

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 31 October, 2016

Report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Education

Proposal to Change the Character of Fairfield Primary School to a 3 - 11 Years School, by Creating a Nursery Unit Within the School

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet approval to consult stakeholders on a proposal to open a nursery unit at Fairfield Primary School from January 2018.

Recommendations

1. Cabinet authorises consultation from 3 January 2017 for a period of six weeks on a proposal to create a 48 part time place nursery class at Fairfield Primary School.
2. Cabinet refers this report to the Scrutiny Committee (Learning and Culture) as part of the consultation to be undertaken on the proposal in the New Year.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To enable Council to consult on the proposal to create a new 48 part time place nursery unit at the school and extend the age range of the school to a 3 to 11 age primary school from January 2018.
2. To ensure that the Scrutiny Committee (Learning and Culture) is aware of progress with school reorganisation and is consulted on proposals in due course and at the appropriate time.

Background

2. Nursery provision in the Penarth area is currently offered by a range of maintained and private nurseries. Primary schools in Penarth and the surrounding area offer maintained nursery provision with the exception of Evenlode and Fairfield Primary schools.
3. Maintained nursery school places for children residing in the catchment areas for Evenlode and Fairfield Primary schools are provided by two stand-alone nursery schools; Cogan and Bute Cottage.

4. The following table shows number of children attending Cogan and Bute Cottage nurseries in July 2016 and July 2015 and the school they transferred to in the following September.

Nursery School Attended	Total Number of Children	Transferred to the Reception Class at:									
		Albert	Cogan	Evenlode	Fairfield	Llandough	Sully	Victoria	St Joseph's R.C.	Other	Out of County
Sept 2016											
Bute Cottage Nursery	77	1	1	54	14	0	0	5	1	1	0
Cogan Nursery	51	3	27	1	10	2	0	2	0	1	5
Sept 2015											
Bute Cottage Nursery	54	0	0	43	10	0	0	1	0	0	0
Cogan Nursery	59	2	27	5	9	7	1	0	2	1	5

5. As can be seen from the table above, fairly even numbers of children transfer from each of the standalone nurseries to Fairfield Primary School. The school also receives children into its reception class from a range of private sector nursery providers. In September 2016, of the 45 children entering reception at Fairfield Primary School, 24 (53%) transferred from Bute Cottage and Cogan nurseries. In contrast, the majority of children transferring into the reception class of Evenlode Primary School are from Bute Cottage Nursery.
6. Fairfield Primary School currently provides for the 4 to 11 age range and has a capacity of 316. The number on roll in January 2016 was 292.

Relevant Issues and Options

7. The Council has a duty to review the number and type of schools in the area and to make the best use of resources to raise standards in schools.
8. Fairfield Primary School was last inspected by Estyn in November 2010. The school's current performance and prospects for improvement were both judged as good.
9. In November 2015 during a monitoring visit of the Council, Estyn identified Fairfield Primary School as one in which the Council should have taken a more direct approach to challenging performance. At its meeting of 25th April 2016 Cabinet were advised that although many positive aspects had been identified at Fairfield Primary School, the following developmental needs had been identified:
- Although performance at outcome 5+ is good in the Foundation Phase, performance at outcome 6+ is not. The school is in quarter 3 in all areas and performance is lower than the family average.
 - In addition, the school is placed in quarter 3 for English and quarter 4 for both mathematics and science. This means, for the Core Subject Indicator (CSI), the school is also quarter 4.
 - For English at level 4+ and the CSI, performance has been in quarter 3 or 4 for the past three years. This is also the case for science at level 5+.

- The reading results in key stage 2 (88.46% level 4+) are below the family, local authority and Wales averages.
 - Although the gap is narrowing, the achievement of eFSM pupils is inconsistent, with non eFSM pupils outperforming eFSM pupils in most areas across both key stages.
 - The targets in the school development plan are not quantifiable and do not have clear success criteria that can be measured and evaluated effectively.
 - The school is successful in improving pupils' outcomes in some areas but this is not consistent across the school as a whole.
 - Outcomes in key stage 2 particularly do not compare well with similar schools and there is no evidence of an improving trend in performance.
 - The excellent teaching found in some classes is not consistent across the rest of the school.
10. Cabinet requested that the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee hold an individual school progress panel at Fairfield Primary School. A panel meeting was held with the school on 22nd June 2016, providing an opportunity for the school to demonstrate its commitment to rapid and sustained progress and to identify barriers that the school is facing.
 11. At the panel meeting, the Headteacher highlighted that Fairfield Primary 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. This meant that 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.
 12. 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 Headteacher also advised that parents of children living in the catchment area of the school chose to send their children to other local schools which have a nursery and that this was having an impact on the numbers coming into the school.
 13. Significant progress has been made by the 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.

Statutory Process

14. The Welsh Government issued a School Organisation Code in 2013 that came into effect from the 1st October 2013. The local authority must “act in accordance with the Code” as determined by the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
15. Section 48 of the 2013 Act requires that before school organisation proposals are published they must first be subject to consultation. A consultation document must be published and provided to prescribed consultees and Welsh Ministers.
16. The consultation document must be provided to all interested parties allowing a minimum of six weeks to respond, the consultation period must include a minimum of 20 school days. Meetings will be held during the consultation period to provide additional information as requested and would include meetings with parents, pupil representatives, governing bodies and staff of the school and playgroup.
17. Within three months of the closing date for the consultation period a consultation report would be published including a summary of comments received and the Council's response to these comments.
18. The Council must then decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal within six months of the end of the consultation period. If following the consultation process the Council decides that the extension in age range and the establishment of a Nursery unit at Fairfield Primary School is to be progressed, a statutory notice would be published providing 28 days for objections. The notice must be published on a school day and must include 15 school days (in addition to the day on which it is published).
19. If objections are received, an objection report must be published with a summary of the objections and the Council's response before the end of 7 days beginning with the day of its determination. Under the legislation as the proposal does not relate to 6th form education the Local Authority can determine the proposal if objections are received.
20. [Appendix A](#) sets out the anticipated timescale for this process if approved by Cabinet.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

21. During 2015, the Foundation Phase building from Ysgol Dewi Sant in Llantwit Major was relocated to Fairfield Primary School with the intention of it being utilised as an early years' intervention base which would be a satellite of Ysgol Y Deri. In recognition of the need to establish a nursery at Fairfield Primary School the early years intervention base did not move into the building which remained at Ysgol Y Deri pending identification of an alternative suitable site.
22. The building will require some adaptation to make it is suitable for nursery provision which is estimated to cost in the region of £20,000. This cost will be met from funding which has been set aside in the capital programme under the scheme to re-site the modular building from Ysgol Dewi Sant.
23. Additional revenue funding would be required to meet the operational costs of the nursery due to an increase in pupil numbers attracting the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) funding. This would be found from within the overall schools' budget and from additional Education Improvement Grant due to additional pupil numbers. An overall increase in the number of pupils across the Vale of Glamorgan would result in increased funding for education from Welsh Government through the revenue settlement.

24. The governing body is responsible for determining staffing levels at schools. The number of teaching staff and learning support assistants is expected to increase for the nursery class only in response to guidelines for teaching support.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

25. Establishment of a 3 - 11 year old phase primary school offers a more efficient and sustainable model of delivery.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

26. Powers for Councils to develop school organisation proposals are governed by the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2013. The Council is to comply with the relevant provisions in connection with the proposal.
27. If following the consultation process and the consideration of responses a decision is made to proceed to a statutory notice to extend the age range of Fairfield Primary School and the establishment of a nursery class, the notice will comply with the requirements of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code, Statutory Code Document no. 006/2013.

Crime and Disorder Implications

28. There are no direct crime and disorder implications as a result of this report.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

29. A key criterion for all school organisation proposals is to improve educational outcomes for all children and young people in all phases and to help to narrow the inequalities in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged groups and individuals. It is anticipated that establishing a nursery at Fairfield Primary School will enable a seamless transition for nursery age children into the reception class of the school.
30. The Council has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics.
31. Protected characteristics include:
- Age
 - Gender reassignment
 - Sex
 - Race - including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
 - Disability
 - Sexual orientation
 - Religion or belief - including lack of belief
32. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be developed as part of the consultation exercise and will be included within the consultation report.

Corporate/Service Objectives

33. Extension of the age range and establishment of a nursery class at the school contributes to the Council's wellbeing outcome: an aspirational and culturally vibrant Vale and to the corporate objective of raising overall standards of achievement.

Policy Framework and Budget

34. This is a matter for Executive decision.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

35. Public consultation with all interested parties will be carried out in accordance with legislation, following the statutory processes set out in the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

36. Learning and Culture.

Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer

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Officers Consulted

Trevor Baker	Operational Manager
Lisa Lewis	School Access Manager
Mark Haynes	School Planning and Buildings Manager
Mike Matthews	Principal Strategic Planning Officer - Learning and Skills
Carolyn Michael	Operational Manager, Finance
Victoria Davidson	Operational Manager, Legal Services

Responsible Officer:

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