



Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4 February 2009

Report from the Director of Children and Families

Wards Affected:
ALL

A Review of the Impact and Outcomes of Special Projects for New Arrivals

1.0 Summary

This report is to provide members with information on the education provision in special projects for secondary aged children who are new arrivals to Brent.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That members note the content of this report and the full review attached.

3.0 Background

3.1 For many years Brent has been a destination of choice for those from around the world seeking refuge and asylum. In response to the increasing number of Key Stage 4 (KS4) children arriving in 2002 a project for refugees and asylum seekers was set up at John Kelly Girls School in 2002. A similar project but for Key Stage 3 children (KS3) was set up in 2003 at Copland High School.

3.2 From 2004 there had been a growing shortage of secondary school places in Brent schools which by summer 2005 led to a situation where there were 280 children of all secondary age groups that did not have a school place.

3.3 Brent secondary schools were filling up earlier and earlier in the academic school year. Each secondary school as their own admission authority managed their own admissions with no central co ordination. As schools were full parents went from school to school to apply for a place, with most being placed on waiting lists, with the result that many children were waiting long periods to secure a place.

3.4 The departments' response to the influx of pupils without a school place was to set

up a Casual Admissions Team to work with a Headteacher consultant to identify ways in which to manage the process and place pupils in a suitable education setting. Work also began to expand secondary provision in the borough.

- 3.5 The numbers of new arrivals could not be contained within existing provision and schools were approached to take children over numbers and to consider ways in which they might be able to accommodate new arrivals. The diverse nature of new arrivals required a multi faceted solution, as some children could not speak any English or had never attended any formal education, while others were competent in English and had been taught up to GCSE standard.
- 3.6 Copland created a second small KS3 project (12 places), which meant that they were able to take students who were not total EAL beginners.
- 3.7 Brent Project expanded briefly to take a further 20 KS4 places housed at Wykeham Primary School.
- 3.8 In May 2006 QPCS CLC opened a pilot Project for KS3 (10 places). This expanded to a full class and currently there are 2 classes (maximum 35) in purpose built accommodation which was funded by the department.
- 3.9 Similarly, Greenway Project at Claremont School started as a pilot and has expanded to a 35 place, KS3 and 4 Project – again in purpose built accommodation funded by the department.
- 3.10 Other projects to accommodate the out-of-school children included what was, initially, an EAL course at CNWL for Year 11 students in the Summer Term of 2006. In the Autumn Term 2006 this was replaced by a Level 1 course with some youngsters taking Level 2 exams. This course successfully plugged a gap for Year 11 students and is now in its third year.
- 3.11 Because this project takes place in the more adult environment of a college it is kept constantly under review. The students and courses are visited at least twice termly by a consultant who sends a report of these visits to both the College and to the department, and a thorough end of year review meeting takes place in order to discuss and improve the offer for the following year.
- 3.12 Two schools agreed to take additional Year10/11 students, educated in their own country, onto reduced GCSE courses. Capital City and Kingsbury in Year 1 2006/7: Kingsbury and QPCS 2007/8, 2008/9.
- 3.13 Wembley High took Year 11s into a one year Level 2 course within their 6th Form in 2007/8 and is repeating this for 2008/9.
- 3.14 An additional flexible project was established in Ashley Gardens in the Summer Term 2008. The initial group consisted of Key Stage 4 students who simply could not be accommodated in schools at that late stage of the academic year. The aim of this project was to provide a basic curriculum for the students and to liaise with secondary schools to ensure the students gained a school place for September 2008, which it achieved.
- 3.15 Ashley Gardens provides a rolling programme of fairly individual tuition for out of school students who do not fit into the criteria for any of the other projects but are simply waiting for school vacancies. The manager of the Ashley Gardens Project,

Julie Haste, liaises with schools both in and out borough in order to find permanent school places for these students as soon as possible.

3.16 A new project is being established in Ashley Gardens for Jan 09 to support the most pressing current additional requirement – A Key Stage 4 Project for totally EAL students, similar to those attending the Brent Project.

3.17 Given that the Projects were established rapidly in response to a crisis regarding secondary school places and are continuing beyond the anticipated end dates it was felt appropriate to review their educational provision. Whilst the projects are mostly linked to a school and partially managed by them, it is the LA and Consultant Headteacher, who continue to be responsible for the placement and oversight of the OOS children in the projects.

4.0 Other considerations

4.1 When placing children in the projects the department has been mindful to ensure that children do not spend longer than necessary in them prior to moving on to a school place or to further education. To guard against pupils staying too long in projects it was decided that pupils would not remain in the Greenway, QPCLC or Ashley Gardens project for longer than one academic year.

4.2 The project review has found that two children were in a project for just over one year, both of whom are from Somalia, and have had no previous schooling. However, both students transferred to Copland in September 2008. That student's join at different times of the year, not just at the start of terms or half terms is challenging for project staff in terms of planning and induction.

4.3 It is also challenging to move children on to schools when they are school ready, and takes up considerable time and resource.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The examination results of those pupils attending the reduced GCSE course at Kingsbury High are very positive. The full results are set out in the full project report on page 13. The pupils placed at Capital City Academy were quickly absorbed on to the school roll. The GCSE course at QPCS has only been running for one year, but students are progressing well.

5.2 The course at Wembley High School has provided a lifeline to able Year 11 youngsters who have arrived from overseas with good English but with no chance of achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs by joining a Y11, i.e. in less than one year. This equivalent, one year, course has enabled the students to gain level 2 qualifications and move on to Advanced Level work with their peers. It is an excellent initiative on the part of Wembley High Technology College and is being replicated this year.

5.3 From the feedback from all the Projects and the detailed reviews at the CLC, Greenway, Kingsbury and the Brent Project it is clear that the projects are all making an extremely valuable contribution to secondary education in Brent. Pupils at the various projects have found their experience to have been very positive, and some excellent initiatives have been developed, e.g. the learning mentors and the use of the buddy scheme.

5.4 Each project is operating successfully and individual refinements identified by the reviews are being discussed directly with the staff and managers of the projects.

Background Papers

Review of the Brent Projects December 2008 attached.

Contact Officers

John Christie
Director of Children and Families
John.christie@brent.gov.uk

Mustafa Salih
Assistant Director – Finance and Performance
Mustafa.salih@brent.gov.uk