

Cambridge Education working with Slough Borough Council Feedback and Customer Satisfaction

Introduction

The following information provides feedback from key stakeholders about the quality and effectiveness of education services provided by Cambridge Education on behalf of Slough Borough Council.

General feedback

A recent survey questionnaire of all Slough headteachers carried out by Cambridge Education to gain feedback about services reported 83% satisfaction. Overall, the responses were two thirds from secondary schools and one third from primary schools. This process provided the following information across all areas of operation, including school improvement, support for vulnerable groups, access and early years:

- The effectiveness of the School Improvement Service in challenging schools to perform better was rated as good. Autumn Term Visits (ATVs) were rated as good to outstanding. Allied to these ATVs, the Strategy Action Group (SAG) challenge meetings were all rated as good. The effectiveness of the School Improvement Service in helping improve outcomes for children in Slough was rated as satisfactory.
- The educational psychology and autism teams were rated as predominantly good, as was the support, advice and training provided for schools on meeting special educational needs.
- The co-ordination of the admissions process was rated predominantly as good. The Attendance Team's support in promoting pupil attendance and managing the Fixed Penalty Notice process was rated as good to excellent.
- Across all of the questions there were 36 responses indicating that services were good and 5 indicating excellence. Alongside this there were 11 responses which pointed towards the need to improve service effectiveness which will be explored with head teachers and addressed to improve performance.

School Improvement

The recent review of School Improvement carried out by Slough Borough Council identified the following feedback. Overall, there was a common consensus from schools that where they had received input from Cambridge Education their experience had been positive. Given the nature of the Council's contract with Cambridge Education for school improvement the main experience for schools was receiving help and support when they were in a category of 'requiring improvement'. For the majority of schools this was a positive experience. Similarly, the schools which engaged in the Autumn Review Visit process were also positive. In most cases schools spoke highly of their "Challenge Meeting" with Cambridge Education consultants. Positive comments related to the challenge included 'helpful', 'supportive', 'valued', 'holding schools to account', 'clear impact', 'clarified thinking', 'refined management processes', 'developed self evaluation and school improvement planning', 'developing classroom practice and moderation', 'developing drive

and direction' and being 'honest, open and spot on'. However, in a very few cases head teachers conveyed a view of seeking even greater challenge. Additionally, some head teachers were seeking follow up support. However, this is an area of misunderstanding which needs to be clarified as this is not part of the contractual role for Cambridge Education. Similarly, some schools commented on the expectation from the outset of training opportunities which did not materialise as again this is outside the contractual remit. Also, it was apparent that greater clarity is needed with the differing and complementary roles of Slough Borough Council, Cambridge Education, Slough Learning Partnership and Slough Teaching Schools Alliance. Interestingly, as a potential solution, the head teachers were asking for Cambridge Education to be able to offer a wider range of services.

Integrated Support Service (ISS)

The three year long service level agreement between schools and the educational psychologists ended in August 2015. When a new three year service level agreement was negotiated for 2015 to 2018 98% of those schools which had been previously involved bought into the new arrangements. This provides a sound financial basis to give clarity, certainty and stability for the service, clearly dependent on the strength and impact of service delivery. This extension is a strong indication of the schools' commitment to the service and positive response to its effectiveness and quality.

The Integrated Support Service has focused on providing more robust measures of effectiveness of intervention. Measures demonstrate positive changes for vulnerable children who have received support so far this academic year. This has been reflected by other services and schools approaching the team to purchase additional time.

Access and School Services

The Access and School Services team recently (March 2016) received some positive feedback from the Ofsted scrutiny of safeguarding related to children missing education (CME) and home education:

'Arrangements to track children missing from education are effective. The high rate of referrals, approximately 400 per annum, reflects the high mobility of children in and out of the borough. Notifications to the children missing education co-ordinator are prompt and appropriate, as are the subsequent actions. The whereabouts of these children are comprehensively recorded and communication with other local authorities is efficient. In the few cases where children are taken abroad, this is investigated in depth.'

'Around 80 children and young people are electively home educated in Slough. Appropriate steps are taken to build positive relationships with educators.'

During the recent allocation of secondary places the Admissions Team were able to offer a preferred school to 96% (1895 children) of applicants out of a total of 1969 with 71% (1399 children) getting their first preference. This process went smoothly, successfully and on time.

Early Years and Children's Centres

The Ofsted inspection of Slough Children's Centres in March 2015 reported, 'Parents are highly positive about the services received. They see the centres as safe, non-judgemental and inclusive places where they are treated with respect. Specialist 'stay and play' sessions for children with special educational needs and disabilities provide a very supportive environment in which to promote children's development. Staff work with parents and children, modelling interactions and giving helpful advice.

A questionnaire in May 2015 reported positively in the following areas:

- Advisory Teachers, Development Workers and Business Support: figures in excess of 70% of respondents (up to a maximum of 87%) conveying positive comments for being efficient, supportive, informative, meeting needs and contributing to quality improvement in the early years settings.
- Childcare Development and Sufficiency, Funded Early Learning and Workforce Development similarly achieved figures in excess of 70% on the same judgements.
- 84% of respondents reported that the Early Years Service improved outcomes for children and young people.

Across service areas numerous positive comments have been made with also some areas to improve which are being taken constructively to improve the quality and effectiveness of delivery.