

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Consultation Report

Proposal to establish a nursery unit at Fairfield Primary School

1. Background Information

1.1. Outline of the consultation

This report presents the feedback received during the consultation period from 3 January 2017 to 15 February 2017 in response to the Council's proposal to establish a nursery unit at Fairfield Primary School by;

1. Extending the age range of the school from 4 – 11 years to 3 – 11 years;
2. Creating a nursery unit within the school.

The consultation process followed Welsh Government guidelines, in compliance with the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The consultation process gave local people the opportunity to learn about the proposal and for the Council to hear the views of all those with an interest so that they can be taken into account before any decisions are made.

Formal consultation was conducted through a consultation document and accompanying response form distributed to prescribed consultees and published on the Vale of Glamorgan website on 3 January 2017.

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 2013. The consultation document outlined the changes being considered, the rationale for these and the details of the consultation exercise. The consultation document also incorporated an individual response form. Consultees were advised of the availability of an online version to complete.

2. Consultation

2.1. Publication of the consultation

The bilingual consultation document was published on 3 January 2017 and distributed online, through social media, and on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's website.

The Council distributed hard copies of the consultation document to staff, the governing body and parents/carers and guardians of children in Fairfield Primary School, Bute Cottage and Cogan Nursery Schools.

2.2. Stakeholder engagement

Consultation on the proposal was undertaken with prescribed consultees as contained within the School Organisation Code 2013.

The Council consulted with the following groups:

Staff (teaching and non-teaching) at Fairfield Primary School.	Governing Body of Fairfield Primary School
Parents/Carers and Guardians of children attending Fairfield Primary School	Staff (teaching and non-teaching) at Bute Cottage Nursery School & Cogan Nursery School
Governing Body of Bute Cottage Nursery School & Cogan Nursery School	Parents/Carers and Guardians of children attending Bute Cottage Nursery School & Cogan Nursery School
Vale of Glamorgan Children and Young People's Programme Board	Penarth Town Council
Communities First Partnership	Vale of Glamorgan Early Years Development Partnership (EYDCP)
Local Councillors	Assembly Members (AM's)/ Members of Parliament (MP's) / Regional Assembly Members
Welsh Language Commissioner	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)
Neighbouring Primary and Secondary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan	Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RHAG)
Central South Consortium Joint Education Service	Trade Unions
Estyn	Directors of Education – All Neighbouring Authorities
Local Police and Crime Commissioner	Welsh Government Ministers
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 www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/fairfieldnursery

2.3. Consultation meetings and drop in session

Meetings were held with the staff and governors at Fairfield Primary School, which were attended by Council officers. The main points of the consultation document were highlighted as well as an explanation of the statutory process.

A drop in session was held for all stakeholders at Fairfield Primary School.

2.4. Consultation with children and young people

A consultation session was undertaken with the School Council of Fairfield Primary School to engage the pupils in the consultation process. A report on the outcome of this session can be found at Annex D.

2.5. Consultation with the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee discussed progress at their meeting of 23 January 2017, reference to which can be found at minute no 711 which confirms that the recommendation of Cabinet be endorsed.

Consultation Summary

2.6. Consultation Questions

Consultees were asked for their opinion on a key question:

- Do you support the proposal to create a new nursery unit within Fairfield Primary School from January 2018?

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?

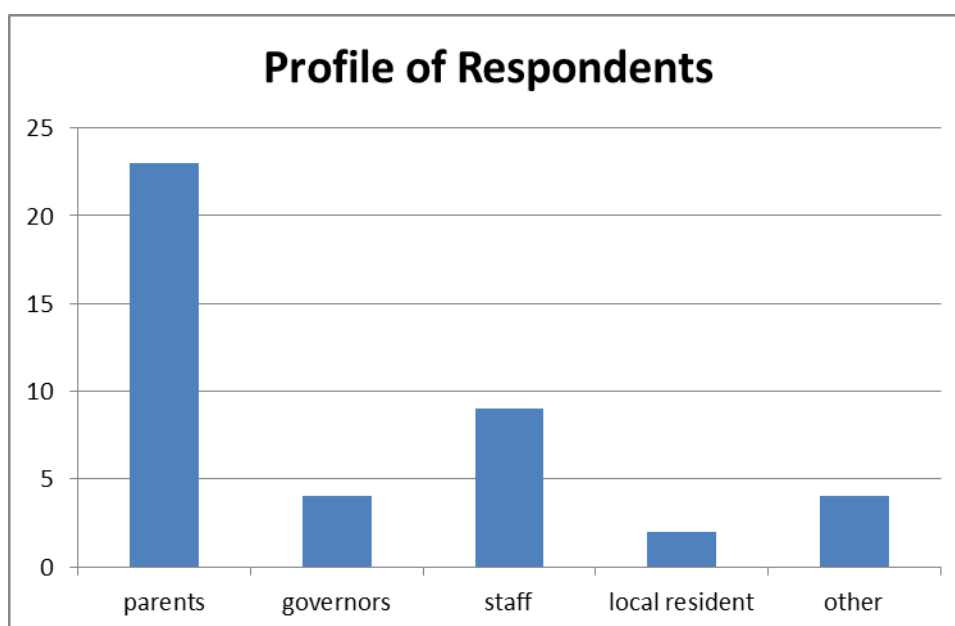
2.7. Results of the feedback from all stakeholders

The Council received 43 individual responses by the consultation closing date. Of the 43 individual responses 32 were in favour of the proposal and 11 were opposed. Estyn formally responded to the consultation providing their opinion only on the overall merits of the proposal.

It has been noted that not all consultees have 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.

Feedback from consultation meetings and drop in sessions are not included in this report as it was stated clearly in the consultation document and at the events concerned that the Council would only accept responses using the official consultation response form. Parents also were advised of this at the drop in sessions.

2.7 Profile of respondents



Responses

A summary of key themes and issues raised by statutory consultees and the response to those issues from the Vale of Glamorgan Council can be found at Annex A. A summary of comments received in favour of the proposal can be found at Annex B and other responses to general themes can be found at Annex C.

The consultation undertaken with young people can be found at Annex D.

In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2013, a copy of the consultation document was sent to Estyn. The response from Estyn can be found at Annex E.

An individual Response from the Headteacher of Bute Cottage Nursery can be found at Annex G.

An individual response from the Chair of Governors of Evenlode Primary School can be found at Annex H.

Consultation with statutory consultees

1. Feedback themes

The following summarises the key issues/concerns 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 Cabinet members.

Issue 1

Impact on and threat to Bute Cottage and Cogan Nursery Schools

Respondents expressed concerns that the implementation of the proposal could suggest an end to the need for Bute Cottage Nursery School as so many children are in Fairfield's catchment. A single respondent felt that it was likely to adversely affect numbers at Cogan Nursery School.

Council's response to the concerns raised

The proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on any other schools in the local surrounding area. Whilst the council is increasing the supply of nursery places in the Penarth area, the current demand is such that a number of children are often refused entry to maintained nurseries as result.

Bute Cottage is regularly oversubscribed each year with parents being turned away who often do not take up nursery provision as a result. Parents have a tendency to reapply for a place for Bute Cottage the following academic year. Cogan Nursery School is well supported each year.

The number of children transferring on average from Bute Cottage and Cogan Nursery schools to Fairfield Primary School is very low each year. Around 18% of pupils transfer from Bute Cottage to Fairfield Primary School and 17% from Cogan Nursery to Fairfield. The majority of children each year transfer to Evenlode Primary School from Bute Cottage Nursery and to Cogan Primary School from Cogan Nursery. The establishment of a nursery will therefore have minimal impact on these schools.

The majority of maintained nursery schools in Penarth are oversubscribed each year and a number of parental applications are refused meaning that some pupils are unable to access a nursery school place within a reasonable distance of their home. Due to the location of Cogan Nursery School, the school does not always attract applications for children refused a place elsewhere in Penarth. Current records show that there are 9 places available at Cogan. Conversely, Victoria has refused 13 pupils this academic year, Albert 19 and Bute Cottage 29. This mirrors the experiences over recent years.

This proposal will ensure that sufficient places are available to meet local demand. The provision of the nursery could potentially attract some parents away from

applying to other schools but will provide greater choice for parents and has the potential to ensure that a greater degree of parental preference is met.

Issue 2

The proposal will have no impact on numbers at Fairfield Primary School

A respondent had doubts as to whether the addition of a nursery would have any impact on the numbers of parents applying to Fairfield.

Council's response to the concerns raised

The establishment of a 3 – 11 year old phase primary school offers an efficient and sustainable model of delivery. The school will be able to incorporate provision for 3 and 4 year old children in a high quality Early Years and Foundation Phase setting. A nursery would enable a seamless transition for nursery age children into the reception class of the school and sustain pupil numbers in future.

A number of parents of children living in Fairfield catchment area choose to send their children to other local schools which have a nursery. This impacts on the number of pupils attending the school.

The establishment of a nursery is not primarily about sustaining pupil numbers. The proposal is focussed on improving educational standards through the provision of additional high quality local authority nursery places in the Penarth area.

It is intended that this will be achieved by creating an all-through primary provision for 3 to 11 year olds in order to enhance standards at Fairfield primary school.

Issue 3

Ongoing support for the excellent provision found in stand-alone nurseries

A respondent felt that there was a need for the council to fully support foundation phase provision in the standalone nurseries in Penarth.

Council's response to the concerns raised

There are no changes to existing nursery provision available at Bute Cottage or Cogan nursery school nursery as a result of this proposal.

The Council believes that high quality learning is provided in both nursery classes and stand-alone nursery schools. This has been evidenced through Estyn inspection reports for nursery schools and primary schools across the Vale of Glamorgan with nursery classes attached.

The Council will continue to support both Bute Cottage and Cogan nursery schools.

Issue 4

Funding

A respondent had concerns about reduced funding for Bute Cottage as a result of the proposal.

Council's response to the concerns raised

Funding is provided through the school funding formula which allocates the majority of funding for schools on the basis of pupil numbers. The pupil funding formula will remain the same for Bute Cottage Nursery if a nursery is established at Fairfield Primary School.

The Council anticipates that the impact of the proposal on other schools will be minimal as a number of parents do not secure places at Penarth nursery schools each year.

The proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on other schools in the local area and as such funding to other schools would not be adversely affected by the proposal.

Issue 5

Standards and transition

A respondent felt that standards at Fairfield need to be improved. A respondent questioned whether a nursery unit within Fairfield (and potentially Evenlode) would help with the transition from nursery to reception and felt that children settle in extremely well to a reception class from stand-alone nurseries.

Council's response to the concerns raised

The proposal is about establishing a nursery unit at Fairfield Primary School and not Evenlode Primary School.

The proposal supports continuity and progression in children's learning from age 3 and provides cohesion between the nursery and primary sector, providing a high quality learning environment for children. This will enable all children to develop into successful learners at an early age.

The transition of pupils from nursery to reception would be better facilitated with a greater focus on standards. This would be readily achieved through a common process of tracking, monitoring and intervention from nursery through to year two and beyond.

The likely impact of the proposals on the ability of the school to deliver the full curriculum at the Foundation Phase and each key stage of education will be positive.

Fairfield Primary School had been identified by Estyn as one in which the Council should take a more direct approach to challenging performance. In demonstrating a commitment to rapid and sustained growth, a number of barriers had been identified.

The planning and delivery of the foundation phase (nursery to year two) would be enhanced through the establishment of a nursery unit within the school. Pupils' progress in learning could be tracked more systematically across four continuous years, as opposed to one year at nursery followed by three years at school, which will facilitate progression. A more holistic approach to intervention would impact positively on standards.

Cabinet held an individual progress panel meeting with Fairfield Primary School in June 2016. In highlighting areas of strong performance, the Headteacher advised that there had been an improvement in outcomes. Teaching standards were considered to be an area of strength and it was reported that the quality of teaching was consistently "good" or "better". At the meeting, the Headteacher highlighted that as the school did not have its own nursery class and that children transferred from a number of different nurseries into the reception class of the school, the school was not always fully aware of the numbers due to come into the reception class and pupil transition was a challenge. A number of children come into reception from other areas and in some instances the level of social skills was very low. The starting point for children varied with children possessing different degrees of social skills and mobility.

The Headteacher also advised that difficulties existed due to the various approaches to learning undertaken by the different nurseries in the area. The school found it difficult to access information on pupils from outside of the catchment area or from outside of the county. The panel was informed that out of the 43 children in the current reception year, only 30 pupils had the necessary core data with them on arrival from the respective nurseries.

The school is now recognised as a category 2B school. A recent report of the Joint Education Service states "Pupils make good progress at Fairfield. Outcomes in the Foundation Phase are generally strong, although performance in language, literacy and communication is less so. There is no doubt that the school's leaders are in a strong position to be able to introduce a nursery provision in the school and ensure it provides a high quality learning experience for all children. The school's track record of raising achievement of most pupils would undoubtedly be enhanced. A consistent approach to teaching and planning pupils' learning for continuity and progression, would certainly contribute to raising standards across the school."

The Council concurs with the comments made by the Joint Education Service in raising standards. The Council believe that the proposal will realise the required improvements in standards and the advantages of all-through primary provision and would meet the Council's aspirations for Fairfield Primary School.

Issue 6

Nursery to open in September 2017

Respondents in favour of the proposal felt that provision should be made available from September 2017.

Council's response to the concerns raised

A decision on the establishment of the nursery unit will not be made until June 2017 which is outside of the nursery admissions timetable process for the academic year 2017/2018.

A foundation phase building is already in place at Fairfield Primary School to be utilised for nursery provision. If Cabinet agree to the establishment of a nursery at Fairfield Primary School, modifications and adaptations will be required to the existing building. Remodelling would be carried out in the autumn term 2017. The earliest date the nursery would be ready to welcome children would be January 2018.

Parents wishing to apply for a place within the nursery will be able to apply via the Vale of Glamorgan website once a decision to open the nursery has been made.

Issue 7

Traffic

A respondent in favour of the proposal was concerned about increased traffic in the area.

Council's response to the concerns raised

It is not anticipated that there will be any immediate impact to traffic levels in the area surrounding the school. The nursery age children living in catchment will in most cases have less distance to travel than they currently do. Schools normally have a staggered start and finish times for nursery children in comparison to the older year groups, so it is anticipated that there will be little impact on traffic congestion in the area.

This section provides comments raised during the formal consultation period by those in favour of the proposal. The issues present an overview of responses and are not intended to be verbatim. All Written responses have been made available to cabinet members.

Continuity of provision

- The continuity of stable provision of education is vitally important for social as well as academic reasons
- A nursery will benefit both child and school
- A nursery on site would allow seamless education provision for pupils aged 3 – 11 years
- It will provide continuity of education for the young children
- It will provide pupils with relevant preschool skills for starting reception

Better transition

- It will make the transition to reception far easier for the children within the catchment area
- There will be less upheaval and transition issues
- Children in nursery will be familiar with the school, teachers and friends that will make transition to reception class easier for children.
- A nursery will provide more consistency and a smoother transition for pupils
- A seamless education provision for pupils aged 3 - 11

Early Identification of children's needs

- Communication between nursery and reception will be able to address the different needs of each child.
- Children's progress can be monitored

Improved standards

- A nursery will enable the school to challenge and extend pupils academic standards at an earlier point in the pupil's career
- A nursery will create all through primary provision for 3 to 11 year olds in order to enhance standards at school
- A nursery will provide a more consistent approach to learning to continue to raise standards` in school
- A nursery would contribute to raising standards from foundation to year 6 and provide a consistent approach to teaching and planning pupils learning
- A nursery will benefit the school and its performance

Meeting future demand

- A nursery will meet future demand and provide high quality nursery places in the Penarth area
- There is no space at Bute Cottage
- Bute cottage is always oversubscribed
- Provide additional much needed nursery space for Penarth

Easier for parents

- It will be easy for parents to drop all children off in the same school
- It will be easier for pupils who have older children in the school
- Able to access early years, foundation and KS2 provision on one site

Building

- There is a great new building suitable for purpose

Local Community/Catchment area

- Fairfield needs a nursery unit to serve the local community
- It will provide a coherent multi-age service to the children and parents of the area

This section provides comments to common questions arising from the consultation exercise on the proposal.

When will my child be eligible to start nursery education?

Children are entitled to a part time nursery place from the start of the term following their third birthday.

If your child is 3 between:

- 1 April – 31 August (inclusive). Your child may be accepted during the following Autumn Term
- 1 September – 31 December (inclusive) your child may be accepted during the following Spring Term
- 1 January – 31 March (inclusive) your child may be accepted during the following Summer Term

Your child can start full time education in the September following their fourth birthday, so, depending on their date of birth they may attend nursery for up to 2 academic years.

Will there be a new headteacher for the nursery?

The nursery unit will be an integrated part of the Foundation phase of the school. The headteacher of the primary school will extend their remit to cover the extended age range of the school. The foundation phase coordinator will extend their remit to cover the nursery age children.

Will the nursery children be required to wear a uniform to school?

This is a decision that is made by the headteacher and the governing body of the school.

What would the admission arrangements be for the new school?

Children are entitled to a part time nursery place from the start of the term following their third birthday. The Vale of Glamorgan Council is the admission authority for the school, both for the nursery and reception year. Admission arrangements are determined annually by the Council and these are outlined in the Parental Guide to School Admissions which can be found on the Council's website. Attendance at a nursery class does not automatically entitle a child to a reception place in the same school. Parents are reminded that if they are offered a place for their child within the nursery, a new application must be made for entrance into the reception class of the school.

Will the extended age range of the school mean that it will have a new name?

The proposal in this document is to extend the age range of the school only. There will be no need for the school to change its name.

Will the policies of the school change to reflect the new nursery age children and their needs?

This will be a matter for the governing body and the headteacher of the school. The school will review its policies to ensure that all children in the school are covered by the school's policies

My childcare arrangements make it important for me to get a place at the school of my choice which is outside my catchment area. Will this be taken into consideration?

Unfortunately childcare arrangements cannot be taken into account. Catchment children will always be the highest priority for entry to the school compared to children from outside the catchment area.

Consultation with young people

Consultation on behalf of Vale of Glamorgan Council on the proposal to extend the age range of Fairfield Primary School from 4-11 years to 3-11 years, by establishing a nursery unit within the school.

Discussion undertaken with a representation of The school's School Council

23 January 2017

Background and Aim

- In their Consultation document on the above proposal the Vale of Glamorgan Council noted the need to give the school's pupils an opportunity to be part of process.
- The information gathered from the consultation will form part of the report which will be submitted to the Council's Cabinet for consideration following the consultation period.

Methodology

- An interactive methodology was incorporated so that all pupils were allowed an opportunity to discuss, share and voice their own ideas.
- It started with a discussion on the meaning of consultation and why it was important to talk to pupils.
- Further discussion continued on what made a good discussion/consultation and ground-rules were established to ensure that this process would be successful.
- The main aspects of the consultation were explained to them, including the background and timetable to ensure that they were up to speed with the relevant information.
- The 16 pupils were divided into 4 groups to discuss and form their own opinions on the strengths and possible weaknesses of the proposal.
- The groups then merged to share their findings, incorporating the rules of engagement as agreed at the beginning of the session.
- The pupils were given an insight into the advantages and disadvantages listed in the Consultation document.
- A vote was taken at the end of the session to sum up responses.

Pupils' responses

What is the meaning of consultation?

- A meeting
- A community of people giving ideas
- Talking
- Co-operating
- Discussing

What makes a good discussion?

- Get to know everyone
- Have a theme to the discussion
- Listen
- Be patient
- Show tolerance
- Let's put our ideas together

Benefits of the proposed plan

- Less travelling to different places if families' children are in the same school – easier for parents
- More of a chance for pupils to stay with their friends after nursery
- Know the school and the teachers better when you start reception class
- Easier for the teachers because they will already know the children
- If upset in nursery they can see their older siblings;
- They can be with their brothers and sisters
- Easier to settle in to school
- They will know the school rules when they start in reception class
- It will encourage more people to come to this school
- Children will have more experiences as they'll be part of the whole school's activities
- It'll be less scary for children when they start school
- They will make friends easier
- Pupils won't be as nervous when starting in school
- Better use of the space in school – playground can be used to offer more opportunities
- Save on petrol and therefore more eco-friendly; it would cause less pollution

Possible pitfalls of the proposed plan

- Make sure that the nursery aged pupils stay within their space, create a nursery zone for the safety of the children and make sure a grown up is with them
- There'll be a need for lots more equipment and therefore more money
- There could be more traffic
- It could be more noisy
- More queues around the school

- Some older children may not want younger sibling to come up to them and give them hugs – therefore the school will need to let children know when they can and cannot see their brothers/sisters
- Some people may not be comfortable with smaller children around so need to be aware of this

Conclusion:

Although it had become evident from the feedback and discussion that the pupils were overwhelmingly in favour of this proposed development an anonymous vote was undertaken at the end of the workshop to gauge individual opinion. This was done by using the ‘thumbs up/thumbs across/thumbs down’ exercise. The result was:

A good thing:	14
Unsure:	2
Against:	0

Final comment:

This was an uplifting session with positive vibes emanating from the pupils. They were keen to highlight the fact that Fairfield was a happy and caring school. ‘ We are all happy’ ‘people having fun in the playground’ ‘ Living. Working, playing together’; in conclusion they noted - ‘Let’s make this Nursery the best Nursery in the World’

Estyn Response to consultation

Estyn's response to the proposal by Vale of Glamorgan Council to extend the age range of Fairfield Primary School to 3 to 11 years and to create a nursery unit within the school, from January 2018.

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 proposals.

Estyn has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer.

Introduction

This proposal is from Vale of Glamorgan Council.

The proposal is to:

- Extend the age range of Fairfield Primary school to 3-11; and to
- Create a nursery unit within the school, to commence in January 2018.

Summary/ Conclusion

The new nursery will contribute to meeting the current demand for nursery places in the locality and will at least maintain the current standard of provision in the area.

Description and benefits

The proposer has provided a clear rationale for the proposal. It is to extend the age range at Fairfield Primary School from 4-11 years to 3-11 years in order to establish a nursery class to accommodate 60 part-time places within the school setting.

This proposal is part of a strategy to move towards a primary school model for 3 to 11 years education, across the Vale of Glamorgan.

The addition of nursery provision at Fairfield primary school would be enabled by utilising a Foundation Phase building already in place at Fairfield Primary School.

The building would require some adaptation to make it suitable for nursery provision, the cost of which would be met from funding set aside in the Councils' capital programme.

The proposer clearly outlines the expected benefits and potential disadvantages of the proposal and has provided a suitable risk assessment and identifies relevant mitigating actions.

The proposer has considered the alternative option of doing nothing. However, this will not realise the required improvements in standards and the advantages of all-through primary provision and would not meet the Council's aspirations for Fairfield Primary School.

The proposal's intended impact is to create all-through primary provision for 3 to 11 year olds in order to improve standards at Fairfield Primary school. The proposal would also meet future demand and would provide additional high quality local authority nursery places in the area.

The proposer has suitably considered the impact of the proposal on learner travel arrangements. Under these proposals there are no plans to change the Council's policy on the transport of children to and from schools. The nursery age children living in catchment would in most cases have less distance to travel than they do currently.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposer has identified many of the expected benefits and disadvantages of the proposal well. The proposer has given due consideration to the impact on education outcomes, provision, adaptation of school buildings and facilities and leadership and governance. It is reasonable to assume that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of provision in the area.

The proposer has appropriately considered the school's most recent Estyn inspection outcomes for the school. The local consortium has placed the school in the yellow support category which indicates that the school is an effective school and knows the areas it needs to improve.

The proposer considers reasonably that the proposal supports progression in children's learning and provides cohesion between the nursery and primary sector.

The proposer states reasonably that the nursery would allow for early identification and intervention for pupils with SEN which would be reflected in improved transition and improved educational outcomes for these pupils.

The proposer has identified potential increased traffic congestion around the school and minor adaptations to the current buildings. However, the Council proposes to work with the governing body of the school to develop a Travel Plan to minimise any potential disruption.



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Email: butecoteNS@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
Head Teacher: Mrs Jo Bryan

13 February 2017

To whom it may concern

We as a staff are writing in response to your consultation document setting out your proposal to establish a Nursery unit at Fairfield Primary School.

We believe the value of the remaining stand-alone Nursery schools in the Vale of Glamorgan in supporting children and families in Penarth is neither reflected nor recognised in this proposal and we remain extremely concerned that assertion that the new Nursery unit will not influence the future of Bute Cottage Nursery is incorrect. We have never been approached by Fairfield Primary School to review current transition arrangements and therefore had no idea that Fairfield Primary School was having challenges. Had this been the case we would of course have offered every support possible to help both them and other Vale of Glamorgan settings, either maintained or non-maintained. We have hosted cluster moderation evenings with staff from all the schools in Penarth to support consistency of judgements in assessment and tracking; it would have been an easy step to invite staff from additional settings had Fairfield Primary School staff requested it.

It is a very simplistic and misleading view of Fairfield Primary School, its Governors and Head Teacher, that their standards are low only because of any 'challenges' they perceive in transition to Reception, and that this 'quick fix' will not deliver the significant improvements that are required.

Below we present out questions and concerns about the proposal for your consideration.

A. On page 11 information showing where children attending Bute Cottage and Cogan Nursery schools transferred to Reception for the last 2 years is provided. No information is provided on the other settings feeding Fairfield Primary school and whether these were maintained / non-maintained / within the Vale of Glamorgan / outside the Vale of Glamorgan.

QUERY: Without similar information on the Nursery settings that currently feed Fairfield Primary School's Reception class and how many of them are non-maintained private nurseries/day care it is not possible to gain an effective overview of the challenges facing Fairfield Primary reception class? EVERY school receives children in Reception from nurseries other than their own and it is the responsibility of the 2 schools/settings involved to discuss and agree the exchange of information that is required. If this has not been happening with Fairfield Primary school perhaps it is a failing of their leadership and transition management.

B. On Page 12 the projected numbers for Fairfield Primary School until 2020/2021 is provided. This information is not enough to make an informed decision about this proposal.

QUERY: It is also essential to publish the projected numbers for the other schools close to Fairfield Primary School in the Penarth cluster, including Bute Cottage Nursery, in order to see where and when numbers on roll could/may be a problem.

C. On Page 12 details are provided of the number of primary aged and nursery children currently residing in the Fairfield catchment area as well as the number of children currently attending Fairfield Primary school from within the catchment area. There is a significant disparity of 152 catchment children whose families have chosen to send their children elsewhere.

QUERY: What research has been undertaken by either the school or the Local Authority to identify the reasons **why** catchment families may have chosen to send their children to Reception classes in other settings? And where is this research available for others to see? Without this research the assumption that 'a nursery unit would encourage more local

children to attend the school in future is unfounded and possibly misleading. There are a multitude of reasons why families may have decided to send their children to out-of-Fairfield-catchment schools which will not ALL be answered by the establishment of a Fairfield Nursery unit. It will NOT be a 'quick fix' for the school nor the Local Authority.

D. On page 12 It is stated that 'the reception intake of the school is often filled from parents' who have opted for the school as a second or third preference.'

QUERY: What research has been undertaken by either the school or the Local Authority to ascertain how many families in Fairfield catchment WOULD have chosen to send their children to a Nursery in Fairfield? And where is this research available for others to see? In this research what reasons have been given for their decision not to?

E. On Page 15 it is stated that creating an all-through primary school for 3-11 year olds will *'enhance standards at Fairfield Primary School'*

QUERY: What research supports this statement as it implies that children have been disadvantaged by the current stand-alone Nurseries feeding Fairfield Primary reception classes? Both of these stand-alone Nursery schools have been held as examples of excellent Foundation Phase practice and have worked extensively and closely in developing effective transition links with Fairfield Primary School.

F. On Page 15 it is stated that *'the proposal would also meet future demand'* yet you provide no details of future demand for Nursery spaces in Penarth.

QUERY: What is the projected future demand for local authority nursery places in the Penarth area? Cogan Nursery School has spaces and Bute Cottage is nearly full. How can 60 additional spaces be justified financially if current Nursery provision is not full?

G. On Page 15 The statement that *'the proposal supports continuity and progression in children's learning from age 3 and provides cohesion between the nursery and primary sector providing a high quality learning environment for children'* suggests that children are being disadvantaged by the current arrangements where the school is being fed by other settings including two excellent Nursery schools, and that the learning environment in these settings is not of high quality.

QUERY: What evidence do you have to support this claim?

H. On page 15 it is stated *'The transition of pupils from nursery to reception would be better facilitated with a greater focus on standards.'*

QUERY: What evidence do you have to indicate that the settings currently feeding Fairfield Primary school reception do NOT focus on standards?

I. On page 15 it is stated: *This would be readily achieved through a common process of tracking, monitoring and interventions from nursery through to year two and beyond'*

QUERY: This is exactly what the Welsh Government's Foundation Phase Profile tracking tool was designed to ensure. If the other settings feeding Fairfield Primary School are in the Vale of Glamorgan and are performing inadequately then it is the role of the Local Authority staff to work with these settings, both maintained and non-maintained, to improve: the quality of teaching and learning; and the learning environment; and implementation of the Welsh Government's Foundation Phase Profile assessment tool. What work is the LA undertaking to ensure this and where is this work reported?

J. On page 16 It is stated that *'The proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on any other schools in the local and surrounding area. Whilst the council is increasing the supply of nursery places in the Penarth area, the current demand each year is such that a number of children are often refused entry to maintained nurseries and are unable to take up nursery school places as a result'*

QUERY: As Cogan Nursery has spaces and Bute Cottage is nearly full, how many children over the past 3 years have been refused access to a maintained Nursery place once eligible? Does this number justify the financial expenditure in establishing a new Nursery unit?

K: QUERY: Has there been an Equality Impact Assessment on the other schools in the area and how the establishment of a 60-place nursery will affect other settings? What was the result and where can the findings be seen by the public?

L. On Page 19 admissions criteria is discussed. It is stated in the Vale of Glamorgan Admissions Criteria that attendance at a Nursery class in a Primary School does not guarantee a child a place in Reception in that Primary School.

QUERY: Does the opposite apply? Will there be preference given to children attending the Nursery class when transferring to the Reception class? How will this be monitored to ensure equality of access for all families and parental choice? Will families attending Bute Cottage be disadvantaged in allocating spaces in Reception?

M. What other English medium schools in the Vale of Glamorgan receive children in Reception who do not live in the Vale of Glamorgan? Do these schools also find transition between settings such a challenge?


N. It is recognised as good practice for schools to have clear procedures and expectations on transition in a Transition Policy or Transition Plan and that these are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure children and families are given effective support on transfer. Both Bute Cottage Nursery and Cogan Nursery work very hard to ensure the transfer of information is prompt, accurate and relevant, and offer additional opportunities for children to meet Reception staff before transfer in September.

QUERY: What steps has Fairfield Primary School taken to improve and update its transition procedures with other settings in order to improve transition for all children?

O. Poor teaching in the Foundation Phase (resulting in many families deciding NOT to send their children to Fairfield Primary School) is the result of poor standards. To claim it is poor transition arrangements illustrates an additional failing in the school. QUERY: Rather than increasing the age range in a Foundation Phase with poor teaching would the children not be better served by developing more capacity in the existing excellent quality Nursery schools in Penarth where services, resources, experience and staff already exist?

Thank you for your time

Yours faithfully



Mrs Jo Bryan
Head Teacher

27th January 2017

Mr Mike Matthews
Directorate of learning and Skills
Vale of Glamorgan County Council
Provincial House
Kendrick Road
Barry
CF62 8BF

Nursery Provision

Dear Mike,

As a Governing Body we have confirmed that we agree that a new Nursery provision for Fairfield Primary school will be of great benefit to parents, children and the school.

You will recall that several years ago we were also informed that we would receive Nursery provision at Evenlode, but this was later rescinded. Given the development at Fairfield we are now asking the Council to again consider Nursery Provision being based at Evenlode Primary School.

There are excellent reasons for this to be considered.

- Virtually all of Bute Cottage's children now make the transition to Evenlode
- There have over the last two years, been concerns over 'transition' of children from Bute into Evenlode.

One concern regards the consistent and agreed assessment of where children 'are' in relation to their learning when they arrive in Evenlode and this was exemplified in the data in last year's GIANTS. This has had a profound effect on teaching staff, who have had much 'catching up' to do when children arrive in Reception.

There is naturally, a differing ethos in Bute and children arrive with attitudes to learning and social behaviour which take some time to readjust. Moving from a school with many play/learning areas and a large outdoor area which allows freedom of movement and pupil choice to 2 very small busy classrooms with a larger pupil: teacher ratio is a huge transition issue. Along with this, pupils are also faced with a more formal curriculum following expectations of the LNF and new framework.

- We are working hard with Bute on our transition process and discussion between both schools has been good, although there continues to be a conflict of interest between phonics and writing schemes. We have made arrangements to have staff from both settings to visit each but this is both time consuming and expensive. We also plan to invite groups of children to spend time in Evenlode during the summer term which creates difficulties for parents but we consider this to be an important in developing confidence in pupils and giving them an introduction to life in reception. If children were all on one site, this matter could be more easily addressed.
- Given the number of children with complex learning needs entering reception classes movement from one setting to another can be more difficult for these children to cope with.

- The Council must surely appreciate the cost of running two sites with two Heads is expensive. Surely, basing a Nursery on one site would be more cost effective? At a time when there are huge constraints and pressure on school budgets, this must surely make 'financial sense.'
- Apart from Cogan (And the nursery and Primary school are very close to each other) Evenlode is now the only Penarth school without a Nursery. The 'trend' within the Vale appears to be moving to placing Nursery and Primary provision on one site. (Cadoxton and Fairfield being the most recent examples.) We are requesting therefore that the Council gives serious thought to providing Evenlode with Nursery provision.

I hope that you are able to consider our proposition and look forward to your reply

Yours sincerely,



Ceri Griffiths

Chair of Governors, Evenlode Primary School

cc. *Paula Ham* *Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources*
S Rees *Head teacher Evenlode Primary*

Date/Dyddiad 22nd February 2017
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Mrs J Bryan
 Headteacher
 Bute Cottage Nursery
 Off Grove Place
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 CF64 2ET

Dear Mrs Bryan,

Thank you for taking the time to respond to the consultation on the proposal to change the character of Fairfield Primary School to a 3-11 years school by establishing a nursery unit. This proposal aims to address some of the challenges and opportunities for Fairfield Primary School, and not to evaluate the performance of its feeder settings. The Local Authority recognises the excellent provision for nursery aged pupils currently provided by both its stand-alone nurseries, Bute Cottage and Cogan Nursery School, and wishes to assure you that there are no changes to the existing nursery provision as a result of this proposal. The Council will continue to support both its stand-alone nurseries in the best interests of our pupils.

While the Council appreciates the concerns expressed with regard to transition arrangements between separate nursery settings into primary education, it is worth reiterating that Bute Cottage is only responsible for a small number of pupils transitioning from nursery into Fairfield Primary School. The challenges of additional transitions for primary schools is not felt by Fairfield Primary School in isolation; there is evidence from other primary schools without a nursery unit that transition is a concern particularly when there are different approaches to learning undertaken by different nursery settings (if any), with headteachers of primary schools having limited influence over this.

Given the demand for pupil places, the council is of the opinion that this proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on other schools in the local surrounding area. Whilst the council is increasing the supply of nursery places in the Penarth area, the current demand is such that a number of children are often refused entry to maintained nurseries as result. It is also acknowledged that a far more significant number of Bute Cottage pupils make the transition to Evenlode than Fairfield Primary School.

Bute Cottage is regularly oversubscribed each year with parents being turned away who often do not take up nursery provision as a result. Parents have a tendency to reapply for a place for Bute Cottage the following academic year. Cogan Nursery

is also well supported each year.

Responses to the individual concerns outlined in your letter can be found below:

A. Fairfield Primary School attracts pupils from a variety of nurseries, with only a small number entering reception from Bute Cottage (14 as at September 2016). The variety and distribution of private or maintained nurseries, if at all applicable, can contribute to some of the operational challenges with managing transitions to the reception class. The challenges of transition are well documented at Fairfield, however data relating to this is not specifically relevant to the proposal due to the relatively small numbers of pupils coming from other nursery providers.

B In preparing for this proposal the council has considered the projected numbers on roll of all schools in the area. Following a detailed analysis it was concluded that this proposal will not have a significant impact on other schools in the area therefore it was not considered necessary to include this detailed data.

C There is a significant level of admissions data to support the conclusion that parental preference within the Vale of Glamorgan tends towards application to the reception class from the nursery unit. Parental preference is an issue for the majority of schools, not just Fairfield Primary School and large numbers of pupils attend schools outside of their catchment area for many reasons. Feedback from stakeholders collected via surveys and drop in sessions as part of the consultation process is also supportive that lack of an all-through provision is one of the factors which influences parental choice, and as this factor is within the control of the Council, it is incumbent on us to take an active role mitigating any challenges it presents.

D The statement making reference to Fairfield Primary School being filled as a second or third preference is based on factual data which is available to the Local Authority via our admissions processes. Parents regularly advise of the importance of having all of their children attending the same school site for convenience for the family and emotional support for siblings. In addition, many initial applications are made to Fairfield under the assumption that a nursery unit is available. Parents then reconsider their preference based on the knowledge that nursery provision is not available at Fairfield.

E The purpose of this proposal and the rationale presented within it is based on how the Local Authority can help support raising the standards at Fairfield Primary School. It is not an evaluation of stand-alone nursery provision, nor does it, in any way, suggest that children are being disadvantaged by attending stand-alone nurseries, as you have suggested.

The Council believes that high quality learning can be achieved in both nursery classes as well as stand-alone nurseries. This has been evidenced through Estyn inspection reports for primary schools with nursery classes attached and stand-alone nurseries across the Vale of Glamorgan. A recent report of the Joint Education Service stated that Fairfield Primary School's leadership team are in a strong position to be able to introduce a nursery provision in the school and ensure it provides a high quality learning experience for all children. The school's track record of raising achievement of most pupils would undoubtedly be enhanced. A

consistent approach to teaching and planning pupils' learning for continuity and progression, would also contribute to raising standards across the school.

F. With regard to meeting future demand, the council is committed to increasing the supply of nursery places in the Penarth area, as the current demand is such that a number of children are often refused entry to maintained nurseries. Existing demand is not being met whereby parents refused entry to a school for their child are not taking up a nursery place. The establishment of a nursery at Fairfield Primary School will provide greater choice for parents and has the potential to enable a greater degree of parental preference to be met each year.

G. As stated above in response to point E, the Council is not suggesting that children are being disadvantaged by attending stand-alone nurseries. The focus of this proposal is on what can be done at Fairfield to support pupils, families and improved outcomes. Fairfield Primary School has been identified by Estyn as one in which the Council should take a more direct approach to challenging performance. In demonstrating a commitment to rapid and sustained growth, a number of barriers had been identified. The Council believe that the proposal will result in further improvements in standards and the advantages of all-through primary provision and would meet the Council's aspirations for Fairfield Primary School.

H. The reference to the link between focussing on standards and managing pupil transition from nursery to reception specifically applies to raising the standards at Fairfield Primary School. The proposal does not suggest that existing settings feeding Fairfield do not focus on standards.

I. Ensuring consistency for pupils moving from nursery into reception is a key aspect of the proposal and one which you challenge is not necessary based on the introduction to the Welsh Government's Foundation Phase tracking tool. While the tracking tool is a mechanism designed to facilitate transition by providing baseline assessments for pupils entering a school, the application of the tool can vary depending on the nature of the school, and the ability to influence or design long term interventions to capitalise on available opportunities within a given setting to support outcomes. It is an essential tool given the nature of parental choice when choosing education provision however there will always be differences between settings which are more effectively managed with regard to pupils' long-term outcomes by having fewer transitions and greater consistency in setting, where available and appropriate.

J. The majority of maintained nursery schools in Penarth are systematically full each year whereby a number of parents are refused entry and unable to access a nursery school place within a reasonable distance of their home. A nursery at Fairfield Primary School will provide greater choice for parents and has the potential to enable a greater degree of parental preference to be met each year. Due to the location of Cogan, the school does not always pick up the children refused a place elsewhere in Penarth. Our records show currently that there are 9 places available at Cogan. Conversely, Victoria has refused 13 pupils this academic year, Albert 19 and Bute Cottage 29. This mirrors the pattern in previous years. The financial implications of implementing this proposal are favourable given that there is already appropriate accommodation onsite subject to an investment of approximately £20k to ensure it is fit for purpose. When considering

the potential benefits and impacts for learners were the school to have nursery provision, this is considered a cost-effective solution.

K. An Equality Impact Assessment has been conducted and is included as part of the consultation report.

L. With regard to the admissions criteria, providing guarantees on admissions is not permitted under the Schools Admissions Code 2013 (Wales). The criteria published in the Parental Guide to School Admissions is applied consistently with no reference made to the nursery attended.

M. There are a number of schools that attract pupils from outside of the Vale of Glamorgan, particularly on the Council's geographical border. The transition arrangements are a matter for the schools in question, however other primary schools have outlined the challenges of not having on-site nursery provision. Details can be found in Annex G, Appendix C.

N. It is again important to highlight that there is significant breadth and diversity with regard to settings which feed into Fairfield Primary, and this proposal is not aimed at evaluating procedures in other settings, both within and outside of Local Authority control, but rather managing change within Fairfield Primary School to better support its outcomes and to minimise challenges, where possible. A recent report of the Joint Education Service states:

“Pupils make good progress at Fairfield. Outcomes in the Foundation Phase are generally strong, although performance in language, literacy and communication is less so. There is no doubt that the school's leaders are in a strong position to be able to introduce a nursery provision in the school and ensure it provides a high quality learning experience for all children. The school's track record of raising achievement of most pupils would undoubtedly be enhanced. A consistent approach to teaching and planning pupils' learning for continuity and progression, would certainly contribute to raising standards across the school.”

O. As headteachers will be aware, challenges affecting positive outcomes are multifaceted, with a number of different factors each having complexity and impact. There are a number of mechanisms in place to identify and support these, not least of which are the Estyn inspections and subsequent monitoring visits (if applicable). Fairfield Primary School has been identified as making significant improvements since 2010, and has been recognised for its progress. Generalising poor outcomes based solely on poor teaching is clearly not a fair assessment, and without considering any other variables, would limit the ability to deal with any root causes or influences. It is a naïve approach which also risks hindering the ability for the school to best support the children and families who choose to go there.

I hope that this addresses your concerns raised. Thank you for your contribution to this consultation.

Yours sincerely,

Trevor Baker
Operational Manager, Strategy and Resources