

APPENDIX 10

Formal Responses were received from the following:

- Joint Response from County Councillors for Gabalfa Ward, Cllrs Rhys Taylor and Ashley Wood
- County Councillor for Cathays Ward, Cllr Chris Weaver
- Estyn – His Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
- Julie Morgan, Member of the Senedd for Cardiff North
- National Education Union (NEU)
- Diocese of Llandaff
- Allensbank Primary School Governing Body
- Allensbank Primary School Headteacher
- Allensbank Primary School Staff – NEU Members
- Gladstone Primary School Governing Body
- Gladstone Primary School Headteacher
- Gladstone Primary School Staff
- St Monica’s Church in Wales Primary School Finance, Premises and Health & Safety Committee of the Governing Body
- St Monica’s Church in Wales Primary School Standards Committee for the Governing Body
- St Monica’s Church in Wales Primary School Vision and Values Committee for the Governing Body
- St Monica’s Church in Wales Primary School Headteacher
- Ysgol Mynydd Bychan Governing Body and Members of Staff
- RhAG (Parents for Welsh Education)

Joint Response from County Councillors for Gabalfa Ward, Cllrs Rhys Taylor and Ashley Wood

- make changes to how English-medium community primary schools are organised, retaining an equivalent number of places or a marginal reduction in places compared to the existing arrangements, and
- expand Welsh-medium primary school provision at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.

We are responding in our capacity as local members for the Gabalfa ward.

General comments

We welcome the commitment to expand the provision of Welsh medium education in the community to both meet unmet demand and ensure that all families and children can access a Welsh medium education should they choose. In addition to known unmet demand, we also know that families within catchment actively seek places in other schools, due to the known capacity issues at Mynydd Bychan, as demonstrated by Table 10 in the report.

We also recognise the urgent need to address the number of surplus places in English medium primary schools and the impact that has on school budgets, and the resources available to support teaching and learning. We recognise these funding pressures are both due to the school funding formula, and ongoing pressures on public sector finances. We strongly believe that this process of re-balancing places must be done in a sustainable way that future-proofs school places, and enhances the provision that schools provide to their pupils.

We also wish to echo comments we made in our response to the consultation in 2019 regarding the process the council has taken. Whilst we acknowledge the outcome of the 2019 consultation and the feedback and solutions brought forward by the community, we remain disappointed that the council has opted to only use a statutory consultation process, rather than informally engaging with schools and their communities at an earlier stage to identify solutions. This has caused significant anxieties among parents at local schools and has again left many, particularly within the Allensbank community, feeling that their school is not valued.

Comments on the Options

We do not support the formal closure of any school. The schools proposed for closure are established, respected schools that provide a distinctive education for their pupils, particularly, from our knowledge, in the case of Allensbank Primary School.

Our preference would be to explore federation of schools, allowing for the individual ethos and approaches to teaching and learning to be retained and shared, whilst still re-allocating and re-balancing school places in the English-medium sector. We recognise that this still poses concerns for the communities of those schools with

respects to staffing and governance, but feel that protecting the identity and educational provision of those schools is important.

In respect to Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, we do share concerns about the budgetary impact of transferring to a significantly larger building. Whilst we recognise data in relation to oversubscription in recent years and data in relation to pupil enrolment in comparison to their catchment area (Table 10) suggests an immediate increase in pupils on roll, there will be a period of growth for the school in reaching 2FE. This will have staffing and therefore resource implications in what is already a challenging financial environment for schools. It is essential that the council actively supports Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to increase the numbers on roll to minimise, insofar as possible, the resource implications of the relocation of the school, as part of its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The consultation document does not outline any capital investment the council proposes to make in the fabric of the affected school buildings. This poses questions particularly in respect of the current Allensbank Primary School building and the constraints of the building as a Grade 2 listed building. More reassurance is needed about the adaptations that would be possible, but also ensuring that enhancements are made to all assets so no school inherits premises that will incur ongoing significant maintenance costs. It is also essential that construction works are completed as quickly as possible as to minimise disruption for all pupils, but particularly those at Allensbank and Gladstone who have faced prolonged maintenance works over recent years.

We support the intention of increasing nursery places and providing continuity for pupils in both Welsh medium and English medium settings as part of the re-balancing of school places in the area.

Other options posed to us by the community

Once again, we share the frustration felt within the community that the council has ruled out, or failed to fully explore, the option of new-build accommodation in creating a sustainable, flexible solution for future growth. We are also disappointed that no capital investment has been indicated as part of the 21st Century schools programme to deliver excellence in our school buildings.

Some residents have advocated for the re-location of Mynydd Bychan on the Gladstone site and the re-location of Gladstone Primary School to the Allensbank site. They feel this would allow substantial growth for Mynydd Bychan without the same resource implications as transferring to the Allensbank site. We do however recognise that this would limit the future growth of Welsh medium education, if the current configuration of the current Gladstone building were to be maintained. It is frustrating however that the reasons for this option being discounted are not outlined in the consultation document.

Further comments

More broadly, the consultation focusses on built assets, but does not appear to engage with any urgency the wider question and role of school catchments in re-balancing places prior to the re-allocation of places.

Page 80 of the consultation document suggests a phased expansion, and we would welcome clarity that means phased expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan as the sole user of the current Allensbank School site, and not that schools will be split across sites as posed in the 2021 consultation. As with the 2019 consultation, we do not feel that operating schools over multiple sites is beneficial for any school.

Notes

Cllr Taylor has been a local authority appointed governor at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan since 2016 and was reappointed in 2021.

County Councillor for Cathays Ward, Cllr Chris Weaver

I've not selected a particular option as supported or not supported, all have benefits and opportunities as well as risks. There are a few points that I'd like to be considered as part of the decision making, based on the discussions we've had at Gladstone Primary Governing Body.

The Governing Body know that many parents really value the culture and ethos of the school and the hard work and excellence of the staff, and understandably these proposals have created some concern that this could be disrupted. We do understand the need for school organisation to provide appropriate numbers of places for both Welsh and English medium for local families, but this is obviously a sensitive and challenging time for staff, parents, and the whole school community.

I would like to emphasise that when considering the best option, the Council should refer to the aims of 'Cardiff 2030', in particular in closing the attainment gap. The EM primary schools in this area share similar demographic traits, with high levels of pupils eligible for free school meals, with English as an additional language with multiple different first languages spoken by families at the schools, and all experience a mobile and transient pupil cohort. I believe these factors should be taken into account in determining the best option, with a clear outcome from this process to be to improve even further the education offer to those pupils. This is exactly the cohort of pupils we need to be investing in to close that attainment gap, and this should be a crucial factor in deciding which option is best – and necessary resource should be made available to ensure enhancement for these pupils can be delivered. I can see that locating either one LEA school or two federated LEA schools on the Gladstone site could bring some opportunities to economies of scale and efficiency in allocating resources that could support some of this enhancement.

I'd also like to emphasise that this process is unsettling and concerning for staff at schools that may be going to federate or amalgamate, and everything possible must be done to support staff welfare during this process. I would like to see the most simple and clear process possible should schools federate or merge, to give staff the greatest and quickest certainty about their situation that is possible.

Gladstone is an excellent school, as evidenced by the most recent Estyn visit, with an inclusive and welcoming culture. Parents of children at the school have expressed their strong support for the school's culture and ethos. If federation or amalgamation are chosen as the preferred option I hope the history and ethos of Gladstone and Allensbank can be reflected in the future school(s), and acknowledged in some way, to reflect their longstanding and important presence in the lives of so many families in this area, and to reassure parents of pupils currently at the schools that the very positive, welcoming, successful cultures and practice of the schools will continue.

Estyn - His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Estyn response to the proposed changes to primary school provision serving Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd

Introduction

This report has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation options.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer.

Summary/ Conclusion

The proposal is by Cardiff council

It is consulting on three options to reorganise schools in the area

Option 1

- Amalgamate Allensbank and Gladstone Primary Schools:
 - Formally Close Allensbank Primary School
 - Formally Close Gladstone Primary School
 - Establish a new 420 place (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
- 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) and increase the number of nursery places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from 64 to 96

Option 2

- Co-locate Allensbank and Gladstone Primary Schools on a shared site:
 - Transfer Allensbank Primary School to the current shared Gladstone Primary School / St Monica's CiW Primary School site
 - Reduce the capacity of Allensbank Primary School from 315 places (1.5FE) to 210 places (1FE)

- Reduce the age range of Allensbank Primary School from 3-11 to 4-11 by discontinuing nursery provision at the school
- Increase the number of nursery places at Gladstone Primary School from 64 to 96
- Transfer St Monica's CiW Primary School to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site and establish nursery provision at the school
- 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), and increase the number of nursery places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from 64 to 96

Option 3

- Increase the number of nursery places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from 64 to 96
- Transfer Allensbank Primary School to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site
- Reduce the capacity of Allensbank Primary School from 315 places (1.5FE) to 192 places (0.9FE)
- 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)

It is Estyn's view that each of the three options are likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area.

Description and benefits

The council has provided a reasonable rationale for suggesting the changes detailed in the three options. This is mainly to provide an appropriate balance of Welsh-medium and English-medium school places. A previous consultation showed that there was support overall for the expansion of Welsh medium education, although other issues were raised. The current options address the issues that informed the earlier consultation.

The council has provided suitably detailed descriptions of the options, highlighting the similarities and differences between each one. It has also appropriately provided key dates for the statutory procedures relating to the proposal and indicated that the proposed changes would take effect from September 2025. The council properly makes reference to the fact that the option to close two schools, and to establish a new school, would require the establishment of a temporary governing body ahead of the opening of the newly opened, larger school.

The council has clearly set out the benefits for the different parts of each option. It has also provided the common disadvantages associated with each aspect of option one and option two and separately provided the potential disadvantages of option three. The council considers that overall, the options would include the benefits of having a better balance between the number of places available and the number of children wanting places for both English-medium and Welsh-medium provision, support schools to become more financially sustainable making better use of their resources and allow all of the school sites to stay as school sites so there is enough

space for future changes in the population. The disadvantages include possible increase in traffic congestion, closing schools valued by the local community and option 3 would result in a marginal reduction in the number of English-medium community primary school places.

The council has suitably identified the main risks associated with the options. These include the council not having enough places if there is an increased demand for English medium education, not enough demand for Welsh medium education thereby resulting in too many surplus places and potential disruption during the transition period. The council appear to have suitable mitigation processes in place to manage these risks.

The council has considered a few different options. These include considering alternative site options within the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan catchment area, locating Welsh-medium provision on the shared Gladstone and St. Monica's CIW site with English-medium provision on the Allensbank site, expansion of the existing Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site and reorganisation of provision on the Albany Primary School site. It has provided reasonable explanations as to why these options have been discounted.

The council has suitably presented information on the impact of the options on learner travel arrangements. It states that it has been committed to ensuring that every school in Cardiff has an 'active travel plan' which identifies actions by the school to support and encourage active travel where appropriate and identifies improvements needed on-site and off-site to facilitate active journeys. All four schools included in the options have active travel plans in place for their current sites. The council asserts that officers will work with these schools to develop their plans to suit any change in circumstances. The council further mentions that there are no plans to change its policy on the transport of children to and from school. Where pupils must go to school in a new location, their entitlement to free home to school transport would be re-assessed from the new location.

The council has provided a useful table showing the distances between all the schools considered in the options. It confirms the council's statement that the maximum distances between the school sites is approximately 0.5 miles and that 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 council has provided a detailed analysis of data that includes the numbers of pupils on roll in each of the affected schools and also historical numbers and forecasts for the next few years. This data demonstrates that there are significant numbers of surplus places overall in the English medium schools which are forecast to continue over the next few years. The council states that there would still be enough places serving the area for children who currently attend or want to attend the English-medium schools in the future. In addition, the council states that it also wants to increase the number of Welsh-medium primary school places in the area by expanding Ysgol Mynydd Bychan. This school is full at present.

The council accurately states that the options would have a positive impact on the Welsh language with an increase in the number of Welsh-medium primary school places available at primary age. It highlights the council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and points out that outcome 1 and outcome 2 refer to more nursery children and more reception class children receiving their education through the medium of Welsh.

The council has considered the financial costs of each option and any potential savings. It states that funding to support the reorganisation of English-medium provision would be made available from council resources. Grant funding from the Welsh Government to reorganise Welsh medium primary school provision would allow for investment in school buildings to support increased intakes. There would be no savings to the council as a result of any of the proposed changes. Any efficiency savings would allow for funding to be allocated more effectively in each school's budget.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The council has provided the consortium's view of quality and standards at each school as well as the most recent Estyn inspection outcomes and states that standards at the four schools included in the proposed changes are good. It affirms that it 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 council concludes that it does not expect the options to have any negative impact on the quality of standards of education, the delivery of the Foundation Phase or each key stage of education at any of the schools or the ALN provision based at Allensbank Primary School. It says that it would work with the leadership of each of the schools to make sure everyone at the school understands their responsibility for helping to improve and sustain high performance, care, support, and guidance and plan changes carefully so that leadership and governance are not disrupted. This seems fair and reasonable, however no further detail is provided to support how this would be accomplished

The council has considered the impact of the options on pupils receiving free school meals, pupils with English as an additional language, minority ethnic pupils and pupils with additional learning needs. It has presented data that shows the numbers of these pupils in each of the schools. For each of these groups of pupils, it reasonably concludes that there is no information available that suggests that the options would have a negative effect on provision. It has also provided a single impact assessment, an equality impact assessment and a community impact assessment which all appear to be relevant and valid

The council has suitably considered the potential disruption to pupils in implementing the proposed changes. A project lead officer would work with the governing bodies of the schools to develop an investment programme that would include transition arrangements and support the wellbeing of pupils and staff. More disruptive work would be undertaken during the school holidays wherever possible. The proposed

expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would be phased and parts of the two buildings could be closed to staff whilst works are undertaken

Julie Morgan, Member of the Senedd for Cardiff North

I am writing in response to the consultation on the plans to reorganise primary school provision to serve Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd. There has clearly been an increase in demand for Welsh language education and it is the policy of the Welsh Government to try to meet that demand and to try to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050. It is therefore understandable that plans are being considered to allow for an increase in the numbers of children able to attend Ysgol Mynydd Bychan. It is very unfortunate that it is not possible to expand the school on the current site but it seems clear that there is insufficient space to accommodate extra classes there.

I have considered the 3 options and there are some concerns about each of them. All of them involve Ysgol Mynydd Bychan transferring to the current Allensbank Primary School site and increase from 192 to 420 places. It is to be welcomed that Ysgol Mynydd Bychan could expand to that size but there is concern that they would be moving into an older building which is listed and therefore they may be prevented from carrying out the improvements they would wish to see. I am aware that permission has not been granted in the past for doors which open to the outside area and I understand that CADW will not now consider specific plans until after the consultation ends. There is also concern that the outside space will not be adequate for the increased size of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.

All of the options also involve moving Allensbank school from its current premises. Option 1 involves Allensbank and Gladstone Primary Schools amalgamating to establish a new 420 place English-medium School with nursery provision on the current site shared by Gladstone primary School and St Monica's Primary School. This seems to be the option preferred by Allensbank School, if they do have to move. The Allensbank building has been clothed in scaffolding and had a huge amount of repair work going on for the last four years. Children have often had to be moved to a different site within the building as the work was going on. This has naturally been difficult for the staff and children but they had hoped that at least at the end of it, they would have benefitted from the improvements. That benefit will now be lost to them, when they move out.

Option 2 would involve Allensbank children moving to the site currently occupied by St Monica's Primary School but there are concerns that the space would not be large enough for all the Allensbank children so some may have to be accommodated in Gladstone school and this does not seem desirable.

I am aware that some parents feel that by offering the three options, the Welsh language is being preferred over English. I do support the promotion of the Welsh language and it is obvious that there is a high demand for it. However, in Allensbank school, they have successfully improved their ranking over the years and have worked very well with a large number of children from various ethnic communities and between them, the children speak over 30 different languages. It is important that the success of the school is not diluted by these proposed moves.

NEU response to the consultation on Primary school places to serve Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd

About The National Education Union

The National Education Union is the largest education union in Europe, and represents teachers, lecturers, leaders, and support staff across the school and FE sectors in Wales. The NEU believes we must value education by valuing educators.

Our response

NEU Cardiff District welcomes the opportunity to respond to this significant schools' reorganisation consultation. As we have members in each of the schools affected by the proposals, we do not think it is appropriate for us to advocate any specific option. We consider the schools themselves and their Governing Bodies to be well placed to convey their responses to each option.

There are, however, several points we would wish to make as an over-arching response to the consultation as a whole for your consideration, especially in terms of the impact on staff and continuity of employment.

The consultation document outlines the case for change based on educational and financial grounds. We are pleased to see that the good standard of education in all schools under consideration has been recognised. While we appreciate that many of the proposals offer enhanced opportunities for collaboration and professional development for staff and potentially expanded learning opportunities for children, it has been noted by our members that these proposals for change come at a time when all of the schools have recently emerged from the COVID pandemic, and its implications for dwindling staff resilience and an increase in the needs of pupils and families are continuing. It has also been stated that staff in some settings have been on a heightened and rapid school improvement journey throughout the period, resulting in very positive ESTYN reports, in the hope that this would lead to a secure and settled future for all. These staff now report feeling very vulnerable and the work that they do, undervalued. We would expect those proposing change to be mindful of the context in which the change is being suggested, and to ensure appropriate support for staff is put in place at every stage, should plans be progressed.

We are pleased that Cardiff LA has a well-publicised commitment to no compulsory redundancies wherever possible, but we note also the fact that there is no stated possibility of the direct transfer of staff should any of the schools be closed, leaving the sustained employment of staff at risk. We will provide a more detailed response to this issue once the outcome to this current stage of consultation is known, but at this point, we would expect the employer/s to ensure that the jobs and livelihoods of existing staff who wish to be employed in any new configuration of provision are protected and staff are as far as possible safeguarded from detriment during any restructuring process. We look forward to working closely with the LA/Diocese/Governing Bodies to ensure this is the case.

It is also a fact that these school sites have been subject to significant and ongoing building repairs over recent years, and staff have expressed disappointment that they may not get to enjoy the improved buildings following the years working in disrupted and noisy conditions. There is also concern that if plans are progressed, this would mean further periods of prolonged disruption whilst the school accommodation is further adjusted to suit the needs of any of the proposed configurations. There is also the potential for such works to impede the further educational development of the schools in the short term.

Indeed, the impact of merely beginning a consultation on amending educational provision has been shown in the past to have the potential to disrupt the improvement journey of the schools involved, due to the creation of uncertainty. Such uncertainty may cause parents to choose to send their children to other schools where the future is known and will not be subject to the same uncertainty/upheaval. This could impact on reception intake numbers, but also on pupils who currently attend, particularly the Allensbank and Gladstone schools, where the proposals involve moving site and changes to staffing structures and school leadership.

There are fears that this would spark a negative chain reaction of decreasing pupil numbers leading to an exacerbation of the financial challenges based in the short term, leading to a less sustainable future for English Medium provision overall. If families leave the catchment area, this would lead to a period of financial instability whether there is no change or a federation or amalgamation. What protections could the LA put in place during any transition period to counter the impact of such potential difficulties?

Arrangements for any period of change/transition must be well planned and properly supported to ensure that the current educational improvements are not lost, or the future prospects for all of the schools being viewed as less positive in the eyes of external stakeholders such as the Central South Consortium or Estyn. This would be hard for all staff who have made such efforts to achieve their current good ratings.

We are pleased that the proposals retain all of the buildings currently in use, and that their future use will be as primary schools. These buildings are key not just to the education of the children they serve, but also to their families and the communities they represent. In areas where there are great degrees of linguistic and ethnic diversity such as this, the importance of welcoming in the community to schools must not be underestimated in celebrating diversity and building a sense of community cohesion. Schools such as St Monica's, Allensbank and Gladstone have generations of experience in doing this, and any proposal for change must consider how this may be impacted either positively or negatively.

The NEU acknowledges the equal status of both Welsh and English as official languages of Wales. With regards to the proposals for expanding Welsh Medium provision in the area, we have the following observations.

We appreciate that the further promotion of WM education in this area will not be possible until a suitable site is identified, and we appreciate that additional funding will only be available and ring-fenced to the expansion of WM education as a result of National policy that Cardiff LA have committed to. The two areas that will need further consideration are around the current identified drop in birthrate that is impacting reception class entry numbers, including those at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan whose reception class currently has vacancies, and the drive towards achieving a million speakers of Welsh by 2050. NEU Cymru believes that the plans to meet the Welsh Government's target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 can only be met if we support the learning of Welsh for everyone in the education workforce. We would encourage the proposals to include consideration of developing any opportunities for the Welsh language skills of those beyond WM setting in this area on the use of Welsh in education, as we see the opportunities for training of the workforce as critical to Cardiff schools playing their part in helping the LA achieve their targets in this area.

We also believe that careful consideration of whether a two-form WM school rather than a 1.5 is the best in the medium term to ensure that too many surplus places are not created, leading to financial pressures being experienced, especially in light of birthrate trends. Indeed, it may be possible in the early years of any expansion, where numbers are not at full complement, any surplus spaces may be used for the development of Welsh Language skills for the wider education workforce in Wales, and the local community.

We welcome the potential for the ethnic diversity profile of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to be improved, but due to the similarity of addresses of those who attend that school and those who attend Allensbank noted in the consultation, we expect that this will not be changed merely by the relocation of the schools. Further work, such as that being undertaken with Minority Ethnic groups as outlined in the WESP will be key to any improvements.

We were pleased that the levels of pupil mobility have been included in the background to the proposals. We would expect that a sufficient amount of pupil places be provided, particularly in the case of St Monica's, to accommodate the necessary flexibility required.

Although there are potential savings identified in the option of federation/ closer collaboration between Gladstone and Allensbank, further assurance would need to be given that this proposal will not mean a 'half-way house' along the route to the potential eventual closure of one or both schools involved in a future proposal. If this assurance is given, it may make this option more attractive to consultees, as it retains two well-known Cardiff schools, steeped in the history and development of the community of Cathays, and allows both unique identities to persist.

Angela Jardine
Branch and District Secretary
Cardiff NEU
June 2023

Diocese of Llandaff

Do you support Option 1? Yes

The Christian faith ethos of the school is proving to be very attractive to both Christians and those of other faiths. Many of the current year groups in St Monica's are oversubscribed.

Parental choice should be treated equitably and therefore increasing the number of places available in a faith school is a positive move to address a demonstrably high demand for places.

The refurbished early years provision at St Monica's would be well utilised by a new school and nursery.

Current outdoor areas are totally inadequate for the size of the current school.

Current accommodation would not be able to accommodate the move to universal free school meals as the current kitchen facilities are totally inadequate.

Do you support Option 2? No

The current site presents too many restrictions as a split site. The current disproportionate outdoor area size restricts the provision available to children for outdoor play and learning in St Monica's which is not equitable for children.

Do you support Option 3? No

The current site of St Monica's is restricted by the availability of outdoor space and inadequate facilities for the provision of universal free school meals.

A demonstrably high demand for places is indicative of the need to extend the provision of places for parents wishing to choose a faith option for their child's schooling. This should be treated in a fair and equitable way and faith provision expanded as an offer for parents.

Do you wish to make any additional comments?

St Monica's should only be moved on condition that the new building is reviewed for, decorative condition, furnishings and facilities at no cost to the school. This would include the establishment of a suitable worship space in the school and the relocation of St Monica (statute) from the present location to the new site.

Paul Booth, Director of Mission Llandaff Diocese

Allensbank Primary School

Allensbank Primary School – Governing Body

Firstly we have to note the distress that these proposals have caused and are still causing to the staff members of Allensbank who have worked tirelessly for many years to improve the experience of pupils in the school, continuing to work with their customary dedication through the recent strains of Covid and extensive building works.

Having endured the massive inconvenience of on-going alterations and construction works, to now be told that others will gain the benefits feels like a complete betrayal.

This is not a failing school as evidenced by the most recent Estyn report:

‘All staff at Allensbank Primary School work diligently to create a happy, caring and inclusive ethos at the school. The positive and supportive relationships between pupils and with all adults are a strength of the school. Leaders and staff work skilfully to create effective provision for pupils who need additional support. They use a range of approaches, which impact very positively on pupils’ achievement and their sense of wellbeing. The headteacher provides clear strategic direction alongside a dedicated team of staff who show a strong commitment towards supporting all of their pupils to achieve and thrive.’

To continue with less partisan objections, it is our opinion that the whole consultation exercise is flawed for the following reasons:

- There was no discussion at all with the concerned parties. i.e. Allensbank Primary School, Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, Gladstone Primary School and St. Monica’s Primary School to explore options before the document was published. This would have been a sensible preliminary process to discuss thoughts and opinions.
- The options suggested do not include all possible options, only those which result in Ysgol Mynydd Bychan being relocated to the Allensbank site with all renovation having been completed.

The most obvious and not dissimilar option omitted is that of moving Gladstone Primary School to the newly renovated Allensbank site. The number of pupils on roll at Gladstone is fewer than the number on roll at Allensbank so this would result in disruption for fewer pupils. The building would then be close to capacity, (whereas if Ysgol Mynydd Bychan were to move to the Allensbank site they would initially and for the foreseeable future have to deal with the problems of too large a building).

This would then allow Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to move to the Gladstone site which is actually more central within its catchment area

There are currently 203 pupils on roll at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan with 181 of these being from within the catchment area. Gladstone has 210 places but sufficient

accommodation for up to 270 places, if resource rooms were to be assigned as classrooms. This would therefore allow an expansion for Ysgol Mynydd Bychan by up to nearly 90 pupils from within catchment with none of the problems of too large premises.

If, and given the decline in Welsh speakers over the last 10 years this remains a big uncertainty, there was a need for further expansion there would be the possibility of extending into the St. Monica's site and St Monica's being relocated elsewhere. This option would also have the benefit of freeing up the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site for development, possibly as a purpose built Welsh school or possibly to ease the current accommodation shortage in Cardiff.

Alternatively St. Monica's could, as proposed, be moved to the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site leaving the current St Monica's site vacant for Ysgol Mynydd Bychan's future possible expansion. Again this would avoid the difficulty for Ysgol Mynydd Bychan of an over large building in the immediate future.

Regarding the options as laid out in these proposals, (none of which are welcome):

We consider options 2 and 3 to be totally unacceptable whereas option 1 is just undesirable and ill conceived.

Finally, while we appreciate the aims of the government's Welsh language strategy and are aware of the need for extra capacity in Welsh medium schools in Cardiff we are concerned and disappointed that these proposals if implemented would be to the detriment of some of the poorer, more vulnerable and more disadvantaged children in our community.

*Kevin Jacobs,
(Chair of Governors, Allensbank Primary School)
on behalf of the Governing Body*

Allensbank Primary School – Headteacher

Do You Support Option 1? No

None of the proposals are desirable for Allensbank. Option one, however, is the only proposal put forward that provides a level of security for the majority of Allensbank staff.

Option one has caused much distress to a highly dedicated and successful staff who have worked tirelessly to bring about school improvement. With the closure of Allensbank and Gladstone and the establishment of a new school comes the potential for job losses and therefore the impact on staff well-being is not to be underestimated if this option were to be carried forward.

The main objection to this proposal is that at no point has there been any form of discussion with schools as to where it would be best to site this larger school.

The distance between the current Gladstone and Allensbank sites is minimal. Surely then, consideration should have been given to which site would be best suited for this purpose. (I refer to this further within my suggestions for alternative proposals).

Do You Support Option 2? No

I consider Option 2 to be unacceptable.

With Allensbank potentially being reduced to a capacity of 210 pupils, it is clear that the school would need to share buildings/outdoor space with Gladstone Primary School. Whilst Allensbank has always had very positive relationships with Gladstone Primary School and would clearly seek to maintain these, there would be concerns around co-location. The burden of sharing facilities on a site that already has a limited amount of outdoor learning space would lead to difficult to manage health and safety and pupil safeguarding arrangements.

The reduction in pupil numbers and removal of Nursery provision would also have a catastrophic impact on Allensbank Primary School in terms of funding and the ability to attract new intake within Reception classes each year.

Do You Support Option 3? No

I consider Option 3 to be unacceptable.

This option would lead to a large reduction in pupil numbers and therefore reduce significantly the funding received by Allensbank Primary School.

The funding for a single form entry school is currently not sufficient to make small schools financially viable. The result of this proposal would be that Allensbank would sustain a huge financial loss of income. This would therefore ultimately mean a lack of job security for all current staff at Allensbank.

Would you like to suggest any changes or alternatives to the proposed options?

None of the 3 proposals are in anyway desirable to Allensbank.

All three proposals are based on the assumption that Allensbank Primary School should move from its current building.

A clear alternative to this proposal would be to close Gladstone Primary School and Allensbank Primary School whilst accommodating a new English-Medium school on the Allensbank site.

The Allensbank building is able to comfortably accommodate a 2FE Primary School whilst also allowing provision for staff parking.

There are fewer pupils on roll at Gladstone and so there would be disruption for a smaller number of pupils in terms of them being relocated.

The Gladstone building would comfortably house Ysgol Mynydd Bychan with the option to expand further into the St Monica's site if needed. It would also position Ysgol Mynydd Bychan more centrally within its catchment area.

If so, how would these changes be of greater benefit to children and young people in these communities, than Options 1, 2 or 3?

The siting of Gladstone and Allensbank Primary Schools on the current Allensbank site would mean a disrupted education for fewer pupils.

The positioning of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan on the Gladstone site would allow for easier access for parents, particularly from the more southernly part of their catchment area.

This option also provides the ability for Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to grow over time. It minimises the amount of unutilised space within the area until needed, as the separate St Monica's building could easily be utilised by the wider community. Some examples of potential interim use would be for EAL classes for parents within this diverse community, a support Hub for refugees and asylum seekers in need of support or simply a place for community groups to meet thus providing an income for the Local Authority.

Do you wish to make any additional comments?

As headteacher at Allensbank Primary School since 2013, I am proud to have led a dedicated team of staff in ensuring that the school meets the needs of pupils from this highly diverse community.

The proposals are being forced on us as a school and community that does not seek change. We would prefer instead to be appropriately funded and resourced in order to continue to meet the needs of our learners.

The school has faced huge challenges in recent years due to the impact of Covid-19 but also the significant building works which have impacted on the everyday life of our school for the past 4 years. Staff have endured all of these pressures whilst remaining steadfastly focused on pupils and the unique ethos of the school. They now face further years of disruption within the building knowing that potentially they will benefit in no way from the improvements to the building. The spending around these building works has been particularly hard to swallow given the fact that Allensbank has been working under severe financial limitations during this period. Scaffolding costs for the building (given that scaffolding was in place for years prior to work commencing) stands at a cost of well over £300,000. Allensbank can only imagine what could have been achieved as a school if this additional Council money had instead been used to address underfunding for the school.

Pupil numbers have declined on a Citywide level and so schools are left fighting to attract pupils. Making Allensbank inviting and appealing to parents is hugely challenging given that buildings have been fully scaffolded externally and the outdoor space severely limited.

Whilst pupil numbers have declined in line with many across the City, our pupil numbers at any one point do not reflect the high levels of mobility and numbers of pupils from across the globe that enter Allensbank very often for their first experience of the British Education system. We were recognised by Estyn in 2020 as being a school that “celebrates the diversity of culture and language of pupils and their families at every opportunity and uses highly effective strategies to support pupils who need to develop their English language skills.” We strongly feel that the Local Authority should be celebrating these successes of the school rather than making us subject to enforced change.

Jenny Drogan, Headteacher of Allensbank Primary School

Allensbank Staff – NEU Union Members

Here is our written response from NEU Union members at Allensbank Primary School in regards to the provision of Primary School places to serve Cathay's, Gabalfa, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd.

Option 1

We recognise the benefits of amalgamating Allensbank and Gladstone schools and becoming a 2FE. However, we would like to raise the following comments:

- Gladstone and St Monica's will not be fit for purpose as a 2FE school by September 2025 if this option goes ahead. We feel that our school will be ready for a 2FE school for a smoother transition to amalgamation and have less of an impact on pupils and staff well-being.
- Ysgol Mynydd Bychan whilst currently full will not have a 2FE on September 2025 if current oversubscription figures and 20% drop in birth rate are anything to go by. Therefore, we feel that Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would be better suited on the Gladstone site providing them with ample space and potential room to grow.
- We feel this option would cause congestion in an already busy area with a significant amount of staff, pupils and parents needing access to parking. How would the council overcome this issue in an already notoriously bad for parking availability.
- With the current cost of living crisis, we are concerned that amalgamating schools would have a significant cost implication for families who reuse uniforms yearly and hand me down. How would the council overcome and address this issue for our families?
- There has been a huge impact on all staff's wellbeing, mental and physical health with regards to the prospect of this option as there is a huge uncertainty with regards to our futures and financial security, as even though the number of staff needed would be the same and two schools are being pushed together, we are not guaranteed our role even though the role is there in the new school. We would also like to raise the concern that pupils have been informed via the council that 'All or most of the teachers in the new school are expected to be from Allensbank and Gladstone.' We would be looking to seek clarity on the discrepancy between these two very different viewpoints both of which have been given by the council.
- We have some of the most vulnerable pupils in the LEA, who rely on the familiarity of staff and their surroundings to cope and keep them regulated on a day-to-day basis and the change of location will ultimately have an effect on these pupils.

Option 2

We feel strongly that Allensbank being placed on the current St Monica's site right next to Gladstone LEA maintained English medium Primary school, makes no sense and will not benefit Allensbank community as a whole. The reduction of numbers with the closure of our current nursery will have a detrimental effect on pupil numbers in the future. How can a smaller Allensbank compete with a Gladstone that is catering from

ages 3-11 and has an abundance of space to do this and we feel that this will ultimately lead to Allensbank's full closure.

This option would also mean uncertainty for all staff and their roles due to the closure of the nursery, having a detrimental effect on the wellbeing of staff and pupils.

We have some of the most vulnerable pupils in the LEA, who rely on the familiarity of staff and their surroundings to cope and keep them regulated on a day to day basis and the change of location will ultimately have an effect on these pupils.

Option 3

Whilst on paper this option seems the most straightforward option for all parties involved, we feel that this is another option to set Allensbank up for failure and ultimately close or an eventual amalgamation with Gladstone. Again, the reduction of numbers to a 0.9FE would impact the current pupils on roll at our school as well as our ability to attract potential pupils. This will then have financial consequences for our school which would be catastrophic taking into consideration our current financial situation as a school and would not be sustainable in the longer term.

We have some of the most vulnerable pupils in the LEA, who rely on the familiarity of staff and their surroundings to cope and keep them regulated on a day-to-day basis and the change of location will ultimately have an effect on these pupils.

We would like to propose a fourth option to yourselves where Allensbank remains on its school site and amalgamates with Gladstone to form a new school, as we do see the benefits of amalgamating the two schools and it would limit some of our concerns listed above, along with relieving some anxieties for our most vulnerable pupils.

In conclusion, we do not understand why pupils, staff and our community's wellbeing has not influenced an option for Allensbank to stay on their current site. All options are in favour of the other schools in the proposal and we feel that our rights to a fair proposal have been missed, especially as we have some of the most vulnerable pupils in the LEA, who rely on the familiarity of staff and their surroundings to cope and keep them regulated on a day to day basis.

Gladstone Primary School

Gladstone Primary School – Governing Body

Do you support Option 1? No

I can see the positives to solve Gladstone's deficit budget by pooling resources with another school. A wider group of staff may also offer wider opportunities for staff and more after school clubs. We may also be able to host a speech and language unit. However there are several issues which would threaten the school's ability to offer the education and support it currently offers.

1. Impact on staff and learners. Many staff are already anxious about losing their jobs. With this uncertainty lasting until September 2025, this may impact the teaching and learning experience for children. This option would also risk the headteacher's role as she too would have to apply. The headteacher has been an excellent leader, pupil numbers have grown annually since her arrival and our ESTYN inspection a success. This option risks losing the most vital resources that make Gladstone such a success.

2. Loss of identity. Gladstone holds a special place in the community and is it vital to support many vulnerable families. 36% of our children qualify for free school meals as they live in relative poverty. 65% of our pupils aged over 5 years speak English as an additional language (EAL), 48% of which are below competent in English (A-C). Our ESTYN inspection recognised our ability to help many vulnerable families to live happy and safe lives. The school supports them informally through translation and interpretation and because the school is small, staff are able to build relationships and trust with families. This is important for parents that have not had the linguistic or social confidence to engage otherwise, and is especially so for those whose children have additional learning needs. We have multiple generations of families that send their children to Gladstone because they trust their children will gain a positive and inclusive education. A loss of Gladstone as an entity would take away that role of trust the school holds locally.

3. Concern over lack of space to provide free school meals for a two-form entry school. We are constrained by the hall size and kitchen capacity; considerable investment would be needed to make it viable, as well as more midday supervisors to ensure the system functions. I also worry that this would take a long time to manage each day and could end up compromising teaching and learning time.

4. Concern over lack of space outdoors for a larger number of learners. Many of our children have limited access to safe outdoor spaces within the community. Doubling the number of children would put pressure on the available space and limit capacity to offer more outdoor activity after school clubs. The playground was described as "adequate" for a larger school by local authority staff, but I feel strongly that the needs of already-disadvantaged children should be a priority, accessing better than "adequate" outdoor space to enrich their learning experience and help to rebalance their life chances.

Do you support Option 2? No

Co-location of the two schools on a single site could bring complexity to practical operations. If the schools federated, it is not clear what the budget implications would be for the schools and may ultimately lead to amalgamation due to funding pressures, which would effectively be option one.

Do you support Option 3? Yes

The third option may be the most practical from Gladstone's perspective in many ways. It would be the least disruptive option for the staff and children and therefore limit the impact of an uncertain period of change or reconfiguration on teaching and learning and reduce the risk of loss of experienced, knowledgeable staff.

However, from a budgetary point of view, I acknowledge that this option may not benefit Gladstone and may not offer us an immediate way of setting a sustainable budget in the short term. However, I perceive this option could enable a reallocation of pupils from Allensbank to Gladstone, which might enable us to grow our pupil numbers to bring Gladstone's numbers up to capacity. This might allow us to make for a sustainable budget in the long-term with a full cohort in each class (we have capacity for around 30 more pupils currently).

As a governing body, we wish for the good work that Gladstone primary does within the community and for its learners to continue, and this option may allow us to keep the ethos and spirit of the school without compromising due to budgetary pressures. This option naturally also ensures that Ysgol Mynydd Bychan can operate in the space it needs and the community retains its schools and minimises disruption for all.

Gladstone Primary School – Headteacher

Do you support Option 1? *Opinion not indicated*

This would be an exciting opportunity for two community schools to unite and form one larger Primary School in the Cathays area. Having one larger Primary School in the area would ensure a smooth transition for pupils from the age of 3 through to 16 years at High School. A larger school would allow for staff to share expertise and create greater collaboration/CPD opportunities. Additional staff could also provide a range of expertise and educational experiences for pupils in the school. An amalgamated school would offset any deficit budgets schools may currently have and provide a more sustainable future for the families and staff. An increase in pupil numbers would impact positively on the school budget and provide additional resources and opportunities for pupils. The whole school community would have the opportunity to contribute their ideas and thoughts to help shape their child's school for the future e.g. deciding on the school name, school uniform, branding giving them ownership of their school in their own community.

The schools building work will be completed and will hopefully provide pupils with a structurally sound building to be proud of. There was previously one school on the whole site with the infant building being located in St Monica's and the Junior school at Gladstone. This could be a possibility for a new amalgamated school with also space for an After School Club and/or a Speech and Language Unit, SRB or Nurture facility. Gladstone Primary School currently hold family learning courses for parents/carers which could continue.

Having one Primary School will also create more opportunities for families to network and support one another in the community. This would also allow the community to work together to help support raise funds for the school and support any local events/businesses. A larger school could enable the school to reach out to more people in the community and raise awareness of the Boathouse building as a potential space which could be utilised by families/businesses.

I appreciate this option would be unsettling for all staff, including myself, as we would all have to re-apply for our jobs with the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher positions going national which could mean potential redundancies.

Do you support Option 2? *Opinion not indicated*

Co-locating Allensbank and Gladstone Primary School on a shared site would allow two community schools to come together and provide greater collaboration opportunities for staff, pupils, families and governors. Having both schools on one site would allow for staff to share expertise and create greater collaboration/CPD opportunities. Staff could also provide a range of expertise and educational experiences for pupils in the school. There would be the opportunity to pool resources together which both schools could benefit from. This would also ensure that Gladstone and Allensbank retain their identity and ethos. If schools were to

federate this would be an exciting opportunity to work closely with all stakeholders of both schools and unite them under one umbrella.

This would give families time to adjust to the schools working on one site and be a smoother transition should the schools federate in the future.

This option would have little impact on staffing with nearly all staff not having to reapply for their jobs offering more job security.

Consideration would need to be given as to how Allensbank and Gladstone would share the site as this would need to be managed appropriately to ensure families are clear on school structures etc.

Do you support Option 3? Yes

This option would allow us to keep our identity, history and ethos which is important to our school community. This option would have the least disruption and impact on our school.

This option would have no impact on the pupils at Gladstone which would provide continuity and stability for their future. We are proud of the recent Estyn Inspection report and would like to build on the already good practice recognized by inspectors. Families have expressed how welcoming and nurturing the school is and how they like the fact we are a small community school as it allows us to support everyone including our EAL and most vulnerable families. We are a multigenerational school and this option would allow families to continue to return to Gladstone School.

Pupil numbers have been on the increase since 2018 and are continuing to rise which will hopefully contribute positively to the budget and future of Gladstone School. Option 3 would allow us to maintain and grow our current nursery numbers.

If schools were to federate this would be an exciting opportunity to work closely with all stakeholders of both schools and unite them under one umbrella. With federation there could potentially be a staffing restructure which could create savings in the long term to the budget. There would be the opportunity for both Allensbank and Gladstone to work collaboratively and share expertise and knowledge. This would also impact positively on the learners as their educational experiences could be enhanced. There would be the opportunity to pool resources together which both schools could benefit from. Having a Federated School would create more opportunities for families to network and support one another in the community. This would also allow the community to work together to help support raise funds for the school and support any local events/businesses. A federated school could enable the school to reach out to more people in the community and raise awareness of the Boathouse building as a potential space which could be utilised by families/businesses.

There is space at Gladstone School to house a Speech and Language Unit.

This would be a quicker and easier option to manage only impacting on 2 schools physically. This option also means that the majority of staff will not have to re-apply for their jobs which will ensure staff wellbeing is maintained.

The Local Authority have invested heavily in the restoration of Gladstone School with extensive building work being undertaken over the last few years – option 3 would allow the staff and pupils/families to enjoy and appreciate their new renovated building.

Would you like to suggest any changes or alternatives to the proposed options?

Extra funding to support the huge pupil mobility factor would support schools in this area and make budget planning for the future less challenging.

Do you wish to make any additional comments?

We have faced (as have other other schools) many challenges over the last few years which have included Covid, Building Work, Budgets, Estyn and now the Consultation of schools in the area. I appreciate that there are advantages and disadvantages for all schools involved with all options but trust that the Council will make the right decision for the future of learners and families in the Cathays area. Although Option 3 is my preferred option I have offered my opinion on Option 1 and 2 as I feel this is important. We will support whatever the outcome will be and help manage the change effectively for all parties involved.

Paula Shipton-Jones, Headteacher of Gladstone Primary School

Gladstone Primary School – Staff

Do you support Option 1? No

- The two oldest primary schools in the Cathays area, lose their identity and history.
- The intimate school ethos of two smaller primary schools, would be lost. With the new families, the families who need that support, and the families with little to no English, having the support within a smaller setting has always been crucial in maintaining positive relationships, and helping those in need.
- Staff have to re-apply for their posts.
- Senior staff, i.e. HT & DHTs have to re-apply for their positions; this would be advertised nationally, not just between the schools.
- Redundancies.
- A new nursery could reduce numbers at Gladstone.

Do you support Option 2? No

- Could be confusing for parents/families if schools are having to share both buildings?
- Could be logistically challenging for schools.
- Federation could mean Senior Leaders are at risk of losing their jobs from both schools
- Possible redundancies

Do you support Option 3? Yes

This option would allow us to keep our identity, history and ethos which is important to our school community. This option would have the least disruption and impact on our school.

Parent/Carers have expressed how much they value the staff at the school and are concerned about the impact of the consultation process on staff wellbeing. They are also concerned that this could also impact on standards due to the uncertainty ahead for staff and pupils. This option would have little impact on staffing with nearly all staff not having to reapply for their jobs offering more job security.

This option would have no impact on the pupils at Gladstone which would provide continuity and stability for their future. We are proud of the recent Estyn Inspection report and would like to build on the already good practice recognized by inspectors. Families have expressed how welcoming and nurturing the school is and how they like the fact we are a small community school as it allows us to support everyone including our EAL and most vulnerable families. We are a multigenerational school and this option would allow families to continue to return to Gladstone School.

Pupil numbers have been on the increase since 2018 and are continuing to rise which will hopefully contribute positively to the budget and future of Gladstone School. Option 3 would allow us to maintain and grow our current nursery numbers.

If schools were to federate this would be an exciting opportunity to work closely with all stakeholders of both schools and unite them under one umbrella. With federation there could potentially be a staffing restructure which could create savings in the long term to the budget. There would be the opportunity for both Allensbank and Gladstone to work collaboratively and share expertise and knowledge. This would also impact positively on the learners as their educational experiences could be enhanced. There would be the opportunity to pool resources together which both schools could benefit from. Having a Federated School would create more opportunities for families to network and support one another in the community. This would also allow the community to work together to help support raise funds for the school and support any local events/businesses. A federated school could enable the school to reach out to more people in the community and raise awareness of the Boathouse building as a potential space which could be utilised by families/businesses.

There is space at Gladstone School to house a Speech and Language Unit.

This would be a quicker and easier option to manage only impacting on 2 schools physically. This option also means that the majority of staff will not have to re-apply for their jobs which will ensure staff wellbeing is maintained.

The Local Authority have invested heavily in the restoration of Gladstone School with extensive building work being undertaken over the last few years – option 3 would allow the staff and pupils/families to enjoy and appreciate their new renovated building.

Would you like to suggest any changes or alternatives to the proposed options?

Extra funding to support the huge pupil mobility factor would support schools in this area and make budget planning for the future less challenging.

Do you wish to make any additional comments?

Our preferred option is 3 but we will support whatever the outcome will be and help manage the change effectively for all parties involved.

St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School

St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School – Finance, Premises and Health & Safety Committee of the Governing Body

Do you support Option 1? Yes

I am writing as chair of Finance, Premises & Health & Safety Committee of St Monica's School Governing Body.

As a committee we believe option 1 to be in the best interest of our school and other schools involved. We believe the relocation of St Monica's to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site would benefit us for several reasons:

- Our school is currently oversubscribed, we have waiting lists for every year group (except for reception). Our current site isn't fit for purpose for growing demand for church school places. Site move would allow us to incorporate a nursery. We hope there is scope for us to increase to a 0.9 form entry school. Making our school more financially viable.
- Moving site would place St Monica's in new Parish Ministry area. Allowing for the first time children in that area catchment – widening choice for church schools.
- Our current building is listed and has undergone significant repairs in recent years. A financial challenge due to us being a church school and relying on CRAMP funding (Capital Repairs and Maintenance Programme).
- To have a modern, more economical building we could better use CRAMP funding for betterment of school. Relieving financial pressures.
- For all schools involved we feel it would be best use of tax payer money and most efficient distribution of finances to manage schools.

St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School – Standards Committee of the Governing Body

Do you support Option 1? Yes

Response on behalf of the St Monica's Governing Body: Standards Committee: The committee believe that St Monica's having nursery provision would support the transition from nursery to reception (albeit that parents would have to apply for places in Reception) as the transition can be tricky especially if Additional Learning Needs have been identified for individual children. So if we had our own nursery, we would already know the children well and transition would be easier.

The benefits to standards are that all the foundation phase classrooms have direct access to outdoor areas which would enhance the curriculum we were able to provide. The building is also in a better condition, so more money would be available for resources. Also, having more staff would allow responsibilities to be shared, thus reducing the workload for SLT and Headteacher and allowing them to focus on improving teaching across the school.

If option 3 is decided, there will still be 3 very small schools and less money in the system to support learning and teaching. Currently there are 4 small schools. Option 1 means that there will only be one small school - St Monica's. The funding model currently used for Nursery places would mean that St Monica's would be financially more stable, also allowing a higher percentage of the budget to be spent on learning and teaching - thus raising standards further.

Do you support Option 2? No

This option is in effect exactly the same as Option 1 for St Monica's, however, there would be less money in the system if there were still 3 small schools in the Cathays/Heath area.

Do you support Option 3? No

St Monica's is an oversubscribed primary school that is financially unviable. The only option for sustainability is for the school to be allowed to grow - which it is very capable of having waiting lists in almost every single year group.

St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School – Vision and Values Committee of the Governing Body

Do you support Option 1? Yes

Our response is based on our views as a Sub Committee of the St Monica's full Governing Body - Vision and Values - who look after the vision and values of the school, to ensure it maintains its Christian identity and complies with the Trust Deed with which the school was first formed.

We would recommend Option 1. Considering the impact Option 2 would have on the school communities involved, from our experience we know that sharing a site comes with many challenges.

Furthermore, Option 1 would enable any future children attending St Monica's to enjoy the facility of a nursery attached to the school on the Mynydd Bychan site, so they are able to be with any older siblings and benefit from a faith-based (Anglican) nursery experience which is not currently available in this area.

The ability to move site would also increase the catchment area for the school to include the Parish of St Mark's in Gabalfa. St Mark's also does not have a church primary school attached to it, and this change would further increase parents' access to a faith-based education - which is their right. This also aligns with the Diocesan vision to 'grow the Kingdom of God'.

The opportunity to have a larger building would enable us to further develop our curriculum offering, including quieter spaces for prayer and reflection. Consideration would need to be given to how St Monica's could ensure the whole learning environment is suitable for a faith-based education - this includes areas for prayer/worship and reflection both inside and outside the Mynydd Bychan site.

We are a thriving, oversubscribed school community, and are current having to turn away many children. This means that many families are not able to exercise their right to choose a faith-based education and many come to our school who have already had significant transitions, changes and challenges in life before their arrival in Cardiff. Turning away families from our community sits very uncomfortably with us as a Governing Body.

The close proximity of the proposed new site means that our existing links with St Michael's Church and The Table can continue. Travel time for families would be only marginally impacted upon. Traffic management of the Mynydd Bychan site would be easier as only one school's community will be attending and leaving at any one time.

For all of the reasons outlined above, we feel that the potential move would accord with the vision, values and Christian ethos which we have worked so hard to develop and sustain in St. Monica's CW Primary School.

Do you support Option 2? No

Please see comments for Option 1.

Do you support Option 3? No

Please see comments for Option 1.

Rev'd Caroline Downs

St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School – Headteacher

Do you support Option 1? Yes

I am responding as the Head Teacher of St Monica's CW Primary School. I support Option 1 as I am aware of the huge difficulties all schools in Cardiff currently have in trying to balance budgets. I sit on the School Budget Forum and represent small schools and faith schools. The budget formula has a disproportionately negative impact on small schools as they are less economical to run. Only Option 1 significantly reduces the number of small schools. This option would mean that more money is available in the system for the education of all children in the city. This money is then available to spend on learning and teaching, rather than the upkeep of multiple buildings by small individual schools, space/school places are also used more efficiently so heating and resources are used better.

Three school buildings are listed, under Option 1 St Monica's would move into an unlisted building, enabling better use of the CRAMP fund (Capital Repairs and Maintenance Programme fund from Welsh Government for the upkeep of faith schools) so the school should be able to repair and maintain the building better. The design of the Mynydd Bychan building is also better matched to meeting the needs of pupils within the Curriculum for Wales. Each downstairs classroom has direct access to the outdoors, which would facilitate outdoor learning, supervision and alternative learning styles - meeting the needs of the St Monica's learners better.

Moving school site would also mean that we would not need to share a site with another school. Time we spend for worship activities would not be interrupted by the (understandable) noise from another school, playground space would be greatly enhanced from the area we are current able to utilise and traffic management would be easier as we would not need to stagger out start and end times to correspond with another school.

The transition from Nursery to Reception would be easier as children (once they have applied for a place in Reception) would be known to us, any ALN processes would have already been started and then continued in the same setting and any settling in periods would not need to be factored in before we requested additional support as that would have already happened in Nursery.

An additional teacher would need to be employed which would further reduce the burden held by all teachers in the school as multiple roles are held by teachers that in a larger school shared out amongst many.

The change in Ministry Area would mean that the Governing Body are likely to consult to extend the catchment area currently proscribed in our admissions policy to include the Parish of St Mark's, Gabalfa. There is no Church in Wales primary school for that Ministry Area currently, so this would also support the Diocesan mission to 'Grow the Kingdom of God'.

Do you support Option 2? No

There is less financial or educational benefit to relocating 3 schools in this option.

Do you support Option 3? No

St Monica's is a thriving, oversubscribed primary school. Option 3 gives no room for growth and does not enable the school to become financially viable. As smaller schools, Gladstone and Allensbank are also much less likely to be financially viable under this model.

Ysgol Mynydd Bychan

Ysgol Mynydd Bychan –Governing Body and Members of Staff

The consultation

1. This consultation sets out the collective view of the Governing Body of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan (“YMB”) regarding the Council’s consultation on its proposals to:
 - make changes to how English-medium community primary schools are organised,
 - retaining an equivalent number of places or a marginal reduction in places compared to the existing arrangements; and
 - expand Welsh-medium primary school provision at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.

2. The Council is proposing to achieve these changes in numbers by identifying three possible options with the overall aim of:
 - supporting each school to continue to improve education for all of their learners
 - ensuring that the provision offered meets the diverse needs of the local community
 - supporting schools to be financially sustainable, with stable school budgets
 - supporting schools to allocate a greater proportion of budget to teaching and learning, thereby retaining and increasing opportunities for learners
 - consolidating English-medium primary school places with an appropriate level of surplus.
 - increasing Welsh-medium primary school places by one form of entry (210 primary age pupils).

Background

3. Cymraeg 2050 sets the strategic, national context for these proposals. The Welsh Government’s goal is significantly to increase the number of Welsh speakers of all ages, with a specific target of 40% of all children receiving Welsh-medium education by 2050.

4. Locally, Cardiff’s ten-year target, as set out in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2030, is to increase the percentage of Year 1 children who are taught through the medium of Welsh in Cardiff by 9%. The Council also maintains its commitments to maintaining city-wide capacity in the Welsh-medium sector at 10% over the projected intake.

5. We are fully supportive of these national and local goals and stand ready to play our part, alongside the Council and the Welsh Government.

6. Given the consistent oversubscription for places at YMB over several years, and the reality that our catchment area is one of many areas within the city of Cardiff where there is scope to increase the number of children in Welsh-

medium education, we are pleased that the Council has been proactive in seeking, and successfully obtaining, grant funding to support capital investments that facilitate growth in Welsh-medium education and use of the Welsh language at YMB.

7. While we recognise that uptake is projected to level out over the next few years, due to falling birth rates, we are mindful that an upsurge is forecasted towards the end of this decade and the beginning of the next, which requires us to think creatively now to achieve a sustainable solution and to accommodate the demand we expect in the coming years.

Our view: new school building and site

8. We remain of the view that the best way to achieve expansion of YMB is a new school building and site which provide the resources, infrastructure, and environment we need to deliver high-quality and enriching learning experiences to our pupils, having regard to both the Curriculum for Wales and the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme.
9. While we recognise that we are in a dense, urban area, we continue to believe that further exploration of the potential utilisation of the existing Cathays High School site, should the relocation of Cathays High School go ahead, or the vacant space at the Companies House site, would be worthwhile.
10. We encourage the Council to make further efforts to explore the possibility of delivering a new school site at either of these locations, or others in the area, including by making enquiries with HM Government in respect of the Companies House site.
11. While we appreciate the financial implications of a new building and site for YMB, and the need to utilise the Council's existing assets where possible, we presume it would be possible to dispose of an existing school site for redevelopment in the event that it became redundant.

Our view: use of existing assets

12. We are of the view that a suitable permanent solution is required in order both to provide for the demand which has existed for several years and to achieve the goal of expanding Welsh-medium education in the area through an additional form of entry. All three options under consultation could offer such as a solution in respect of YMB.
13. We also continue to be of the opinion that any expansion of YMB must be delivered on a whole-school basis, rather than on a year-by-year or progress step-by-progress step basis. We are grateful to the Council for listening to the concerns we expressed at the previous consultation in 2021.

14. If the Council's preferred solution is to utilise its existing educational building stock in the form of a site swap between YMB and another existing school site within the local area, then our priority will be that the necessary investment is put in place to deliver a scheme of improvement works which ensures that YMB's new site offers the same, if not a better, level of facilities as its current site.
15. This is essential to enable YMB to continue being able to offer the level of education and opportunities to its pupils as at present, as well as to achieve the 'buy in' from YMB's parents and wider community, which will be an important factor in ensuring that YMB's sense of community continues to flourish.
16. In any case, YMB will continue proactively to seek and foster a positive relationship and a sense of community with the other schools in our area, including regular interactions between pupils to mark, for example, the Urdd's Day of Goodwill and the Eisteddfod.
17. We are also mindful of our place in the wider community and will, regardless of the outcome of this consultation, continue to engage with local businesses and groups, including by making our site accessible to the community, in line with the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.
18. We acknowledge that there are significant demographic differences between YMB and the other schools involved in this consultation. While this reflects a general trend across Wales, we will continue to work with the Council, the Welsh Government, and any other appropriate bodies to increase the diversity of our school population. We recognise our own responsibility and, in line with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, believe strongly that this must be a shared endeavour.

Questions and concerns

19. We are aware that all the other existing school sites within the locality are Listed Buildings and, as such, could prove difficult to alter and adapt to meet our requirements in line with the Curriculum for Wales and the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme.
20. Officers have advised the Governing Body that they have been unable to make a substantive approach to CADW in respect of any proposed building fabric amendments at any of the sites in this consultation.
21. We are also concerned about the ongoing maintenance requirements of the other existing school sites within the locality given that all three schools have been covered in scaffolding for at least the past three years, with very little progress on any remedial works being undertaken. We would not want to see the school burdened by long-term outstanding maintenance works.

22. We are extremely concerned that, without further enquiry and guarantee, YMB may be relocated to a site, at which it could prove difficult or impossible to deliver a scheme of improvement works which ensures that we are able to offer the same, if not a better, level of facilities as our current site.
23. As such, we ask the Council to make appropriate further enquiries regarding the issues raised above, and to make this information available.
24. We are concerned about the energy efficiency of the school buildings under consideration. We have requested information from the Council on this matter but unfortunately this has not been forthcoming. We were told that this information was available to Council Officers but have not received anything to date.
26. We are also concerned that any move to a larger school building could cause the school major financial challenges if not properly addressed by the Council. In the future, school will be operating in a larger building with only a marginal increase in pupil numbers for a few years. School budgets are becoming increasingly challenging and there will be substantial pressure over the next few years. We would look for the Council to work with the Governing Body to alleviate the budgetary implications of a rapid expansion.

Conclusion

27. Given that all three options would deliver the same outcome for YMB, and given the questions and concerns we have outlined above, we are not minded to indicate a preferred choice between the three options.
28. However, we believe that achieving expansion of Welsh-medium primary education in the north of Cardiff, as in the city more generally, which we support strongly, requires a permanent solution which enables YMB to continue to provide rich learning experiences to our pupils. All three options under consultation could provide such a solution.
29. We are grateful to the Council for listening to the concerns we expressed at the previous consultation in 2021.

RhAG (Parents for Welsh Education)'s response to Cardiff Council's consultation on the proposal regarding Primary School places to serve Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd

June 2023

1. RhAG wishes to thank you for the opportunity to respond to this Cardiff Council consultation on the **Primary School Places Proposal to serve Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd.**

The Welsh language education planning system through the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans must be a core part of the education provision planning of all Local Authorities. Since September 2022, Cardiff Council has been implementing a new scheme agreed by Welsh Government.

To increase opportunities for learners to be able to acquire the Welsh language so that they can use it easily is the basis of Welsh Government's ambition to reach one million speakers and the Government's own Welsh language education planning document notes

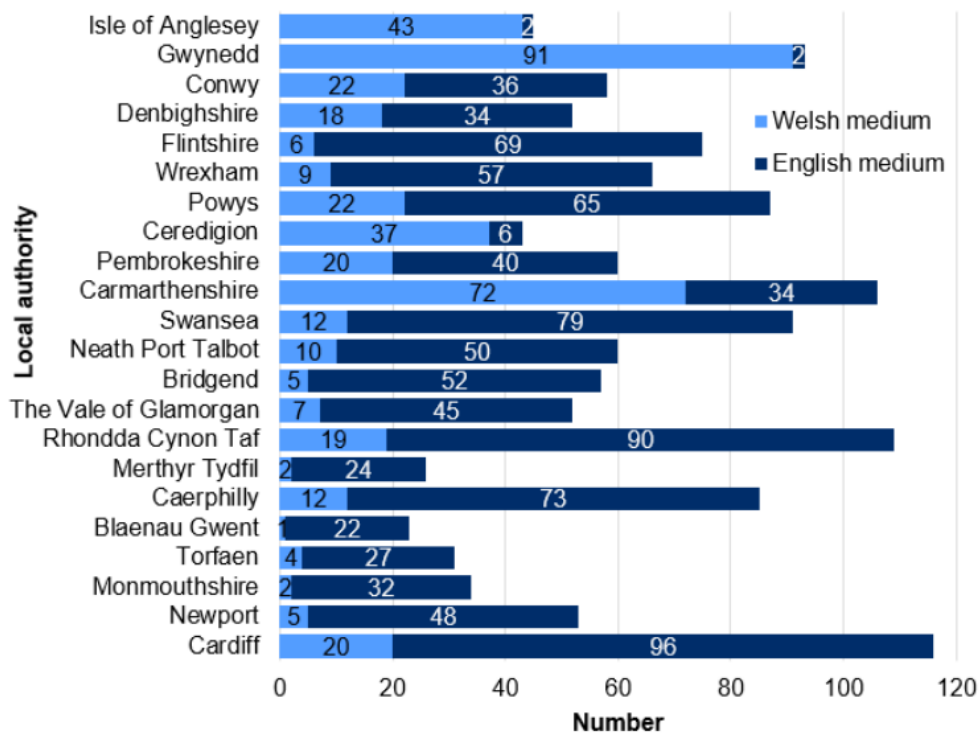
"Cymraeg 2050 is clear that Welsh-medium immersion - which is where the medium of teaching and learning is delivered wholly or predominantly through the medium of Welsh - is the most reliable model for creating Welsh speakers with the skills and confidence to use the language comfortably in their everyday lives."

(Page3:

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/guidance-welsh-in-education-strategic-plan.pdf>

2. We realise the amount of work that's involved in reorganizing schools in the C21st. RhAG has collaborated positively for a number of years with officers of the county and have been contributing ideas and strategies to ensure fairness for Welsh Language Education provision and for the families across the county who continue to fail to realise that the offer is available to them also. With the implementation of the 10-year plans there is a real opportunity to make a difference to the accessibility of Welsh language education within the County of Cardiff.
3. We only need to look at the figure below to see how few opportunities exist still in the county for pupils to be able to choose a Welsh language education easily and conveniently with only 20 Welsh medium schools while there are 96 English medium schools.

Chart 1: Number of maintained schools by local authority and medium, 2022 (a)



Source: Schools Census

(a) Primary, middle and secondary schools (excluding nursery and special schools)

School Census 2022

4. A pledge has been made and money has been received from Welsh Government to increase the Welsh language education capacity of this area of the city since 2018 with pressure being felt in this area since long before then. RhAG has communicated with the county consistently since then noting the challenges that have arisen for parents as a result of failure to increase provision in this area.
5. The lack of an increase in Welsh language education provision in this area of the city has and will continue to cause challenges and other negative side effects across the county until a solution is found. There are families in this area of the city who have had to accept places in schools that are not within their catchment area, and as younger siblings applied for places in local schools, have been forced to apply to a school that is not within the catchment and therefore have had to travel further than normal, changing a journey made on foot to a journey in a car and in increasing cases of children from the same family having to go to different schools.
6. We agree of course with the principle of increasing Welsh language education provision which is a key part of this consultation, but the new provision must be suitable for education in the C21st and we are not fully convinced that this building will fulfil this need from the information that's been provided. The consultation sets out as follows:

" The school occupies two Grade 2 listed buildings which have been assessed as Condition category C+ (Poor with major defects) and Suitability category B (Satisfactory). The school buildings are generally in a satisfactory condition although works to external walls, windows and roofs are underway through the Council's Capital Asset programme. Some internal areas are suffering with an infestation of dry rot, and treatment will be ongoing until the dry rot is eradicated. The sanitary provision requires some refurbishment, and the site has some drainage issues to be resolved. The ongoing works at the school are scheduled to complete in Autumn 2023."

It is not clear from the consultation the details and impact of the sanitary and drainage works nor who will be responsible for funding these aspects when the reorganization takes place and therefore what will be Ysgol Mynydd Bychan's budgetary responsibility in this situation.

7. Increasing the capacity of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to 420 will mean a significant change in the area in terms of the Welsh language education offer. We see no mention of the promotion and public communication steps that will be needed for this change. RhAG would of course be able to assist with this aspect.
8. We very much hope that further and ongoing communication will take place with Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to further develop these proposals, for the benefit of the school's community. We very much look forward to the provision of Welsh language education that is fit for the C21st and which is finally increasing the opportunities for the families of this area of Cardiff to have a real opportunity for their children to acquire Welsh from a very early age. We look forward to continuing to work with you to make these exciting plans a reality.

Sincerely,

Elin Maher
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