

BRIEFING NOTE

Agenda Item

no. 9

TO: Children's & Young People Scrutiny & Performance Panel

DATE: 19 July 2011

RE: Sneyd

Purpose

To provide an update on the process of closing Sneyd Community School.

1. Introduction

Formal reports have been made to Cabinet at its meetings on:
22 October 2008, 22 April 2009, 15 July 2009, 13 August, 21 October 2009 and 13 January 2010.

Reports have been made to Scrutiny at its meetings on:
30 October 2008, 20 November 2008, 18 December 2008, 18 March 2009 and 24 July 2009, 12 March 2010, 15 June 2010, 20 July 2010 and 27 September 2010, 18 October 2010, 4 November 2010, 16 December 2010, 01 March 2011 and 28 April.

2. Pupils

Pupil numbers have continued to decline because some pupils are transferring to alternative schools before the end of the current academic year.

| Date | Y7 | Y8 | Y9 | Y10 | Y11 | Total Y7-11 | Y12 | Y13 | Y14 | Total Post-16 | Grand Total |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------|-----|-----|-----|---------------|-------------|
| Oct-2008 | 113 | 128 | 149 | 185 | 225 | 800 | 61 | 37 | 1 | 99 | 899 |
| Jan-2009 | 110 | 127 | 148 | 183 | 226 | 794 | 59 | 37 | 1 | 97 | 891 |
| May-2009 | 108 | 123 | 149 | 184 | 231 | 795 | 54 | 34 | 1 | 89 | 884 |
| Oct-2009 | 70 | 99 | 93 | 144 | 186 | 592 | 40 | 21 | 3 | 64 | 656 |
| 21-Jan 2010 | 67 | 95 | 65 | 138 | 184 | 549 | 41 | 21 | 3 | 65 | 614 |
| 1-Mar 2010 | 64 | 93 | 64 | 138 | 184 | 543 | 41 | 21 | 3 | 65 | 608 |
| 21-Apr 2010 | 63 | 91 | 54 | 137 | 185 | 530 | 38 | 18 | 0 | 56 | 586 |
| 5-May 2010 | 62 | 91 | 54 | 137 | 185 | 529 | 35 | 18 | 0 | 53 | 582 |
| 8-Jun 2010 | 62 | 90 | 52 | 137 | 185 | 526 | 35 | 18 | 0 | 53 | 579 |
| 16-Jun 2010 | 62 | 81 | 32 | 137 | 185 | 497 | 35 | 17 | 0 | 53 | 549 |
| 23-Jul 2010 | 58 | 72 | 23 | 135 | 185 | 473 | 32 | 17 | 0 | 49 | 522 |
| 13-Sept 2010 | - | 42 | 43 | - | 135 | 220 | - | 11 | - | 11 | 231 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|----|----|---|-----|------------|---|----|---|-----------|------------|
| 29- Oct 2010 | - | 40 | 42 | - | 135 | 217 | - | 11 | - | 11 | 228 |
| 26-Nov 2010 | - | 33 | 37 | - | 133 | 203 | - | - | - | 0 | 203 |
| 6-Dec 2010 | - | 32 | 35 | - | 133 | 200 | - | - | - | 0 | 200 |
| 20-Jan 2011 | - | 30 | 25 | - | 132 | 187 | - | - | - | 0 | 187 |
| 14-Feb 2011 | - | 24 | 20 | - | 132 | 176 | - | - | - | 0 | 176 |
| 29-Mar 2011 | - | 20 | 17 | - | 132 | 169 | - | - | - | 0 | 169 |
| 19-May 2011 | - | 19 | 16 | - | 132 | 167 | - | - | - | 0 | 167 |

3. Pupil Transfers

Arrangements for the transfer to other schools from September 2011 of pupils in Year 8 and Year 9 have been completed and offer letters have been sent.

Year 8

Details of the places offered to the 19 children on roll on 1 April 2011 are provided in the table below.

| School | Number of Year 8 pupils transferring |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Brownhills | 11 |
| Alumwell | 2 |
| Blue Coat CE | 1 |
| Wednesfield High | 4 |
| Wolverhampton to make offer | 1 |

Admissions staff and the Choice Adviser are continuing to work with the families to support them through the transfer process.

Year 9

Details of the places offered to the 16 children on roll on 1 April 2011 are provided in the table below.

| School | Number of Year 9 pupils transferring including offers for UTC |
|--------------------------|--|
| Black Country UTC | 8 |
| Brownhills | 2 |
| Grace Academy | 0 |
| Blue Coat CE | 2 |
| Frank F Harrison | 1 |
| Pool Hayes | 1 |
| Wednesfield High | 1 |
| Coppice High | 0 |

Admissions staff and the Choice Adviser are continuing to work with the families to support them through the transfer process.

Year 11

The destinations for Year 11 pupils have been confirmed by the Connexions service and staff from the 14-19 team at Walsall Children's Services – Serco and details are provided in the table below.

| Destination | Number of Students |
|--|---------------------------|
| Post-16 Existing School | 0 |
| Post-16 Other School | 19 |
| Post- 16 Further Education | 101 |
| Total Continuing in Full Time Education | 120 |
| Apprenticeship | 4 |
| Employment with Training | 6 |
| Training (in e2e) | 0 |
| Total Continued Learning in the Labour Market | 10 |
| Post-16 Part time learning | 0 |
| Post-16 Part time employment | 0 |
| Voluntary/Personal Development | 0 |
| Unemployed | 0 |
| Not settled- Active | 0 |
| Not settled – Not active | 1 |
| Cannot be contacted | 0 |
| Refused to participate in survey | 0 |
| Unknown | 0 |
| Total Others | 0 |
| Total Not in Learning | 1 |
| Grand Total | 132 |

Work will continue to try and ensure the final student is in an appropriate placement.

4. Uniform and Travel

It has been agreed that assistance with the cost of uniforms for transferring pupils will be made available for Walsall pupils in Year 8 and Year 9.

Where appropriate, home-to-school transport arrangements are being made for pupils transferring to other schools from September 2011. Depending on the circumstances this may take the form of a bus pass or other arrangements.

5. Staff

The HR team have been working closely with senior management and the staff at Sneyd to secure employment for staff named as redundant.

Support has been provided with regard to CV writing and interview techniques.

Out of a potential 44 staff redundancies, 6 have successfully been redeployed to other council positions, 2 have left employment, 2 have gained employment outside of Councils. There are also a number of staff who are awaiting outcomes from job applications that they have submitted.

Support will continue to be provided.

6. Finance

The school budget has been well managed during the difficult closure period. This factor along with the decision of the Cabinet to close the school earlier than originally planned and the success of staff in securing alternative employment will result in the school returning a healthy balance. The local authority is appreciative of the excellent stewardship undertaken by the school and the IEB during the closure period and has thanked all concerned.

In the final closedown period the local authority will liaise with the school to ensure that all relevant financial information is handed over and that the school bank account is formally closed. From the end of this term the local authority will take over the administration of the school's finances to ensure that all outstanding payments are made or provided for before final closedown. Any school balances remaining, estimated to be approximately £500K, will be returned to the global schools budget, and used to meet in-year budgetary requirements.

7. Curriculum

The Ofsted report was published on May 4th, 2011 and the school was found no longer to need Special Measures. This was achieved in just over 13 months and resulted from the focused and determined effort of all key partners to secure rapid and sustained improvements in the experience and outcomes of students.

Some extracts are given below:

'Sneyd Community School is now providing a satisfactory and improving quality of education. Despite the challenges that inevitably surround school closure, morale and confidence among staff and students are high; this is clear testimony to the excellent leadership of the Headteacher. The outstanding partnership with Barr Beacon School has been instrumental in catalysing the rapid improvement of teaching and learning and lies behind the good capacity for further improvement in the remaining few months of the schools operation. Teachers, students and their parents and careers are now rightly confident that they are well supported and that discipline is firmly and consistently applied where necessary. A parent said that staff had turned their child back onto school.

Teaching has improved rapidly, thanks to the hard work and professional approach of staff coupled to excellent external support from Barr Beacon and local authority advisory staff.

The curriculum is satisfactory, with every effort being made by the school to maintain specialist teachers delivering subjects; that includes using partners from Barr Beacon or the local authority where necessary in drama, science and information and communication technology (ICT). The impact of the mathematics and computing specialism has been weak in the past until this academic year's arrival of additional support and expertise from Barr Beacon. There is a range of additional activities, including some cross-curricular sessions in Key Stage 3, designed to promote creative thinking. Joint international visits with Barr Beacon have helped retain access to these enrichment activities despite the small size of the school. A minority of students take part in a range of additional sporting activities after school.

The Headteacher has, in a very short time, expertly led the school by firmly insisting that everyone focuses on classroom quality, irrespective of the challenging personal circumstances faced by all the staff.'

8. Governance

The Ofsted Report commented:

'The interim executive board has dealt effectively with the numerous distractions surrounding school closure and potential re-use of the building, while enabling the Headteacher to focus on the day-to-day running of the school. It gives good oversight of statutory requirements and policies to keep school users safe, with effective, knowledgeable and experienced staff in charge of delivering those policies well. There are good links to specialist agencies for meeting the needs of the most vulnerable of students, and also in meeting the challenges of school closure.'

The IEB last met on June 20.

The head teacher reported on the budget position, the number of students, their progress and transition arrangements, the number of staff, the curriculum delivery and communications. She presented an analysis of the results to date and predicted levels. There was particular thanks given for the support of ICT consultants for work that was being done to support portfolio building of students' work in preparation for examination.

The IEB were pleased with the continuing high level of individual support being given to students and staff but were concerned about recent Express and Star and Chronicle articles in the local press which they felt did not reflect accurately on the current provision at Sneyd School.

The Chair of the EB agreed to write to the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, outlining the current progress being made and offering to attend a future Scrutiny Panel Meeting.

Author

Sue Wedgwood
Assistant Managing Director – Improvement and Effectiveness
☎ 01922 686239
sue.wedgwood@walsallcs.serco.com