

Date: 3rd May 2019

Department: Children, Learning & Skills
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FAO School Headteacher

Dear Headteacher,

LA Partnership Offer

Further to our discussions and survey last term, I am pleased to write to you with our confirmed LA school effectiveness partnership offer, which will take effect from September 2019.

BACKGROUND

As outlined in our presentation to headteachers last term, funding for school improvement services in Slough have previously been provided by a combination of £800k centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and £200k from the £1.3m Education Services Grant (ESG), which the council received from central government. This funding provided a total of £1m for school improvement in 2015-16 and around £2m for all education functions. The Education Services Grant is no longer paid to the council and the funding previously retained from the DSG for school improvement is now delegated directly to schools. To date the council have continued to fund school improvement services despite receiving no income for these functions, but we can no longer afford to do so at the same level.

FUNDING 2019-20

The council will receive a portion (£412k) of the former ESG from the Central School Services Block of the DSG to support education functions in maintained schools and academies. This funding largely covers the post of statutory DCS, the attendance service and asset management. It does not cover school improvement.

The council receives a direct grant from central government of £50k to cover statutory school improvement functions. I have been asked to outline how we might deliver these functions if we only utilised the £50k grant provided. It would look something like this:-

- Have a statutory DCS (funded by CSSB)
- Basic liaison with DfE/Ofsted e.g. to answer factual queries about schools including queries about complaints. Likely to be basic response of having no further information other than published data or contacts from parents/members.

- Monitor standards in maintained schools – would be desk top analysis
- Intervene in maintained schools of concern – based on desk top analysis, external consultant employed when necessary
- Nominate LA governors for maintained schools
- Moderation of key stage assessments in maintained schools
- SACRE
- Conduct s175 safeguarding audit

Partnership offer 2019-20 - Beyond the Statutory Minimum

It is not our intention to deliver only the statutory minimum services. Whilst we understand that schools are responsible for their own improvement, we believe that the local authority can play a strong facilitative role in the school system. We are proud of our work in recent years where we have put in place policies, governance, networks, seminars, a dedicated education website, and support from officers and consultants, which have helped strengthen the school system.

We want to continue investing in the school system. Therefore, in the spirit of partnership, the council is topping up the £50k school improvement grant with a further £200k to fund a core council offer and asking all schools to enhance the services available by subscribing to a wider offer. The offer will be strategically monitored at the Slough School Improvement Board (SSIB) and Slough Education Partnership Board (SEPB). Subscribing schools will also be asked to complete an annual evaluation of the content, quality and impact of the offer.

The core council offer is attached to this letter (Appendix A). The schedule for the additional subscription services are attached as Appendix B Schedule 1.

Please note that, following consultation with schools, the pricing for the subscription offer was changed slightly. The preference of most schools was for a flat rate charging model, but smaller schools preferred a per pupil rate. We have therefore used a flat rate charging model, but reduced the cost for small schools (primary less than 300 and secondary/all-through less than 600).

This is a partnership offer intended only to cover the costs of the service. It is possible that the current pricing model may result in a financial loss for the council this year, but we have nevertheless decided to go ahead at risk. The partnership offer and charging model will be reviewed for 2020-21 in conjunction with SEPB and SSIB.

I very much hope that you feel able to opt into the subscription offer and look forward to our continuing journey of collaboration.



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Appendices

Appendix A - Core service details

Appendix B Schedule 1 – Subscription service

Appendix A

Core service details – Academies *(Fully funded by the LA)*

Council Leadership

- Strategic Leadership (policy, strategy, communications)
- DFE/Ofsted/RSC Liaison
- Breakfast briefings for school leaders and governors (hosted by SBC twice a year)
- Various partnership Boards including SEPB and SSIB

School Improvement

- Half a day annual conversation with council linked to CRE evaluation

Safeguarding

- On-line Safeguarding audit tool
- Basic liaison and referral with Ofsted/DfE complaints
- Updates on national, regional and local policy and procedures - termly Newsletter
- Basic advice and guidance

Data and IT systems

- Nexus subscription (perspective lite)

Governance Support

- Updates on national, regional and local policy and procedures - Termly Newsletter

Other

- Bulk-buy purchases to secure reduced rates for schools e.g. Egress, Sophos and other services commissioned

Appendix B – Schedule 1

Schedule 1

Subscription details

Duration: 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020

Council Leadership

- Three (termly) leader seminars facilitated by SBC and school leaders
- The Link website access and weekly communication from SBC

School Improvement

- 4 days school effectiveness consultant time to be used at the discretion of the school (includes time for report writing)
- The Key for Leaders
- 1 x Leadership network meeting per half term (Facilitated by School Effectiveness Partner)
- 1 x Network meeting per half term (Facilitated by SBC). Theme TBC in consultation with subscribing schools.

Safeguarding

- DSL networks x 3 a year - Slough services, policies and procedures
- Safeguarding Newsletter – Three times a year
- Information and advice and when needed via phone/email
- Dealing with Ofsted/DfE complaints including school follow up & report when required
- Two free CPD sessions a year for DSL's safeguarding
- One free safeguarding governor training – training for safeguarding governors to carry out their functions around scrutiny and accountability (one session)
- Annual 'New to the role welcome meeting/Induction' for DSL/Governors in those roles (twice a year)
- Discounted rates for attending additional CPD sessions/events throughout the year (30%)
- Discounted rates for whole school safeguarding training (20%)

Data and IT systems

- FFT
- ALPS (secondary schools only)
- Data analysis provided by LA data team
- CLEAPS (primary schools only)

Governance Support

- The Key for School Governors
- Updates on national, regional and local policy and procedures - Termly Newsletter
- Governor meetings. Events for governors x 3 a year
- Discounted rates for attending additional training/events throughout the year (30%)