

# Teacher recruitment and retention

*Proposed use of surplus centrally-retained DSG to fund a research, marketing and recruitment strategy to benefit. This paper draws on background information provided for Cabinet by Cambridge Education in June 2015.*

## 1. The challenge of teacher recruitment in Slough

There is a growing and increasingly serious problem of teacher recruitment and retention across Slough schools, which is a reflection of national trends. Recruitment has been a significant issue over the last five years and has now become a significant and universal challenge across the Slough community of schools. This has been exacerbated by the expansion of schools in response to a rapidly growing school population; since 2008 an additional 27 forms of entry have been added to the primary sector and an additional 15 forms of entry in the secondary phase.

Additionally, demand is still increasing across the primary sector for the next couple of years. In the secondary sector, a further 22 forms of entry are required by 2022. This will necessitate a substantial number of additional teachers, while at the same time many other local authorities are rapidly expanding due to the increase in pupil numbers and are in need of additional teachers. Current estimates are that 250 additional teachers required by 2022

In the secondary phase, there is a particular need for senior and middle leadership, maths, science, English and modern foreign language teachers. Across the primary phase there is a need for senior and middle leadership, general teachers, special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) and specialist teachers for mainstream SEN resource bases. Within the special needs area, there is a need for teachers who have specialisms in managing challenging behaviour.

There are a number of specific challenges for Slough, including:

- Slough itself does not have a positive image;
- there are more 'desirable' areas around in which to teach, with less challenging circumstances in some neighbouring authorities;
- teachers have ready access to higher salaries in West and Inner London (Outer and Inner London pay scales);
- housing costs are high and access to housing can be restricted

However there are a number of positives which are not necessarily effectively communicated:

- Slough's close to central London, with good road access;
- there is a very strong community of schools with a high level of collaborative working;
- Slough has a high percentage of good and outstanding secondary schools, with strong GCSE examination results (7<sup>th</sup> nationally);
- the town provides a stimulating and exciting context through a very diverse school community;
- the close community and high number of schools in a small area give opportunities for promotion.

## 2. The need for a joined up approach

Other services are experiencing difficulties in appointing staff, most especially in Social Care. Anecdotally, recruitment challenges also exist with the Police and in the Health sector. Within education there are also challenges in appointing to key posts such as educational psychologists.

Krutika Pau, Interim Director of Children's Services, has been focused on improving recruitment in Social Care. She has led on the development of a workforce strategy and the recent appointment of a lead officer for workforce development. Krutika has promoted a joint approach with schools on recruitment and has also draw in the Local Authority's Human Resources team to be part of the group considering solutions.

Individually, schools continue to explore different strategies to attract high quality staff. However, the majority of schools are positively committed to developing a collective solution following discussions in

the summer term of 2015 by a representative group of headteachers and within the headteacher phase associations.

### **3. A collective recruitment strategy?**

Slough headteachers propose that unused centrally retained DSG in 2015-16 and ongoing is directed towards the funding of a collective recruitment strategy comprising three elements – research, marketing, and direct recruitment.

#### **a) Research**

The proposal is to commission a one-off piece of research to inform future strategy. An initial approach has been made by SASH to the Recruitment and Employment Confederation to undertake a focused piece of research looking at:

- What are the factors that influence attraction and retention of staff?
- What factors are specific to Slough?
- What existing trends in turnover and how is this influenced through the year?
- What innovative approaches might support recruitment?

Research will also establish seek to establish the full cost of recruitment across Slough: time, searching, advertising etc, and to look at the possible extent of savings. The indicative cost of this work on behalf of secondary schools has been quoted at £26k, over a timescale of 6-12 months. The findings may be applicable to the primary sector, or it may be preferable for primary headteachers to commission a similar piece of work, which would most likely be at a broadly similar cost as indicated in the table in section (4).

#### **b) Marketing**

The marketing strategy would include a number of aspects, some of these could be commissioned from professional companies, others through direct employment. Aspects might include:

- commissioning online video resource to promote the Slough schools community;
- greater use of social media to notify and attract applicants;
- developing a joint Slough recruitment website with links to websites for individual schools;
- differential marketing to attract teachers at different career stages;
- developing a Slough 'presence' at university recruitment fairs;
- engagement with university-based teacher training courses;
- general promotion of the benefits of working in Slough;
- promoting careers in teaching to current students in Slough schools;
- encouraging residents across the community to be teachers locally in Slough;
- joint action, such as single advertising across a number of schools, rather than or alongside schools doing what they want individually.

#### **c) Recruitment**

To address the central issue of direct recruitment of staff to fill specific vacancies, the proposal is to set up a not-for-profit recruitment agency focusing on recruitment to agreed priority areas (eg general primary teaching, secondary maths and science). This would involve the direct employment (through the Slough Teaching School Alliance or the Slough Learning Partnership as representative organisations) of professional and experienced recruitment staff whose work would be informed by the research evidence base. Schools would pay a basic sum to access the service. An alternative approach would be to commission an existing major recruitment provider to act on behalf of the Slough schools collectively.

#### **d) Other possible activities**

Additional elements of the recruitment strategy could include:

- establishing a bursary fund which could be used for recruitment and retention, intended to contribute towards housing costs;

- providing training over the summer holiday period to get new staff 'up to speed' for the beginning of the new academic year;
- developing a teaching pool which can be drawn on by schools needing teachers;
- through the Slough Teaching School Alliance, develop programmes to retrain or upskill existing staff to teach shortage subjects of areas.

#### 4. Likely costs

The following table presents some initial estimates for costs of the activity described above. The figures given are based on some research of typical costs but do not constitute a full business case; the intention is to provide Forum members with some indication of how the sum of £300k could be spent.

Area of proposed activity	2015-16 financial year (April 2015 to Mar 2016)	Subsequent annual funding required
<b>Research</b>		
Secondary-based research	£26k	
Primary research	£20k	
<b>Marketing</b>		
Promotional video production	£15k	
Development of recruitment website	£8k	£5k
Social media and online promotional campaign <i>~1-2 days per week commissioned</i>	£5k	£10k
Visiting recruitment fairs (headteachers) – travel costs and accommodation	£25k	£25k
Collective advertising campaigns eg TES	£30k	£45k
<b>Direct recruitment</b>		
Recruitment agent – salary and on-costs <i>Assumes £40k basic salary plus bonuses and oncosts</i>	£40k	£65k
Administrative backup and office expenses	£30k	£70k
<b>Indicative funding for main activities</b>	£200k	£220k
<b>Other possible activity</b>		
Summer holiday induction and training (eg 120 new teachers for two weeks)		£120k
Upskilling/retraining programmes for existing staff	£k	£15k
Recruitment bursary fund (eg 120 staff @ £1k)	£120k	

#### 5. Conclusion

Slough headteachers request that Forum considers and approves in principle the use of up to £300k of centrally retained DSG in the 2015-16 financial year; a detailed business case can then be developed with a 3-year timeframe. Although the use of centrally retained DSG can only be agreed by Forum on an annual basis, headteachers are seeking a commitment in principle to fund the recruitment initiative for three years.

# Appendix A