progress; the use of resources; and the quality of provision for SEN pupils.
- Consider the resources at the disposal of individual schools as part of pupils' annual review

4.5 Provision for pupils with identified high level SEN

- The LA will consider whether top up funding will be allocated to mainstream schools in addition to their delegated budgets to meet the needs of children with statements/EHSCP on completion of statutory assessment or following annual review
- Commissioning places in academy special schools
- Managing placements in specialist support centres/bases within mainstream schools
- Managing placements in independent sector providers

4.6 Parent partnership

- Provide an 'arm's length' Parent Partnership (PPS) service that offers advice and support to the parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs

4.7 Provision of Pupil Referral Places or educational provision

- Ensure all children who fall under the scope of Section 3 of the Children, Schools and Families Act 2010 receive efficient full-time education unless reasons that relate to their medical condition mean that this would not be in their best interests

4.8 Safeguarding

- Ensure schools are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding children
- Monitor their safeguarding performance through annual audit
- Bring any deficiencies to the attention of the governing body and advise on remedial measures that need to be taken
- Make available appropriate training, model policies and procedures
- Assist in dealing with allegations against staff, volunteers and pupils and ensuring arrangements are in place to prevent unsuitable staff and volunteers from working with children
- Ensure all children who go missing from education or who are electively home-educated are safeguarded
- Issue work permits and performance licences for individual pupils
- Responsibilities for Looked After Children including corporate parenthood and Virtual School.

4.9 Attendance

- Ensure schools comply with their responsibilities in relation to attendance registers as set out in the pupil registration regulations through an annual registration audit
- Prosecute parents in conformity with the LA's policies

4.10 School place planning

- Liaise with providers of school places to ensure every child of school age has a school place
- Maintain an Education Infrastructure Plan

4.11 Co-ordination of admissions

- Consult on and set co-ordinated admissions schemes
- Consult on and set admissions arrangements for maintained schools according to the School Admissions Code and legislation
- Prepare cases for admissions appeals panels
- Manage 'in-year' admissions
- Champion the rights of children to be admitted to their preferred school, particularly vulnerable children.

5. Timetable with academies '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'.

All academies will be offered the opportunity of an autumn visit with a School Improvement Consultant to discuss pupil achievement and the effective functioning of their school.

If an academy does not wish to have this discussion then SBC as Local Authority will use publically available data and any school specific data provided under the agreed data sharing protocol to form its judgements.

January. The LA will use publically available information as outlined in the DfE 2014 School and College Performance tables to form a view on pupil performance and progress within an academy.

February. If there is an area of concern the LA will follow the agreed protocol and inform the academy of its concern and request a meeting to discuss this with the headteacher.

Following this meeting if there continues to be an area of concern the LA will ask the academy to respond outlining the actions agreed by the school to address the area of concern. The LA will offer to work with the academy trust in securing appropriate support for the school.

The LA follows the protocol and will either monitor progress via published annual performance data or refer the area of concern to the EFA and/or the DfE.