

# DIRECTORATE OF LEARNING AND SKILLS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

## ON THE PROPOSAL TO:

- CHANGE THE AGE RANGE OF ST NICHOLAS CIW PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM 4-11 YEARS TO 3-11 YEARS AND TO ESTABLISH A NURSERY CLASS CONTAINING 24 PART TIME PLACES FROM SEPTEMBER 2023



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Background.....	1
1.1. Proposal: To provide Nursery provision at St Nicholas Primary School .....	1
2. Outline of the consultation process .....	2
2.1. Publication of the consultation.....	2
2.2. Consultation stakeholder engagement .....	2
2.3. Late Representations .....	3
2.4. Consultation meetings.....	3
2.5. Consultation Questions .....	4
3. Consultation responses .....	5
3.1. Summary of responses .....	5
3.2. Responses to the Proposal: To Provide Nursery Provision At St Nicholas Primary School.....	5
4. Conclusion .....	8
4.1. Quality and standards in education .....	8
4.2. Community impact.....	8
4.3. Travel arrangements .....	8
4.4. Factual Changes Following Close of Consultation Period.....	9
5. Annex A - A summary of key issues raised by statutory consultees .....	10
5.1. Issues raised in relation to the proposal: .....	10
6. Annex B - A summary of comments received in favour of the proposal.....	18
7. Annex C - Frequently asked questions. ....	19
7.1. New FAQs:.....	20
8. Annex D - Consultations undertaken with young people.....	22
8.1. Consultation on the proposal To Provide Nursery Provision At St Nicholas Primary School.....	22
9. Annex E - Response from Estyn .....	26

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## 1. BACKGROUND

This report presents the feedback received during the consultation, undertaken from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 to 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022, in response to the Governing Body's proposals to change the age range of St Nicholas Church in Wales (CiW) Primary School from September 2023. The statutory consultation was held to seek comments from relevant parties on a regulated alteration as defined in "the Code" which alters the lowest age range of pupils at St Nicholas CiW Primary School from 4 to 3 or to consist of an addition of a nursery year.

### 1.1. PROPOSAL: TO PROVIDE NURSERY PROVISION AT ST NICHOLAS CIW PRIMARY SCHOOL

- Changing the lowest age range of pupils at St Nicholas CiW Primary School from 4 to 3, to include 24 part time nursery places.

To implement the proposal the existing school site would be re-developed to provide 126 place school, same as the existing building with an additional capacity for 24 part time nursery places from September 2023.

This report outlines the consultation process, provides an overview of responses to the consultation, and offers further details of the key issues and favourable comments raised by stakeholders.

## 2. OUTLINE OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation processes followed Welsh Government guidelines, in compliance with the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and in accordance with the School Organisation Code 2018. The consultation processes gave prescribed consultees the opportunity to learn about the proposal and for the Governing Body to hear the views of all those with an interest so that they can be considered before a decision is made to extend the age range at the school.

### 2.1. PUBLICATION OF THE CONSULTATION

Formal consultations were conducted through a consultation document and response form distributed electronically to prescribed consultees and published on the Vale of Glamorgan Council website on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022. Hard copies of the consultation document were available upon request.

The publication of a consultation document is central to the consultation process for school reorganisation and is prescribed by Welsh Government in the School Organisation Code 2018. The consultation document outlined the proposals being considered, the rationale for the proposals and the details of the consultation processes. The consultation document also incorporated an individual response form. Consultees were advised of the availability of an online version to complete.

### 2.2. CONSULTATION STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Engagement for the consultation on the proposal was undertaken with prescribed consultees as contained within the School Organisation Code 2018.

The following groups were consulted:

**Table 1: List of groups consulted as part of the consultation process**

Staff (teaching and non-teaching) at St Nicholas CIW Primary School	Diocesan Directors of Education
Parents/Carers and Guardians of children attending St Nicholas CIW Primary School	St Nicholas with Bonvilston Community Council
Vale of Glamorgan Children and Young People's Partnership	Vale of Glamorgan Early Years Development Partnership (EYDCP)
Assembly Members (AM's) / Members of Parliament (MP's) / Regional Assembly Members	Local Councillors
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)	Welsh Language Commissioner

Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RHAG)	Neighbouring Primary and Secondary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan
Estyn	Central South Consortium Joint Education Service
Welsh Government Ministers	Trades Unions
Local Police and Crime Commissioner	Directors of Education – All Neighbouring Authorities
Council's Transportation Department	Diocesan Directors of Education

Consultees were invited to complete a formal consultation response form which could be completed in hard copy or online via the Council's website at:

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/schools/Consultations/Expanding-St-Nicholas-CiW-Primary.aspx>

### 2.3. LATE REPRESENTATIONS

The closing date for the consultation was the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021. No late representations were received.

### 2.4. CONSULTATION MEETINGS

Meetings were held with the staff and governors at St Nicholas CiW Primary School which were attended by Council officers. The rationale behind the proposals was highlighted and an explanation of the statutory process was provided.

Consultation sessions were undertaken with the school pupils of St Nicholas CiW Primary School. A report on the outcome of these sessions can be found at Annex D.

Virtual meetings were held for community and parent / guardian consultees which were attended by Council officers. The process was explained, and consultees were given an opportunity to raise any concerns / queries on the proposal with officers on hand to answer directly.

Table 2 below lists the meetings undertaken by the Sustainable Communities for Learning Team on behalf of the Governing Body for ease of reference.

**Table 2: Consultation Meetings Undertaken**

<b>Nature of consultation</b>	<b>Date/Time</b>
Pupil engagement session	Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> February
Staff meeting	Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> February
Governors' meeting	Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> February
Parent Session (Virtual Meeting)	Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> February
Community session (Virtual meeting)	Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> March

## 2.5. CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Consultees were asked for their opinion on the key question for the proposal:

**1) Do you support the proposal to change the lowest age range for the school from 4 to 3 to provide nursery provision from September 2023?**

Consultees were able to respond to the question with Yes or No. Consultees were also offered the opportunity to comment further:

**If you would like to suggest any changes or alternatives to the proposals, please detail these below.**

**Any other comments?**

### 3. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The consultation responses received in writing between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 and 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022 are outlined below.

#### 3.1. SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

4 individual responses were received by the consultation closing date. The breakdown of responses to each proposal are detailed in the tables and charts below.

It has been noted that not all consultees provided a response to each of the questions and that some forms were not fully completed. In these cases, we have accepted the responses to the questions that they have chosen to answer.

Respondents were asked to indicate their role in relation to the proposal, respondents were able to tick more than one option.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the school they are connected to (if any) in relation to the proposal.

**Table 3: Responses in detail**

<b>Annex</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Annex A</b>	A summary of key issues raised by statutory consultees and the Governing Body's response to those issues can be found at Annex A.
<b>Annex B</b>	A summary of the comments received in favour of the proposal can be found at Annex B.
<b>Annex C</b>	The frequently asked questions (FAQs) document has been updated to include the key questions raised during the engagement sessions (Annex C).
<b>Annex D</b>	Consultation sessions were undertaken with the representative pupils of St Nicholas CiW Primary School to engage the pupils in the consultation process. A report on the outcome of these sessions can be found at Annex D.
<b>Annex E</b>	Estyn formally responded to the consultation. Their response can be found at Annex E.

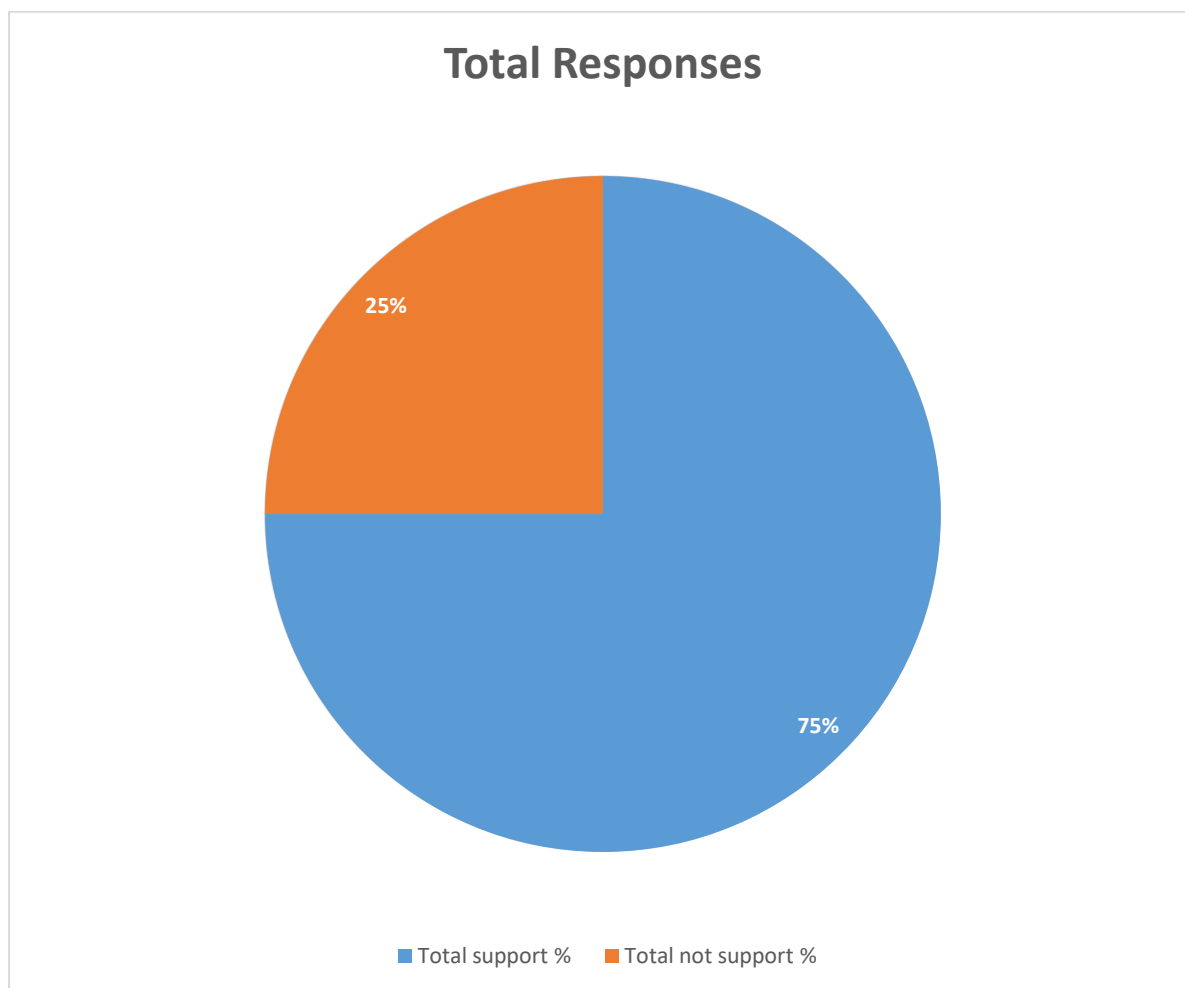
#### 3.2. RESPONSES TO THE PROPOSAL: TO PROVIDE NURSERY PROVISION AT ST NICHOLAS CIW PRIMARY SCHOOL

As Table 4 and Chart 1 below show, most responses (25%) were **not** in favour of the Proposal.

**Table 4: Breakdown of consultation responses**

Total (individual) responses:	Total support		Total not support	
No.	No.	%	No.	%
4	3	75%	1	25%

**Chart 1: Split of responses supporting or not supporting the Proposal of the consultation**



As Table 5 and Chart 2 below show, the majority of the largest group of respondents (Local Residents) were **split equally for and against** the Proposal. However, the majority of respondents (3) were in favour of the proposal. 1 respondent identified as a local resident and a parent or guardian and therefore has been counted twice in the tables below.

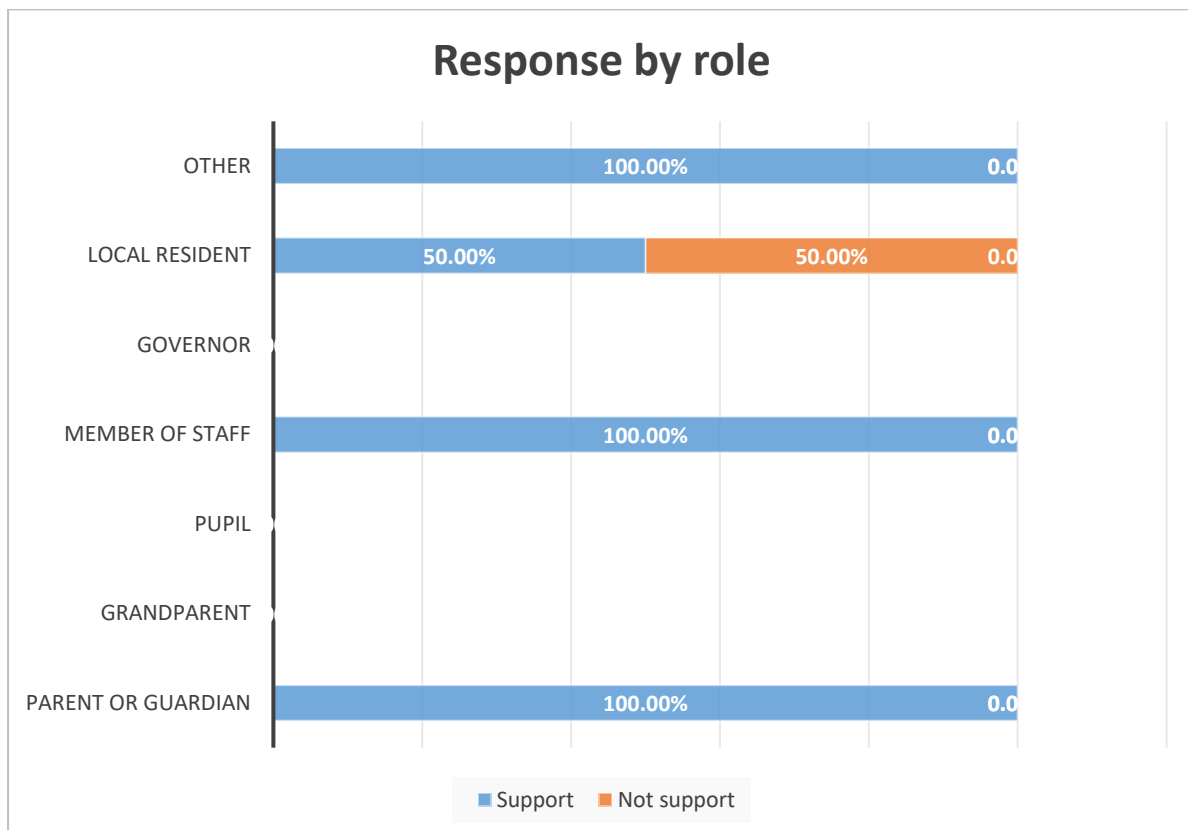
**Table 5: Breakdown of consultation responses by role**

Response by role (A):	Support	Not support	Total
Parent or guardian	1	0	1



<b>Grandparent</b>	0	0	0
<b>Pupil</b>	0	0	0
<b>Member of staff</b>	1	0	1
<b>Governor</b>	0	0	0
<b>Local Resident</b>	1	1	2
<b>Other</b>	1	0	1

**Chart 2: Split of consultation responses by role**



Regarding responses affiliated with schools, 1 respondent identified as being affiliated with St Nicholas CiW Primary School and supported the proposal. The remaining respondents did not identify any affiliation with the school the proposal relates to or any other school.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Following consideration of the responses received throughout the consultation period, the Governing Body has revisited the proposal to determine the likely impact on quality and standards in education, the local community and travel arrangements.

### 4.1. QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

The latest Estyn inspection for the schools noted Standards as 'Good' for St Nicholas CiW Primary School. It is noted in the inspection reports that most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make good progress and attainment performance is strong.

In Estyn's response to the consultation, they concluded that the proposal is likely to maintain or improve the current standards of education and provision in the area. Estyn's response did note some areas of the consultation document which required the proposer to expand on the information provided. The response to these concerns is outlined under the relevant themes under Section 5.

Overall it is concluded that the proposal would likely have a positive impact on quality and standards in education by providing:

- Appropriate resources and technologies to support staff and learners to meet the objectives of the Digital Competence Framework through provision of improved learning environments.
- Sufficient indoor and outdoor play facilities to promote pupils' wellbeing on a single site.
- Breakout areas to support pupils with additional learning needs within the proposed new building.

### 4.2. COMMUNITY IMPACT

A Community Impact Assessment was undertaken and published alongside the consultation document. The impact assessment identifies that the proposal would likely have a neutral impact on the local community across 2 of the 8 measures assessed. The proposal would likely have a positive impact on the local community across 5 of the 8 measures assessed. The proposal would likely have a negative impact on the local community across 1 of the 8 measures. Overall, the proposal would likely have a positive impact on the local community.

### 4.3. TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

The Council has a statutory duty to provide free school transport for pupils of statutory school age who reside beyond walking distance to the nearest appropriate school. In accordance with 'The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008'.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council does not provide free school transport for nursery-age children other than those children who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN). Under these proposals there are no plans to change the Council's policy on the transport of children to and from schools.

The Council has a statutory duty to provide free school transport for pupils of statutory school age who reside beyond walking distance to the nearest appropriate school.<sup>1</sup>

*“This is defined as 2 miles or further to the nearest suitable school for Primary Pupils and 3 miles or further for Secondary School Pupils. Distances are measured by the nearest available walking route.”<sup>2</sup>*

The school does not currently have any pupils who are entitled to free school transport. However, the school does provide a fee-paying minibus service for parents.

This proposal would not impact on existing learner travel arrangements as the school would remain on the existing site and there would be no change to the catchment area or primary aged pupil capacity.

#### 4.4. FACTUAL CHANGES FOLLOWING CLOSE OF CONSULTATION PERIOD

The consultation document noted that the Council had initiated the planning process for the preferred option which would implement the regulated alteration. This would determine if the proposal would be considered appropriate in planning terms.

The responses received during the statutory consultation, as outlined in this report, raised issues which related to the implementation of the proposal. All respondents supported the change in age range, however, they raised concerns with how the proposal was going to be implemented on the existing school site. The majority of these issues directly related to considerations of the planning application for the proposal. Consequently, progress on statutory consultation was put on hold until the outcome of the planning process was confirmed. On 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022, the proposal to re-develop the existing St Nicholas School site to accommodate 126 capacity school with additional capacity to cater for 24 part time nursery pupils was approved.

The outcome of the planning application can be viewed on the following link:

<https://vonline.planning-register.co.uk/Planning/Display/2022/00066/RG3>

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<sup>1</sup>Policy For the Provision of Home to School Transport (Revised February 2010)

<sup>2</sup>The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008

## 5. ANNEX A - A SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES RAISED BY STATUTORY CONSULTEES

The following summarises the key themes raised during the formal consultation period. The issues present an overview of responses and are not intended to be verbatim. All written responses have been made available to the Governing Body.

### 5.1. ISSUES RAISED IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSAL:

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#### THEME 1

##### **Proposal does not prioritise Welsh medium education**

Respondents raised concerns that denominational education was an inappropriate beneficiary of public funding. Identified Welsh medium provision as a higher priority to ensure the Council achieves Welsh Government targets to increase the number of Welsh speakers.

##### **Governing Body's response to the concerns raised**

Although St Nicholas CIW Primary School teaches predominantly through the medium of English, the high standards achieved in Welsh language at the school contribute to the Council's commitment to encouraging bilingual speakers. Therefore, the proposal will continue to contribute to the Council's commitments in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), which aims to ensure that demand for Welsh medium education can be met in the long-term, in line with Welsh Government's National Gymraeg 2050 strategy and contributing to its ambitious target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050.

In addition, the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 established the Curriculum for Wales in law and replaced the basic curriculum. The Act sets out the four purposes of the curriculum in law. It also sets out that Welsh language is a mandatory element as part of the 3 to 16 learning continuum. The requirements of the Act come into force in September 2022. Consequently, the school will be required to provide Welsh language as part of the curriculum from September 2022.

Regarding funding for denominational schools, the school is voluntary controlled and is maintained by the Local Authority. The Council has a statutory duty to secure sufficient school places both in number and character. Regarding the pupil demand, this has been reviewed and is based on the latest population projections, housing developments in the catchment area and only accounts for pupils within the Authority. This results in a projected demand of 110 primary pupils and 20 nursery pupils by 2026. The proposal would ensure the school is able to provide improved learning environments and meet demand for nursery provision in the area while maintaining sufficient surplus capacity to provide for primary aged pupils.

In terms of the funding for the implementation of the proposal, the anticipated cost of the new school is £7.03million. 65.9% of this funding will be sought from Welsh Government through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme in accordance with the funding rate for community schools. The Council would provide the remaining 34.1% funding. However, this would not be funded by the tax payer but from Section 106 contributions received from housing developers. These contributions have been received to mitigate the impact of additional pupils resulting from developments.

It is also worth noting that the condition of St Nicholas CiW Primary School's buildings has been rated by the Council as in poor condition. Investing in a new school building would reduce ongoing maintenance costs and would provide a better teaching and learning environment for the pupils of St Nicholas CiW Primary School.

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## THEME 2

### **Impact on providing additional nursery provision in the catchment area not fully considered**

Respondents identified that the impact of a new nursery on existing third-party providers has not been fully considered.

#### **Governing Body's response to the concerns raised**

There is no nursery provision offered within the catchment of St. Nicholas CiW Primary School. However, there are 4 childminders within 3 miles. The closest one is 1.5 miles away and has part time spaces.

Currently, nursery aged pupils in the St Nicholas CiW School catchment have to access nursery provision outside the catchment area of the primary school. The projection for nursery aged pupils by 2026 estimates there will be a demand for 20 places within the catchment area of St Nicholas. Consequently, there is considered to be sufficient demand to support the implementation of 24 part-time nursery place within the catchment area which would have limited to no impact on existing early years provision in the wider area as the proposal would help address future growth.

As part of the consultation process, it is noted that no early year's providers commented on the proposal. However, the proposal would result in part-time nursery places being offered which will allow for other providers to fill the gap to offer an all-day child care provision. As noted above there are several childminders within the catchment of the St Nicholas CiW Primary School which could benefit from part-time nursery provision being provided in the area.

Overall, it is considered the introduction of nursery provision at St Nicholas CiW Primary School would not have a detrimental impact upon private or third-party providers as the provision would aim to meet the expected growth in demand in the catchment area. Furthermore, there is currently no early year's provision in the catchment area with the exception of 4 childminders. It is considered the childminders in the catchment could potentially benefit from the part-time nursery provision provided at the primary school to offer all day childcare shared between the proposed nursery provision and private childminders in the area.

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## THEME 3

### **Funding implications not properly identified**

Respondents were concerned that not all the funding impacts for implementing the proposal have been identified.

### **Governing Body's response to the concerns raised**

The implementation of the proposal will be funded as part of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. The project to re-develop St Nicholas CiW Primary School has been approved as a project to be delivered under Band B of the programme. The cost of the original proposal was approved as part of a Business Justification Case (BJC) submitted to Welsh Government in June 2022. However, since the BJC was submitted there have been a number of changes and delays to the implementation of the proposal and this has impacted on the project costs. The original BJC was approved for £4.999m project to develop 210 place school on the existing site by September 2022. However, this cost was based upon savings made through bringing forward 3 projects together at the same time which included the redevelopment of St David's CiW Primary School, St Nicholas CiW Primary School and Llancarfan Primary School (known as South Point Primary). The initial cost savings for the schemes could not be realised as they did not progress at the same time. In particular the development of St Nicholas CiW Primary School was delayed significantly with the original planning proposal being refused for the 210 primary school. This has resulted in the scheme not benefiting from the original envisaged savings. Furthermore, costs were increased due to the need to redesign the scheme to ensure it addressed the concerns which resulted in its original refusal.

In addition to the loss of the original savings for the project, global events have had a significant impact upon prices within the market for construction materials. This has been linked to the initial impact of Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the war in Ukraine. Consequently, the cost of the proposal in its current form has risen to £7.03m. The Council is currently re-submitting a revised BJC to demonstrate the increased cost for the scheme still represents best value for money and would deliver a school which provides improved learning environments for pupils in the area, community use and a net zero carbon building. The original scheme was to be funded at a ratio of 46.4% Council and 53.6% Welsh Government. This was a significant reduction on the usual contribution rate for faith schools of 85% Welsh Government

and 15% Council. This difference in the contribution rate was due to the amount of section 106 funding available to redevelop the school. To meet the increased costs the Council would maintain the amount allocated to fund the school from section 106 funds and Welsh Government would increase their contribution to 65.9% which is still below the 85% contribution rate for faith schools.

Regarding the implications for the proposal if the revised BJC is refused by Welsh Government, the Council would re-tender for the Stage II construction contract to deliver the new school to retest the market. This would likely delay the implementation of the proposal by 4 months to allow for the tender process to complete. To avoid this outcome the increased costs have been thoroughly market tested by the Council's cost and management consultant Aecom to demonstrate the quoted costs reflect the current market conditions.

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## THEME 4

### **Affect construction of new school would have on existing pupils / residents**

Respondents were concerned that the implementation of the proposal would have a detrimental impact on pupils attending the existing school during the construction phase and the impact construction would have on local residents.

### **Governing Body's response to the concerns raised**

It is proposed that the new school building is built on the existing site which would result in some disruption for staff, pupils, and local residents during the construction phase. The school would collaborate closely with the Council's Sustainable Communities for Learning Team to limit disruption through restricting delivery times and working collaboratively with the construction site manager. A similar approach has been adopted throughout the construction of the recent St David's CiW Primary School development, located in Colwinston which is a similar rural village location to St Nicholas CiW Primary School which retained pupils in the existing school building while the new school was developed on the same site.

In addition the development of the school is supported by a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP). The CEMP is required as a condition of the planning approval of the new school prior to the commencement of construction. It provides information on how noise will be managed on the site and how construction will be undertaken. In the first phase of development the Multi Use Games Area will be constructed to ensure pupils will retain an outdoor play area during construction minimising the disruption to outdoor education. The majority of the playing field to the rear of the site will be retained as well. The CEMP also outlines both construction staff and teaching staff will be able to continue parking within the site to minimise disruption to local residents.

The construction of the new school represents an opportunity for the school to work closely with the construction team to ensure pupils are involved throughout the process and the curriculum is enhanced through regular site visits.

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## THEME 5

### **Lack of clarification within the Consultation Document on alternative options considered**

Respondents raised concerns that the alternative options identified had not been appropriately considered and noted inconsistencies in the assessment.

### **Governing Body's response to the concerns raised**

The consultation document outlined 4 alternative scenarios which were considered and discounted. These included the following:

- 1) Opening a brand new 210 place school to serve the additional demand for school places as a result of the developments in St Nicholas and Bonvilston,
- 2) Refurbish the existing school building and provide demountable accommodation to provide nursery provision,
- 3) Close St Nicholas CiW primary school and expand the catchment area of Peterston-super-Ely,
- 4) Maintaining the status quo.

Option 1: This related to relocating the school to a new site outside of St Nicholas. There is no other Council owned land within the vicinity which could accommodate a new school. Therefore, a new site would need to be purchased from a private landowner. 13 potential sites adjoining an existing settlement with potential highway access were identified for the new site location. These sites were not available on the open market and would rely upon negotiations with landowners or pursuing the purchase of the land through the compulsory purchase order process. This would add considerable time to delivering the proposal and additional uncertainty as to whether a proposal on a new site would be acceptable in planning terms. In terms of the feasibility of these sites, none of the sites identified are within settlement boundaries and all would be considered greenfield sites. This means there would be a presumption against the development in the open countryside under local planning policy which a proposal would need to demonstrate why the development would be appropriate in this countryside location, increasing uncertainty on achieving planning consent on alternative sites. In addition, 1 site identified went beyond the initial feasibility study and was explored further. However, the site was un-serviced and would have required substantial investment to provide the relevant utilities on site.

In terms of the capital receipt for the existing school site, this was considered as part of the feasibility test. However, the disposal of the land would have caused further delays to the proposal as the Council has a duty under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 dispose of land 'in any manner they see fit' for the 'best price



reasonably obtainable'. This would likely result in the land being sold on the open market to ensure the best price was achieved or if an offer were made which could be demonstrated represented the best price reasonably obtainable. No agreement was forthcoming during the feasibility test that would have represented the best price reasonably obtainable, therefore, the site would have needed to be marketed causing further delays.

To balance the additional costs associated with a new site in terms of land purchase, servicing and access, a 210-place school would be proposed which would represent the best option in terms of net present value which is a requirement of the Business Case process to receive approval of funding from Welsh Government under the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme. This would account for the additional need for places arising from Cardiff. The projected need for places, accounting for pupils attending from outside the Authority, is 168 pupils by 2026.

In addition, it is not considered that relocating the school to another site within the vicinity would address concerns relating to congestion. It would likely move congestion issues elsewhere within the highway network. Depending on the site location, this could have implications on the A48 which could make the proposal on an alternative site inappropriate in planning terms or the required highway mitigations would make the scheme unviable from a cost perspective as Welsh Government do not fund works outside of the proposed school site boundary such as highway works.

Depending on the location of the new site, this could result in an additional alteration to the school resulting in the loss of the existing school within the village of St Nicholas. Consequently, the existing school issues would not be addressed, and the site would likely be sold as surplus to requirement following the development of the replacement school. However, it is acknowledged that a new school would provide a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning environment on an alternative site but based on the cost implications it is considered this would not be achievable.

Option 2: This option would result in the refurbishment of the existing school and providing an extension in the form of a demountable unit to provide nursery provision. This option would not include traffic congestion mitigations as the school building would be retained in its current location. In terms of the provision of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environments, due to the construction of the existing school a refurbishment project of the existing building would not be able to provide the same build quality as a new build development.

Additionally, due to the amount of works required to the existing building it is considered likely that the pupils would need to be decanted from the school building to alternative accommodation during the refurbishment works which would increase the costs of the proposal.

Option 3: This option would result in the closure of St Nicholas CiW Primary School. The catchment area for Peterston-super-Ely CiW Primary School could be increased to include the existing catchment of St Nicholas. There are currently 121 pupils on roll at St Nicholas who would require relocation as a result of the proposal. In

accordance with the School Organisation Code, a plan would need to be put in place as part of the consultation. Peterston-super-Ely CIW Primary School currently has 170 pupils on roll against a capacity of 189. This means there would be insufficient space to transfer all existing pupils from St Nicholas CiW Primary School. However, of the 121 pupils on roll at St Nicholas, only 18 are from within the catchment area. It is likely these could be accommodated within Peterston-super-Ely. However, the Council would also need to identify nearby alternatives for the other pupils, regardless of catchment.

The Council could work with Cardiff Council to identify alternatives for out of county pupils, but this would be dependent on availability. In terms of meeting long term demand, there are currently 53 catchment pupils attending Peterston Primary and St Nicholas has a potential catchment population of 102 pupils (this includes housing development yield but excludes likely WM demand).

Therefore, the existing capacity of Peterston-super-Ely is likely to be sufficient to meet long term demand from within the catchment areas. However, this could negatively impact other schools in the Vale. For example, Peterston currently has pupils on roll from Y Bont Faen and Gwenfo. This could put additional demand on those schools.

This option would not provide 21st century learning environments as a new build would no longer be required. This option would also result in increased free learner travel.

Option 4: This would maintain the existing situation. This was discounted as it would not improve the learning facilities at the school and maintenance costs would continue to increase in the long term due to the need for ongoing repair works to the school buildings. This is reflected in the most recent Condition Report undertaken in 2022 which has identified the repair and maintenance costs for the school buildings has increased and is estimated to cost £1.77m over the next 5-year period.

This option would not result in nursery provision at the site, meaning the anticipated nursery demand of 20 places would need to address through provision elsewhere in the Vale of Glamorgan.

In addition, this option would not include any mitigation for the issues raised by consultees relating to traffic congestion at the existing school.

Consequently, it is considered the preferred option being pursued is appropriate and represents the best way forward when considered against the alternatives identified above. The Council had adequately reviewed and tested the alternative options to demonstrate why they have been discounted and this has been summarised in the Consultation Document and expanded upon in the response above.

### **Implementation of proposal inappropriate**

Respondents raised concerns that the proposed implementation for the proposal was not appropriate as it would have a detrimental impact on local traffic congestion.

### **Governing Body's response to the concerns raised**

A key priority when developing the proposal was to improve transport measures at the school and eliminate the need for a split site at St Nicholas CiW Primary School. Currently, pupils are chaperoned by staff down a road without a pavement to the nearby 'Old School' building.

To address current transport issues at the existing school the current measures in place at the school include:

- Minibus service provided by the school
- Staggered drop-off / pick-up times
- Introduction of breakfast club
- Staff presence at the gate before and after school

These measures would be continued under the proposal and expanded upon with additional traffic mitigations included as part of the redevelopment of the school site. It should be noted that the proposed implementation for the proposal has been subject to a planning application which was approved on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022. The planning application considered the transport implications for the proposal, and it was deemed that the proposal would be appropriate in planning terms. In relation to the transport considerations the Local Planning Authority concluded "It is considered that the increase in traffic movements associated with the school would not be so significant to be unacceptable in planning terms. Any increase in movements would be offset to a significant degree (and in all likelihood outweighed) by the provision of improved pedestrian facilities to the site frontage, enhanced staff parking and pick up and drop off facilities within the confines of the site. Furthermore, the TA submitted indicates a number of potential measures that could be incorporated within a Travel Plan, including but not strictly limited to, staggered start times and potential for parents using an "informal" one-way system when accessing the school. Following consultation with the Council's Highway Development section it is considered that the development would not cause any unacceptable impacts upon the local highway network or highway safety and would comply with relevant Policies within the adopted LDP including SP1 and MD2"

A condition was attached to the planning consent which requires a Travel Plan to support the development. The Sustainable Communities for Learning Team will work with the Governing Body and other interested parties to produce a Travel Plan in accordance with the condition with the aim to further alleviate school traffic in the area and promote a modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport.

## 6. ANNEX B - A SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED IN FAVOUR OF THE PROPOSAL.

This section provides the key themes raised during the formal consultation period by those in favour of the proposal. The following presents an overview of responses and are not exhaustive or intended to be verbatim. All written responses have been made available to the Governing Body.

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### THEME 7

#### **Support change in age range**

Currently the school has no nursery provision, which results in a significant amount of time spent integrating reception pupils into the school and a loss of potential local pupils to other schools further away with nursery provision. The proposed nursery will provide a consistent approach from 3-11 years to promote and underpin continuity and progression for pupils, ensuring breadth and balance across the curriculum. It will also develop the ethos and culture of the school in children from an earlier age, leading to effective interpersonal relationships and higher self-esteem.

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### THEME 8

#### **Proposal provides adequate Welsh Medium Provision**

Consultees noted that the proposal considered the impact of the proposal on Welsh language provision in the area suitably. They noted that the proposal would result in continued support for Welsh language as part of the curriculum with improved educational facilities aiding in the delivery of Welsh as well as other subjects.

## 7. ANNEX C - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.

This section provides updated frequently asked questions in relation to the proposal.

### ***What is the intended timescale for the development of the new school building?***

Building work is likely to commence from August 2022. It is proposed that the new school would be open for September 2023.

### ***Who would manage the construction of the new school building?***

The Council's Sustainable Communities for Learning Team would be responsible for managing the build process. A contractor would be appointed using the SEWSCAP framework. SEWSCAP is a construction framework used by 16 local authorities and provides pre-qualified and suitably experienced Contractors to deliver the 21st Century Schools Programme, and other public buildings, relating to both new build and refurbishment projects over £1.5 million. A programme of engagement would be devised to ensure all stakeholders are informed of progress and are able to feed into the design process. There would be regular meetings between the Council, contractor, and school.

### ***Would the construction of the new school result in disruption for staff, pupils, and local residents?***

It is proposed that the new school building is built on the existing site which would result in some disruption for staff, pupils, and local residents during the construction phase. The school would collaborate closely with the Council's Sustainable Communities for Learning Team to limit disruption through restricting delivery times and working collaboratively with the site manager. The proposal will be supported by a Construction Environment Management Plan which outlines how the site will be set-up to ensure the continued education provision can be provided at the existing site during the construction phase.

### ***Would contingency arrangements be put in place during the construction of the new school to ensure pupils are able to access outdoor space?***

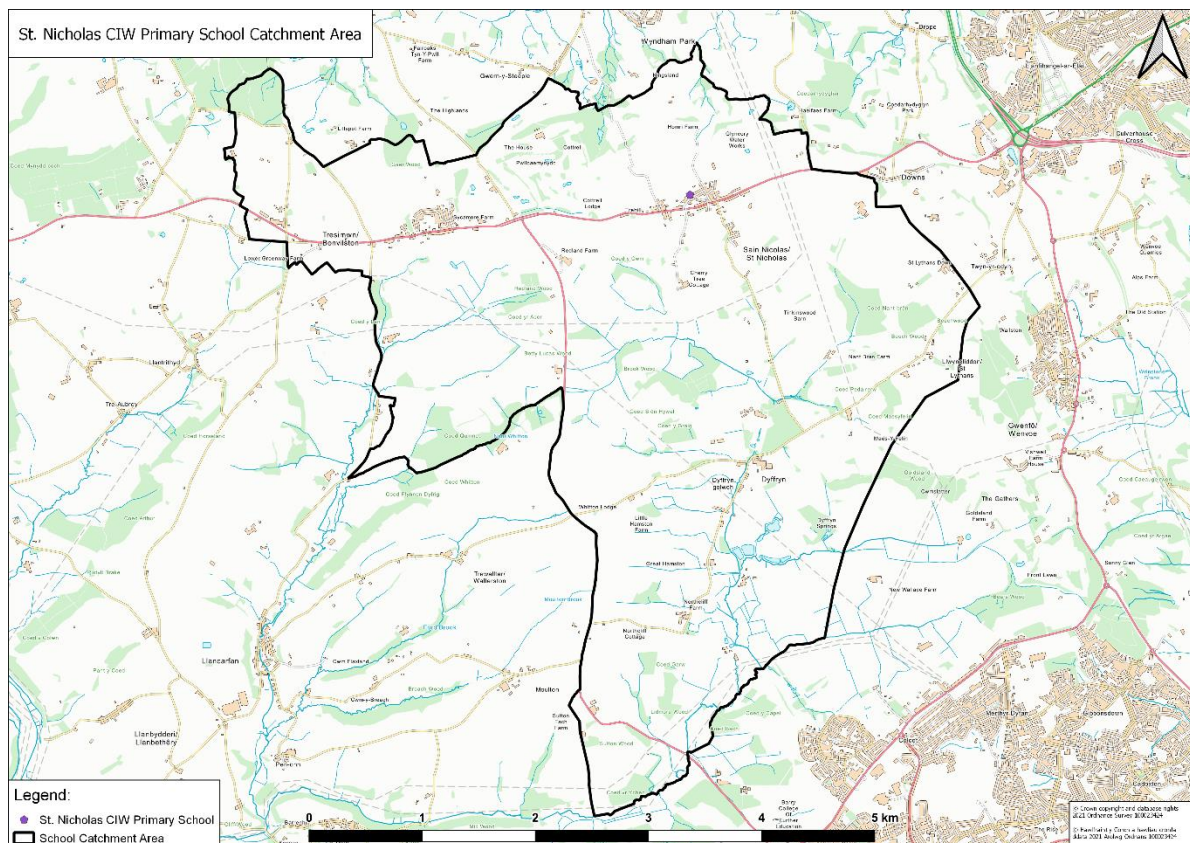
As the proposed new build would be built on the existing site, the school would lose outside space during the construction phase. During this time, the school would collaborate closely with the Sustainable Communities for Learning Team to ensure pupils have access to sufficient outside space and the curriculum is not compromised. The Multi Use Games Area will be developed first to ensure pupils still have access to outdoor play facilities. In addition the majority of the playing fields to the rear of the school site would be retained during the construction phase of the site. The school would also work closely with the construction team to ensure pupils are

involved throughout the process and the curriculum is enhanced through regular site visits.

## 7.1. NEW FAQs:

### ***Will the proposal result in changes to the catchment area?***

No. The catchment area for the school would remain the same. The map below identifies the extent of the catchment area which does not identify Wenvoe in the catchment.



### ***How will the proposal be funded?***

The proposal will be funded through the Welsh Government's Band B of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. This a collaboration between Welsh Government, Local Authorities, and other stakeholders to fund educational developments in Wales. The funding for the development will be split between Welsh Government and the Council at a 66:34 split. The Council will primarily fund its 34.1% contribution to the project through Section 106 agreements allocated for education use from developments that have come forward in the surrounding area and the remaining 65.9% will be funded by Welsh Government from the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

The agreement to the funding is subject to a Revised Business Justification Case to reflect the increased cost of the project.

***How will admissions for the nursery work?***

Children are eligible for a part time nursery place, usually five mornings or five afternoons, from the term after their third birthday. St Nicholas CiW primary School is a voluntary controlled school and would be subject to the Council's admissions policy. Further information on nursery admissions can be found on the Council's [Nursery Admissions](#) Webpage.

## 8. ANNEX D - CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.

### 8.1. CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE NURSERY PROVISION AT ST NICHOLAS CIW PRIMARY SCHOOL

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#### BACKGROUND

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is committed to ensuring that all pupils within the Vale have every opportunity to attain the best possible outcomes. In order to achieve this ambition, it is essential that we ensure schools remain sustainable, reflect the needs of our local communities, and are equipped with the best possible learning environments.

On 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021, the Governing Body authorised the Council's Sustainable Communities for Learning team to undertake a consultation from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 to 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 on a proposal to add nursery provision to St Nicholas CiW Primary School from September 2023.

- A consultation workshop was arranged with St Nicholas CiW Primary School pupils on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022 to gather their views about the proposal.

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#### METHODOLOGY WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

- An interactive workshop which gave pupils an opportunity to discuss and share ideas together.
- It started with a discussion on the meaning of consultation and why it was important to talk to pupils
- Agreement was reached on what made a good discussion/consultation
- The consultation document was then explained to them, including the background and the timeline for the activity.
- The pupils were divided into groups to share and note their own ideas. The two groups then merged to have further discussion on these ideas, based on the rules of engagement as agreed at the beginning of the session.
- Following the feedback pupils were given information on the advantages and shortcomings noted in the consultation document, they were reminded of the timeline, and it was explained to them that their comments would be fed into



a report on this session and that it would be presented to the Governing Body as part of the evidence gathered on this consultation.

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## PUPILS' RESPONSES (YEAR 4 / 5 CLASS – 27 PUPILS)

### Vote on Proposal

Support	Object
24	3

### Reasons for Objection

- Younger and older children mixing – older pupils could hurt younger pupils at play time by accident.
- The existing school should be refurbished instead.
- Won't be able to know where things are in the new school as its will be a different layout.
- The hall is too far away from the classrooms.
- Existing school could be repainted instead.
- Classrooms in new school to close together, harder to follow Covid-19 rules.
- New school has too many doors, easier to get lost.
- New school would be further away from the Church.
- Pupils would miss the old school building.
- More electricity would be required to run the new school because it is bigger increasing school costs. This would mean less money to spend on pupils.
- Mixed toilets should not be included.
- Hall is too big.

### Reasons for Support

- Pupils would have more space.
- Pupils would have younger siblings in the same school.
- The hall would be big enough for the whole school.
- It would be nice to have a new school building.
- Could play both rugby and football on the sports field.
- All the classes are a similar size, this is fairer for pupils.
- New school would be eco-friendly.
- Sports field would be big enough.
- MUGA is a good idea and lots of storage in new school.
- Support the separate play areas for the main school and reception and nursery. Worried about running into smaller pupils.
- High fence on MUGA would help stop balls getting lost outside the school.

## Potential Improvements

- More solar panels on the roof.
- Include new rugby equipment.
- Include new laptops for pupils.
- Bigger IT cupboards.
- Dedicated room for IT.
- Library to be included.
- Include new bookcases in mixed use area outside of classrooms.
- Include signage on the front of the building.
- No carpets, hard floors are easier to clean.
- Include play equipment outside.
- Include full school name on the building
- Dedicated science room included.

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## METHODOLOGY WITH INFANT SCHOOL CHILDREN (YEAR 2 CLASS – 18 PUPILS)

- A conversation with a class of infant pupils and an opportunity to discuss and share ideas together.
- The focus of the consultation was explained to them in terms of the Primary school going to look after the Nursery school.
- A short conversation emerged on the possible good points and bad points of this development.

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## PUPILS' RESPONSES (YEAR 2 CLASS – 18 PUPILS)

Good Ideas	Bad Ideas
Growing Garden	Like the current building
Classroom will be bigger	Like the way the classroom works now
Will have our own space	Change can be disruptive
Intercom	
Sports Field	
Dropping off in site	

### Potential Improvements:

- New cupboards
- New storage areas
- Climbing wall
- Slide and swings in play area
- Balancing beams

- Need a canopy outside classroom
- Seesaw
- Monkey bars
- MUGA
  - Skipping ropes
  - Ping pong
  - Beach ball
  - Giant snakes and ladders
  - Volleyball
  - Netball
  - Hockey
  - Basketball
  - Bowling
  - Tennis

**Vote on Proposal:**

Good	Bad
16	2

## 9. ANNEX E - RESPONSE FROM ESTYN

In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018, a copy of the consultation document was sent to Estyn.

### **Estyn response to the proposal by the Vale of Glamorgan council to change the age range of St Nicholas CiW Primary School from 4-11 years to 3-11 years and to establish a nursery class containing 24 part-time places from September 2023**

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.

#### **Introduction**

The proposal is by the Vale of Glamorgan council.

The proposal is to change the age range of pupils at St Nicholas CiW Primary School from 4-11 years to 3-11 years and to establish a nursery class containing 24 part-time places from September 2023 by:

- changing the age range of St Nicholas CiW Primary school from 4 - 11 to 3 - 11
- constructing a new school building on the current school site to accommodate the nursery and primary classes
- opening a new 126 place school with additional 24 part time nursery places.

It should be noted that St. Nicholas Church in Wales Primary School was subject to a previous statutory consultation in 2019 to expand the school from 126 places to 210 places, including the addition of a nursery class containing 48 part-time places from September 2021. However, the Local Planning Authority considered the proposed design was insufficient to mitigate the impact the increased school capacity would have on the local highway infrastructure. Consequently, the Council's planning committee on 21st January 2021 determined that planning permission would not be

granted due to the impact the increased capacity would have on the local highway infrastructure.

As a result, the original proposal was amended to reduce the proposed capacity of the new school building but maintain additional nursery provision for the school. This would address concerns regarding the impact the proposal would have on the local highway infrastructure.

## **Summary/ Conclusion**

In Estyn's opinion the proposal is likely to maintain or improve the current standards of education and provision in the area.

## **Description and benefits**

The proposer has provided a clear rationale for the proposal. This is to provide nursery provision at the school to meet increased demand for faith-based education within the area because of recent and proposed housing developments.

The local authority has considered the potential advantages of the proposal reasonably. These include providing more suitable learning environments for pupils and more effective transition from nursery to primary education. It has considered in small part a few of the potential disadvantages of the proposal, for example the disruption to staff and pupils during the building phase of the new school. However, the local authority has not been clear enough about how it will mitigate the impact of the works on the school and its pupils.

The proposer has considered one main risk to the proposal, which is the risk that sufficient funding does not materialise as expected. It has stated that The Council has secured 65% of funding for the proposal under Band B of the Welsh Government 21st Century Schools Programme subject to approval of a business case. The remaining funding for the new school building would be met by the Council using Section 106 funding received from the nearby housing developments. The authority has not been clear about what will happen if this funding does not materialise.

The proposer has considered well other alternative options to the current proposal. It has listed the advantages and disadvantages of each option. The disadvantages of these options clearly demonstrate why the other options have been discounted as being viable.

The proposer has undertaken an appropriate condition survey of St Nicholas CiW Primary School and assessed the condition of the school building to be poor and needing around £730,276 pounds worth of repairs. It highlights the advantages that a new school building would provide.

The local authority has considered the impact on learner travel arrangements suitably. It identifies that traffic and transport implications would be considered as part of proposals to limit the impact of the additional nursery provision. It has considered the fact that no pupils currently receive free school transport, and the proposed site relocation is within one mile of the existing school. As a result, the proposer reasonably concludes that the proposal is unlikely to have any significant impact.

The proposer has produced a clear analyses of current pupil numbers and projected demand for future places in the area due to local housing developments. These projections indicate that St Nicholas CiW Primary School will be able to meet the demand for English medium nursery and primary education from September 2023. It should be noted that there is potential for a further increase in numbers at St Nicholas CiW school as currently a notable proportion of parents living in its catchment send their children to other English medium CiW primary schools in the local authority.

The proposer has considered the impact of the proposal on Welsh language provision in the area suitably. It refers to the council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), which aims to ensure that demand for Welsh medium education can be met in the long-term. It notes that there are several Welsh-medium primary schools serving the Western Vale, including Ysgol Iolo Morgannwg and Ysgol Dewi Sant.

The proposer has provided an appropriate community impact assessment as a separate document. This considers suitably the impact of the relevant components of the proposal on the local community and of the eight measures assessed it reasonably concludes that overall, the proposal would likely have a positive impact on the local community.

### **Educational aspects of the proposal**

The proposer has considered suitably the impact of the proposals on the quality of standards, wellbeing, and attitudes to learning, teaching, and learning experiences, care support, guidance, leadership, and management. It refers appropriately to the outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspection reports. The proposer states reasonably that the improved accommodation and modern learning environments should better meet the needs of the Curriculum for Wales and provide more opportunities for community learning across phases.

The proposer has considered the impact of the proposal on pupils with special educational needs and provided information about the needs of pupils at the school. The proposal appears to demonstrate that suitable provision will be made for pupils with special educational needs throughout the new school.

The proposer has considered the impact of the proposal on other schools in the area. It has concluded reasonably that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on these schools as no changes to the existing catchment area are proposed.

The proposer has included details about finance, including running costs and capital investment. It estimates that the total capital funding required will be split between Welsh Government funding through the 21st Century Schools Programme and funded by the Council using section 106 contributions where available.

The proposer has recognised the need for additional nursery places of a religious character within the area and assumes an increased demand for nursery and school places due to housing developments. However, the local authority does not consider well enough the effects of the proposal on other institutions, including private and third sector providers.

The proposer reasonably assumes that adding nursery provision will improve the already good arrangements for the care, support, and guidance of pupils from an earlier age, and extend and develop partnerships with families from the earliest opportunity.