

Records of in person drop-in sessions at Cathays Library

- 15 May 2023
- 25 May 2023
- 07 June 2023



Schools Organisation Programme
Record of Drop in Session
Cathays Library
15 May 2023



Present: Rosalie Phillips (RP), Shirley Karseras (SK), Cai Maxwell (CM)

Please note: The following is not a transcript but a contemporaneous note of the meeting.

Six members of the public attended the drop-in session at Cathays Branch Library regarding the proposed changes to primary school provision serving the area. The points raised are set out below.

Two parents, both with children at Allensbank Primary School who live locally had concerns over the proposals and consultation process:

- There is no hard data for the increase in WM to the level of 420 places. Believes this is at the expense of Allensbank which offers places relevant to the community and multiple faiths.
- Concerned that the increased number at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would encourage pupils from a wider area, outside of the catchment area, increasing traffic. This would be detrimental to the environment of the local area and would put children's safety at risk as the area is already very congested with parking restrictions.
- Believes that the proposal displays casual racism and that there were no non-white faces used in the consultation documentation.
- Criticised the drop-in session scheduling.
- Information in minority languages had not been produced enabling members of the community for whom English is a second language to contribute to the consultation; Arabic needed to be prioritised.
- Believes that the proposals will create a system that will force people to choose Welsh-medium education.
- Acknowledged Cymraeg 2050 but asked why Allensbank couldn't work towards a Welsh-medium model.
- Allensbank is a School of Sanctuary and pupils need to learn English. Does not believe that people arriving in the area would want to choose Welsh-medium education.
- Asked if there were any plans by the Council to limit the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) in the area as there are more and more students residing in the area and less and less families who would require school places.

A parent of pupil due to start at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan raised the following:

- Relieved to see that the expansion of YMB is finally due to take place; the last proposal for temporary arrangements was awful. Had moved to the area so that child could attend Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and was very concerned that they would not gain admission due to the school being oversubscribed in previous years.
- Would like to see the capacity of the Cylch Meithrin increased to accommodate an afternoon session but the Cylch had been unable to find suitable

accommodation; the Allensbank site could potentially support this if the proposal is agreed.

- Queried what would happen with Allensbank and thought merging it with Gladstone Primary School and moving St Monica's was a very good idea.
- Whilst living in a Flying Start area, there is no Welsh-medium provision nearby so was not able to make use of it.
- Also looking to start a Ti a Fi for the area.

A parent of a child at Allensbank Primary School raised the following:

- English is a second language for their family and doesn't feel that this is the correct decision for the capital of Wales.
- Why are Welsh schools getting more money than English-medium schools?
- Will there be sufficient staff numbers available to meet demand for Welsh-medium – issues at primary and secondary level.
- Concerned that there will not be sufficient English-medium places available going forward for children from families with English as a second language who do not want Welsh.
- Concerns that there will be an impact on education.
- Parents should learn more Welsh.

Two parents of children at St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School raised the following:

- Don't have an issue with the school moving but concerned that the VA status of the school would change. Officers advised that there was no proposal to change the status of the school as part of the proposed changes.



**Schools Organisation Programme
Record of Drop in Session
Cathays Library
25 May 2023**



Present: Rosalie Phillips (RP), Ceri Tanti (CT), Cai Maxwell (CM)

Please note: The following is not a transcript but a contemporaneous note of the meeting.

Four members of the public attended the drop-in session at Cathays Branch Library regarding the proposed changes to primary school provision serving the area with the following points raised:

- Less choice of school for parents if schools merge. Each school has its own way of doing things, atmosphere etc. and currently parents can have choice of all three English-medium schools for the one that suits them best.
- Concerned at losing the history of the schools. Generations of the family have attended.
- Don't want to lose the school family at Gladstone, as finds the school very supportive.
- Parent with a child with autism attending Gladstone who needs familiarity and a solid routine, feels this is very disruptive.
- In favour of increasing spaces in Welsh-medium, but not at the expense of those who don't speak Welsh.
- Concern at how non-English speaking parents will take part in consultation, asked how they are being encouraged; *informed that consultation summaries are being translated into community languages, and sessions are being put on at all four schools to speak to parents.*
- Would the Council consider moving Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to the Gladstone Primary School/St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site as this would better serve the southern part of the catchment which runs down past the city centre; if the number of places is going to increase to 420 there will need to be more pupils from the southern end.



**Schools Organisation Programme
Record of Drop in Session
Cathays Library
07 June 2023**



Present: Rosalie Phillips (RP), Ceri Tanti (CT), Cai Maxwell (CM)

Please note: The following is not a transcript but a contemporaneous note of the meeting.

Four members of the public (three of whom were parents of children attending Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, and one whose child attends St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School) attended the drop-in session at Cathays Branch Library regarding the proposed changes to primary school provision serving the area with the following points raised:

- Ysgol Mynydd Bychan parent said that they had mixed feelings about the school expanding – with school being small lots of people know each other, and it is a tight-knit community, which might be lost if school was bigger. However, they appreciate that people have struggled to get a space, and in some cases have had trouble getting their family into the same school as some have had to take up a place at an out of catchment Welsh-medium school and then couldn't get a place for younger siblings at the same school.
- Wanted to be assured that there would be sufficient places at Welsh-medium secondary school should the expansion bring more children into Welsh-medium education.
- Concern at Allensbank being a listed building, feeling that the school may be limited in the changes it can make and that any changes may prove more expensive due to status of building. Aware that there is grant funding available for spending on school for Welsh-medium but may not get much for the money as could be more costly to do work.
- Understand that children in Y1, 2, 3 have access to outdoor space at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, something that they have worked hard to build, children have free access to outside space from their classrooms. Unsure whether this set up is in place or possible at Allensbank or if it would be restricted due to listed status.
- Concern that the outside space available at Allensbank being less per pupil than Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, if the school was full.
- Currently Ysgol Mynydd Bychan take children to do sports outdoor at Maindy Park and concerned at losing this as a space for the children to do sports.
- The Allensbank site is appealing as not so close to the main road,
- In terms of options, feel that English-Medium schools may feel aggrieved as seems like Welsh-medium schools are getting all the benefits of the proposals.
- An option of locating Ysgol Mynydd Bychan on the Gladstone/St Monica's site should have been included in the consultation; although it is close to a busy junction, it would be more central in the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan catchment so would be easier access for people at the south of the catchment.
- A more diverse mix of backgrounds would be beneficial for Welsh-medium schools; how is the Council going to promote Welsh to the wider community?

- What would the impact on other Welsh-medium schools be?
- More space would be beneficial for children who attend the school and have additional learning needs, to allow for withdrawal spaces, etc.
- Supports need for additional Welsh-medium provision in the area.
- Proximity of Allensbank site to current school site as positive, as many families live very close to the school.
- Welcome the opportunity to move to Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, which would give St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School the opportunity to have a nursery, as the school currently loses some children to other schools which have a nursery.
- It was felt that St Monica's would benefit from the increased amount of outside space at the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site if the move went ahead.