

Putting children, young people and families at the heart of our reform work

Dear Colleagues,

As we begin a new academic year, I would like to **thank you for your continued commitment to the children, young people and families of Slough.**

This year presents an exciting opportunity to reshape how we support children and young people across education, health and care. Through SEND and social care reform together with the Best Start in Life plan, we have a shared opportunity to deliver better outcomes through earlier intervention, stronger partnerships and more inclusive communities.

Schools, colleges, early years providers and alternative provision settings are where needs are identified, relationships are built and support makes the greatest difference. Together, these reforms challenge us to build a system that intervenes earlier, strengthens inclusion and ensures children receive the right support at the right time.

Our Shared Ambition

- Create a **more inclusive** education system.
- Strengthen **earlier identification** and **support**.
- **Improve outcomes** for children and young people with SEND.
- Build **stronger links** between education, social care, health and family support.
- Ensure **resources are used effectively** and **sustainably**.

Our Commitment to Improvement

Alongside the reforms, significant work is underway to address the findings of the recent **children's services inspection**. I would like to thank our settings, the Virtual School, social workers and carers for ensuring that our children in care have positive education outcomes.

Our Director of Children's Services, Debbie Jones, wants to reassure all education settings that improvement activity is progressing at pace. Importantly, Ofsted recognised the positive impact of the new leadership team, noting that **practitioners felt leaders genuinely care about the workforce, are visible and transparent, and are working to change the culture.**

Debbie will be engaging directly with SPHA and SASH to ensure schools are fully informed about planned improvements and have opportunities to help shape the journey ahead. Co-production with schools, families and partners will remain a core principle of our approach.



Best Start Family Hubs

Our Best Start Family Hubs continue to provide a wide range of support, activities and early help services for children, young people and families.

Please share information about activities with families and encourage them to explore the support available through the Slough Family Information Service - Best Start Family Hubs.

View the latest Best Start Family Hubs timetables and activities via the link below:

[Slough Family Information Service – Best Start Family Hubs](#)

All Slough residents can access the Togetherness Programme via [Pathways library - Togetherness](#) the passcode is PARENTING, parents can access a variety of modules and complete in their own time and in home languages.

We are also beginning to finalised our parenting offer, having trained a number of partners in the Nurturing Programme via the Centre for Emotional Health, if your school or setting have been trained and want to discuss delivery of the programme or you would like to attend training in the future please contact johanna.mullin@slough.gov.uk. Parents and professionals can self-refer here:

[Slough Parenting Groups Referral Form – Fill in form](#)

Early Years Autumn Term Visits: Joyfulness and Belonging

This autumn, the Early Years Team will be visiting a range of early years providers, including schools, as part of our work to support children to have the Best Start in Life. This year's focus is joyfulness and children's sense of belonging, exploring the question:

“What is it like to be a child in this setting?”

Visits will consider how children experience their environment, relationships and learning opportunities, and how feeling happy, valued, connected and secure supports learning, development and positive outcomes.

This work supports our collective ambition to improve Good Level of Development (GLD) outcomes, with Slough working towards 78.1% of children achieving GLD and 71% of disadvantaged children.

Visits will provide an opportunity to celebrate effective practice, discuss current priorities and reflect together on how we can strengthen children's experiences and outcomes across Slough.

Karen Loft and Sharon Rose, Early Years Advisory Teachers, will contact schools and settings directly to arrange visits where appropriate.



Strengthening Our Partnership with Schools

I would like to **thank Pete Rowe for his contribution as our Consultant Headteacher**. His knowledge, insight and challenge have been invaluable in helping understand the lived experience of children and young people, their families and the staff who support them.

Deborah Glassbrook, our SEND Commissioner, is inviting school leaders to become involved in **SEND improvement activity**. Opportunities will include supporting reviews, contributing to strategic groups and helping shape future developments across the SEND system.

There are also opportunities to get involved in our **Safeguarding Partnership work**. If you are interested in finding out more, please email me. **We would welcome your involvement**.

Experts at Hand Update

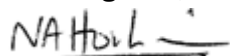
We are pleased to report that good progress is being made in developing our **Experts at Hand** model. Over recent months, we have worked with partners to shape the approach and ensure it supports our wider ambitions for inclusion, early intervention and improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND. We recognise the strong interest from schools and settings in this work, and a dedicated SEND newsletter will be issued in the coming weeks providing a more detailed update on progress, next steps and opportunities for engagement.

Looking Forward

This is an important year for Slough. By bringing together SEND reform, children's social care reform and the Best Start in Life agenda as a single vision for children and families, we have an opportunity to create a more inclusive, preventative and child-centred system.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support. I wish you, your staff and pupils a successful and rewarding academic year ahead.

Kind regards,



Neil Hoskinson

Director of Education - Slough Borough Council

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