



**The Governing Body of
The Bishop of Llandaff Church in Wales High School**

Consultation Report

The proposed expansion of The Marion Centre Specialist Resource Base

1. Reason for this Report

- 1.1 The Governing Body of The Bishop of Llandaff Church in Wales High School in partnership with Cardiff Council (hereafter also referred to as the "Council") recently consulted on a proposal to increase the designated number at The Marion Centre Specialist Resource Base (hereafter also referred to as "SRB") from 42 to 66 students from September 2022.
- 1.2 In accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government School Organisation Code the Governing Body must publish a consultation report
- summarising each of the issues raised by consultees;
 - responding to these by means of clarification, amendment to the proposal or rejection of the concerns, with supporting reasons; and
 - setting out Estyn's response to the consultation in full, responding to Estyn's response by means of clarification, amendment to the proposal or rejection of the concerns, with supporting reasons.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 The Governing Body agreed to hold a public consultation on proposals to increase the designated number at The Marion Centre Specialist Resource Base from 42 to 66 from September 2022.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 14th October 2021, the Cabinet of the Council noted that a statutory consultation on the proposal was to be undertaken and authorised officers to provide all reasonable assistance.
- 2.3 The consultation on the proposed expansion of The Marion Centre was undertaken as part of the Councils wider proposals for the establishment/expansion of secondary complex learning needs and specialist provision for autism spectrum disorder (including Specialist Resource Base).
- 2.4 The consultation ran from 14th December 2021 until 1st February 2022 and was supported by Cardiff Council.
- 2.5 The consultation process for all proposals involved
- Publication of a bilingual consultation document outlining background; rationale and implications to parents; Headteachers and Chairs of Governors; all Members of local wards, local residents and other stakeholders (a copy of the consultation documents can be seen at Appendix 1);
 - Publication of a bilingual summary document setting out the main points of the consultation documents (a copy of the summary documents can be seen at Appendix 2);
 - Publication of information in community languages upon request;
 - Consultation meetings via Microsoft Teams with staff at The Bishop of Llandaff Church in Wales High School (notes from the meetings can be seen at Appendix 3);
 - Student survey with student representatives at The Bishop of Llandaff Church in Wales High School (a copy can be seen at Appendix 4);
 - A public consultation meeting via Microsoft Teams at which the proposal was explained by Council officers and questions answered (notes from the meetings can be seen at Appendix 5);

- Drop-in sessions were offered via Microsoft Teams where Council officers were available to answer questions (there were no requests for drop-in sessions);
 - Letters setting out details of the proposals and where further information could be found were sent to local residents and businesses in the area surrounding the school sites subject to the proposed changes
 - A communication campaign via social media;
 - A consultation response slip for return by post or email, attached to the consultation documents and summary documents; and
 - An online response form at www.cardiff.gov.uk/ALNSchoolproposals.
- 2.6 For stakeholders who did not have access to digital platforms, the opportunity to discuss the proposed changes via telephone was available.
- 2.7 The views expressed at Council organised meetings, drop-in sessions, telephone calls, and on paper or electronically through the appropriate channels, have been recorded.
- 2.8 Views were sought from interested stakeholders via an online survey and a hard copy version of the survey within the consultation document.
- 2.9 The details presented in this report represent the views expressed during the consultation process. These include the wider stakeholder survey, formal responses, e-mail responses, views expressed at public meetings, drop-in sessions, telephone calls and the student consultation survey.
- 2.10 The views expressed in the wider stakeholder surveys reflect those raised in the e-mail responses received.

3. Responses received during the consultation period

- 3.1 As set out in 2.3, the consultation on the proposed expansion of The Marion Centre was undertaken as part of the Councils wider proposals for the establishment/expansion of secondary complex learning needs and specialist provision for autism spectrum disorder (including Specialist Resource Bases). The consultation included proposals for the establishment/expansion of additional learning needs provision at five secondary schools across Cardiff.
- 3.2 In total, 114 responses to the consultation on the proposals for secondary complex learning needs and autism spectrum condition Specialist Resource Base provision were received by the Council including 106 online responses and a further 8 email responses regarding the specific proposals consulted on.
- 3.3 The Council received a number of formal responses to the strategic expansion of ALN provision which did not reference The Bishop of Llandaff Church in Wales High School. This includes a response from Estyn. Details of which can be found at [Cabinet 10 March 2022 SOP Complex learning needs App 6.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](http://modern.gov.co.uk/Cabinet_10_March_2022_SOP_Complex_learning_needs_App_6.pdf).
- 3.4 Of the 106 online responses received, 84 respondents replied to the proposal to increase the designated number at The Marion Centre Specialist Resource Base for students with autism spectrum disorder from 42 to 66 places from September 2022. One respondent identified as a parent of a child/children enrolled at the school.
- 3.5 Of the 84 online responses, over four fifths (86.9%) agreed with the proposal. If 'Don't know' responses are removed from the analysis, then agreement rises to 98.6%.
- 3.6 A summary analysis of the responses received can be seen at Appendix 6. The points raised during the consultation are set out italics below, grouped according to the issues raised where appropriate.
- 3.7 The Governing Body's response to each point can be seen underneath, under the heading "Appraisal of Views Expressed".

4. Formal Responses

- 4.1 Estyn submitted a formal response to the Councils wider proposals for the establishment and/or expansion of secondary complex learning needs and specialist provision for autism spectrum disorder (including Specialist Resource Bases). They did not specifically provide a response in relation to The Marion Centre.
- 4.2 The response from Estyn covered all of the secondary complex learning needs and autism spectrum condition proposals consulted on and was not specific to the expansion of The Marion Centre.
- 4.3 Estyn welcomed the proposals which sits alongside others and aims to achieve a more equitable provision to better match current and future learning needs of students, across the City.
- 4.4 The response from Estyn sets out its view that the proposals are likely to, at least, maintain the standard of education provision in the area.

4.5 Their response included the following points (for the full response, please see Appendix 7)

- We welcome this proposal which sits alongside others and aim to achieve a more equitable provision to better meet the current and future additional learning needs of students, across the City.
- We consider that the proposal is likely to, at least, maintain the standard of education provision in the area.
- The proposals outline very clearly five broad principles that all schools and settings should aspire to and attain in effectively supporting students with additional learning needs... It is not clear however, if there is an overall framework that will help to ensure the realisation of the principles. An overall framework could be used also to guide and assist schools that are either establishing or developing specialist resource base provision. Neither is it clear what support or networks exist, or will be created, to support leaders and staff as they develop and embed effective practices in meeting the needs of students.
- The proposer states that a joint review of health and specialist provision in Cardiff special schools and the student referral units is being carried out. However, it is not clear if the scope and outcomes of the review will benefit students in specialist resource bases across the city. Neither is it clear if the review will look at Welsh medium provision alongside English medium provision.
- The proposal gives appropriate attention to the current capacity and how it is unable to meet the demands for places for students with complex learning needs and autism spectrum condition and the deficit of places currently available.
- The proposer defines specialist resource bases as "a small class in a mainstream school for students with significant additional learning needs. All students attending a specialist resource base have a statement of SEN and are taught by specialist teachers and learning support assistants, and have opportunities to learn, play or socialise with other mainstream students..." It is unclear from the definition whether students, where appropriate, can access, with appropriate support where necessary, lessons alongside students that do not attend the specialist resource base. To comply with the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal [Wales] Act the proposer needs to consider the admission of students with individual development plans.
- The proposal appears to provide effective opportunities for stakeholders, organisations, and members of the public to respond. This includes opportunities to access online public meetings. The process is clearly set out with timescales and how the consultation will be used.
- Statements made by the proposer for all schools about for example, teaching and learning experience and care, support and guidance are identical and do not provide a good enough account of how these are tailored to meet the specific additional learning needs of the students.
- The proposal considers suitable alternatives, for all schools, and outlines the possible benefits and disadvantages appropriately.
- The proposals consider appropriately the travel implications for students. All proposals foresee the likelihood of reducing travel time from home to school for some students. They also identify the need to further assess the suitability of drop-off and pick up point at each school site.
- The overall proposal considers the provision for the Welsh language but does not reflect the ambition laid out in the local authority's draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032. The plan states that the authority aims to increase the number of secondary specialist places to be delivered in an SRB located at each Welsh-medium high school with different specialist needs in each base to achieve a level of specialist provision that is on a par with other sectors and responds appropriately to individual need. This proposal does not address this particular aim sufficiently well.
- The proposer states that there is an opportunity to employ specialist staff and to work more closely with specialist services in Cardiff. However, no further detail is provided and there is no guarantee that the opportunity will translate into a firm commitment or reality. The proposer further states that the pool of Welsh speaking ALN qualified and experienced teaching staff is limited in number, in comparison to the English sector. It goes on to state that any plan to develop Welsh medium specialist provision will need to be supported by an Additional Learning Needs Workforce Development Plan but lacks any detail or commitment about how this will come about.

- The proposer correctly asserts that students with additional learning needs may find change difficult. Other than recognising that change needs to be carefully planned, information on transition planning is very limited.

5. Appraisal of views expressed

- 5.1 The Governing Body acknowledges the conclusions of Estyn on the overall merits of the proposals. Governors recognise the broad principles outlined in the consultation document reflect the approach the Council takes when developing Additional Learning Needs provision.
- 5.2 The Council provides a range of support to specialist settings. This includes professional learning for specialist staff; ALNCo forums and cluster meetings; termly additional learning needs updates for Headteachers; and regular updates for governing bodies.
- 5.3 The Council is currently working with the Health board to review services. This review will include consideration of specialist resource base provision in addition to special school provision.
- 5.4 Students attending specialist resource base provision benefit from specialist curriculum which is tailored to meet their needs.
- 5.5 In line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal [Wales] Act, the transition to individual development plans is being progressed.
- 5.6 The planning of Welsh-medium specialist places within the city is not the responsibility of the Governing Body of The Bishop of Llandaff Church in Wales High School.
- 5.7 The school continues to work with the Council to identify appropriate transition arrangements for students with additional learning needs. These arrangements are dependent on individual need and are progressed, as required. This support includes the provision/timing of funding, support with the recruitment and training of staff, the identification of needs and ongoing reviews.

6. Student consultation

- 6.1 Representatives from The Bishop of Llandaff Church in Wales High School Student Congress responded to a student survey.
- 6.2 The students agreed it was a good idea to improve the provision for Children and young people with additional learning needs.
- 6.3 The students agreed with the proposal to increase the number of places at The Marion Centre as they were already there.
- 6.4 Concerns were raised regarding the volume of transport (taxis/cars) and the need to make sure that all students are safe. It was noted that multiple vehicles travelling on and off the site needs to be looked at. There are times of day when the site is very busy, and this could be dangerous.

7. Response to views expressed

- 7.1 The Governing Body values the positive feedback by students on the proposed expansion of The Marion Centre, which reinforces the importance of the centre to the whole-school community, and its student body.
- 7.2 The Governing Body acknowledges the concerns raised by students in relation to increased traffic. The existing facilities for 'drop-off and pick-up' will be reviewed by the Council and the school to confirm they are suitable to accommodate the appropriate numbers of vehicles.
- 7.3 The Governing Body has been informed that proposals for the introduction of a 'School Street' on Rookwood Close are being developed by Cardiff Council. This would stop traffic entering at the start and end of the school day with the exception of resident traffic.

8. Other responses received

- 8.1 Reasons for supporting the proposed changes included recognition of the need for increased additional learning needs provision within the City.
- 8.2 Whilst there was support for the expansion of specialist resource base provision at the school there were a number of concerns related to
- Safety, transport and traffic volume concerns due to tight site access;
 - The need for site adjustments to reduce risk of injury as a result of traffic on, accessing and egressing the site; and
 - Potential building and staff requirements to support the increased number of students.

9. Response to the views expressed

- 9.1 Issues related to safety, transport and traffic volume are addressed in 7.2 and 7.3.
- 9.2 The Governing Body continues to work with the Council to ensure that suitable accommodation is provided for the increase in the number of students within the centre.
- 9.3 The Governing Body will continue to work with the Council Human Resources People Services to address the human resource implications arising from the permanent increase in the designated number at The Marion Centre Special Resource Base at the school and the resulting need for additional staffing.

10. Quality and Standards in Education

- 10.1 The Bishop of Llandaff Church in Wales High School is recognised as a high performing school. In its most recent Estyn and Diocesan inspections, it was rated as 'excellent' in all categories. Copies of these reports are available via the school [website](#). The school continues to work tirelessly with all stakeholders, including the Diocese of Llandaff and the Council, to sustain the high-quality education offered at the school for all its students.
- 10.2 Standards at the school, which includes The Marion Centre, are consistently outstanding, as seen over a sustained period of time. Increasing the Specialist Resource Base provision would provide appropriate high-quality school places for young people with autism.
- 10.3 Existing students within The Marion Centre, receive a bespoke and high-quality educational experience that enables them to make strong progress in their learning and development, relative to their individual need. Since the creation of The Marion Centre, every student has successfully transferred to an appropriate onward destination, aged between 16 to 19 years.
- 10.4 Governors do not expect the proposal to impact on standards at the school. It is not expected to have any negative impact on the quality and/or standards of education at the school, or the centre, as a result of the proposed change.
- 10.5 The proposal is not expected to have any negative impact on teaching and learning experiences at the school. The school has an appropriate range of policies and provision in place to promote students' health and wellbeing; the school is committed to providing an environment in which learning is valued; and students achieve their potential in a happy, safe environment in which they show respect and tolerance for each other.
- 10.6 The school continues to work to make sure everyone understands their responsibility for helping to improve and sustain high performance. The school, including The Marion Centre, has excellent relationships with parents and other partners and, as a result, students receive a high-quality education.
- 10.7 The proposed changes would be planned carefully so that leadership and governance is not disrupted, which could have a negative impact on educational standards.

11. Transport Matters

- 11.1 The Council applies the two-mile statutory qualifying walking distance criteria for students to qualify for free home to school transport to specialist resource bases. Some specialist resource base students who live within two miles of the school may be provided with free transport due to their individual learning needs and social issues. Other students that are able to travel independently or with parents/carers and residents within the two-mile qualifying distance may not be eligible for Student Transport. These students, as well as staff and school visitors, would benefit from any required improvements in facilities for active travel to school or public transport facilities.
- 11.2 The Council's current Corporate Plan includes a commitment to every school in Cardiff developing an Active Travel Plan. Such a plan will identify actions by the school to support and encourage active travel to school and also any improvements to on-site and off-site infrastructure required to facilitate active journeys.
- 11.3 Increasing travel to school by active modes (walking, cycling and scooting) by ensuring safe facilities are provided will have a positive impact on children's health and wellbeing. A number of initiatives have successfully demonstrated support and encouragement for active and sustainable travel amongst the Additional Learning Needs cohort, which would be offered to students as appropriate, including Independent Travel Training for older students (to be reviewed each year), cycle maintenance and cycle training.
- 11.4 With the expected increased demand for Student Transport suitable improved and/or expanded facilities for drop-off and pick-up may be required within the site to accommodate the appropriate numbers of vehicles. Other improvements may include modifications to the layout, signage and traffic control measures.

12. Community Impact

12.1 It is not anticipated that the proposal will have any impact on the community.

13. Admission Arrangements

13.1 Admissions to specialist provision are managed by the Council, subject to a statement of Special Education Needs (SEN) and/or under the ALN Code [Wales], placement will be subject to an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

13.2 There are no planned changes to the Council's policy on the admission of children to schools as a result of this proposal.

13.3 Detailed information about admission arrangements is contained within the Council's Admission to School booklet. This information can be found via the Council's website www.cardiff.gov.uk.

13.4 There are no planned changes to the school's policy on the admission of children to the school as a result of this proposal.

14. Recommendations

14.1 The Governing Body is recommended to publish proposals in accordance with section 48 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 on proposals to increase the designated number at The Marion Centre Specialist Resource Base from 42 to 66 students from September 2022.

14.2 Note that in the event of there being no objections to the published proposals a further report will be considered by the Governing Body prior to implementation of the proposal.

14.3 Note that in the event of objections to the published proposal being received, the proposal would be referred to the Local Authority (Cardiff Council) for determination within 35-days of the end of the objection period. The Local Authority has 16-weeks from the end of the objection period to determine the proposals.

The following appendices are also available as part of the post-consultation report

Appendix 1 – Consultation Document;

Appendix 2 – Summary Document;

Appendix 3 – Notes of staff meeting;

Appendix 4 – Student survey;

Appendix 5 – Notes of public meeting;

Appendix 6 – Summary analysis of responses; and

Appendix 7 – Estyn's response to the consultation.