

BRIEFING NOTE

Agenda Item

no. 4

TO: Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 16 December 2010

RE: Sneyd

Purpose

To provide an update on the process of closing Sneyd Community school between 23 October and 01 December 2010.

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, 27 September 2010 and 4 November 2010.

2. Closure Date

Cabinet's original decision was to close the school agreed a phased closure with the current Year 8 pupils remaining as the single year group in the school during the academic year 2011/12.

The current Year 8 is now standing at 33 pupils.

Given the small size of this cohort, Cabinet was asked to agree to change the implementation date to close the school totally in August 2011 with both the existing Year 8s and existing Year 9s transferring to new schools on 1 September 2011.

This was agreed by Cabinet on 17 November 2010.

3. Pupils

3.1 Pupil numbers

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
01-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
01-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
05-May-2010	62	91	54	137	185	529	35	18	0	53	582
08-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

3.2 Year 8 and Year 9 Transfer

27 applications for transfer on 1 September 2011 have been received from Y9 pupils, a reminder letter was sent on 15 November and offers will be made on 17 December. The Year 8 Transfer process started on 22 November and open evenings were arranged for 29 and 30 November 2010. 3 applications have been received to date and the deadline for return of applications is

17 December; offers will be made on 14 January 2011.

4. Uniform and Travel

Walsall Children's Services – Serco agreed for the 09/10 Year 9 pupils leaving Sneyd in August 2010 to pay a £50 contribution towards the cost of their new uniform and to consider

paying for home to school transport for pupils who did not qualify under Walsall's transportation policy for the academic years 10/11 and 11/12.

Walsall Children's Services – Serco has, exceptionally, agreed that for the 10/11 Year 9 pupils leaving Sneyd in August 2011 to attend another school to pay a one off sum of £50 contribution towards the cost of their new uniform and to consider paying for home to school travel for pupils who will not qualify under Walsall's transport policy for the academic years 11/12 and 12/13.

As Cabinet has agreed to accelerate the closure to August 2011, these arrangements will be extended to the current Year 8 pupils for the academic years 11/12, 12/13 and 13/14.

5. Staff

The HR team will continue to work closely with staff and their unions to secure redeployment. Job shop bulletins will be sent out to all staff. Staff will be given the opportunity of 1-1 meetings to discuss opportunities and for concerns to be discussed.

The redundancy process will be instigated by the Headteacher, which may be a two part process, in April and August.

6. Finance

The early closure of the school will allow the school to remain in budget through to the 31 August 2011. Sufficient 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.

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

In the Ofsted Monitoring Visit on 9th November, the HMI commented that since going into Special Measures in February 2010, 'satisfactory' progress had been made but since the last monitoring visit in progress has been 'good'. He noted especially the effective work on developing 'literacy' where progress was judged to be 'good' and the volume of written work in English which was high and was helping to reinforce better attainment. 'Satisfactory' progress had been made in speeding up students' progress in lessons. 'Satisfactory' progress is also being made on attendance, planning lessons to take account of prior learning, giving students challenging activities and opportunities for independent learning and 'good' progress on providing feedback and clear guidance.

HMI writes: 'Now, there are monthly assessments of the current working levels of every student in every subject. These give detailed information for managers to direct early intervention and support. There is a subject expert seconded from Barr Beacon who is now leading mathematics teaching. She has quickly instituted early GCSE entry, with a strong focus on

mathematics revision and booster work. She has been well supported by local authority consultants. There is a good capacity across the school to improve provision despite the reduction in staff and student numbers.

The specialist maths and computing school resources have previously been ineffective in tackling low mathematics standards. This academic year, a large proportion of students will complete an information and communication technology course at Key Stage 4.'

8. Governance

HMI noted that the IEB had formally requested that Cabinet should consider an earlier closure of the school. He recognises that: 'It would not be in the best interests of the current Year 8 pupils (38 of them) to continue into a Year 9 in September 2011, as was originally envisaged.' The HMI recognised that the IEB had good control over financial matters and staff reductions. He cautions against losing specialist support staff before courses have been completed and suggests that LA advice is sought by governors on this matter. LA support and the partnership with Barr Beacon is judged to be effective. He states: 'This partnership has brought about an improved sense of morale among staff and the new senior management team has 'rekindled professional pride, established a better corporate spirit and created a sense of stability and common purpose.'

9. Press

The early closure has had some media coverage. 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.

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