

Appendix 7

Option 1

Site Organisation



Welsh-medium

- Transfer Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to the current Allensbank Primary School site
- Increase the capacity of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from 192 places (0.9FE) to 420 places (2FE)
- Increase the number of nursery places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from 64 to 96

English-medium

- Amalgamate Allensbank and Gladstone Primary Schools:
 - Formally Close Allensbank Primary School
 - Formally Close Gladstone Primary School

- Establish a new 420 places (2FE) English-medium Primary School with nursery on the current shared Gladstone Primary School / St Monica's CiW Primary School site
- *Transfer St Monica's CiW Primary School to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site and establish nursery provision at the school

* Any decision to relocate St Monica's CiW Primary School and to establish nursery provision at the school would be a matter for consideration by the Governing Body of the school with any proposed changes subject to consultation and the relevant statutory processes.

The proposed changes would be implemented from September 2025.

Nursery Provision

The number of nursery places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would be increased from 64 to 96 to support its growth to a two-form entry school.

Should the transfer of St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site be taken forward it is proposed that 32 part time nursery places are provided to develop continuity and progression in children's learning from the age of three.

At present the Council funds 112 community nursery places between Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School, reducing to 96 places next year. It is proposed to retain sufficient accommodation to allow for up to 96 English-medium community nursery places at the new school.

Overall, accommodation to allow for an increased number of English-medium and Welsh-medium nursery places would be retained, and the number of places funded would reflect the demand for places in the local area.

The establishment of nursery provision at St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School would be subject to consultation and the relevant statutory processes.

Additional Learning Needs provision

There is a Speech and Language early intervention class hosted by Allensbank Primary School. The Council admits up to 8 Foundation Phase children to this city-wide provision who were not making sufficient progress, but who have good prospects for returning to their local mainstream school.

Placements last 1 – 3 years, depending on progress. Pupils are dual registered at their local school and supported to return at the end of the placement. Pupils continue to attend their local school for at least one day a week, to maintain links with local friends and to prepare for a successful early reintegration to their local school.

Consideration would be given to establishing the city-wide Speech & Language class within the new school.

Further consideration would be given to this in consultation with the relevant school Governing Body / bodies, taking account of each school's aspirations.

The proposed expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to two forms of entry, and transfer to the Allensbank Primary School site could provide the opportunity for consideration to be given to the establishment of specialist resource base provision. Separate proposals would have to be developed for this.

What are the benefits of the proposal?

The proposed changes would:

- provide an improved balance between the availability and take up of both Welsh-medium and English-medium primary school places
- provide a more economically sustainable pattern of school provision over the long term
- support progress towards the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and Cymraeg 2050 targets
- support Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to maintain and continue to build on its excellent standards
- allow for a greater number of children to benefit from the education on offer at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan
- result in fewer children being refused admission to a local school
- as a minimum maintain the current standards of education and allow each school to continue to improve education for all of their learners
- ensure that each school provision offered meets the diverse needs of the communities they currently serve and are able to serve in the future
- support schools to be financially sustainable in an improved pattern of provision through amalgamation
- support schools to allocate a greater proportion of budget to teaching and learning, thereby retaining and increasing opportunities for learners
- maintain the current number of English-medium primary school places serving the local area
- allow for the establishment of nursery provision at St Monica's CiW Primary School and the associated benefits
- allow for the retention of school sites to future proof against changes in the population cycle

The expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to 2FE and the establishment of a new 2FE English-medium primary school would support teaching and learning by allowing for:

- the area to have two form of entry schools. When compared with smaller schools, the scale of a two form entry primary school permits greater flexibility and opportunity for pupils due to an extended, more enhanced and secure financial resource base
- a two form entry school can provide a greater degree of stability at all levels of leadership including maintaining a full and stable complement of school governors
- the ability to employ more teaching and support staff would allow the two form entry schools to cover a wider range of curriculum expertise
- a greater number of teachers to share workload and expertise

- greater opportunities to professionally develop staff e.g. NQTs who can observe their parallel teacher
- opportunities for staff to teach to their strengths ensuring learners have the best education experience possible
- a greater number of teachers to lead on Areas of Learning, plus RE, RSE and Digital Competency
- greater opportunities to offer a broader range of extra-curricular activities
- greater opportunities for distributed leadership

The establishment of nursery provision at St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School would:

- provide continuity of provision which reflects the ethos and culture of the school
- support the development of strong and effective parental links from the earliest possible opportunity
- ease transition for a nursery-aged child when promoting to Reception class (where Reception admission application has been successful)
- allow for the early identification of vulnerable groups. This would mean that the needs of children can be identified as early as possible
- provide an opportunity for children to attend nursery at the same site as their older siblings. This should impact positively on parents' time and reduce the logistical difficulties that seeking an alternative childcare provision may cause
- provide continuity and progression between Early Years and Foundation Phase, enhancing the opportunity to appropriately address individual developmental and cultural needs

Standards

The Council works closely with the governing bodies of schools to make sure that standards in schools are high, that teaching is good, and that leadership and governance is strong.

The standards at the four-school included in the proposed changes are good.

The proposed expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to 2FE, the establishment of a new 2FE English-medium primary school and the establishment of nursery provision at St Monica's provide the opportunity to realise a range of educational benefits that would allow for all of the schools to build on existing progress ensuring a positive impact on the quality and standards of education for current and future pupils.

Amalgamating Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School and combining their budget would allow for a redistribution of financial resources to schools through the reduction in the number of lump sum allocations to schools.

Should Option 1 be progressed, it is proposed that the equivalent sum would be ringfenced for the newly established two form entry English-medium for three years to support the school to further develop provision and/ or invest in resources to benefit its pupils. Beyond this period, this sum would be available for redistribution to primary schools city-wide.

Potential disadvantages of the proposals

- there is potential for increased traffic congestion around the current Allensbank Primary School site and the current shared Gladstone Primary/St Monica's CiW Primary School site at the start and end of the school day. However, the Council would work with the Governing Bodies of the schools to develop a Travel Plan to minimise any potential disruption.
- the proposal to close Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School would result in the loss of two historic institutions which are valued by their communities.

Risks

- there is a risk that an increase in the number of pupils requiring Welsh-medium places does not happen. The Council will keep its projections under review and would respond to any such changes in demand if required.
- there is a potential impact on neighbouring Welsh-medium schools. However, this is expected to be short term as the number of pupils attending Welsh-medium provision grows as part of the development of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).
- there is a risk that there will be a rise in demand for English-medium places. However, the Council will monitor demand over the coming years to ensure that there are sufficient places for those requiring English-medium education. As the proposals retain all existing sites and do not reduce accommodation available, they would retain flexibility for future changes that may be identified as appropriate.
- there is a risk of potential disruption to pupils during the transition period however the Council has significant experience in the successful delivery of building projects on the sites of occupied schools as a result of progressing a large and growing school organisation programme. Any building work carried out would be managed effectively in consultation with the schools to ensure the full curriculum continues to be delivered and that high education standards and safety standards are maintained.

Human Resources and Finance Matters

Welsh-medium

Proposals to relocate a school would require high levels of staff and trade union consultation, clear communication plans and arrangements for the transition from one school site to another. Staff involvement in the development of building specifications or designs should be secured.

The proposed expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would require the Governing Body to consider the workforce requirements in readiness for the expansion. The Governing Body would be encouraged to undertake this work in line with the School Organisation Planning HR Framework. HR People Services would provide advice, support and guidance to the Governing Body for the workforce planning process and consequential recruitment processes.

Where the Governing Body has adopted the Council's School Redeployment and Redundancy Policy, any new vacancies arising as a consequence of an increase in the numbers on roll would provide opportunities for any school-based staff on the school redeployment register.

The Council was successful in securing £1.8m grant funding from the Welsh Government to reorganise primary school provision in central Cardiff and expand Welsh medium places by 1 Form of Entry (210 places). The purpose of the Welsh Medium Capital Grant is to support capital investments that facilitate growth in Welsh-medium education and use of the Welsh language.

The funding allocated to Cardiff Council is ring-fenced to support expansion in Welsh-medium education provision and would allow for investment in school buildings to support increased intakes.

English-medium

The number of teaching and learning roles required for a 2FE primary school is similar to the number for two 1FE primary schools, however the type and number of roles required would be dependent on the number of pupils on roll and the school budget position.

Where roles are duplicated e.g., Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher positions, and administrative and estates staff, it is expected that there would be a reduction in the number of roles required overall.

The proposed formal closure of Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School and the establishment of a new 2FE primary school places staff at a potential risk of redundancy which would need to be managed in line with the School Redeployment and Redundancy Policy.

A key aspiration for the Council is to achieve staff reductions as far as possible through redeployment rather than voluntary or compulsory redundancies. Therefore, the Council is committed to maximising opportunities for school staff to secure employment in other schools in Cardiff through redeployment into vacancies in other schools in Cardiff.

The redeployment arrangements would also be taken into account should the decision be taken to relocate the Speech and Language class from Allensbank Primary School to within the remit of a Governing Body of another school.

The establishment of a new school would require the setting up of a temporary Governing Body to oversee the development of an appropriate staffing structure and appointments to this.

Any decisions taken with regards to staffing would be a matter for the relevant Governing Body.

The proposed increase in pupil numbers arising from the introduction of a nursery at St Monica's Primary School would require the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team to plan for workforce requirements of additional staffing.

Full support would be offered to the school staff and Governing Bodies by HR People Services throughout the reorganisation. This would involve attendance at consultation meetings, meetings with school staff where appropriate and the circulation of a Frequently Asked Questions document.

Funding to support the reorganisation of English-medium provision would need to be made available from Council resources. There would be no savings to the Council as a result of the proposed changes. Any efficiency savings arising out of a reduction in leadership and establishment costs would allow for funding to be allocated more effectively within the Education budget.

The school budget formula saving from amalgamating Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School by closing each school and creating a single two form entry primary school as set out in Option 1 would be c£98k per year based on the removal of lump sum allowances provided to schools.

This option amalgamating Allensbank and Gladstone and combining their budget would allow for a redistribution of financial resources to schools through the reduction in the number of lump sum allocations to schools.

Should Option 1 be progressed, it is proposed that the equivalent sum would be ringfenced for the newly established two form entry English-medium for three years to support the school to further develop provision and/or invest in resources to benefit its pupils. Beyond this period, this sum would be available for redistribution to primary schools city-wide.

Option 1 would result in the displacement of an existing Headteacher and restructuring of leadership. The anticipated efficiencies in the new school's budget, compared to the two existing budgets combined, could be c£100,000 to £114,000 per year plus on-costs, based on the midpoint of existing leadership salary ranges and the implementation of a new leadership structure of one Headteacher and two Deputy Headteachers.

Transport/Travel to school

The Council has been committed to ensuring that every school in Cardiff has an Active Travel Plan by 2022. Such plans identify actions by the school to support and encourage active travel to school and identify any improvements to on-site and off-site infrastructure required to facilitate active journeys. The Council's Active Travel Plans officers have been working with schools to develop these and all four schools included in the proposed changes already have Active Travel Plans in place for their current sites.

All new (including reorganised) schools need to have an Active Travel Plan in place from the outset of their operation.

The Active Travel Plans officers will continue to work with the schools in the review and further development of their current Active Travel Plans as appropriate to suit any change in circumstances. They can support with engagement on the Active Travel Plans as part of an implementation of a proposed expansion of places and any changes in location of school cohorts to alternative sites.

Following a reorganisation of the schools, the Council will monitor conditions outside the schools post-completion to see if any further measures such as parking restrictions are required. The scope for introducing parking restrictions will be investigated and put in place where appropriate as a low-cost measure to help discourage short distance car travel, make the environment outside each school safer and more conducive to walking, scooting and cycling and maximise active travel to school.

The Council's Road Safety Team already provides a programme of cycle and pedestrian training to further encourage take up of active travel to school. This support will continue as part of the ongoing engagement and support that will be provided by the Council's Schools Active Travel Team on Active Travel Plan development and delivery.

The construction of the new Cycleway 1.2 along Cathays Terrace, Whitchurch Road and Allensbank Road will provide a new cycling facility directly linking to Allensbank Primary School, Gladstone Primary School and St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School.

Where it is identified that some pupils will be eligible for school transport due to their additional learning needs (e.g., for SRB pupils), the facilities for drop-off and pick-up of pupils will be reviewed to identify any necessary improvements.

The maximum distances between the school sites is c0.5 miles. Should any of the schools be relocated to an alternative site, the maximum increase in home to school travel distance for current pupils is therefore 0.5 miles.

The impact of transferring Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to the Allensbank site would be an average travel distance increase of 0.04 miles for current pupils of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.

The establishment of a new 2FE English-medium primary school at the shared Gladstone Primary School / St Monica's CiW Primary School site would result in the current pupils of Allensbank Primary School having an increased journey. The impact on these pupils would be an average travel distance increase of 0.08 miles.

The impact of transferring St Monica's CiW Primary School to the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would be an average travel distance increase of 0.2 miles for current pupils of St Monica's.