

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 15 April 2010

RE: Sneyd

Purpose

To respond to Scrutiny's request, at the previous Scrutiny meeting (2 March 2010) that they be updated on the work taking place to manage the closure of Sneyd.

1. Pupil numbers

Following some years of declining standards and numbers and after a long and very detailed consultation the decision was taken to close Sneyd Community School on 31 March 2012.

Closing a secondary school, even a small school like Sneyd, is usually phased over a number of years.

For Sneyd the plan currently in place is as shown in the table below.

Academic Year 09/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Year 9 to leave 31 August 2010 to start their KS4 education in their new school• Year 11 to leave 31 August 2010 to start their KS5 in their new school
Academic Year 10/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Year 7 intake• Year 9 to leave 31 August 2011 to start their KS4 in their new school• Year 11 to leave 31 August 2011 to start their KS5 in their new school
Academic Year 11/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Year 7 intake• Year 9 to leave 31 August 2012 to start their KS4 at their new school

The option selected for closure was that no new school places would be created with the pupils moving from Sneyd taking up surplus places in either Walsall or out of borough schools.

The numbers on roll at the school are shown in the table below.

Date	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Total Y7-11	Year 12	Year 13	Year 14	Total Post-16	Grand Total
01-Oct 09	70	99	93	144	186	592	40	21	3	64	656
21-Jan10	67	95	65	138	184	549	41	21	3	65	614
01-Mar 10	64	93	64	138	184	543	41	21	3	65	608
17-Mar 10	63	93	63	137	184	540	41	21	3	65	605
29-Mar 10	63	92	57	137	184	533	40	18	0	58	591

Walsall Children's Services – Serco has asked the Integrated Young People's Support Services to provide support to the current Year 11s who may want to transfer to a new school or college at the start of their KS5

education on 1 September 2010.

For the current Year 9 pupils, who will transfer to new schools in September, an admission round was held and allocations made. During the admissions round, parents were invited to drop-in sessions and some schools with surplus places held open evenings. Offers have been made to all Year 9 pupils and the process of appeals and reallocations, where requested, is on going.

A number of parents did not express a preference and did not accept or reject their allocated place. Admissions staff have provided considerable support to these families and the majority have now confirmed arrangements.

A number of receiving schools have indicated that they believe that they and the moving Year 9 Sneyd pupils would be advantaged by transferring during the summer term. This will allow the pupils to join their new colleges using the summer term to prepare.

The table below shows how the year groups will progress through the school.

	A/Y 2002/ 03	A/Y 2003 /04	A/Y 2004/ 05	A/Y 2005/ 06	A/Y 2006/ 07	A/Y 2007/ 08	A/Y 2008/ 09	A/Y 2009/ 10	A/Y 2010/ 11	A/Y 2011/ 12	A/Y 2012/ 13
Intake September 2009								Y7	Y8	Y9 LEAVE 31 AUGUST TO START KS4 AT NEW SCHOOL	
Intake September 2008							Y7	Y8	Y9 LEAVE 31 AUGUST TO START KS4 AT NEW SCHOOL		
Intake September 2007						Y7	Y8	Y9 LEAVE 31 AUGUST TO START KS4 AT NEW SCHOOL			
Intake September 2006					Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11 TO LEAVE SCHOOL ON 31 AUGUST OR START KS5 AT NEW SCHOOL		
Intake September 2005				Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11 TO LEAVE SCHOOL ON 31 AUGUST OR START KS5 AT NEW SCHOOL			
Intake September 2004			Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13		
Intake September 2003		Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13			

A/Y = Academic Year

Y7 = 12+; Y8 = 13+; Y9 = 14+; Y10=15+; Y11=16+; Y12=17+; Y13=18+

KS3 – YEARS 7 TO 9

KS4 – YEARS 10 TO 11

A number of parents have chosen to transfer pupils out of Sneyd as mid year admissions to both Walsall and out of borough schools. Numbers are being monitored.

2. Transport

Pupils who live 3 miles (2 miles for families on some benefits) from the nearest school that can offer them a place are entitled to support with their transport costs. For mainstream secondary pupils this is usually a bus pass.

Walsall Children's Services – Serco has, exceptionally, agreed to consider supporting the transport cost outside of this policy of the 09/10 Year 9 pupils transferring to new secondary schools on 1 September 2010.

3. Uniform

Walsall Children's Services – Serco has agreed, exceptionally, to contribute £50 towards the cost of new uniforms for the 09/10 Year 9 pupils transferring to a new secondary school on 1 September 2010.

4. Building

Throughout the process of considering the closure of the school, Elected Members asked officers to explore ways of retaining education and community use on the school site. The future of the Sneyd building is connected to the possible development of a 14 to 19 regional University Technical College (UTC) on the site.

The group supporting the potential sponsors for the development of the expression of interest for the UTC has a sub group looking at the community use that takes place in the Sneyd building and the land and lake that make up the school site.

5. Cabinet/ Scrutiny

Reports have been made to Cabinet and Scrutiny as follows:

Cabinet

22 October 2008, 22 April 2009, 15 July 2009, 13 August, 21 October 2009 and 13 January 2010.

Scrutiny

30 October 2008, 20 November 2008, 18 December 2008, 18 March 2009 and 24 July 2009.

6. Finance

Schools Forum, at its meeting on 2 March, agreed that 7/12 of the AWPU for the pupils transferring to Year 10 in their new school should be removed from the Sneyd budget and given to the receiving schools.

This will give the receiving schools the resources to educate the ex Sneyd pupils for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 March 2011 after which they will receive full funding for the pupils.

Walsall Children's Services – Serco has been working closely with the school for the last year to ensure that the school's resources are managed in the most cost effective manner, during the turbulent closure period.

To date the staff reduction process and the numbers of staff securing new jobs has allowed the school to manage within its budget and carry forward balances into the 2010 – 11 financial year to help close the funding gap when pupil numbers reduce dramatically in September 2010.

A further review of staffing will take place in the Summer Term 2010 in order to balance the school's budget on 31 August 2011, the end of the 2010-11 academic year.

In the final academic year there will be approximately 60 pupils remaining at the school. The fixed costs of the school such as management overhead, premises, maintenance, caretaking and cleaning, insurance, business rates, water, energy, ICT, plus teaching staff, cannot be met by the delegated budget share generated by 60 pupils. It is expected that a significant deficit will occur, officers will explore ways of managing this problem.

7. Staff

Walsall Children's Services – Serco is working with the school to manage the contraction that will result from the decline in pupil numbers from September 2010.

Currently 17 redundancies are being explored.

Staff who are at risk are being supported to find alternative employment, Walsall schools are being encouraged to consider at risk Sneyd staff and bumped redundancies are being considered.

Council colleagues in both HR and Finance are being updated on progress.

8. Standards and Management

Sneyd was given a Notice to Improve on 13 November 2008.

In February 2010, following an HMI monitoring visit, the school was placed in Special Measures.

The Local Authority (LA) is required to send a plan to Ofsted, within ten working days after the publication of the report, explaining the steps being taken to address the priorities identified as a result of the inspection findings. We are expected to identify what partnership arrangements with other schools will be established to support improvement.

One to one tuition is in place for transferring pupils.

Walsall Children's Services – Serco colleagues are working with the school, Black Country Challenge and other Walsall Headteachers to ensure that pupils attending Sneyd receive their curriculum entitlement and are given the opportunity to reach their academic potential.

A Partnership Review Group has been established to support this work and report to the Sneyd Transition Group.

Additional resources to pay for support for the curriculum through an Advanced Skills Teacher have been identified.

The interim Headteacher's contract ends on 31 August 2010. An executive Headteacher arrangement is being explored by the IEB to maximise school to school support and to provide a flexible leadership responding to the changes in the pupil and staff numbers.

9. Sixth form

The sixth form at Sneyd has always been small, making it expensive and at risk of viability.

The numbers in the sixth form from September 2010 will be unviable. The LSC has confirmed that this is the case, and that, post 16 funding for Sneyd will cease after 31 July 2010.

Discussions are taking place with the LSC over funding and liability and work is taking place to protect the quality of the curriculum of the pupils currently in the sixth form. The IEB is not able to fund an independent sixth form provision at Sneyd, so discussions are taking place with other providers to secure continuity of courses elsewhere from September.

10. Equipment

Walsall Children's Services – Serco is working with the school to develop an inventory of equipment at the school and ongoing leases.

11. Governance

An IEB was established on 20 January and has replaced the governing body of the school and is working closely with Walsall Children's Services – Serco to ensure a smooth movement towards the closure.

12. Attendance

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) visits the school twice a week and has spoken to all pupils with an attendance below 80% to explain the consequences of not attending school. The Integrated Support Worker (ISW) makes regular visits to the school to support pupils with attendance of below 80-85%. A pupil at Sneyd was selected from a raffle draw for the 'good attendance scheme' and won tickets to a Walsall Football match.

13. Community Use

Council colleagues with responsibility for community use at the Sneyd site have been asked to report to Scrutiny.

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