

Frequently Asked Questions

When would Barry and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive Schools amalgamate?

If the amalgamation goes ahead the two schools would amalgamate from September 2017. Initially the school would be on separate sites, but would be led by a single governing body and headteacher. It is anticipated that the new school building would be ready by September 2020, subject to funding.

Will there be a new headteacher for the English medium secondary school if the proposals were to go ahead?

As this will be a new school, a new head teacher will be appointed. Existing postholders can apply.

Will there be enough teachers for the amalgamated school, will there be an increase in class sizes?

Yes, class sizes will be maintained at their current levels.

Who will be on the Governing Body of the new English medium secondary school if the proposals were to go ahead?

If the amalgamation goes ahead, a new governing body would be established for the school. This will include parent governors, staff governors, council appointed governors and community governors.

Will mixed education be available for all pupils on amalgamation?

A transition plan will be developed for the new English medium secondary school by the Governing Body and the new headteacher in consultation with staff and parents. This will be available prior to the proposed amalgamation in September 2017.

What would the proposals mean for pupils currently attending Barry and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive Schools? Will my child be offered a place at the amalgamated school?

All pupils attending Barry and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive Schools at the time of amalgamation will be guaranteed a place at the amalgamated school.

What would the admission arrangements be for the new school?

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is the admission authority for the schools. Admission arrangements would remain unchanged as a result of the proposals.

Which year groups will be mixed in September 2017 in the amalgamated school?

The Council's proposals would mean that the new English medium comprehensive school will operate on two sites between September 2017 and September 2020: this is called the transition period. During this period the governing body of the new school would decide how best to organise pupils and staff across the two sites. The arrangements for the transition period are not part of these proposals.

Why are there no transition details available for parents?

Transition will be a matter for the governing body to decide advised by staff who know the learners. Priority will be given to protecting the continuity of education particularly for those in GCSE years and the sixth form. There will be minimal disruption for pupils taking examinations. The consultation will enable people to make suggestions on transition arrangements that will be carefully considered.

Could the schools remain as they are now from 2017 to 2020?

It is possible but this will be a matter for the governing body to decide upon. The main focus is to protect the continuity of education for learners.

How can people be assured that the amalgamation will not have a detrimental effect on young people's education?

Recent improvements made by both schools will not only continue but will be accelerated to achieve educational outcomes that are higher than that achieved by the two existing schools.

- Achievement will be strengthened with strong leadership and an aspirational culture in order to achieve improved quality of teaching and learning.
- The new campus will consist of a number of high quality learning environments that will enhance high quality teaching and learning for young people.
- There will be much less surplus capacity and more of the budget can therefore be spent on teaching and learning.
- The Council and Central South Consortium will work closely with the governors and school leadership team to ensure that standards continue to improve.
- We have evidence that a period of transition can still be achieved without affecting the performance outcomes of the school. This was case for the Penarth Learning Community when St Cyres transitioned into the PLC. In this case learning outcomes improved rather than deteriorated.
- The number one factor in a young person's educational performance is due to teachers and the quality of teaching delivered. A larger teaching body will give more opportunities for staff to join together to share best

practice and develop improved teaching practice. In addition a large staff has the potential to result in a broader curriculum on offer.

- Pupils will have better access to a wide range of subjects regardless of their gender

Will the new English medium school be too big?

The new amalgamated school is expected to have 2050 pupils when it opens in September 2017 which will grow to 2214 in 2020 and to 2388 by 2025. This will mean that it is one of the largest schools in Wales. The campus will comprise separate buildings helping to create 'smaller learning communities' whilst enabling students to benefit from excellent specialist provision. Published evidence about the size of schools points to the weaker performance of smaller schools rather than to any disadvantages of larger schools.

Research has been carried out on large secondary schools with pupil numbers in excess of 2200. All achieved L2+ results better than those presently achieved by either Barry or Bryn Hafren comprehensive school;

- Whitchurch Secondary school (2,235 pupils) achieved 60% L2+ in 2012/13 and 59.65% L2+ in 2013/14
- Stanwell Comprehensive school (1995) achieved 74.5% L2+ in 2012/13 and 82% L2+ in 2013/14

Although there will be a larger pupil population in the amalgamated school, with a single governance structure, the young people will be accommodated in an upper and lower school –

- Key stage 3 in the lower school
- Key stage 4 and 5 in the upper school

The lower site will have a capacity for 1170 pupils and the upper site 1225 pupils. These pupil numbers are similar to the numbers currently accommodated at Barry comprehensive and Bryn Hafren school sites.

Why have we developed proposals without an assurance that funding will be available?

Although there is no guarantee that Welsh Government funding will be available, clear plans and proposals in place we will be well placed to access the necessary funding for the proposal.

The Council's contribution to the project is secure and included in the capital programme. Our past success at securing Welsh Government capital funding suggests that we will be successful in attracting the required match funding for this project.

Funding will be accessed through Band B funding of the 21st Century schools programme where this project is first on the priority list.

More money will be spent on Welsh medium education facilities, why is this always the case?

The three buildings will be brought up to a similar standard for English-medium and Welsh medium education.

Details of the plans on how the money will be spent have yet to be decided. However, in order to move Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg to the Bryn Hafren site we will need to build at least one new teaching block as well as a new 210 place primary building.

The new English medium school will see a state of the art two storey laboratory built as well as a new 3G pitch and multi-use games area. Both schools will have new catering facilities.

Both schools will undergo extensive refurbishment to ensure that they all enjoy an equally high level of condition to support the educational outcomes of the children attending these schools.

What happens if there is a shortfall in funding?

A shortfall in funding will not prevent the schools from amalgamating.

The Council would need to prioritise money in event of a shortfall that would include the expansion of Welsh medium places and address the condition issues at both schools.

The council may need to revisit the proposals in the event of a shortfall of funding.

What will be the impact on educational outcomes?

The intention is for the proposals to accelerate current improvements at Barry and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive Schools and to maintain the momentum of improvement at Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg and Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Talwg

The proposed amalgamated school will provide greater opportunities for curriculum development. Girls and boys will have access to a very broad range of high quality courses and specialist teachers at the new English medium school.

Both schools will benefit from improved facilities as a result of the proposed investment.

The amalgamated school will have a clear and ambitious vision for the success of all its students. The governors of the amalgamated school will be visionary and robust and the senior leadership of the new school will be of the

highest calibre. The leadership of Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg and Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Talwg will continue to be strong.

Careful planning will take place during the proposed period of change to avoid any risk of distraction or disruption to leadership and governance that could impact on educational outcomes.

Bryn Hafren and Barry Comprehensive school buildings are rated as poor, how is this determined?

An assessment of the condition of all schools within the Vale has been undertaken and was completed in April 2015. This condition survey comprised a visual non-intrusive inspection of the building finishes, electrical, heating, gas, water and ventilation systems as well as the external areas. Each building element has been assessed and given a condition rating:

- Category A - Good – Performing as intended and operating efficiently
- Category B - Satisfactory – Performing as intended but minor repairs required
- Category C - Poor – Exhibits major defects
- Category D - Life Expired – Serious risk. These (if identified) during the survey have the potential to close the building.

An overall opinion of the whole building is formed based on a number of factors such as the number of elements assigned each category, the impact on the school of failure of elements in poor condition and the estimated cost of the required repairs. For example a building could be considered to be in poor condition if the roof and heating system is nearing the end of their anticipated life even though other parts of the building are in a satisfactory condition.

Will the amalgamated school have a new name and uniform?

The new school will have a new name which will be considered by the Governing Body and decided by the council. A uniform for the school would be decided by the Governing Body of the amalgamated school taking in to account the current uniforms of both schools and the phasing in of a new uniform. In making its decision, Governors would be encouraged to consult with parents and pupils.

What will the local catchment areas be following relocation in September 2020?

The catchment area of the amalgamated school would be the same as the existing catchments areas for Barry and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive Schools. This is also the case for Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg.

The catchment area for Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Talwg from September 2020 would need to be extended slightly to include the follow roads and houses:
Port Road East – odd numbers 115 – 129
Port Road East – even numbers 184 – 200

Port Mews – numbers 1 – 4
Merthyr Dyfan Road – numbers 1 – 56
Glynbridge Close – numbers 1 – 21
Merthyr Dyfan Court – numbers 1 - 5

Will transport continue to be provided for existing eligible pupils if they become ineligible due to a potential change of distance from home to school?

Pupils receiving a free school transport service prior to September 2020 will continue to receive this service until the end of their education at either 16 or 18. However all new pupils from September 2020 will be assessed for eligibility under the criteria outlined in the School Transport Policy which can be viewed via the following link:
http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/working/education_and_skills/schools/school_transport/school_transport.aspx

Why has St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School not been included in the consultation proposal?

Proposals are required when significant changes are planned to schools. The proposal to transform secondary schools in Barry relates specifically to establishing a mixed-sex comprehensive school through the amalgamation of Barry Comprehensive and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive schools and the expansion of Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg to meet future demand for Welsh medium secondary school places in the Vale of Glamorgan. There are no changes proposed to St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School and the school is therefore not included as part of the consultation proposal.