

## **Cabinet – 22 April 2008**

### **The Future of Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College – Options for Consultation - supplementary report**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Zahid Ali, Children's Services

**Service:** Walsall Children's Services, Serco

**Wards:** Bloxwich West

**Key decision:** No

**Forward plan:** No

#### **1. Summary of report**

This report seeks permission to consult on options for the future of Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College.

Sneyd Community School has been working to improve education standards in the school for a number of years with additional support from the local authority and the Black Country Challenge. Unfortunately despite this the current school remains educationally and financially unviable through falling rolls and inadequate education standards. Following a period of scrutiny of future proposals for the school, this report proposes that the education on the site should be transformed. Options A, B, and C in this report describe how this can be done, and include proposals to submit an expression of interest in relation to the establishment of a 14-19 engineering academy.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the commencement of consultation on options A, B and C outlined in this report.
- 2.2 That Cabinet asks the relevant officers to commence discussions with Walsall College, Wolverhampton University and the DCSF regarding the establishment of a 14-19 Engineering academy in the Borough, potentially on the Sneyd site; and to consult with other local secondary headteachers regarding this proposal and also the possible establishment of a Skills Centre on the Sneyd Site. Either outcome would be in keeping with the overall secondary educational strategy to establish vocational provision across the Borough and would fulfil the desire expressed by Walsall Council's Children and Young People's Scrutiny and Performance Panel to retain education provision on the Sneyd site.

### 3. Background information

- 3.1 On 22 October 2008, Cabinet considered a report which outlined two options for the future of Sneyd – A Specialist Maths and Computing College. Following consideration of the issues raised in the report, Cabinet resolved to refer the matter to an early meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel (CYPSP) for full consideration of all options available to the school and that the full implications of the community uses be considered in conjunction with any proposal coming forward in relation to the school.
- 3.2 The CYPSP held a special meeting at Sneyd on 20 November 2008 and reconvened on 18 December 2008. After considering the options and additional information, the Panel decided to establish a working group to consider the options in greater detail. The Working Group met on 6 January, 15 January and 3 February 2009 and reported back to the Panel on 5 March. The Working Group's report is attached as **Appendix A**.
- 3.3 The Panel resolved to recommend that
- a) Cabinet pursue a solution that ensures the continuation of education provision on the site of Sneyd Community School, supported by further investigation into viable solutions between Council Officers, representatives of Walsall Children's Services Serco, the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Office of the Schools Commissioner (OSC)
  - b) This solution for the continuation of education provision on the site of Sneyd Community School must:
    - 1. be financially viable
    - 2. be devised with particular attention paid to its impact on all schools within the north west area of Walsall
    - 3. meet the needs of the local community.
- 3.4 Since October 2008, officers have held numerous detailed discussions with representatives from the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Office of the Schools Commissioner (OSC) regarding the future of Sneyd. The support of these bodies is a prerequisite for a number of the options considered by members. It was made very clear in these discussions that approval for Sneyd to become an academy would not be forthcoming. Other options were discussed to ensure that whatever proposals were put to Cabinet for consideration for consultation would secure the necessary support in addition to leading to improved educational outcomes for young people. The proposals detailed in 3.6 below emerged as the most appropriate option.
- 3.4.1 The Scrutiny Panel was very keen to secure the continuation of education on the Sneyd site. Should Sneyd site be available it would give an opportunity to establish new provision which could take the form of an engineering academy (a specialist provision with an engineering focus for the 14-19 age group) or a local Skills centre.

### **3.4.2 Engineering Academy**

This new form of provision has the potential to be the first to be established in the country and would enable Walsall to be at the forefront of educational development.

An engineering academy, specialising in engineering, would exist as a separate provision; pupils would be on its roll and there would be a requirement for a site area and playing fields in proportion to the number of places. The area of land available at the Sneyd site is considerably reduced in size by the lake (approx 38,595 sq metres) from 134,792 sq metres to 96,197sq metres. The DCSF is still developing the model for these Colleges and until there is a clear indication of the minimum number of places required for viability, it will not be known whether the remaining land area would be sufficient. This will be confirmed during the initial consultation period and brought back to Cabinet before any final decision was made. In addition officers will review the community use of the facilities on the Sneyd site and ensure these form part of the final solution brought back to Cabinet following consultation.

The DCSF would expect that an engineering academy would also attract some pupils from neighbouring local authorities. The DCSF is very interested in the possibility of a regional facility in Walsall and it is proposed to explore the establishment of an engineering academy as part of the consultation. Walsall College and the University of Wolverhampton have indicated to the LA and DCSF that they would be very interested in participating in such a development as part of the broader development of the borough-wide entitlement offer for 14 – 19 year olds. Other Local Authorities will be consulted as part of this plan. Relevant officers from the Council and Serco have undertaken initial discussions with the University, Walsall College and the DCSF regarding this possible development and it has been met with positive enthusiasm from all parties.

### **3.4.3 Skills Centre**

A Skills Centre would also provide a range of opportunities for young people from the local community and Walsall as a whole.

Skills Centres are run in partnership by the schools accessing part time places for their pupils who may attend for 1 or 2 days a week depending upon the options chosen. Pupils would remain on roll at their school and there would be no requirement for playing fields although there would be a need for a recreational area for breaks and lunchtime activities. This approach would enhance the secondary strategy core entitlement offer for students in this part of the Borough.

## **3.5 Sneyd – A Specialist Maths and Computing College**

- 3.5.1 Despite the best efforts of the school community and everyone working with them, the combination of standards issues, curriculum delivery and financial viability are such that Sneyd – A Specialist Maths and Computing College is not viable.

- 3.5.2 Detailed information about why it is necessary to consider the future of Sneyd – A Specialist Maths and Computing College is provided in **Appendix B**. Details of the area from which Sneyd draws pupils are provided in **Appendix D** which shows the number of pupils resident in each ward who attend Sneyd. A map showing the home address of pupils on roll at Sneyd in January 2009 is provided as **Appendix E**.

In view of this the options considered previously by Cabinet and the Scrutiny Panel - closure of the school; federation with another school; National Challenge Trust; Sneyd to remain open as an enlarged 11-19 secondary school; Sneyd to become an 11-19 Academy; Sneyd to be replaced by a new 14-19 Engineering Academy or Specialist Skills Centre - have been reviewed in order to identify the most appropriate way forward, taking account of the wishes of the panel that the needs of the local community are met.

### 3.6 Proposals for consultation

- 3.6.1 **Option A. Current education provision at Sneyd ceases on 31 August 2012. No pupils would be admitted to Year 7 or the sixth form in September 2010 and subsequent years. Pupils would transfer on a year on year basis to places at other schools in the borough.**

Pupils who start Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 at Sneyd in September 2009 would complete their Key Stage at Sneyd. All pupils currently in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 would complete their key stage at Sneyd. There would be no admissions to Year 7 or to the sixth form in 2010 and following years. Details of the phased implementation of this option are provided in Table 1(over).

Table 1 Phased transfer arrangements

Year Group in 2009/10 school year	Transfer to alternative school
Y7 (2009 admission)	Sept 2012
Y8	Sept 2011
Y9	Sept 2010
Y10	Sept 2011 (Post 16)
Y11	Sept 2010 (Post 16)
Y12	Leave August 2011; alternative places available in Sept 2010 as appropriate
Y13	Leave August 2010

This would mean that the year groups on roll at Sneyd in the three school years prior to closure would be as shown in Table 2 below. In the 2009/10 school year all year groups would operate. In 2010/11, the school population would comprise pupils in Year 8, Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13. In the 2011/12 school year, there would only be pupils in Year 9.

Table 2 Proposed phased implementation arrangements

School Year		
2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Y7	Y8	Y9
Y8	Y9	Y10 At alternative schools
Y9	Y10 At alternative schools	Y11 At alternative schools
Y10	Y11	Left school or Y12 at alternative schools
Y11	Left school or Y12 at alternative schools	Left school or Y13 at alternative schools
Y12	Y13	Left school Aug 2011
Y13	Left school Aug 2010	

Shaded boxes show the year groups on the Sneyd site.

Details of the estimated availability of places at alternative schools are provided in **Appendix C**. This demonstrates that there would be sufficient places at other schools to accommodate transferring pupils from Sneyd.

Details of the advantages and disadvantages associated with this option are provided in table 3.

Table 3 Option A advantages and disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would provide a realistic timescale</li> <li>• Enables pupils to access places at higher achieving schools</li> <li>• Availability of places would enable pupils to transfer in groups</li> <li>• Minimises disruption for pupils</li> <li>• Pupils would complete their key stage at Sneyd</li> <li>• Receiving schools have time to plan for additional pupils from 2010</li> <li>• Temporary accommodation would not be required</li> <li>• Additional posts would be available at the receiving schools, creating opportunities for Sneyd staff</li> <li>• 14 -19 proposal ensures the continuity of education provision on the Sneyd site</li> <li>• Pupils from Sneyd would have access to a broader range of curriculum opportunities at the receiving schools</li> <li>• Community use of the facilities on the Sneyd site would be secured through this option along side the proposed 14 – 19 provision</li> <li>• Additional places would be provided at Pool Hayes as part of the implementation of the secondary strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving schools would receive a large number of additional pupils</li> <li>• With the rapid decline in pupil numbers at Sneyd, the Schools Funding Formula is unlikely to be sufficient to fund the running of Sneyd especially in 2011/12 when there would only be pupils in Year 9</li> <li>• Challenge of meeting Year 9 entitlement to a broad balanced curriculum in 2011/12</li> <li>• Staff retention issues at Sneyd over the period to closure</li> </ul>

**3.6.2 Option B. Current education provision at Sneyd ceases on 31 August 2012 and significant enlargement of Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall from 1 September 2010.**

**No pupils would be admitted to Sneyd in September 2010, pupils would transfer on a phased basis to other schools, and the school would close on 31 August 2012. Additional places would be provided at Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall from September 2010.**

Pupils who start Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 at Sneyd in September 2009 would complete their Key Stage at Sneyd. All pupils currently in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 would complete their key stage at Sneyd. There would be no admissions to Year 7 or to the sixth form in 2010 and following years. Details of the phased implementation of this option are provided in Table 4.

Table 4 Phased transfer arrangements

Year Group in 2009/10 school year	Transfer to alternative school
Y7 (2009 admission)	Sept 2012
Y8	Sept 2011
Y9	Sept 2010
Y10	Sept 2011 (Post 16)
Y11	Sept 2010 (Post 16)
Y12	Leave August 2011; alternative places available in Sept 2010 as appropriate
Y13	Leave August 2010

This would mean that the year groups on roll at Sneyd in the three school years prior to closure would be as shown in Table 5 below. In the 2009/10 school year all year groups would operate. In 2010/11, the school population would comprise pupils in Year 8, Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13. In the 2011/12 school year, there would only be pupils in Year 9.

Table 5 Proposed phased implementation arrangements

School Year		
2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Y7	Y8	Y9
Y8	Y9	Y10 At alternative schools
Y9	Y10 At alternative schools	Y11 At alternative schools
Y10	Y11	Left school or Y12 at alternative schools
Y11	Left school or Y12 at alternative schools	Left school or Y13 at alternative schools
Y12	Y13	Left school Aug 2011
Y13	Left school Aug 2010	

Shaded boxes show the year groups on the Sneyd site.

This option would require the provision of additional places at Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall schools in order to provide sufficient secondary school

places in the local area for the community. These would become available for Year 7 admissions from September 2010 and pupils from other year groups would transfer as indicated in Table 5 above. Officers would work with families to find suitable alternative places at the schools it is proposed to enlarge or at other schools where places may be available.

Details of the numbers of additional places proposed at these schools are provided in Table 6 below. It is proposed to enlarge Frank F Harrison by three forms of entry from 2010/11, to enlarge Pool Hayes by two forms of entry from 2010/11 and by a further one form of entry from 2013/14, and to enlarge Willenhall by one form of entry from 2010/11. The number of sixth form places at a school is not fixed in the same way as admissions to Years 7 – 11 and any increase in Post 16 numbers across the schools is expected to be modest as there is a range of opportunities available and many pupils go on to college or work-based training settings. In view of this it is considered that any additional Post 16 numbers can be accommodated.

Table 6 Changes in admission numbers

School	Admission number*				
	Current	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Frank F Harrison	180	270	270	270	270
Pool Hayes	213	270	270	270	300
Willenhall	270	300	300	300	300
Sneyd	250	0	0	0	0

\* Applies to Year 7 and progresses through the school

Table 7 Schools proposed to be enlarged

<b>Frank F Harrison</b>				
Admission Number in 2009: 180				
Proposed Admission Number from 2010: 270				
Additional places in year group on phased basis from 2010: 90				
Total number of 11 – 16 places at full implementation: 1,350				
Phased implementation	School Years			
Year Group	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 7	No additional places in any year group	Year 7 additional places	Year 7 additional places	Additional places in all year groups
Year 8		Year 8 no change	Year 8 additional places	
Year 9		Year 9 no change	Year 9 – no change	
Year 10		Year 10 additional places	Year 10 additional places	
Year 11		Year 11 no change	Year 11 additional places	
Post 16		Post 16 additional places	Post 16 additional places	
Total additional places		180 & Post 16	360 & Post 16	450 & Post 16

<b>Pool Hayes</b>				
Admission Number in 2009: 213				
Proposed Admission Number from 2010: 270 and from 2013: 300				
Additional places in year group on phased basis from 2010: 57 and from 2013: 87				
Total number of 11 – 16 places at full implementation: 1,500				
Phased implementation	School Years			
Year Group	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 7	No additional places in any year group	Year 7 additional places	Year 7 additional places	Additional places in all year groups
Year 8		Year 8 no change	Year 8 additional places	
Year 9		Year 9 no change	Year 9 – no change	
Year 10		Year 10 additional places	Year 10 additional places	
Year 11		Year 11 no change	Year 11 additional places	
Post 16		Post 16 additional places	Post 16 additional places	
Total additional places		120 & Post 16	240 & Post 16	300 & Post 16
<b>Willenhall</b>				
Admission Number in 2009: 270				
Proposed Admission Number from 2010: 300				
Additional places in year group on phased basis from 2010: 30				
Total number of 11 – 16 places at full implementation: 1,500				
Phased implementation	School Years			
Year Group	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 7	No additional places in any year group	Year 7 additional places	Year 7 additional places	Additional places in all year groups
Year 8		Year 8 no change	Year 8 additional places	
Year 9		Year 9 no change	Year 9 – no change	
Year 10		Year 10 additional places	Year 10 additional places	
Year 11		Year 11 no change	Year 11 additional places	
Post 16		Post 16 additional places	Post 16 additional places	
Total additional places		60 & Post 16	120 & Post 16	150 & Post 16

Shaded boxes show the year groups on the Sneyd site.



The proposed enlargements at Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall would all be classed as 'significant enlargements' which would require the publication of statutory proposals. These would all be linked with the proposal to close Sneyd and would therefore be the subject of joint consultation and determination ie none would be considered in isolation by decision-makers.

Temporary accommodation would need to be provided at these three schools in line with the increase in pupil numbers. This would be replaced with purpose-built accommodation through the Building Schools for the Future Programme.

The key advantages and disadvantages of option B are set out in Table 8 below.

Table 8 Option B advantages and disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would provide a realistic timescale</li> <li>• Enables pupils to access places at higher achieving schools</li> <li>• Parental preference enhanced by the provision of additional places at three popular over-subscribed schools</li> <li>• Additional places to be provided would enable pupils to transfer in groups</li> <li>• Minimises disruption for pupils</li> <li>• Pupils would complete their key stage at Sneyd</li> <li>• Receiving schools have time to plan for additional pupils from 2010</li> <li>• Additional posts would be available at the receiving schools, creating opportunities for Sneyd staff</li> <li>• 14 -19 proposal ensures the continuity of education provision on the Sneyd site</li> <li>• Pupils from Sneyd would have access to a broader range of curriculum opportunities at the receiving schools; this is further broadened by the partnership working between the receiving schools</li> <li>• Community use of the facilities on the Sneyd site would be secured through this option along side the proposed 14 – 19 provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving schools would receive a large number of additional pupils</li> <li>• Significant temporary accommodation would be required at the receiving schools</li> <li>• Additional classrooms and toilets could be provided but only limited additional specialist teaching spaces</li> <li>• Possible planning implications including complex negotiations with Sport England</li> <li>• Frank F Harrison site is Green Belt and any proposed development would be subject to possible referral to GOWM and possible delay</li> <li>• Capital resources would be required to fund temporary accommodation in advance of BSF</li> <li>• With the rapid decline in pupil numbers at Sneyd, the Schools Funding Formula is unlikely to be sufficient to fund the running of Sneyd especially in 2011/12 when there would only be pupils in Year 9</li> <li>• Challenge of meeting Year 9 entitlement to a broad balanced curriculum in 2011/12</li> <li>• Staff retention issues at Sneyd over the period to closure</li> <li>• The location of the significant amounts of temporary accommodation on the receiving school sites would need to be considered in the context of BSF proposals and site layout</li> </ul>

### **3.6.3 Option C. Current education provision at Sneyd ceases on 31 August 2010 and significant enlargement of Frank F Harrison from 1 September 2010**

**Sneyd would close on 31 August 2010 and pupils would transfer to Frank F Harrison on 1st September 2010. Frank H Harrison would be enlarged and the intake increased to 360. The intake at Pool Hayes would also be increased by 27 places to 240 from 2013 as part of the Building Schools for the Future Programme.**

Frank F Harrison is located on a campus site along with a Children's Centre, Hatherton Primary School, and Mary Elliot School. Frank F Harrison and Hatherton Primary School have entered into a federation and all the schools and Children's Centre operate effectively as a 'Learning Village' which offers wide range of extended schools, family and community services and activities. Pupils currently attending Sneyd and their families would benefit from the advantages of being part of this development.

All pupils on roll at Sneyd would transfer to Frank F Harrison in September 2010 and the number of 11 -16 places at the school would be increased from 900 to 1,800 and have 11 forms of entry. The number of places available at an enlarged Frank F Harrison would need to exceed the number of pupils on roll in order to provide some spare places to cater for families moving into the area as the other schools in the area are full.

It would not be possible to provide sufficient temporary accommodation on the Frank F Harrison site for this number of pupils in advance of the Building Schools for the Future Programme as the existing accommodation would need to be almost doubled in size in order to provide the range of classrooms and specialist rooms essential for curriculum delivery. However, it would be possible to continue to use the Sneyd building for the next few years and detailed consideration would be given to how all of the accommodation available to the school could best be used in order to maximise opportunities for pupils in terms of curriculum delivery. With the provision of replacement accommodation through the Building Schools for the Future Programme, all pupils could be based at the Frank F Harrison site, however, it would not be possible to meet the requirements for playing fields without the provision of additional land. This could be achieved by continued use of the sports facilities on the Sneyd site although it would be necessary to provide changing rooms. This would have the added benefit of securing continued use of these facilities for the community.

The continued need for part of the Sneyd site for sports facilities would reduce the area of land available at the Sneyd site for other educational developments which could include an engineering academy or a Skills Centre.

The key advantages and disadvantages of option C are set out in Table 9 below.

Table 9 Option C advantages and disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick implementation</li> <li>• Enables pupils to access places at a higher achieving school</li> <li>• All pupils would transfer to the same school unless parents requested otherwise</li> <li>• Minimises disruption for pupils</li> <li>• Additional posts would be available at the Frank F Harrison, creating opportunities for Sneyd staff</li> <li>• No temporary accommodation required if the Sneyd building is used until BSF</li> <li>• With the availability of the Sneyd building in the interim, the disruption associated with a rebuild of the school through BSF would be minimised</li> <li>• In the short term learning would be retained on the Sneyd site</li> <li>• In the longer term, a 14 – 19 facility would provide continuity of learning on the Sneyd site</li> <li>• Community use of the facilities on the Sneyd site would be secured through this option along side the proposed 14 – 19 provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frank F Harrison would receive a large number of additional pupils in September 2010</li> <li>• It would not be possible to locate all pupils on the Frank F Harrison site in advance of BSF as the scale of temporary accommodation necessary is too large to accommodate on the site and it would also severely restrict redevelopment of the site through BSF</li> <li>• School would need to operate from 2 sites until replacement accommodation through BSF Programme</li> <li>• Possible planning implications including complex negotiations with Sport England</li> <li>• Frank F Harrison site is Green Belt and any proposed development would be subject to possible referral to GOWM and possible delay</li> <li>• Financial viability: operating from 2 sites would attract a split site allowance in the school budget, however, there would be 2 lots of overheads and some additional staffing costs</li> <li>• Some pupils may need to transfer to the other site depending upon the arrangements put in place for the various year groups</li> </ul>

### 3.7 View of the interim Headteacher of Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College

The interim Headteacher of Sneyd Community College was invited to make a short school response for inclusion in this report. The following has been submitted:

*“The process of debate about the future of the school has been demanding for all concerned and we continue to be grateful for the enormous amount of time that has been invested in this issue. We do hope that a solution can be identified as speedily as possible.*

*The Working Group and the Scrutiny Committee have now established three criteria for future provision and we fully endorse these, recognising that any option that satisfies some or all of these criteria will be in the best interest of young people, both now and in the years to come. Our vision is that we create educational provision that strengthens collaboration, both within Walsall and beyond.*

*The tremendous opportunity afforded by BSF provides the Borough with the potential to create something that is ‘flexible, inspirational and*

*innovative' and if this can be made available to the local community here then that will be regarded as a fantastic outcome.*

*Our preferred option is to close Sneyd and create an 11-19 Community Academy. This would enable learning to continue on site for the full age-range of local children and the additional funding associated with an Academy would accelerate the academic progress of all young people. Beyond the school, community provision would be enhanced and participation would increase, especially in sporting activities associated with healthy lifestyles. Adult provision could be extended to include day time classes in a range of subjects. New state of the art facilities created here could be made more widely available to other schools and colleges. Community cohesion would be strengthened.*

*If an 11-19 Community Academy was not possible because of falling numbers at Key Stage 3, for example, then the creation of a 14-19 Academy might be a strong alternative option. We know that this element of another proposal attracted interest from the Working Group. Surplus places at Key Stage 3 could be removed, at least in the first instance, in the hope that other places were available at other local schools (this is not the case at present). Current Key Stage 3 pupils at Sneyd could remain and then progress into this new provision (assuming a start date in 2010 or 2011). An Engineering specialism has already been suggested but the specialist provision, in an Academy, could also provide for additional specialisms to complement existing specialist subjects in other Walsall schools. This would be consistent with a Borough-wide strategy.*

*The Sneyd community is strongly committed to improving standards and there is plenty of evidence of this. We would want to continue to do our part in transforming learning in the Borough. We would also want to be part of creating something that persuaded fewer families to choose education beyond our geographical boundary. This is the biggest challenge to us all."*

#### **4. Resource considerations**

##### **4.1 Financial:**

4.1.1 The financial implications of these options are not fully explored at this time but Cabinet will receive detailed information when the results of this consultation are known. During any potential closure process and with falling roll numbers current indications are that there would be financial issues. Current forecasts show that Sneyd could be approaching a significant deficit by 2011. While a closure of Sneyd would have potential long term benefits for utilisation of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), any deficit would be charged against DSG at point of closure. Consideration will be given to various options to attempt to mitigate any deficit including appointing an Interim Executive Board but no guarantee can be given at this stage that there will not be a significant deficit on closure.

#### 4.2 Legal:

- 4.2.1 The closure of Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College and significant enlargement of other schools as detailed in options A and B would follow statutory procedures. These specify that there must be a period of consultation before the proposing authority decides whether it wishes to proceed with the proposal. Both options include linked statutory proposals and all of the proposals for an option would be considered together at all stages

The table below shows the dates for initial consultation and the representation period prior to a final decision.

Date	Details
8 May 2009	Consultation starts (six weeks)
19 June 2009	Consultation ends
July	Cabinet considers outcome of consultation on the options and decides whether to proceed and if so, with which option
September 2009	Statutory notice published – 6 week representation period
November 2009	Consideration of the proposals by Cabinet and notification of decision to parents, staff and governors at the school

**This timetable does not reflect delays that could be caused by calling in of the reports**

#### Consultation Process

Consultation would include the publication of a consultation document which would provide information regarding the proposed closure of Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College and the proposed enlargement of other schools. This document would be issued to stakeholders and would be made available to the public. Meetings would be held with stakeholders including parents, staff and governors at the schools and there would also be a consultation with pupils on roll at the schools.

The admission arrangements for the 20010/11 school year for community and controlled schools in Walsall were determined by Cabinet on 18 March 2009. Should Cabinet decide to proceed with one of the options detailed in this report, and determine the statutory proposals, the new admission numbers would apply.

In autumn 2009, the parents of Year 6 pupils will be asked to express preferences for Year 7 places for their children for September 2010. Should Cabinet decide to approve consultation on the options set out in this report, parents will be informed that it is possible that there will be no Year 7 intake into Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College in September 2010 and of the schools where additional places may be available (this would depend upon the option). Parents who have been offered a Year 7 place at the Sneyd in September 2009 will be included in the consultation and invited to consultation meetings. Should any of these parents decide to seek a place at an alternative school for September 2009, assistance will be given by the Choice Adviser.

#### **4.3 Staffing:**

- 4.3.1 The staff employed at Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College are employees of Walsall Council. If the decision is made to close the school, support will be provided to staff to find alternative employment in a Walsall School. Receiving schools are often keen to secure the services of staff from closing schools as they bring with them knowledge of the pupils and their families in addition to their professional expertise; they can also provide a sense of security for transferring pupils. As additional staff would be required at other schools in the options under consideration, it is likely that many staff would secure alternative employment. In the event that these efforts are unsuccessful and staff remained without alternative employment when the school closed, they would be entitled to redundancy payment and in some cases access to their pensions. Every effort would be taken to minimise redundancies.

### **5. Citizen impact**

- 5.1 The proposal to close Sneyd and increase the number of places available at other schools will provide opportunities for current and future pupils of the area to access places at educationally and financially viable schools.

### **6. Community safety**

- 6.1 There are no community safety issues arising from this report

### **7. Environmental impact**

- 7.1 There are no environmental issues arising from this report.

### **8. Performance and risk management issues**

#### **8.1 Risk:**

The option to close the current education provision at Sneyd Community – A Specialist Maths and Computing College will mitigate the risks of Sneyd becoming financially unviable over a long period of time.

#### **8.2 Performance management:**

The option to close the current education provision at Sneyd Community will remove the danger of the school's academic results declining further.

### **9. Equality implications**

Existing and potential future pupils at the school will be supported to find alternative school places as needed.

Pupils moving to higher performing schools will receive enhanced opportunities to maximise their educational potential.

## 10. Consultation

Local elected members, Council officers, Sneyd Community - A Specialist Maths and Computing College, Frank F Harrison, Pool Hayes and Willenhall schools have been consulted in the preparation of the report. There has also been extensive consultation with the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Office of the Schools Commissioner (OSC) regarding the future of Sneyd.

### Background papers

Cabinet report, 22 October 2008: Review of Secondary Schools: The Future of Sneyd – A Specialist Maths and Computing College.

Scrutiny report, 20 November 2008: Cabinet report dated 22 October 2008: Review of Secondary Schools: The Future of Sneyd – A Specialist Maths and Computing College

Scrutiny report, 18 December 2008: Options for the Future: Sneyd Community – a Specialist Maths and Computing College

Sneyd Working Group, 5 March 2009: Report to the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel

Scrutiny Report to Cabinet, 18 March 2009: Review of Secondary Schools: the Future of Sneyd Community School – A Specialist maths and Computing College

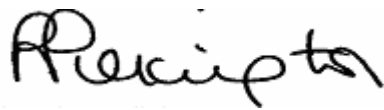
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Signed: 

Interim Executive Director: Pauline Pilkington

Date: 15 April 2009

Signed:

  
Managing Director, Walsall Children's Services - Serco

Date: 15 April 2009

Signed: 

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Zahid Ali

Date: 15 April 2009

REPORT OF THE:

DATE:

CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL  
TO CABINET

18 MARCH 2009

REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS: THE FUTURE OF SNEYD COMMUNITY  
SCHOOL – A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE

Background

On 22 October 2008, Cabinet rejected a proposal to close Sneyd Community School. In rejecting the closure proposal, Cabinet tasked the Children's and Young Peoples Scrutiny and Performance Panel to review the future options for the school. Cabinet resolved:

*'That the matter be referred to an early meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel for full consideration of all options available to the school and that the full implications of the community uses be considered in conjunction with any proposal coming forward in relation to the school.'*

After debating the options alongside the additional information made available to them, Members of the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel felt that this issue would benefit from the close scrutiny of a working group. Therefore, the Sneyd Working Group was established.

The Sneyd Working Group held three meetings and discussed the options for the future of Sneyd Community School in detail. The Working Group drew a series of conclusions on the options available for Sneyd and these are detailed below:

#### **Option A – Establish a National Challenge Trust**

*The Working Group recognise that the National Challenge Trust model is relatively new, however, in light of evidence provided by officers at its 15 January and 3 February meetings, the Working Group feel that new legislation may increase the viability of this option for Sneyd Community School.*

#### **Option B – Establish an Academy on the site: 11-19 years**

*The Working Group concludes that a small Academy would not be appropriate for Sneyd. A large Academy may be more acceptable to the DCSF and would secure*



*education provision on the Sneyd site. However, the financial viability and the impact of this size of Academy on neighbouring schools as well as the education provision for the borough overall would need to be carefully considered before this option could be taken forward.*

**Option C - Close the school; significantly enlarge another school (Frank F Harrison); establish a 14-19 specialist Academy alongside 14-19 or 16-19 provision so that learning continues on the Sneyd site**

*The Working Group felt that this was an interesting and potentially very exciting option but concluded that further investigation into the viability of this option would be required to enable a suitable model to be presented to the DCSF and OSC should this option be pursued.*

#### **Option D – Co-operative Trust Model**

*The Working Group conclude that further investigation into this option would be required to determine it's viability, but based on current evidence this may be the weaker option for Sneyd.*

#### **Recommendations**

Having considered the report of the Sneyd Working Group to the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel, the following recommendations are made to Cabinet

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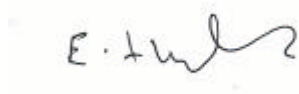
**That:**

- a) **Cabinet pursue a solution that ensures the continuation of education provision on the site of Sneyd Community School, supported by further investigation into viable solutions between Council Officers, representatives of Walsall Children's Services Serco, the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Office of the Schools Commissioner (OSC)**
- b) **This solution for the continuation of education provision on the site of Sneyd Community School must:**
  1. **be financially viable**
  2. **be devised with particular attention paid to its impact on all schools within the north west area of Walsall**
  3. **meet the needs of the local community**

A more detailed report, responding to these recommendations, will be submitted to Cabinet on 22 April 2009.

This form provides an accurate record of the meeting of the above named Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

**Chair of Scrutiny name:** Councillor Eddie Hughes



## Information relating to Sneyd – A Specialist Maths and Computing College

### 1 Background

Sneyd is a community secondary school and is located in the northern part of Walsall close to the border with Wolverhampton and Staffordshire. In recent years the demand for secondary school places in Walsall has fallen and this has had a significant impact on pupil numbers at Sneyd.

Sneyd operates co-operative arrangements for its Key Stage 5 provision with Pool Hayes Community School.

### 2 Trend in Pupil Numbers

Pupil numbers at Sneyd were relatively stable between 2001 and 2005 and peaked at 1,395 in 2005. Since then numbers have fallen by 27% over a three year period to 1,016 in January 2008. The table below provides more details of the decline in numbers.

Table 1 Trend in pupil numbers at Sneyd

January Census	Sneyd NOR	Reduction in pupil numbers from previous year	
2001	1,384		
2002	1,368		
2003	1,380		
2004	1,386		
2005	1,395		
2006	1,269	- 126	9%
2007	1,156	- 113	9%
2008	1,015	-141	12%
2009	893	- 122	12%
Projections			
2010	768	These projections are based on secondary school offers for September 2009.	
2011	675		
2012	627		
2013	598		

The number of pupils admitted to Year 7 has reduced over this period and this is illustrated in Table 2 below which provides details of the number of pupils in each year group in September 2008.

Table 2 Pupil numbers by year group at Sneyd (January 2009)

	Adm no	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Total
Sneyd	250	110	127	148	183	226	61	38	<b>893</b>

The estimate for the 2009 Year 7 intake is based on the number of places (104) offered in March 2009. The 2009 intake will replace a Year 11 cohort of 226 and,

if the numbers in the sixth form remain similar, the total number of pupils will fall to approx 760 - 770.

Sneyd does not have feeder schools however, traditionally, a large number of pupils have transferred from Mossley, Beacon, Abbey and Busill Jones Primary Schools. There has been a marked reduction in the number of first preferences from pupils at Busill Jones and Woodlands over the last three years and it is likely that this is in part a reflection of changes in the relative popularity of secondary schools and also the increasing ease of securing a place at other local schools because of the overall reduced demand for places. It is envisaged that this trend will continue.

Falling rolls create a challenging situation for schools to manage and the scale of the reduction at Sneyd is such that the educational and financial viability of the school must be considered. Given the number of pupils admitted to Year 7 in 2008 and expected admissions in 2009, questions must be asked about the viability of a school where admissions are so low and are expected to fall further.

### **3 Standards**

Sneyd was in special measures between January 2005 and November 2006. When the school came out of special measures an exit plan was implemented in order to wind-down the Local Authority intervention and allow the school to become fully self governing once again. However, the 2007 results showed a significant decline at both Key Stages 3 and 4. This triggered an intervention by the Local Authority and the Headteacher resigned. Governors were fully supportive throughout this period. An interim Headteacher was secured by the Governors following guidance from the Local Authority. Over this period the LA supported the school with additional School Improvement Partner (SIP) time, additional consultancy, and regular review meetings because it has been in the 'intensive' category which requires greatest intervention and support. Additionally since June 2008, a Black Country Challenge Adviser has been appointed to work to support the Headteacher to bring about rapid improvement. Additional resources have been secured against improvement priorities. For example an additional £20k from Excellence in Walsall funds and a grant was awarded to provide an additional Advanced Skills Teacher thus retaining an excellent teacher to improve practice across the school. In addition to support to raise standards in core subjects, data training has been carried out with governors to enable them to provide more challenge.

The interim Headteacher has steadied the performance of the school. However, the 2008 Key Stage 4 results remain disappointing and show a downward trend over the last two years. This will make the school highly vulnerable to an Ofsted category once again.

The school, now a National Challenge School, is still required to make rapid improvement in order to secure 30%+ 5+ A\* - C (incl En/Ma) GCSEs over the next 2 years.

## 2009 – PREDICTED EXAMINATION RESULTS

Over the last few years the levels of achievement at Sneyd have been very low in terms of both raw and contextualised data (where schools are compared with similar schools), and pupils' progression from one key stage to the next has been lower than expected. Details of this are provided in table 6 below.

Table 6 Achievement at Sneyd compared to Walsall and national data

	<b>Sneyd</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009 Target</b>
KS3	L5+ English	70.1%	68.5%	55.9%	57.5%	67.0%
	L5+ Maths	55.2%	58.6%	55.9%	58.0%	80.0%
	L5+ Science	52.8%	53.4%	52.7%	54.1%	73.0%
	L5+ English & Maths	49.4%	51.6%	44.1%	47.0%	66.0%
GCSE	5+A*-C inc En & Ma	15.0%	20.0%	17.0%	19.0%	30.0%
	2 Levels English			26.0%	53.0%	45.0%
	2 Levels Maths			8.0%	3.0%	20.0%

	<b>Walsall</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009 Target</b>
KS3	L5+ English	68.7%	67.9%	68.2%	70.2%	77.0%
	L5+ Maths	67.0%	72.2%	70.4%	71.6%	80.0%
	L5+ Science	61.3%	67.2%	66.8%	62.2%	78.0%
	L5+ English & Maths	58.6%	61.4%	61.3%	62.9%	73.0%
GCSE	5+A*-C inc En & Ma	35.7%	34.9%	35.5%	40.4%	48.0%
	2 Levels English			47.0%	56.0%	57.0%
	2 Levels Maths			23.0%	19.0%	32.0%

	<b>National</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009 Target</b>
KS3	L5+ English	74.0%	73.0%	74.0%	73.0%	
	L5+ Maths	74.0%	77.0%	76.0%	77.0%	
	L5+ Science	70.0%	72.0%	73.0%	71.0%	
	L5+ English & Maths	66.0%	67.0%	67.0%	66.0%	
GCSE	5+A*-C inc En & Ma		45.8%	46.8%	49.7%	
	2 Levels English			59.0%	63.0%	
	2 Levels Maths			29.0%	24.0%	

Not Available

Given current performance, it is likely to be very challenging for the school to meet its published targets despite the high level of support from the local authority and the Black Country Challenge.

The school's current predictions based on their internal monitoring shows that 26.1% of students are expected to achieve 5 good GCSE including English and mathematics in 2009. This would represent a satisfactory improvement although the school still remains below the national 30% threshold and FFT predictions of between 34% and 37% who should achieve this level. Details of these are provided in the table below which also shows that the Black Country Challenge do not expect the school to achieve 26% owing to weaknesses that remain in the teaching of mathematics.

	2009			2010		
	FFT KS2-4 Estimate	School prediction	BCCA Prediction	FFT KS2 - 4 Estimate	School prediction	BCCA prediction
5 + A* - C inc En/ma	37.6 (A) 34.4 (D)	26% But 19% secure with possible 23%	Likely to be at the lower end because of maths weaknesses	36.0 (A) 32.9 (D)		
5 + A* - C	50.9 (A) 48.3 (D)	Unclear at present		50.0 (A) 47.2 (D)		
1 + A* - C	89.1 (A) 94.8 (D)			91.3 (A) 96.1 (D)		

CVA (Contextualised Value Added) Key Stage 2 -4 data shows that the progress of students compared with similar students nationally has put the school in the bottom 5% nationally. When analysing subject by subject, mathematics shows a declining trend and has remained in the bottom percentile over the last three years. Sneyd is mathematics and computing specialist college receiving additional funding, so this trend in mathematics is serious as additional funding may be withdrawn if sufficient impact on results is not made.

Students in almost all categories are making well below expected progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. The targets that the school has set for 2009 represent considerable challenge but are still below those expected when target-setting within the Borough and nationally.

The local authority has set up a Progress Impact Review Team to work with the school to prioritise interventions and coordinate support for the leadership team in securing improved outcomes for pupils.

#### 4 Ofsted inspection, November 2008

Sneyd was inspected by Ofsted on 12 – 13 November 2008. The published report says: *'The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate. In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve.'*

Ofsted, December 2008

Ofsted make judgements on a Scale from 1 to 4 (1 is outstanding; 2 good; 3 satisfactory and 4 inadequate). Of the 39 judgements 16 were judged inadequate and the others only satisfactory.

The report stated that many students do not make the progress expected from their starting points and a high proportion of students significantly underachieve. Standards are exceptionally low. Inadequate progress is adversely affecting the development of skills that will contribute to students' future economic well being.

Significant improvement is required in relation to the level of students' achievement throughout the school and also the quality of teaching and learning. The school's sixth form also requires significant improvement.

#### 5 Support being provided (including financial support)

The table below provides details of the range of support given to Sneyd by the Local Authority and through the Black Country Challenge.

By the Local Authority	By the Black Country Challenge (include reference to programmes as well as individual support)
Science review; teaching and learning quality assurance; raising attainment in maths and science; PIR	Academic coach for maths £25k
National strategies RA support for English; consultancy support for English	Academic mentor and training for 2 £26k
Weekly consultancy support for maths	Support from Shire Oak (NCSL/ LLE)
ICT consultancy support KS4 and KS5	Leadership and Management training (NCSL)
£20k for learning mentor; tracking and interventions (EIW); £12.5k for raising achievement at KS4 (NRF)	

## 6 Self Evaluation Form Judgements and comments

Details of the SEF judgements for Sneyd are provided in the table below.

Aspect	Last inspection	Current LA view	Current BCCA view
Leadership & Management	3 (3)	3/4 (3/4)	3/4
Learning & Teaching	4 (4)	4 (4)	4
Curriculum	3 (3)	3/4 (3/4)	3/4
Attainment	4 (4)	4 (4)	4
Pupil Progress	4 (4)	4 (4)	4

1 – Outstanding; 2 – good; 3 – satisfactory; 4 – inadequate

(Figures in brackets relate to the sixth form)

### Progress against issues

Issue	LA/ Black Country Challenge Adviser views on progress
Differentiation; improving teaching and learning; target setting at pupil level; departmental self-evaluation; middle management development. All Ofsted issues focus on raising achievement. BCC – strengthening English and maths.	<p>Some progress in targeting intervention in Year 11, using data more diagnostically.</p> <p>Small group of middle and senior leaders now beginning to work together more effectively to drive improvement but still at early stage.</p> <p>Staffing weaknesses/ shortages in English and maths remain.</p>
<p><b>Other</b></p> <p><i>The Office of the Schools Commissioner has made it clear to the Local Authority that they believe Sneyd should close as the school is not viable – financially or educationally. In their opinion a closure programme linked to the support from other schools in the area a likely best solution.</i></p> <p><i>The Local Authority would need to consult other schools on such a support programme during the consultation period – dependent on the outcome of the Cabinet decision to consult on the future of the school.</i></p>	

## Availability of Places at Secondary Schools in Walsall (Sept 2009)

	Adm no	Estimated Pupil numbers Sept 2009					Estimated Available places Sept 2009					
		Y7#	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Total
Aldridge	259	259	258	258	258	258	0	1	1	1	1	4
Alumwell	195	189	179	151	160	155	6	16	44	35	40	141
Barr Beacon	245*	260	251	236	243	242	0	0	9	2	3	14
Blue Coat CE	180	178	150	127	163	154	2	30	53	17	26	128
Brownhills	182**	100	85	120	127	149	68	97	62	55	33	315
Darlaston	245	131	134	155	179	172	114	111	90	66	73	454
Frank F Harrison	180	180	179	172	164	159	0	1	8	16	21	46
Joseph Leckie	240	180	145	156	146	188	60	95	84	94	52	385
Pool Hayes	213	213	216	208	202	206	0	0	5	11	7	23
Queen Mary's G	96	96	96	95	96	96	0	0	1	0	0	1
Queen Mary's H	96	97	96	97	93	95	0	0	0	3	1	4
Shelfield Community Academy	240	242	252	237	184	213	0	0	3	56	27	86
Shire Oak	238	240	250	245	234	231	0	0	0	4	7	11
St Francis of Assisi	180	186	183	183	178	180	0	0	0	2	0	2
St Thomas More	210***	243	248	240	230	234	0	0	0	0	0	0
Streetly	243	243	244	231	213	240	0	0	12	30	3	45
Walsall Academy	168	168	168	168	168	168	0	0	0	0	0	0
Willenhall	270	270	273	255	269	260	0	0	15	1	10	26
Total	2,619	3,475	3,407	3,334	3,307	3,400	250	351	387	393	304	1,685
Sneyd Pupils	250	100	110	127	148	183						

# Offers as at March for September 2009 admission.

\* Barr Beacon: 260 from Sept 2009 (Y7 only) 168 from Sept 2009, 245 Adm No for Y8 – Y11

\*\* Brownhills: 168 from Sept 2009 (Y7 only), 182 Adm No for Y8 – Y11

\*\*\* St Thomas More: 243 from Sept 2009 (Y7 only), 210 Adm No for Y8 – Y11



## Ward of residence of pupils on roll at Sneyd, Jan 2009

DCSF No	School Name	Aldridge Central and South	Aldridge North and Walsall Wood	Bentley and Darlaston North	Birchills Leamore	Blakenall	Bloxwich East	Bloxwich West	Brownhills	Darlaston South	Paddock	Palfrey	Pelsall	Pheasey Park Farm	Pleck	Rushall-Shelfield	Short Heath	St. Matthew's	Streetly	Willenhall North	Willenhall South	Out of Borough	Total
4107	Sneyd	0	1	11	68	57	55	373	0	3	0	4	3	0	4	0	45	2	1	213	30	22	892

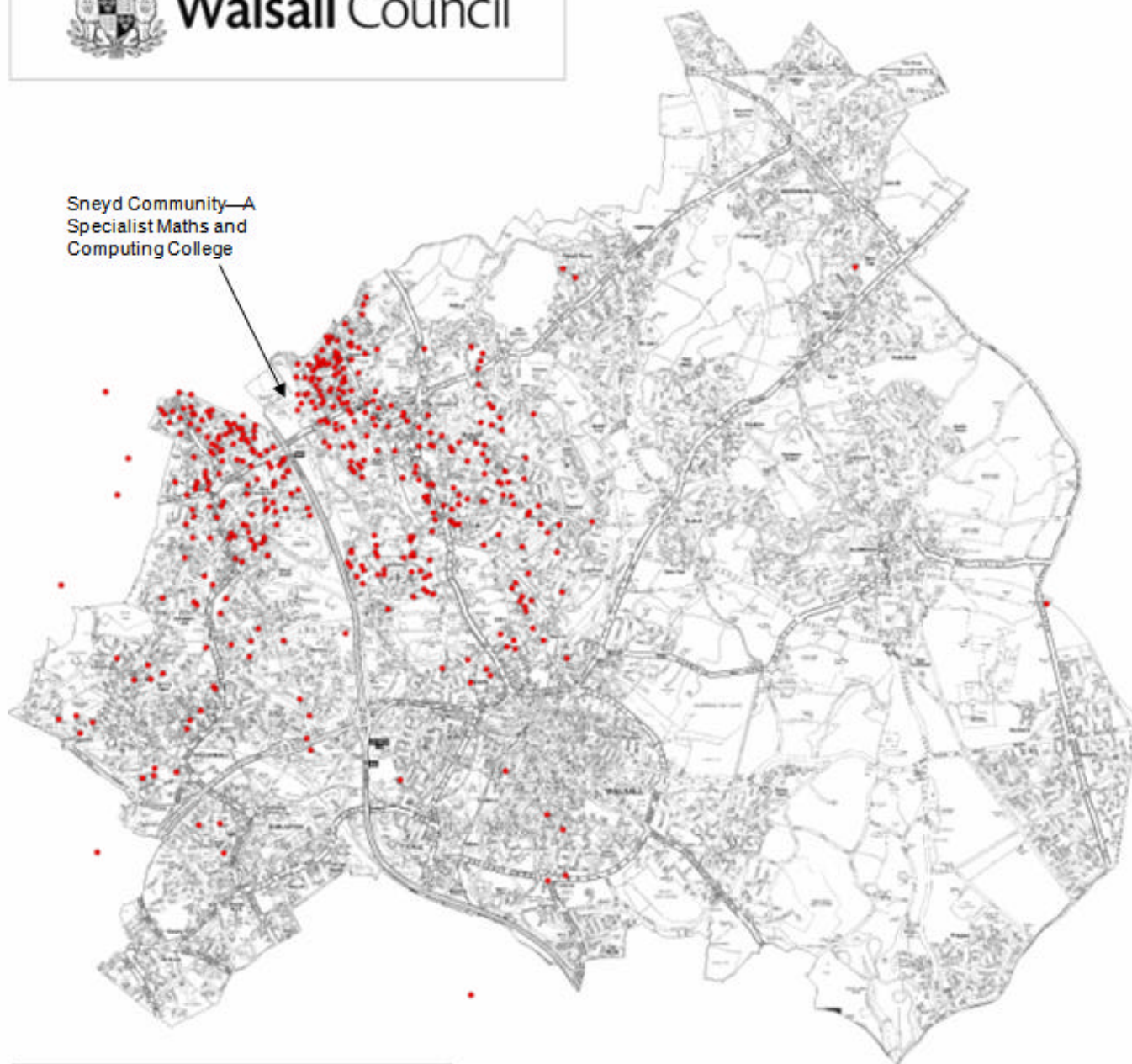
This table provides details of the number of pupils resident in each ward who attend Sneyd.

Sneyd – A Specialist Maths and Computing College: Addresses of Pupils, Jan 2009



Walsall Council

Sneyd Community—A  
Specialist Maths and  
Computing College



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