

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN

CONSULTATION REPORT

Proposal to change the age range of **Ysgol Parc y Tywyn**

from 4–11 to **3–11**

Our Vision.....Carmarthenshire is a community where children are safe and nurtured and learners of all ages are supported to achieve their full educational potential

January 2018

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Content

| No. | Subject | Page |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Executive Summary | 4 |
| 2. | Summary of observations received and Local Authority related responses | 6 |
| 3. | Estyn's Observations regarding the Proposal | 9 |
| 3.1 | Local Authority response to Estyn's observations | 12 |
| 4. | Consultation with the Pupils | 15 |

1. Executive Summary

The Consultation Period

On the 6th November 2017 Carmarthenshire County Council published proposals to change Welsh Medium primary school provision within the community of Burry Port and Pembrey. The County Council's proposal is to:

- to provide nursery provision at Ysgol Parc y Tywyn by increasing its age range from 4-11 to 3-11

The consultation period commenced on the 6th November 2017 in line with the publication of the proposals and closed on 17th December 2017 with a total of 3 observations received (excluding the responses received from Estyn and the pupils' consultation) in response to the formal consultation.

It must be noted that of the 3 observations received, 2 were received before the end of the consultation period whilst 1 observation was received after the end of the consultation period. However, all responses received have been included for the purposes of this report.

Observations Received

The proposal to provide nursery provision at Ysgol Parc y Tywyn by increasing its age range from 4-11 to 3-11, is the formal statutory procedure that must be undertaken and completed to legally increase the age range at the school.

The themes of the comments received are as follows:

- Existing Provision / Loss of jobs
- School Nursing Service

Observations were received from the following:

The 5 respondents were as follows:

- Estyn
- Welsh Language Commissioner
- Cylch Meithrin Porth Tywyn – Existing Private Provider
- Ysgol Parc y Tywyn - School Council
- Hywel Dda University Health Board – Children's Public Health

A complete summary of all of the observations received to the consultation document together with the response of the County Council's professional officers can be found in section 2 of this report.

Next Steps

The Consultation Report will be presented to the Education & Children's Scrutiny Committee for comments and a recommendation and then ultimately to the Executive Board for determination on whether or not to proceed with the proposal and publish a statutory notice.

Should the Executive Board decide to proceed to the next stage, a Statutory Notice will be published during the Spring Term 2018.

2. Summary of Observations received and Local Authority Responses

| Point Number | Point Raised | Local Authority Response |
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| 1. | <p><u>Existing Provision / Loss of jobs</u></p> <p>Cylch Meithin Porth Tywyn has provided nursery provision in this area since the early 1970s. It would no longer be sustainable should a nursery provision be provided by Ysgol Parc y Tywyn.</p> <p>The proposal is for part time provision for 3 year old. Currently Cylch Meithrin provides full time provision for a number of 3 year old pupils. Is it possible for the Cylch Meithrin to be relocated to the new school to continue to provide Welsh Medium education and provide the wrap around care needed by parents. This would be beneficial if the 30 hour child offer comes into force.</p> | <p>Carmarthenshire County Council accepts that this proposal will have a detrimental effect on the current private nursery and childcare providers in the area of Burry Port and Pembrey. Focus has been given to this area in its consultation document where it clearly identifies the impact of this disadvantage.</p> <p>The authority acknowledges the excellent service being provided locally by the private providers, which is recognised by Estyn in the settings that are subject to inspection. However, the aim of the authority is to standardise its part time nursery provision in this area for its English and Welsh medium schools. This is to ensure that parents/guardians base their decision on language rather than the facilities being provided locally.</p> <p>The authority fully appreciates that this proposal will have a negative effect on demand for 3 year old provision, and as a result the number of settings could be reduced. However, the facility at the school will be for part time nursery pupils, there are</p> |

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| | | <p>opportunities for the providers to work with the school/parents/guardians to provide the wrap around care that is currently being provided.</p> <p>In addition, the Welsh Government is currently piloting an ‘enhanced’ childcare offer in several areas around Wales, this is expected to be rolled out in Carmarthenshire from April 2018. In order for this initiative to succeed, the authority will be reliant on utilising the expertise of private providers.</p> |
| 2. | <p><u>Welsh in Education Strategic Plan</u></p> <p>The scheme shows positive ambition in developing Welsh medium education within the county and falls in line with its strategic plan.</p> | <p>Carmarthenshire County Council welcomes the comments in recognition of the development of Welsh medium education within the county.</p> <p>It is the authority’s opinion that there will be more children in Welsh Medium education if the nursery provision being offered locally in the area comparable. This not only supports the authority to meet the targets set in its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, but will support the Welsh Government vision for one million Welsh speakers by 2050.</p> <p>The views of the authority in respect of Welsh language are also fully endorsed by Estyn. Having considered this proposal Estyn state that:</p> |

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| | | <p><i>'The proposal forms part of Carmarthenshire County Council's vision and aims form Welsh medium education as set out in their Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014 - 2017.'</i></p> <p><i>'There would appear to be no negative impact on the Welsh language arising from this proposal.'</i></p> |
| 3. | <p><u>School Nursing Service</u></p> <p>The only impact this will have on the School Nursing service is possibly some increase in caseload numbers for the School Nurses who are assigned to the schools in question. Caseload numbers for our School Nurses are regularly monitored by the Senior Nurse/Quality Assurance Manager for School Nursing and are managed through our workforce planning.</p> | <p>Carmarthenshire County Council accepts that the increase in capacity may have an effect on caseload numbers for the School Nurses who are assigned to the school, however agree that any effect can be monitored and managed by workforce planning and communication between organisations.</p> |

3. Estyn's Observations regarding the Proposal

Estyn response to the proposal to change the age range of Ysgol Parc y Tywyn from 4-11 to 3-11

This report has been prepared by Her 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 proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

The proposal is by Carmarthenshire County Council.

The proposal is to change the age range of Ysgol Parc y Tywyn from 4-11 to 3-11 as from the September 2018.

Summary

The proposal is part of Carmarthenshire County Council's commitment to provide each child with the best possible start in life and to meet the aspirations of Welsh Government as set out in their strategic documents for education. The proposal aims to standardise the nursery education for the Burry Port and Pembrey areas by ensuring that the same level of provision is available for both the Welsh and English medium primary schools.

It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.

Description and benefits

The local authority has given a clear rationale for the proposed expected benefits when compared with the status quo in relation to transition through from nursery age to primary aged pupils in the Welsh medium sector. The proposer also explains clearly how the proposal fits with the local authority's broader plan for ensuring it

makes the best use of resources and facilities to serve the needs of all learners. The proposal also notes appropriate how it supports Carmarthenshire County Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017.

The proposal clearly defines the expected benefits of the proposal and these link well to the stated purpose and rationale. The proposal notes appropriately the advantages of the proposal, which include the seamless progression from nursery into primary school for Welsh medium pupils living in the Burry Port and Pembrey areas; standardisation of Welsh and English medium nursery provision for pupils living in these areas, ensuring parity in the provision of Welsh medium nursery education between Ysgol Parc y Tywyn and other Welsh medium schools in the Llanelli area; and providing new employment opportunities at the new Ysgol Parc y Tywyn.

The proposer has identified appropriately the disadvantages to the current proposal, which focus on the impact of the reduction in demand for places at the privately run nurseries and childminders who currently provide the provision in the area.

The local authority has provided appropriate evidence to show that it has considered other alternatives to this current proposal. These three options include maintaining the status quo, providing Welsh medium nursery provision at the two neighbouring English medium schools or to create a standalone Welsh medium nursery for the catchment of Burry Port and Pembrey. They have demonstrated appropriately the advantages and disadvantages of each option and the reasons for their preferred option.

The proposer has suitably considered the impact of the proposal on pupil travel arrangements. It intends to support home to school travel in line with the council's transport policy. The new Ysgol Parc y Tywyn building is located near a new link road which the proposer believes is likely to reduce travelling time for pupils living in the catchment area.

The proposer has shown appropriately how the proposal will affect school places by providing pupil numbers and surplus places for 2017 for schools in the area. It has also provided information of projected pupil numbers for Ysgol Parc y Tywyn over the next five years against the capacity of the new school building. The proposer notes appropriately that the school would be able to meet the current and projected demand for Welsh medium nursery provision in the Burry Port and Pembrey areas. The proposal forms part of Carmarthenshire County Council's vision and aims for Welsh medium education as set out in their Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014 - 2017. The proposer believes that the proposal will allow greater opportunities for access to Welsh medium education within the area. The proposal aims to ensure better linguistic continuity from nursery education to the end of secondary education to allow pupils to become fluent and confident in both Welsh and English languages. There would therefore appear to be no negative impact on the Welsh language arising from this proposal.

The proposer has considered reasonably well the impact of the proposals on the quality of the outcomes, provision and leadership and management at Ysgol Parc y Tywyn. The proposer has considered the outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspection report and the school's categorisation in relation to the National School Categorisation system on the quality of leadership and pupil outcomes. However, the proposer has not commented on the school's outcomes when compared with similar schools based on entitlement to free school meals. The proposal has not considered the most recent Estyn inspection reports of other Welsh medium nursery settings in the Burry Port and Pembrey areas.

Ysgol Parc y Tywyn was inspected in January 2012 and the judgements for both the current performance and prospects for improvement were judged as adequate. The local authority has also evaluated the school's performance in relation to the National School Categorisation System. Under the system, schools will be in one of four standards groups (1 to 4), with schools in standards group 1 demonstrating very good overall performance and those in standards group 4 demonstrating the greatest need for improved performance. Ysgol Parc y Tywyn is currently in standards group 2. The proposer believes that the proposal will have a positive impact on the quality of education outcomes and provision in the school.

The proposer has undertaken an appropriate equality impact assessment, which considers the impact of the proposal on vulnerable groups including those with a disability or special educational needs. However, the proposal does not consider the possible impact of the proposals on pupils' wellbeing.

3.1 Local Authority Response to Estyn's Observations

Free School Meals

The proposer has considered the outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspection report and the school's categorisation in relation to the National School Categorisation system on the quality of leadership and pupil outcomes. However, the proposer has not commented on the school's outcomes when compared with similar schools based on entitlement to free school meals.

Although this information is considered when proposed changes are made to school provision, in the form of statutory school organisation proposals, it is currently not included in its consultation document. However, consideration will be given for this information to be included in future similar proposals.

Estyn Inspections

The proposal has not considered the most recent Estyn inspection reports of other Welsh medium nursery settings in the Burry Port and Pembrey areas.

The authority acknowledges the excellent service being provided by the existing Welsh medium private nurseries. The providers subject to inspection were awarded with either Excellent or Good judgements in their most recent inspections. Clearly there is not an issue with the standard of education being offered at these settings.

The comments are noted and consideration will be given for this information to be included in future similar proposals.

It should be noted that this information is always included in its consultation documents when proposed changes are made to its own settings.

Impact of pupils' wellbeing

The proposer has undertaken an appropriate equality impact assessment, which considers the impact of the proposal on vulnerable groups including those with a disability or special educational needs. However, the proposal does not consider the possible impact of the proposals on pupils' wellbeing.

The authority acknowledges its statutory role on the wellbeing of pupils in respect of this proposal and to promote a healthy and happy school, to aid the learning environment. The authority ensures that there are policies in place for the promotion of the wellbeing of pupils and include pupils in the decisions that affect them, through pupil participation. (A record of the pupil participation for this proposal can be seen in section 4 of this document).

These policies aim is to provide a fair and bully free environment in which pupils can learn, with a healthy food in schools also playing a key role in creating wellbeing.

It is proposed that the nursery pupils will be accommodated in a building that is accredited by Secure by Design. Secure by Design is a police initiative owned by the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Statements of support for this proposal by Estyn

- It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.
- The local authority has given a clear rationale for the proposed expected benefits when compared with the status quo in relation to transition through from nursery age to primary aged pupils in the Welsh medium sector.
- The proposal also notes appropriate how it supports Carmarthenshire County Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017.
- The proposal clearly defines the expected benefits of the proposal and these link well to the stated purpose and rationale.
- The proposer has identified appropriately the disadvantages to the current proposal, which focus on the impact of the reduction in demand for places at the privately run nurseries and childminders who currently provide the provision in the area.
- The local authority has provided appropriate evidence to show that it has considered other alternatives to this current proposal.
- The proposer has suitably considered the impact of the proposal on pupil travel arrangements.
- The proposer has shown appropriately how the proposal will affect school places by providing pupil numbers and surplus places for 2017 for schools in the area.

- The proposal forms part of Carmarthenshire County Council's vision and aims form Welsh medium education as set out in their Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014 - 2017.
- There would appear to be no negative impact on the Welsh language arising from this proposal.
- The proposer has considered reasonably well the impact of the proposals on the quality of the outcomes, provision and leadership and management at Ysgol Parc y Tywyn.
- The proposer has considered the outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspection report and the school's categorisation in relation to the National School Categorisation system on the quality of leadership and pupil outcomes.
- The local authority has also evaluated the school's performance in relation to the National School Categorisation System.
- The proposer has undertaken an appropriate equality impact assessment, which considers the impact of the proposal on vulnerable groups including those with a disability or special educational needs.

4. Consultation with the Pupils

School: Ysgol Parc y Tywyn

Date: 10 December 2017

Consultation undertaken by: Llinos Jones – Challenge Adviser

Interviewed: School Council

The School Council were interviewed regarding the proposal to introduce a nursery at the school by increasing its age range from 4-11 to 3-11.

Informative discussions were held around the questions below:

- 1) Would you like to be part of a larger school with more children?
- 2) Do you think it's a good idea to be a 3-11 year old school?
- 3) What would be the benefits of being a 3-11 year old school?
- 4) What are you looking forward to most?
- 5) Are there any disadvantages?
- 6) Is there anything you're worried about?

School Council Feedback

Everyone was unanimous and happy that they were going to be part of a school with more children.

Pupils said that it was a good idea to switch to 3-11 year olds, because this is going to extend the Welsh-speaking population. This is going to help the language live.

Pupils agreed that there are many advantages –

- Pupils will not need to change from nursery school to primary school when they are 4 years old.
- Everyone will know each other going into the reception class rather than pupils coming from different nurseries around the town.
- Pupils get to know all the teachers from a very young age, so their lives will not have so many changes.
- This is going to mean that we have more friends, and it will be nice for three year olds to be able to talk to us as a school council and make them feel safe.

Pupils did not identify any disadvantages with the proposal.