

# Consultation Responses Report June 2014

*Re: changing the lower age range of  
St David's CIW VA Primary School  
from 4 to 3 years, to include a nursery class.*



YR EGLWYS  
YNG NGHYMRU



THE CHURCH  
IN WALES

## THE STATUTORY PROCESS

The initial consultation process of 42 days began on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May and concluded on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

*During this period, Mrs Penny Snowden, Chair of Governors accepted comments or proposals using the attached proforma:*

*C/o St David's CIW VA Primary, Colwinston, Nr.Cowbridge,  
Vale of Glamorgan CF71 7NL. [stdavidsp@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:stdavidsp@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)*

An Open Day was held at the school on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May at 2.30pm for any person wishing to view the site, including the current room used by the Preschool and the proposed Foundation Phase classroom area.

An Evening Meeting was held in the school hall on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May at 5pm to take any questions.

Considering your views

**A consultation report issued within 13 weeks of the end of the consultation period**

Within 6 months,  
the Governing Body will determine whether to proceed with the proposal

Statutory Notice

If proposal is approved, a statutory notice is published providing a 28 day notice period for objections to be made

Determination of proposal

Within 28 days of the objection period  
The publication of an objection report & the Governing Body response.

*If there are objections the proposal will be referred to the local authority for determination.*

Proposals must be determined within 16 weeks of the end of the objection period

Decision notification

Following determination of proposals all interested parties will be informed and advised of the availability of the decision which will be published electronically on the schools website.

Implementation

(Changes with effect from January 2015 at the earliest)

**Proposal: To change the age range of St David's CIW VA Primary School to include a nursery class: *altering the lower age limit of the school from 4 to 3 yrs.***

**PUPIL VOICE:**

*The School Council met on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2014 and unanimously voted in agreement with the proposal.*

**OPEN DAY:**

*Three people attended the Open Day on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2014*

**EVENING MEETING:**

*Other than St David's School governors and staff, there were seven attendees on 21<sup>st</sup> May, which included the four current Preschool staff.*

*Record of meeting questions and answers:*

1. Would the school continue to support the existing arrangements, (renting a room to the Preschool) if the Preschool sought an alternative to "amalgamating" with the school? (The feasibility of the Preschool operating as a Private Nursery provider was discussed.)  
*Yes, with the same proviso that should school numbers increase then the room would revert to the school and the Preschool would need to relocate.*  
*However, if the nursery class was amalgamated & part of the school, if numbers rose, funding could be sourced to increase the school building provision.*
2. Would the school pass on details of any new options to parents?  
*Of course, this could be sent by ParentMail, but should occur prior to the June 16<sup>th</sup> deadline.*
3. What are the numbers like for the Preschool, how could you ensure viability with a falling roll in the catchment? What are the projections for numbers in the future?  
*10 transferring to Reception for September 2014, but 7 others will remain and there have been 3 expressions of interest. An aggressive advertising campaign outside of the catchment would be instigated. This will still obviously be much lower than Preschool's current roll and the option to increase to 32 children has been available since September 2013. The Governing Body has always offered to support any expansion by not charging for the afternoon room until it is a viable option. Re expressions of interest, the school often has such expressions that fail to come to fruition, as perhaps moves into the area fail to go ahead.*
4. How financially viable would a private preschool be (staffing)? The past history of the nursery suggests that it wouldn't be, as this was why it needed to move from the Village Hall to the school.  
*There are enough funds in the account due to additional grants and donation. The numbers were about the same last September and then more children joined. If the nursery moved to the school, then all Preschool staff would be invited to interview if a position became available, however, initially this would not be required until numbers rose. If the nursery remained as a Preschool the result would be **future** staff redundancies within the school.*
5. What hours would the school nursery class be available?  
*Officially schools need to only provide 2.5 hours a day, but as the teacher is employed all day it would be the normal school session times. 9am until 12pm, with the possible option of packed lunch until 12.45pm at a small cost. Wrap around care linked to a private provider could also be purchased.*
6. Do children enrolled in the nursery class have to attend every morning, or can they build up to it like in Preschool?  
*Every morning, but of course a staggered start, building up to 5 days is part of the school admission process anyway. Reception parents have not chosen this option in the past even though it is available.*

7. What provision do other local schools have- ie how does St David's compare when parents are searching for new schools?  
*Llanfair- nursery/reception class; Llangan-nursery /reception class; Llansannor- Nursery/ reception unit; Y Bont Faen- nursery class; St Brides- no nursery (separate local private provision); Wick – separate Preschool provision. Some parents prefer a Preschool which offers less than 5 days, whilst others have expressed that they only want a nursery class taught by a teacher. It is about perceptions.*
8. What would happen to children who are 3 years old in February/March?  
*As mentioned in the consultation document, if the amalgamation commenced from the 1<sup>st</sup> January, the child would continue to attend the existing fee-paying Preschool until January and then alternative fee-paying provision would need to be sought until their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday in February. They would then join the free school nursery class. If they remained in a private provision they would continue to pay fees until **the term following** their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, after Easter.*
9. Could children effectively be in the same classroom for three years?  
*Extremely unlikely. The school operates a unit, with the three Foundation Phase classrooms open for all children to engage in the continuous play provision, with a base for registering and teacher-led tasks. These are matched to a child's stage not age. If numbers continued to fall and year groups were merged, the three classroom space would still be available.*
10. How would it work?  
*As now, the year groups of children would follow a rota for playing in the different continuous provision areas in whichever room, ie sand, water, outside, painting, play dough, construction, small world, climbing, book corner, computers, craft.....and of course work on teacher directed tasks according to their stage not age. Very occasionally, like on the Enrichment afternoons, older and younger Foundation Phase children might be able to play together, with the older ones modelling. Just like they would on play times outside.*
11. Isn't the Preschool a more suitable provision for the 3 year olds?  
*As mentioned in the consultation document, the curriculum in the Preschool is exactly the same as that in the School, ie learning through play. The only difference is the staff ratio, (which is higher in Preschool) and the qualifications of staff (which is higher in the school ie a teacher).*
12. If the school has the nursery class and the 2 ½ to 3 year old provision is lost, will children choose provision elsewhere?  
*As clarified in the consultation document, this is unlikely, as to encourage friendships parents often choose to return children to the nursery at 4 years, prior to starting school. Some children in the Preschool already attend wrap around care in private nurseries such as St Aubin and Fun Foundations.*
13. Will the Consultation stop if an alternative was found to the school establishing a Nursery Class and the Preschool closing?  
*No, see the flow diagram timescale in the Consultation document.*
14. If the Preschool remained open, but it again became unviable in the future could the school then open a nursery class straight away?  
*No the consultation process would need to start again from the beginning, with a 9 month to a year timescale, so there would be a gap in provision. As there would not be a Committee with a private provider, when it closed there would be no one to keep it going, although I expect the CSSIW would be very proactive in encouraging a replacement to be found.*

*The full Governing Body met following the meeting at 6pm to discuss the issues raised. The Governors weighed the benefits of the existing proposal and the possible new option and unanimously agreed to support the original proposal for a new nursery class at St David's School under the control of the Headteacher. They believed this to be the best way forward for the school and the children to secure its long term viability.*

***On Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, the alternative proposal offered by the Preschool leader was withdrawn.***

**RESPONSES RECEIVED BETWEEN 5<sup>TH</sup> MAY AND 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE:**

Mrs Snowden received 18 responses.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Strongly Agree</b>  | 4  |
| <b>Agree</b>   | 2  |
| <b>Emailed “in support of proposal” not using the proforma</b> | 12 |
| <b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>                              | 0  |
| <b>Disagree</b>  | 0  |
| <b>Strongly Disagree</b>                                       | 0  |

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

*I believe that a nursery class in St David’s primary school would benefit the school greatly. From a child’s perspective I believe that it would provide the children with a taste of formal schooling before entry to Reception. From a parent perspective it would make the school more attractive with free nursery provision attached to the school which is a consideration for parents who are comparing schools in the area.*

*It will be an excellent addition to the school.*

*I was Chair of the preschool parent Committee for the academic year ..... During that academic year there were not enough pupils at the Preschool for it to be financially viable and we were becoming increasingly reliant on fundraising and grants. The Preschool suffered from full day-care competition and no Preschool leader stayed at the facility for longer than 18 months. I moved from the Village Hall that year to reduce the money spent on rent but the Preschool has failed to attract more pupils and has lost yet another Preschool leader this year. Whilst it is encouraging that the staff wish to take on the Preschool as a business, I sincerely doubt that they could make it work without the generosity of parent fundraising which has kept the Preschool afloat for many years.*

*The quality of education and general care provided by the school is excellent and it adds to the financial security of the school.*

*You will no doubt be aware that both.... and .... went through the play school when it was hosted at the Village Hall, and also that.... was involved as a play group tutor. Since then there was I believe some sort of ill-informed local opposition to the school taking over the playgroup officially on the school premises.*

*It makes total sense for the school to provide the local education from the age of three upwards under the aegis of the Head Teacher. the continuity of education and care would be assured, and the children will already be familiar with the school and its environs as they start in Year 1. if it also assures the future of St David’s despite falling roll numbers in the main school then that has to be a very good thing. Whilst I have taken issue a couple of times with the school’s modus operandi I can say without a doubt that both... and ... have had a sound start to their education, and have made many lasting friendships within the school.*

*Our daughter....is in Year 1 and our son .... will leave the existing playgroup in the summer and will start in the Foundation year of the school. Both...and ...have very much enjoyed their time in the playgroup and have been very happy there. The staff in the playgroup have been nothing but superb and I feel for them given the impact the consultation will have on them personally.*

*However, it is clear that the proposal by the governors should be supported for the good of all children in the area. the simple fact is that the infrastructure of the school will make a school supported nursery the better long term option for the children. With the greatest admiration for the efforts of the committee of the playgroup they are essentially well meaning amateurs and do not have the resource, experience or skills that Mrs Hoffrock and her staff have. The transition from playgroup / nursery to school will certainly be easier for the pupils with an integrated nursery. The needs of the school should also not be ignored as with the increase in headcount it should help with the funding of the school.*

*As a parent of two children already at St David’s and a two year old, I have a keen interest in the future of the school and the nursery provision. I think there would be a long term benefit to the school in having*

a nursery as parents will know that their children are getting high quality teaching in line with the school's ethos and curriculum from the very start of their education, ensuring consistency and progression. This hopefully will encourage more parents to choose the school for their children and raise pupil numbers, thus providing security for the financial future of the school.

I think the option of pupils entering school via a staggered start should be made clear to parents, as it is still a big step for children who are only 3 to begin education 5 days a week. *(This will happen during the New Intake Parent meetings. CH).*

My elder children thoroughly enjoyed their time at Colwinston Preschool but I think the time of committee run playgroup/preschools has come to an end and it makes much more sense for the provision to be transferred to the school, where the nursery will be under the care of the Headteacher and the expertise of the whole range of staff at the school can be called upon. More able pupils will have the opportunities to be challenged whilst the less able will receive support sooner.

Initially I considered providing an alternative option. The option was to keep Colwinston preschool as it is (a provision for children aged 2 ½ years to 5 years) but running it as a private business, which was a viable option.

However, after much consideration and many discussions, I agree that the school and community would benefit greatly by providing a nursery class within the Foundation phase Unit of St David's CIW Primary School.

We would like to thank the Headteacher and Governing Body for this Consultation exercise and doing things correctly.

We were not happy as parents to be TOLD this was taking place by the Colwinston Nursery/Preschool Committee/ Chairperson(s) as they never carried out any type of written or verbal consultation exercise with parents just within the select few in their committee. *(The Preschool Committee Chair informed the school that all Preschool parents had been given a copy of the Preschool's own consultation letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> March 2014 for return by 9<sup>th</sup> April 2014. The school itself received a copy and forwarded it to all parents, including some who are employed at the Preschool. The Preschool Committee informed the school that no negative responses had been received. CH ).*

We hope the current Nursery/Colwinston Preschool staff's future will be safeguarded as we also gather they weren't consulted, also just told that "the school was taking over"? *(see Evening Meeting record).*

I strongly believe that St David's Primary School should have its own integrated nursery class, under the control of Mrs. Hoffrock. I believe that this is a strong and viable option for the school and appropriate for the future security of the school if it is to attract future generations of local children.

I think that incorporating pre-school under your helm is the best move for both the parties. Firstly, having had....at the pre-school I was at the time very disappointed in the standards and preparation he was given to enter the reception class. Although I believe pre-school should be a fun play based approach there should also be certain criteria that is attained. In particular, I believe that....fine motor skills were never developed and as a result he really struggled with initial pencil work. If pre-school was pulled in under the St David's umbrella you would have some steer on activities and in turn this would help drive overall school standards up further from the base level. Also I believe offering a nursery makes the school more attractive hopefully helping to add to school numbers.

For the long term viability of nursery provision I believe this would be for the best, due to continued difficulties of provision both of staff and committee members this would be of great benefit.

Changing legislation regarding early teaching needs to be solely run by educational specialists who can understand and implement necessary changes. *(unlike unqualified committee members).*

The Preschool Committee over the last number of years have done a wonderful job of maintaining the Pre-school so it will be a shame to see the change and lose the 2/1/2-3 year age group. But, with the new mother and toddler group now up and running it will give those children a chance to interact and learn in an informal setting.

## **ESTYN RESPONSE**

### **Introduction**

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 management committee of Colwinston Preschool approached the governing body of St David's Church in Wales (CIW) Voluntary Aided (VA) Primary School to consider "amalgamating the current provision." This would mean the closing of the current preschool which uses the school premises and a proposal to change the lower age range of St David's Voluntary Aided Primary School from 4 to 3 years, to include a nursery class. If agreed, this change will take effect from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

### **Summary/ Conclusion**

#### **Are the proposals likely to maintain or improve the standard of education provision in the area?**

In Estyn's opinion it seems that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the standard of education and provision in the area for pupils of three years of age and over.

### **Description and benefits**

#### **Has the proposer:**

- Given a clear rationale of the expected benefits of the proposals and disadvantages when compared with the status quo as outlined in the report?

The proposer appears to have given a clear rationale of the expected benefits and disadvantages of the proposal.

- Managed any risks associated with the proposals?

It seems that the proposer has considered and managed the risks associated with the proposal appropriately.

The proposal does not include current provision for un-funded 2 ½ to 3 year olds.

The proposal acknowledges appropriately the possible effect on other institutions, including private and third sector providers. It is claimed that many parents already send their children to private providers and these may benefit from the reduction in provision for pupils aged 2 ½ to 3 years. There is not expected to be a risk to the numbers in the nursery or school if the parents of younger preschool children make alternative arrangements. It is claimed that, in order to smooth transition and encourage friendships prior to starting school, most parents who send their 2 ½ to 3 year old children to a private provider tend to change them to the nursery attached to the prospective school for their final nursery year. St Brides Major, 5 miles away, is the nearest provision which offers nursery places with a religious character. At present, St David's has an admission number of 23 reception class places so would offer 11 full-time places (22 part-time nursery places). The proposal claims that the school has sufficient capacity to offer a maximum of 14 full-time places. Extensions to the building were completed in 2012, but the capacity figures have not been revised accordingly.

Considered suitable alternatives and given good reasons as to why these have been discounted?

The proposer seems to have considered suitable alternatives appropriately. One such alternative to the proposal states that the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CCSIW) and the Vale Early Years Partnership 'would be keen' to retain the current mixed provision at Colwinston. This would ensure that the provision from 2 ½ years is maintained in the area. Both bodies would continue to work with the current Preschool Committee to recruit staff and provide stability to the Management Committee.

It is reported that the Management Committee carried out their own informal consultation and felt that the results suggested that the community would be best served if they pursued the merger with St David's CIW VA School.

Other than the outcome, there is no specific evidence provided about this consultation.

- Considered the impact of the changes on learner travel arrangements and on accessibility of provision?

As school transportation is only provided for children of statutory age, and as the preschool is currently on the school site, it seems reasonable to agree with the proposal's claim that there would be no impact on accessibility of provision.

- Effectively shown how surplus places will be affected? If surplus places will be increased has the proposer given adequate reasons for this?

The proposal appears to have given appropriate consideration to the issue of surplus places. The proposal identifies a falling roll at St David's which is expected to continue. The Preschool is also experiencing a falling demand for places. It is suggested that financial saving would result from effectively "amalgamating" the provision. The redirection of underused resources would increase value for money.

The proposal will not result in any additional funded nursery 3 to 4 year old places, so this would not impact on the projected numbers of nursery children in local schools. However, it is claimed that the school may have the capacity to increase places in future to meet wider demand.

- Where relevant, taken sufficient account of the impact of the proposals on Welsh medium provision within the local authority?

St David's CIW VA Primary School is an English medium school. The proposal does not evaluate the impact of the proposal on Welsh medium education. As St David's CIW VA Primary School is an English medium school, this seems reasonable.

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

- Considered the impact of the proposals on the quality of the outcomes, provision and leadership and management?

The proposal claims that nursery aged pupils would be assimilated into St David's Foundation Phase Unit. Pupils would be taught by staff with more specialist educational qualifications, including training in early intervention strategies. It is claimed that the preschool management committee has experienced problems with consistency and commitment, whereas the school governing body has a mixture of long term and new members who work very closely with the headteacher to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The proposal appears to give appropriate consideration to these educational aspects.

The proposal also refers to the most recent inspection report on the school and the Regional Consortium's classification of the school. Although the proposal does not include an analysis of the school's performance data, the proposer claims that children at the school achieve high standards.

At key stage 2, performance in the core subject indicator has fluctuated between the third quarter and the second quarter over the last four years. Performance in English and science has been in the top quarter for two and three of the past four years respectively whilst performance in mathematics has been in the third quarter for two of the last four years. At Foundation Phase, performance in the areas of learning in 2013 places the school in the top 50% of similar schools for three areas of learning and in the third quarter for English. Overall, the data indicates that the school is performing at least adequately in most areas.

- Considered the likely impact of the proposals to ensure delivery of the full curriculum at the Foundation Phase and at each key stage?

The proposal appears to give reasonable consideration to the delivery of the curriculum at the Foundation Phase. It is claimed that pupils would have the use of vastly increased internal and



external space, including more suitable toilet provision.

Nursery pupils would access the full resources of the school, including ICT resources. The nursery class would access the full range of school activities on a daily basis and would have older pupils as role models. Transition arrangements would be improved through the consistent use of teaching strategies, resources and progress tracking. However, the proposal notes that attendance at the nursery will not guarantee admission into the reception class.

- Considered the impact of the proposals on vulnerable groups, including children with Special Educational Needs?

The proposal appears to have considered the impact of the proposals on vulnerable groups, including children with additional learning needs. The proposal states that by integrating the nursery class within the school, pupils would benefit from access to the early intervention support for pupils failing to make significant progress that is already in place in the school, prior to the need for external agencies. The proposal also acknowledges that current separate preschool offers limited internal specialist provision and interventions for pupils with additional learning needs.