

23rd May 2018

Dear all,

Slough Local School Improvement Funding – update 5

This is your half termly update on the Local School Improvement Fund (LSIF) and events linked to school improvement in Slough.

Firstly, exciting news; a group of 10 schools have been identified and agreed to be part of the national bid to the 'Strategic School Improvement Fund' for funding to be used for an improvement project in these 10 primary schools. The project is focused on raising attainment and improving progress in reading, reducing the attainment gap in KS2 between PPG and non-PPG while raising standards overall, using SOLO Taxonomy to align planning, refine formative assessment and provide structured feedback to increase challenge and deepen thinking. Heather Clements (HMC Consultancy) was brought in to work with heads and wrote the bid on our behalf. On the 11th May I represented Johnny Kyriacou at the Regional School Commissioner's offices in Watford where those present started the process of sorting and rating the bids against a very strict set of criteria. Unfortunately, I had to leave the room whilst the Slough bid was discussed but I hope, based on the other bids, that ours got through this round. We will find out whether or not we have been successful in July!

I attended the Education Scrutiny meeting with Johnny where we presented the work that the local authority is doing to support schools of all types of schools in Slough. It was good to be able to let our local councillors how much is happening in schools and the proactive approach that is being taken by the local authority with its team of consultants who have been carefully matched to schools and also the exciting work that is happening thanks to the funding available for school to school support. They were very impressed.

Rachel Gallyot and I attended the Academies Show in London. It was useful listening to Sean Harford speaking about the curriculum and the expectations of Ofsted in school inspections. Likewise, we attended a session on well-being and recruitment as well as the changing face of professional development and learning for staff. We have this week received the presentations for the sessions so I will go through these at half term and will share with you the most useful of these.

Rachel and I have also met up with Manni Sanghera who runs School Direct from UCGS as a result of trying to find ways to recruit more teachers in Slough. We had explored the TES Straight to Teaching route but this is quite expensive and then we found out that UCGS run a number of routes into teaching – right on our doorstep, and without cost. We are now working as a team, with Navroop from Wexham Primary joining us too, to put on a big re-launch of School Direct so that all schools get an up-to-date picture of all the routes on offer. The re-launch is happening at The Barn, Wexham Court Primary School on 4th July from 4:00pm – 6:00pm. Manni has sent an email with details of how to sign up on Eventbrite. We hope to see lots of schools represented.

Following on from my February update, I am pleased to say that Rachel, Johnny and I met with two representatives from the DfE regarding the work the local authority is doing with regards to

the wider remit of school improvement. They had been informed by Dame Kate Dethridge that Slough had created something exciting and wanted this exploring. During the meeting we were able to give them lots of information which they found extremely useful and this will be presented as part of their paper on innovative approaches being taken to school improvement.

Local School Improvement Fund

As an update to the two reports sent out last week, Marish and Willow have both supported Iqra Primary School; apologies for this oversight.

I am pleased to say that Montem, Wexham Court, Priory and Western House primary schools have received funding for a project which aims to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children in the early years and to improve the uptake of pupil premium funding for families in early years' and KS1. The bid was submitted at £16,200 and after consideration the panel agreed to fund £12,000. When the project has run its course, the schools will be looking to increase the outreach of this project, so watch this space for further news!

Langley Hall Primary Academy has also had a bid accepted based on Hooked on Books and Talk for Maths. The bid submitted was for £2617.76 and the full amount has been allocated.

I visited Sue Rose and Peter Collins at Westgate School to review the project being undertaken with virtually all the secondary schools which has created networks of subject leaders across all year groups including 6th form. The impact of the work being undertaken so far is very exciting and has been warmly welcomed by staff across all the schools who are really embracing the opportunity to work together to improve outcomes for all pupils in all secondary schools.

In order to get bids processed as quickly as possible we are no longer sticking to the dates that were given for bid submissions. It is easier to send through bids as and when they are written and the panel share this and their view by email so that we can get back to schools as soon as possible; this means that projects can get underway without delay.

The total amount allocated from the fund so far is £96,493 which leaves a balance of £83,507 which will need to be used before April 2019.

Mental Health

Following on from the half day conference I have been busy completing my course, which I've just heard I've passed – phew!

I will be sending out a date for the working party to get together so that we can start putting together a handbook for schools as well as creating the mental health charter.

Enjoy your half term break (from school, or children, or both, or neither) and the final, undoubtedly very busy, last half term of school.

Kind regards

Rachel Cross

Senior Education Liaison Officer