

BRIEFING NOTE

Agenda
Item No. 7

TO: Scrutiny Panel
DATE: March 2011

RE: Impact of Theme 5 – Services supporting education beyond the classroom for Walsall schools

Purpose

To provide Walsall Council with an update on the impact of Theme 5 – Services supporting education beyond the classroom for Walsall schools / Enhancement, Enrichment and Creativity.

Background and Context

The Walsall Children's Services Serco team started in September 2009 with the creation of the Creative Arts Managers post.

A full time Consultant with specialism in Creative Arts was employed in January 2010.

Three further full time consultants joined the team in April 2010 with specialisms in 'Equalities', 'Building resilience' and 'Transition from primary to secondary'.

The strategic aims of Theme 5 can be summarised as:

- Engage in strategic partnership and leadership for the development and promotion of education and leisure activities beyond the classroom for children and young people in Walsall
- Support educational and leisure activities beyond the classroom for children and young people in Walsall

The Enhancement, Enrichment and Creativity team focuses on pulling together the Creative Development Team, Music Support Services (Forest Arts Centre), Walsall Libraries and Archives, Walsall New Art Gallery, Walsall Museum and The Leather Museum to promote learning both in and out of school hours, so that the Walsall vision is achieved:

Walsall Vision:

'We believe that all children and young people in Walsall have the right to be healthy, happy and safe; to be loved, valued and respected; and to have high aspirations for their future.'

This report is based upon the impact of the team since September 2009 on the children and young people, settings, schools and providers in Walsall.

Description of Work

We have developed 4 strands to ensure the vision is achieved for all our children and young people.

1. **Teaching & Learning**
 - Curriculum development, CPD for staff, out of hours learning opportunities
2. **Learning beyond the Classroom**
 - Parental engagement, mentoring, out of hours learning opportunities

3. Raising the Profile of the visual arts

- CPD for staff, collaborative projects, showcases, displays, online support

4. Inclusion

- CPD for staff, clear reporting structures, out of hours learning opportunities

Measure of Impact

The impact of theme 5 is far reaching and includes increasing the percentage of pupils who enjoy school, taking part in positive activities and ultimately raising their aspiration and impact on their overall progress and attainment at all phases. Equally importantly the work has impacted on developing pupils' personal, learning and thinking skills; the professional skills for life and work.

1. Teaching & Learning

The key theme of Creative Arts manager has been to support teaching and learning as well as to ensure that pupils and young people are given opportunities to develop their gifts and talents and schools are supported to help unlock pupils and young people potential.

We have continued to develop the gifts and talents of pupils in Walsall. The Gifted & Talented networks continue to flourish with increased numbers of schools participating. The biggest improvements in attainment has been at L5 (Key Stage 2) with a 4% increase in reading, 2% increase in writing and a 2% increase in Mathematics and a 6% increase in the numbers of pupils attaining the higher L5 in combined English and Maths.

We have continued to develop links with the creative development team, the new art gallery, music service, library, heritage, museums and Walsall College to ensure there is a strategic plan for effective collaborative e.g. the accreditation of courses/out of hours opportunities provided by the above through such vehicles as the Children's University.

Finally, we have continued to support schools in developing their curriculum with 25% of Primary and 75% of Secondary schools now being supported.

2. Raising the Profile of the visual arts

The key theme of all work supported by the Creative Arts consultant is to raise aspiration through the arts.

We have continued to develop large scale projects bringing together several schools in partnership to create a finished piece of work. 'Rebellion' is a piece currently displayed in the EDC. Children and young people from 4 schools (60 pupils) worked in teams to create the piece. This work also created an excellent continued professional development (CPD) opportunity for 10 staff. Four collaborative projects have been run to date which have involved a total of over 300 children and young people, 10 different schools and 25 staff.

There has been continued support to individual schools: St Mary of the Angel's, New Leaf and St Thomas of Canterbury are just three who have benefitted from this area of expertise.

The Visual Arts Network is gaining in numbers with 12 primary schools and 8 secondary schools now attending the termly meetings. We have also moved closer to becoming involved in the Children's University.

3. Learning beyond the Classroom

The key theme of the Transition consultant is to support schools in developing successful transition arrangements so that pupils (focusing on specific identified groups e.g. Bangladeshi) are able to transfer without undue stress which could impact on their attainment and progress.

This work has gained momentum over the past months and now has supported a total of 200 pupils and their parents in 8 primary schools (and their two main secondary partner schools Blue Coat Performing Arts College and Alumwell Business and Enterprise College) in terms of transition. The work has ranged from individual tuition, leading workshops and attending parents evening.

We have also developed out of school learning opportunities for these pupils including half term schools and weekly after school clubs.

4. Inclusion

The key theme of the 'Building resilience' consultant has been to work with the Preventing violent extremism agenda (PREVENT). An effective reporting structure for pupils who have been identified as potentially having extreme views has been developed with a range of partners including council, police, schools and community leaders. This has been a government led programme.

We have also developed out of hours learning opportunities such as holiday clubs and weekend events focused on developing community cohesion and raising aspirations by providing positive role models.

The key theme of the Equalities consultant work is equality training in line with current equalities act. This has included NQT training and specific whole school training.

Work in this area has developed teachers' confidence in terms of teaching controversial issues as part of the PSHE and citizenship agenda. (16 staff in 8 secondary schools have been involved to date).

We have continued to develop academic mentoring for Pakistani pupils that are potentially underachieving at Blue Coat CE performing Arts Specialist College, Joseph Leckie Community Technology College and throughout the Birchills Children's Area Partnership.

We have also continued to support the development of the teaching and learning that takes place in the local Mosque and ensure that there is good communication between the school and Mosque, to continue to promote learning both in and out of school hours.

Future

Whilst the work of those involved in Theme 5 has been very well received and was warmly supported through the contract reviews, it has also been recognised that in a time of austerity, Theme 5 cannot continue as it is.

In the future some of these activities will be offered as a traded service. If schools wish to purchase they will continue, otherwise the activities will cease.

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