



Oxfordshire Strategic Schools Partnership Board

Annual report 2017-2018

Oxfordshire's Strategic Schools Partnership Board (SSPB) brings partners together to promote the development of sustainable school to school support across the county and to identify key priorities for school improvement to benefit all schools in the county. The Board's aspiration is to raise standards and support all children and young people in the county to be educated in schools that are good or outstanding.

In order to meet this aspiration, a number of priorities were identified in September 2017 and agreed by the Board as the focus for work over the next two years:

1. Support effective recruitment and retention;
2. Reduce fixed term and permanent exclusions;
3. Improve attendance;
4. Support the development of leaders and managers in schools and settings.

Key achievements to date include:

1. The secondment of a senior teacher to design a programme to support the recruitment of teachers in Oxfordshire is starting to show some significant signs of success. The secondee is coached by a member of the SSPB and his performance is regularly monitored by other members of the Board. This is a two-year project, as it was recognised that the impact of this work will develop over time. Funding for the second year has been agreed.
2. A small-scale project to identify practice to support those children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion is being undertaken by staff from the Oxfordshire Intervention Team (OXIT) and staff from Mulberry Bush Special School (Teaching School). This is a small-scale intervention, which, if successful, will be disseminated to other schools.
3. The SSPB initiated a low-cost project to support schools with improving attendance. The project, which will be launched to schools in June 2018, is being led by OTSA and will be delivered in collaboration with the OCC attendance team as part of the overall 'Learner Engagement Strategy'. The project will identify schools who have improved their attendance and seek to disseminate their strategies to have a positive impact on the performance of other schools.

4. The SSPB has supported the OTSA Early Headship programme for the past 2 years, providing match funding allowing all new headteachers the opportunity to benefit from group sessions, one to one coaching from a designated system leader and attendance at the annual headteachers conference.

5. The SSPB also financially supports the Operational Group, which works as a collective of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), the Oxfordshire Diocesan Board, the Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance and Oxfordshire Headteacher Associations in delivering school improvement strategies to those schools which require additional support. This group also ensures that the system leaders involved in those strategies are appropriately trained and supported in this work.

Financing these projects:

Finance for these projects has come from the funds originally allocated by OCC and Schools Forum. The accompanying reports show the precise allocation for each project along with administrative costs for this financial year. The Board is grateful to Oxford Brookes University for providing accommodation for regular meetings, to OCC for funding the clerking of the meetings and OTSA for funding the SSPB website and the management and external audit of the SSPB funds.

Aims for the year ahead:

The development of area based education partnerships such as the SSPB is the subject of much discussion nationally. The majority of the partnerships are voluntarily taking responsibility for the collective performance of school in their local area. They are based on a shared moral purpose and strong professional networks. But members of the SSPB fully recognise that the power and influence of this partnership has not yet been fully realised or evidenced.

As a result, there have been a number of meetings for the Board and wider partners to discuss the future opportunities of the SSPB and how it can work more effectively for the good of all schools in Oxfordshire. Currently there are three work streams underway:

- to capture the purpose of such a board;
- to gain clarity and transparency with regard to the relationship between OCC, the Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance, the Oxfordshire Diocesan Board and the SSPB;
- to agree how this can be effectively communicated, with a supporting engagement plan.

This work will take time to develop, but will place the SSPB in a better position for the future to ensure sustainability and develop strong partnerships with key players in the local context.

Adam Arnell, Director, Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance
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