

BRIEFING NOTE

Agenda Item No. 5

TO: Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 01 March 2011

RE: Sneyd

Purpose

To provide an update on the process of closing Sneyd Community school between 16 December 2010 to 18 February 2011.

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, October, 4 November and 16 December.

This report provides an update for the period between 20 December 2010 and 4 January 2011.

2. Pupils

2.1 Pupil numbers

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	62	91	54	13	185	529	35	18	0	53	582

2010				7								
8-Jun 2010	62	90	52	13 7	185	526	35	18	0	53	579	
16-Jun 2010	62	81	32	13 7	185	497	35	17	0	53	549	
23-Jul 2010	58	72	23	13 5	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	
5-Jan 2011	-	31	35	-	133	199	-	-	-	0	199	
20-Jan 2011	-	30	25	-	132	187	-	-	-	0	187	

2.2 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 30 children on roll on 20 January 2011 are provided in the table below.

School	Number of Year 8 pupils transferring
Brownhills	11
Alumwell	3
Pool Hayes	2
Frank F Harrison	2
Aldridge	1
Blue Coat CE	1
Wednesfield High	9
Wolverhampton to make offer	1

Offer letters were sent out on 14 January 2011 and at present 8 offers have been accepted and 2 refused because parents are appealing for a place at a preferred school.

Year 9: details of the places offered to the 25 children on roll on 20 January 2011 are provided in the table below.

School	Number of Year 9 pupils transferring
Brownhills	7
Grace Academy	5
Blue Coat CE	2
Frank F Harrison	1
Pool Hayes	1
Joseph Leckie	1
Wednesfield High	5
Coppice High	2

Offer to be made	1
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Offer letters were sent on 17 December 2010 and at present 6 offers have been accepted and 1 refused because parents are appealing for a place at a preferred school. In one case the circumstances are very complex and officers are continuing to liaise with the family and Sneyd School to secure appropriate arrangements.

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 by Walsall Children's Services - Serco.

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 first Staff Dismissal Committee took place on 14th February 2011. All staff and unions were notified that formal consultation in relation to termination of contracts has commenced. There are currently 39 permanent and 12 staff on long term casual staff. HR will continue to seek redeployment opportunities, which will include visits to other schools. Additional support on professional CV writing and interview skills is also being made available from the School's SIP.

6. Finance

The agreed early closure of the school should allow the school to remain in budget through to the 31 August 2011. Pupil numbers as at January 2011 School Census date were close to numbers used in the budget forecast. However, grant funding changes announced in December may have some adverse financial impact. Large reserves will be carried forward at the end of the 2010-11 financial year to support the school's budget during its last five months of operation, and every attempt will be made to ensure the school continues to meet the needs of the remaining pupils within its resources.

The Schools' Finance Team will continue to support the school leadership team up to the end of August 2011 to resolve all outstanding financial issues and undertake rigorous budget monitoring.

7. Curriculum

The Year 11 students are continuing with their studies leading up to the examinations. Recent examination entries have increased the number of students with C grades or better already in English (52%), in mathematics (32%) or in ICT (24%) ahead of this summer's entry. 22% have a D grade in mathematics which could become a C or better in the summer, given effective intervention. 29% have a C or better in English and mathematics already. Students are being given support, including support from staff from Barr Beacon College, by teaching the top two sets in mathematics, for example, to increase their chances of success. Current projections are that 45% of students could achieve 5+A*-C including English and mathematics.

Extra time was given to students entering mathematics, English and science before the recent GCSE exams and other departments were promised some payback time. The first of these Study Days took place on 25th January, where students spent 4 hours intensive study completing extension work, developing examination skills and completing assignments for one of their options.

This was a model adopted from Barr Beacon and the staff at Sneyd were told that the impact would be evaluated before a further day was planned. Feedback from both staff and pupils was very positive.

The Walsall Children's Services-Serco ICT consultant will offer intensive ICT days so that some Y11 students can gain the equivalent to at least 1 GCSE.

The school has also been successful in gaining a further £7,000 from Black Country Challenge to support an Easter Revision programme and KS4 to KS5 transition.

The Key Stage 3 students have started on the next motivational integrated topic 'You've never had it so good', supported by the consultant sponsored by the Black Country Challenge. A launch day took place at the start of January and it compares current schooling with 100 years ago and in other countries. It is planned to take the pupils to the Black Country Museum. All KS3 will be participating in First Aid Training to gain a qualification in this area and plans are also being made for them all to complete a Food Hygiene qualification. Alongside specialist teaching, this means that they get a broad and balanced curriculum even though the numbers of students in this Key Stage continues to fall. For the pupils that are on roll now, their attendance is up by 5% on the comparable time last academic year. Students feel well supported.

8. Governance

The IEB continues to meet regularly. Staffing levels are kept under review so that the curriculum can be taught effectively in partnership with Barr Beacon College. The next meeting is on February 28th.

9. Press

Walsall Council and Walsall Children's Services – Serco will continue to work together to ensure that the important information required by parents, carers and pupils is communicated. Statements will be issued, if required, in response to individual enquiries from the media.

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