

## BRIEFING NOTE

**TO: Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel**  
**MEETING DATE: 20 December 2007**

### RE: TRANSITION OF BEECHDALE PUPILS

#### Background

- The school was inspected by Ofsted in February 2000 and was placed in Special Measures with leadership and management, standards, quality of teaching and attendance as Key Issues.
- A new Headteacher and a new Deputy Headteacher were appointed and the school came out of the category in 2003 but remained with Serious Weaknesses.
- The school had been judged by the Local Authority as continuously failing its pupils for a number of years in terms of academic achievement. This was in spite of the high level of support and additional resources provided by the local authority. The quality of that support was acknowledged by HMI to have been good.
- The problems at Beechdale Primary School had proved intractable despite several changes of leadership and substantial investment and support. Previously this type of targeted support had rapidly brought other schools out of Ofsted categories.
- When the school was inspected in November 2005 it was again put in Special Measures by Ofsted.
- The number on roll at Beechdale Primary School had fallen over the years resulting in a large number of surplus places until there would have been only 141 on roll in September 2006.
- As a result of the inspection Education Walsall produced a detailed consultation document which set out the issues facing Beechdale Primary School and three possible options for the provision of primary school places in the area. This document was circulated to all parents, staff and governors at Beechdale Primary School, Hatherton Primary and Frank F Harrison Community School (now Frank F Harrison Engineering College).
- A series of consultation meetings were held with parents, staff and governors of these three schools.
- Following publication of the proposal to close Beechdale Primary School a further series of meetings was held for the parents including opportunities for one to one discussions about the availability of school places.
- Ninety One pupils joined Hatherton Primary School in September 2006. Small numbers of pupils went to a range of other Walsall schools such as Lodge Farm, King Charles, Bloxwich CE, Leamore, Busill Jones, Christchurch, Sunshine Infants and Woodlands .
- As a result of the very effective systems for transition from Beechdale to Hatherton schools, all Beechdale Primary School pupils settled in well at the beginning of the autumn term 2006.
- Twelve Beechdale Primary School pupils joined Year 6 at Hatherton Primary school in September 2006. Of those 12 pupils 67% achieved a level 4+ in English; 58% achieved a level 4+ maths; 68% a level 4+ in science in the Key Stage 2 tests in May 2007. 8% of

these pupils achieved the higher level 5 in English and 17% the higher level 5 in maths and science. The majority of the pupils who did not achieve a level 4, nevertheless made the two levels of progress since Key Stage 1, as expected by the DCSF.

- Fifteen Beechdale Primary School pupils joined Year 2 at Hatherton Primary School in September 2007. Of those 87% achieved a Level 2+ in reading , (which was above the national and Walsall averages) 73% in writing and 87% in mathematics (within 1% of the Walsall average).
- In July 2007 feedback was obtained from 41 former Beechdale pupils on their first year at Hatherton Primary. The vast majority of the comments were very positive with words used like - “**fun**”; “**excitement**”; “**I like the teachers**”; “**my teacher is the best teacher I have ever had**”; “**maths is better**”; “**we get more lessons**”; “**brilliant**” . These pupils said they particularly liked art; PE; maths; literacy; cooking; maths, writing stories; golden time; plays and pantomimes. One child said there were more playtimes at Beechdale. Fifteen parents/carers whose children had transferred from Beechdale to Hatherton Primary School all reported they were pleased with the school and considered their children to have made **good progress**.
- The Ofsted inspection of February 2007 although giving the school a notice to improve, judged the leadership and management of the school to have the capacity to improve. When HMI made a monitoring visit to the school in September 2007 the school was judged to have made satisfactory progress.
- Since September 2006 Education Walsall school improvement staff have conducted several regular reviews of teaching and learning at the school. The most recent one, carried out in November 2007, reported that **teaching and learning across the school had greatly improved. Standards in reading have seen the greatest improvement with pupils making significant progress across the school. Writing and mathematics have also improved in every year group.**

### **Summary**

In spite of initial parental concerns around possible disruption to their children’s education, pupils transferring from Beechdale Primary to Hatherton Primary School settled quickly into their new school. They quickly adapted to the changes in routine, organisation and expectations. Hatherton Primary School Staff used data and information from Beechdale Primary School Staff to ensure they were well prepared to provide targeted, differentiated teaching and support for these pupils. Consequently pupils are making good progress.

### **Author**

Sue Wedgwood  
Director for Learning

☎ 01922 686239

[sue.wedgwood@we.serco.com](mailto:sue.wedgwood@we.serco.com)

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