

23 October 2018

Decision in principle to close The Bath Studio School

It is with much sadness that Wellsway Multi Academy Trust (WMAT/Trust) is announcing that, following its request, the Secretary of State for Education has granted a 'decision in principle' to close The Bath Studio School by mutual consent. Following this approval in principle there will now be a five week listening period during which individuals and organisations can put forward their views on the proposed closure to RSC.SW@education.gov.uk.

The Bath Studio School (TBSS) was opened in September 2014 and has, despite considerable effort, struggled to recruit students. Although the school's capacity is for 300 students, aged from 14-19, it currently educates just 126 students and has never recruited more than 140 students in any one of its five academic years of existence. This lack of demand has led to the situation where the school is not financially viable, or educationally sustainable, going forward.

The Trust has reviewed several options to keep TBSS open but none are likely to be achievable within the local educational landscape and, reluctantly, WMAT has therefore made the request for closure.

If the request is given formal approval, TBSS will close at the end of the school year 2019/20 - with no further students being admitted to the school from September 2019. This will enable all current students to complete the courses and qualifications they have enrolled on. During this period WMAT will work individually with students to support their on-going education and transition and will also be available to talk to their parents/carers. WMAT will also provide advisory support for TBSS staff, and will look to identify other opportunities for them within other WMAT academies.

Aspire Academy, which shares a site with TBSS, will remain within the Trust and plans are already underway to expand the school to provide more places for children with social, emotional and mental health needs. Alongside this expansion, WMAT is planning to work with the local authority to further develop special school provision on the site to meet the growing need for more special school places in Bath & North East Somerset.

ENDS

Note: The listening period runs from 23 October 2018 to 27 November 2018