

DIRECTORATE OF LEARNING AND SKILLS

Consultation Response Report

Consultation on the proposal to reconfigure nursery provision in Penarth from September 2022 by:

- **Amalgamating Bute Cottage Nursery School and Evenlode Primary School; and**
- **Amalgamating Cogan Nursery School and Cogan Primary School.**



*This document can be made available in other formats and languages as needed.
Please contact us on 01446 700111 to arrange this.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Background.....	1
2. Outline of the consultation process	2
3. Consultation responses	6
4. Conclusion	15
5. Annex A - A summary of key issues raised by statutory consultees	17
6. Annex B - A summary of comments received in favour of the proposal.	25
7. Annex C - Frequently asked questions.	27
8. Annex D - Consultations undertaken with young people.....	30
9. Annex E - Response from Estyn	38
10. Annex F - Minutes of the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee on the proposal.....	41
11. Annex G – Responses from Governing Bodies	45

1. BACKGROUND

This report presents the feedback received during the consultation, undertaken from 20 September 2021 to 5 November 2021, in response to the Council's proposals to reconfigure nursery provision in Penarth from September 2022. The statutory consultation was held to seek comments from relevant parties on a regulated alteration as defined in "the Code" which alters the lowest age range of pupils at Evenlode and Cogan Primary Schools from 4 to 3 or to consist of an addition of a nursery year and the discontinuation of Bute Cottage Nursery School and Cogan Nursery School resulting in an amalgamation of Bute Cottage Nursery School and Evenlode Primary School and Cogan Nursery School and Cogan Primary School.

1.1. PROPOSAL 1: TO AMALGAMATE BUTE COTTAGE NURSERY SCHOOL AND EVENLODE PRIMARY SCHOOL BY:

- Changing the lowest age range of pupils at Evenlode Primary School from 4 to 3, to include 96 part time nursery places:
- Increasing the capacity of Evenlode Primary School to accommodate the 96-part time nursery places; and
- Discontinuing Bute Cottage Nursery School and transferring all staff and pupils of the nursery phase under the governance of Evenlode Primary School from September 2022.

1.2. PROPOSAL 2: TO AMALGAMATE COGAN NURSERY SCHOOL AND COGAN PRIMARY SCHOOL BY:

- Changing the lowest age range of pupils at Cogan Primary School from 4 to 3, to include 96 part time nursery places:
- Increasing the capacity of Cogan Primary School to accommodate the 96-part time nursery places; and
- Discontinuing Cogan Nursery School and transferring all staff and pupils of the nursery phase under the governance of Cogan Primary School from September 2022.

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

2. OUTLINE OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation processes followed Welsh Government guidelines, in compliance with the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and in line with the School Organisation Code 2018. The consultation processes gave prescribed consultees 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 considered before any decisions are made.

2.1. PUBLICATION OF THE CONSULTATION

Formal consultations were conducted through a consultation document and response form distributed electronically to prescribed consultees and published on the Vale of Glamorgan Council website on the 20 September 2021. Hard copies of the consultation document were available upon request.

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

2.2. CONSULTATION STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Engagement for both consultations on the proposals was undertaken with prescribed consultees as contained within the School Organisation Code 2018.

The following groups were consulted:

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

Staff (teaching and non-teaching) at Bute Cottage Nursery School, Evenlode Primary School, Cogan Nursery School and Cogan Primary School	Governing Body of Bute Cottage Nursery School, Evenlode Primary School, Cogan Nursery School and Cogan Primary School
Parents/Carers and Guardians of children at Bute Cottage Nursery School, Evenlode Primary School, Cogan Nursery School and Cogan Primary School	Diocesan Directors of Education
Penarth Town Council and Sully and Lavernock Community Council	Vale of Glamorgan Early Years Development Partnership (EYDCP)

Vale of Glamorgan Children and Young People's Programme Board	Local Councillors
Members of the Senedd (MS's) / Members of Parliament (MP's)	Welsh Language Commissioner
Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RHAG)	Primary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan
Estyn	Central South Consortium Joint Education Service
Welsh Government Ministers	Trade Unions
Local Police and Crime Commissioner	Directors of Education – All Neighbouring Authorities
Council's Transportation Department	

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/nurseryprovisionpenarth

It should be noted that a petition on behalf of Bute Cottage Nursery School stakeholders was launched 16th September 2021 and received 1,138 signatures by December 2021:

www.change.org/p/vale-of-glamorgan-council-save-bute-cottage-nursery-school?utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=custom_url&recruited_by_id=ebf3c900-17d8-11ec-a8c6-f3fa967fb711

Initially the petition included information that the nursery would be relocated to the Evenlode Primary School site. This was later changed to note that relocation is not part of the proposal but would be a priority if the proposal were to be approved.

A "Save Bute Cottage" Facebook group was also initiated to share information about the proposal:

www.facebook.com/groups/savebutecottage

Only responses to the consultation given in writing (either via post or the online survey) have been included in formal responses submitted to the Council's Cabinet.

2.3. LATE REPRESENTATIONS

The closing date for the consultation was the 5th November 2021. The Council has received the following 2 late representations:

- Mairead Canavan on behalf of Vale of Glamorgan National Education Union – received 6th November 2021.
- Cllr Joel James MS – received 25th November 2021.

Unfortunately, as the representations were received after the closing date of the consultation, they have not been considered further within the Report. In summary the late representations raised the following concerns:

- The expertise of staff will be diluted as part of the amalgamation process.
- Lack of senior management on the site.
- No firm requirement for the Cogan Primary School Governing Body to integrate some of the governors from Cogan Nursery School.
- High risk of redundancy for staff in the future.
- Community work will be lost due to the change in governance of the nursery.

Although the above representations have not been considered directly in this report, the majority of concerns raised have been identified in other responses which were submitted during the consultation period. It should be noted that if the Council consider it appropriate to move to the next stage of the statutory consultation, there is another opportunity to object to the proposals as part of the Statutory Notice stage. Anyone wishing to make objections at this stage to the proposals can do so. Objections must be made in writing or by email and sent to the proposer before the end of 28 days beginning with the day on which the notice was published. The statutory notice would be published on the Vale of Glamorgan Council website and posted at or near the main entrance to the schools. Copies of the notice would be distributed to pupils, parents, guardians, and staff members.

2.4. CONSULTATION MEETINGS

Meetings were held with the staff and governors at Bute Cottage Nursery School and Cogan Nursery School which were attended by Council officers. The rationale behind the proposals was highlighted and an explanation of the statutory process was provided.

Consultation sessions were undertaken with the School Council of Evenlode Primary School and Cogan Primary School, and with representative pupils from Bute Cottage Nursery School and Cogan Nursery School to engage the pupils in the consultation process. A report on the outcome of these sessions can be found at Annex D.

2.5. CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Consultees were asked for their opinion on a key question to each proposal:

1) Do you support the proposal to amalgamate Bute Cottage Nursery School and Evenlode Primary School?

2) Do you support the proposal to amalgamate Cogan Nursery School and Cogan Primary School?

Consultees were able to respond to each proposal with Yes, No or No opinion either way. Consultees were invited to respond to both proposals if they so wished.

Consultees were also offered the opportunity to comment further:

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

Any other comments?

3. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The consultation responses received in writing between 20 September 2021 and 5 November 2021 are outlined below.

3.1. SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

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

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

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

Respondents were also asked to indicate the school they are connected to (if any) in relation to the proposal, respondents were able to tick more than one option.

Table 2: Responses in detail

Annex	Description
Annex A	A summary of key issues raised by statutory consultees and the Council's response to those issues can be found at Annex A.
Annex B	A summary of the comments received in favour of the proposal can be found at Annex B.
Annex C	The frequently asked questions (FAQs) document has been updated to include the key questions raised during the engagement sessions (Annex C).
Annex D	Consultation sessions were undertaken with the representative pupils of Bute Cottage Nursery School, Evenlode Primary School, Cogan Nursery School, and Cogan Primary School to engage the pupils in the consultation process. A report on the outcome of these sessions can be found at Annex D.
Annex E	Estyn formally responded to the consultation. Their response can be found at Annex E.
Annex F	The consultation document was referred to the Learning & Culture Scrutiny Committee on 14 October 2021. The minutes of this meeting can be found at Annex F, where Cabinet recommendations were endorsed.
Annex G	The Governing Bodies from Bute Cottage Nursery and Evenlode Primary School submitted responses to the consultation. Additionally Cogan Primary Governing Body released a letter to the school

	community highlighting how they intended to respond to the consultation. Their full representations can be viewed at Annex G.
--	---

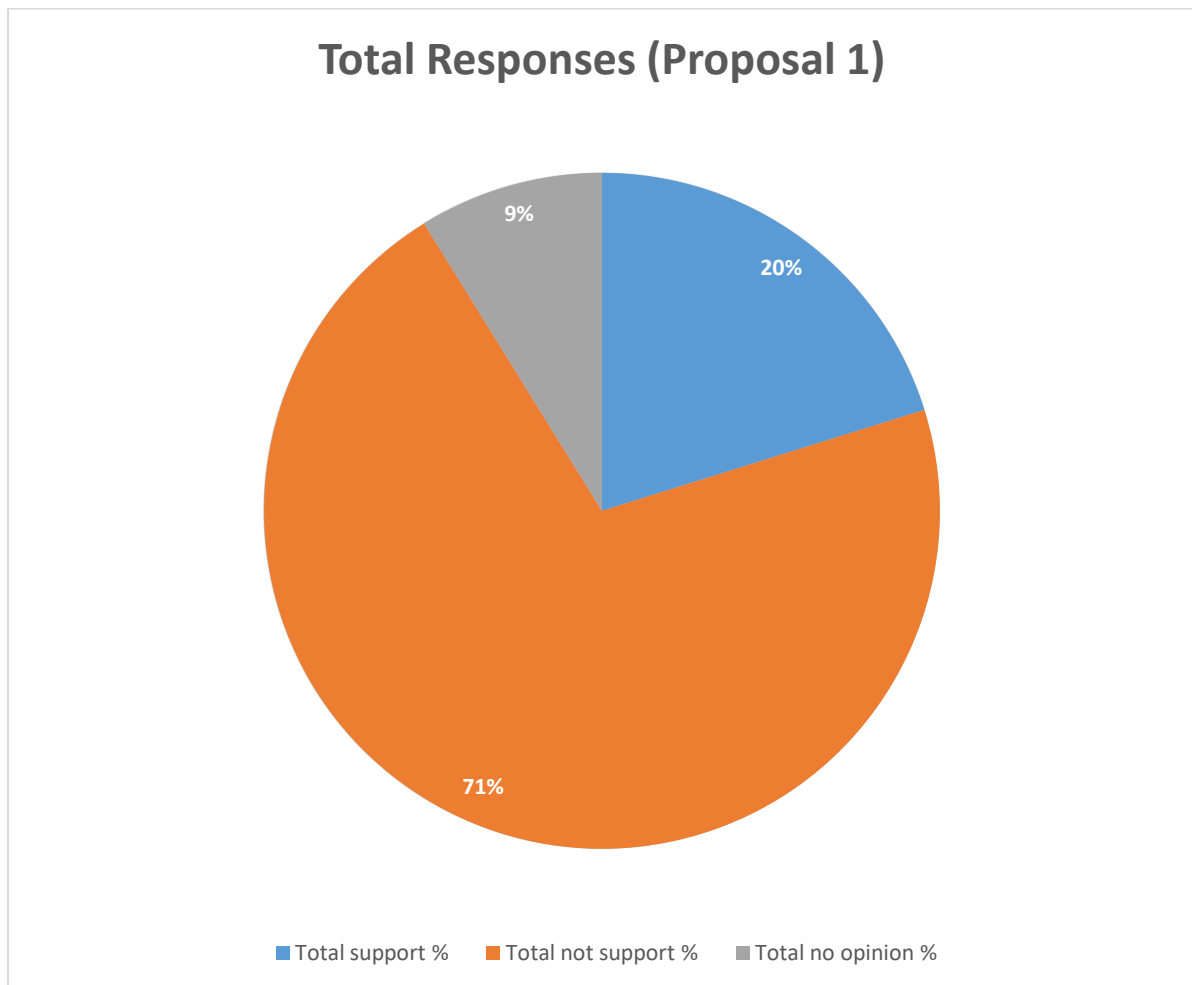
3.2. RESPONSES TO PROPOSAL 1: AMALGAMATING BUTE COTTAGE NURSERY SCHOOL AND EVENLODE PRIMARY SCHOOL

As Table 3 and Chart 1 below show, most responses (71%) were **not** in favour of Proposal 1.

Table 3: Breakdown of consultation responses (Proposal 1)

Total (individual) responses:	Total support		Total not support		Total no opinion	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
238	48	20%	169	71%	21	9%

Chart 1: Split of responses supporting or not supporting Proposal 1 of the consultation, and those responses with no opinion either way

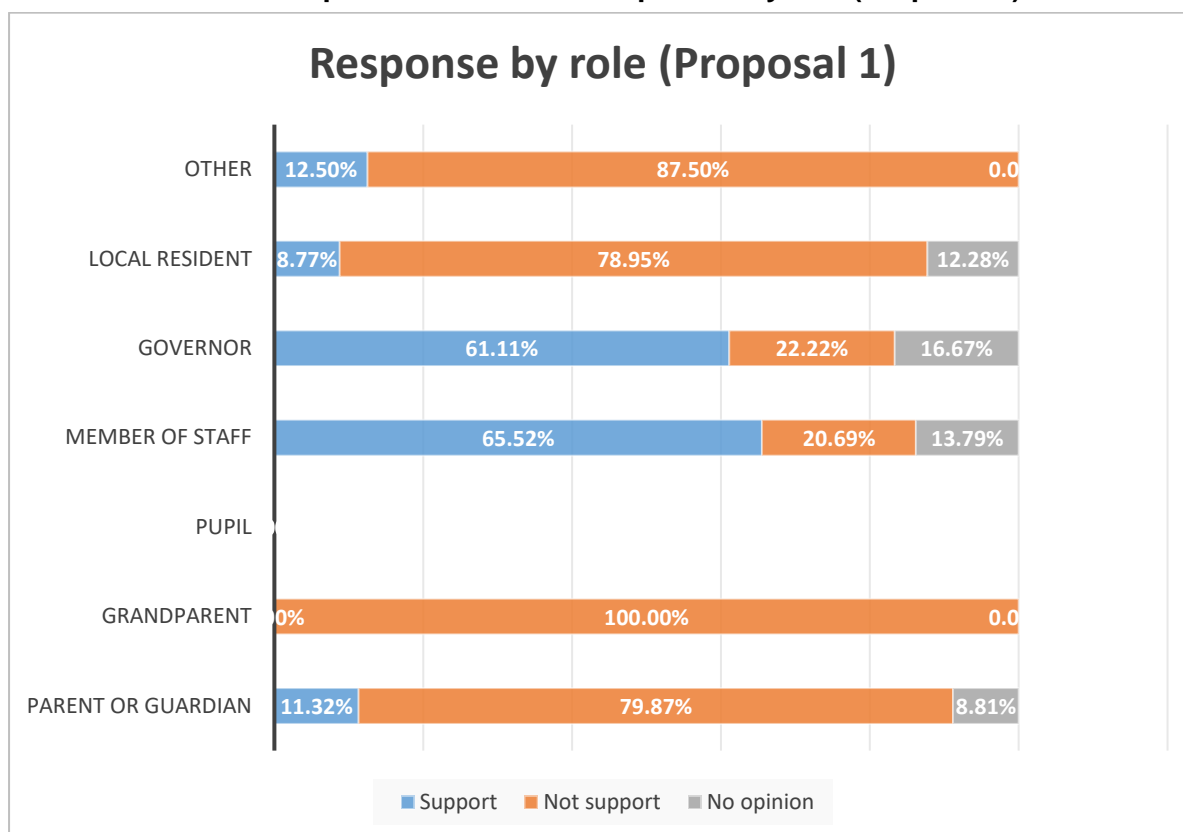


As Table 4 and Chart 2 below show, the majority of the largest group of respondents (parents or guardians) were **not** in favour of Proposal 1. However, the majority of members of staff and governors were in favour of the proposal. In terms of the breakdown of respondents, 159 people were in the parent and guardian group with 79.87% (127 people) not supporting the proposal. The next largest respondent group related to local residents with a total of 57 responses received of which 78.95% did not support the proposal. It should be noted respondents were able to tick more than one option (e.g. they could be a parent and a member of staff). Respondents who labelled themselves as “Other” included a careers advisor and a member of the Children and Young People Service.

Table 4: Breakdown of consultation responses by role (Proposal 1)

Response by role (A):	Support	Not support	No opinion	Total
Parent or guardian	18	127	14	159
Grandparent	0	9	0	9
Pupil	0	0	0	0
Member of staff	19	6	4	29
Governor	11	4	3	18
Local Resident	5	45	7	57
Other	1	7	0	8

Chart 2: Split of consultation responses by role (Proposal 1)



As Table 5 and Chart 3 below show, most respondents with a connection to (a) school/s were **not** in favour of Proposal 1. The largest group of respondents were connected to Evenlode (113 respondents); 65.49% of which were **not** in favour of Proposal 1. Responses have been received from all schools directly affected by the proposal except for St. Helens where no responses were received.

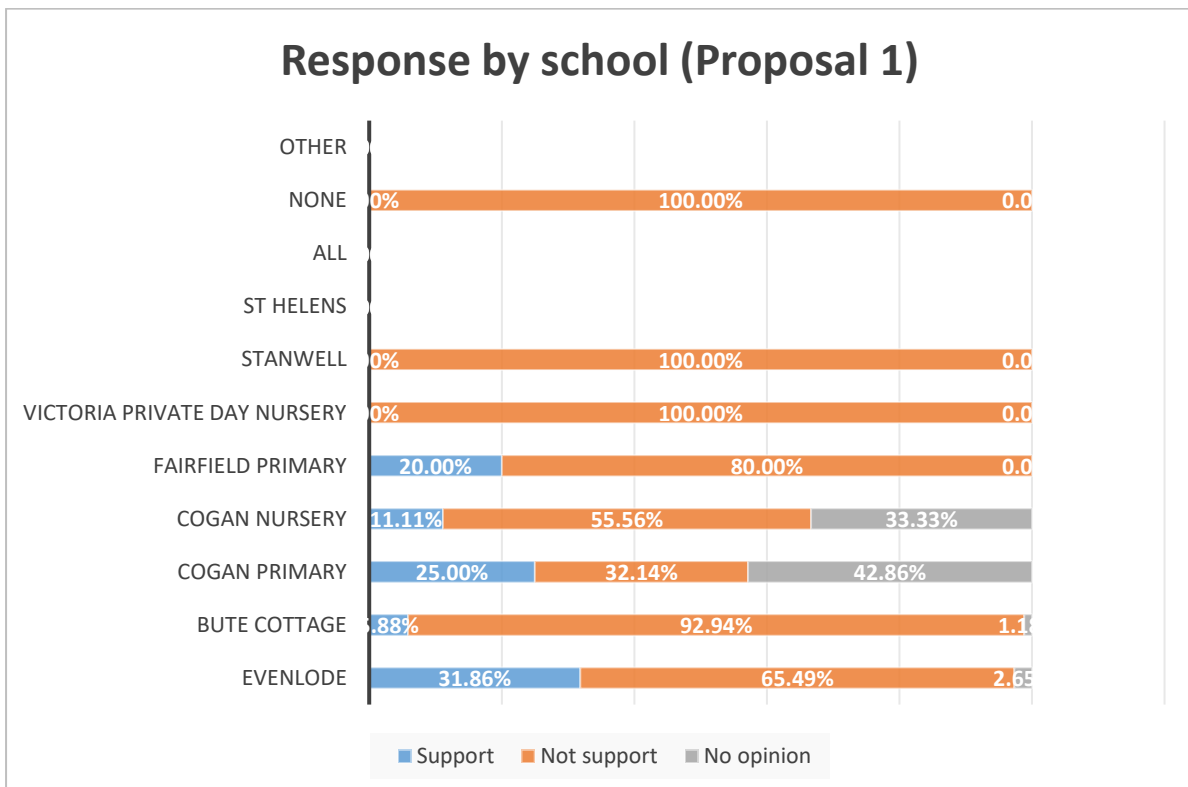
It should be noted respondents were able to tick more than one option (e.g. they could be connected to Evenlode and Cogan Primaries). An option for “Other” schools was included but no respondents selected this option.

Table 5: Breakdown of consultation responses by school (Proposal 1)

Response by school (A):	Support	Not support	No opinion	Total
Evenlode	36	74	3	113
Bute Cottage	5	79	1	85
Cogan Primary	7	9	12	28
Cogan Nursery	3	15	9	27

Fairfield Primary	1	4	0	5
Victoria Private Day Nursery	0	1	0	1
Stanwell	0	1	0	1
St Helens	0	0	0	0
All	0	0	0	0
None	0	3	0	3
Other	0	0	0	0

Chart 3: Split of consultation responses by school (Proposal 1)



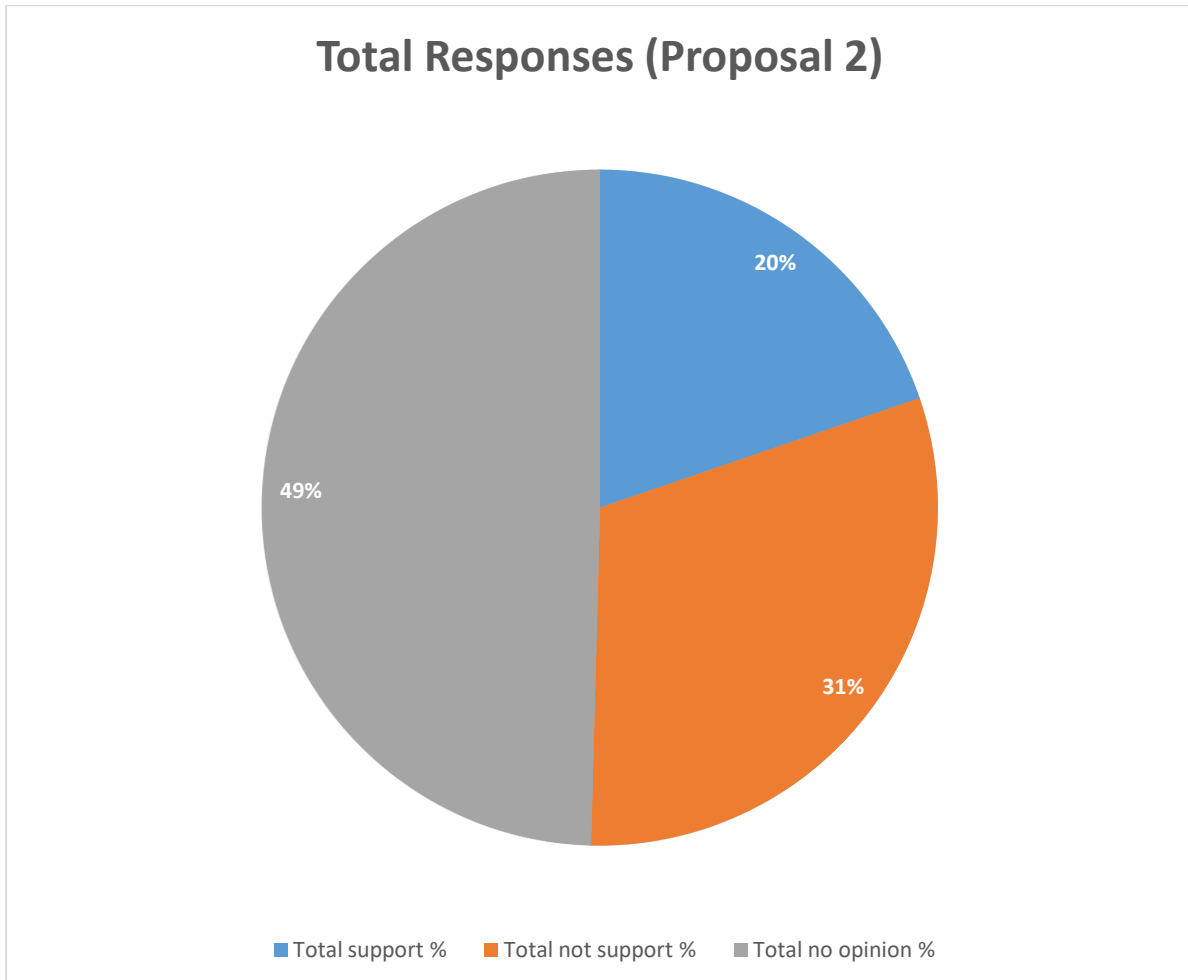
3.3. RESPONSES TO PROPOSAL 2: AMALGAMATING COGAN NURSERY SCHOOL AND COGAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

As Table 6 and Chart 4 below show, the majority of responses (50%) had no opinion either way on Proposal 2. However, 31% of respondents were **not** in favour of the proposal.

Table 6: Breakdown of consultation responses (Proposal 2)

Total (individual) responses (A):	Total support		Total not support		Total no opinion	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
238	47	20%	73	31%	118	50%

Chart 4: Split of responses supporting or not supporting Proposal 1 of the consultation

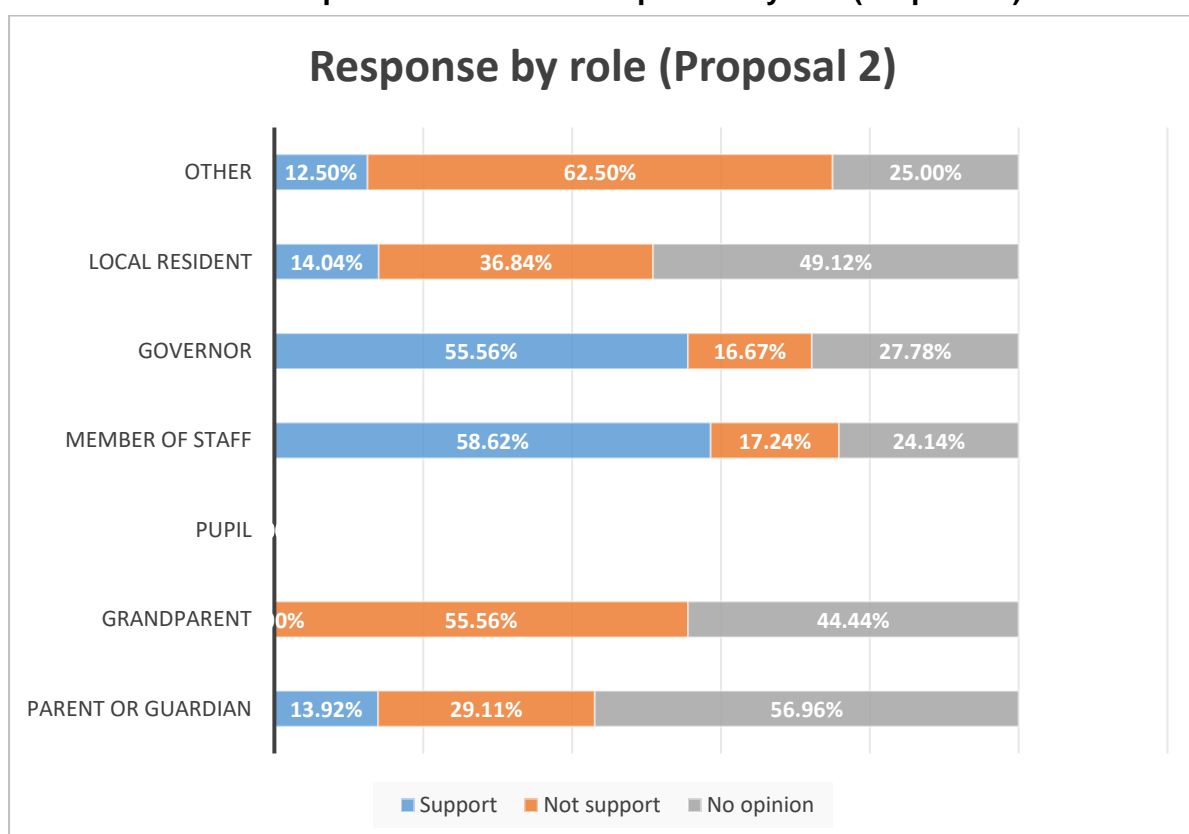


As Table 7 and Chart 5 below show, most respondents had no opinion on the proposal either way. The largest group of respondents indicated that they were parents or guardians (158 respondents – 29.11% of which were in favour of Proposal 2), followed by local residents (21 respondents – 36.84% **not** in favour). It should be noted respondents were able to tick more than one option (e.g. they could be a parent and a member of staff). Respondents who labelled themselves as “Other” included childminders, people who had family members who attended the Nursery in the past, a member of the Senedd and a representative of Estyn.

Table 7: Breakdown of consultation responses by role (Proposal 2)

Response by role (A):	Support	Not support	No opinion	Total
Parent or guardian	22	46	90	158
Grandparent	0	5	4	9
Pupil	0	0	0	0
Member of staff	17	5	7	29
Governor	10	3	5	18
Local Resident	8	21	28	57
Other	1	5	2	8

Chart 5: Split of consultation responses by role (Proposal 2)



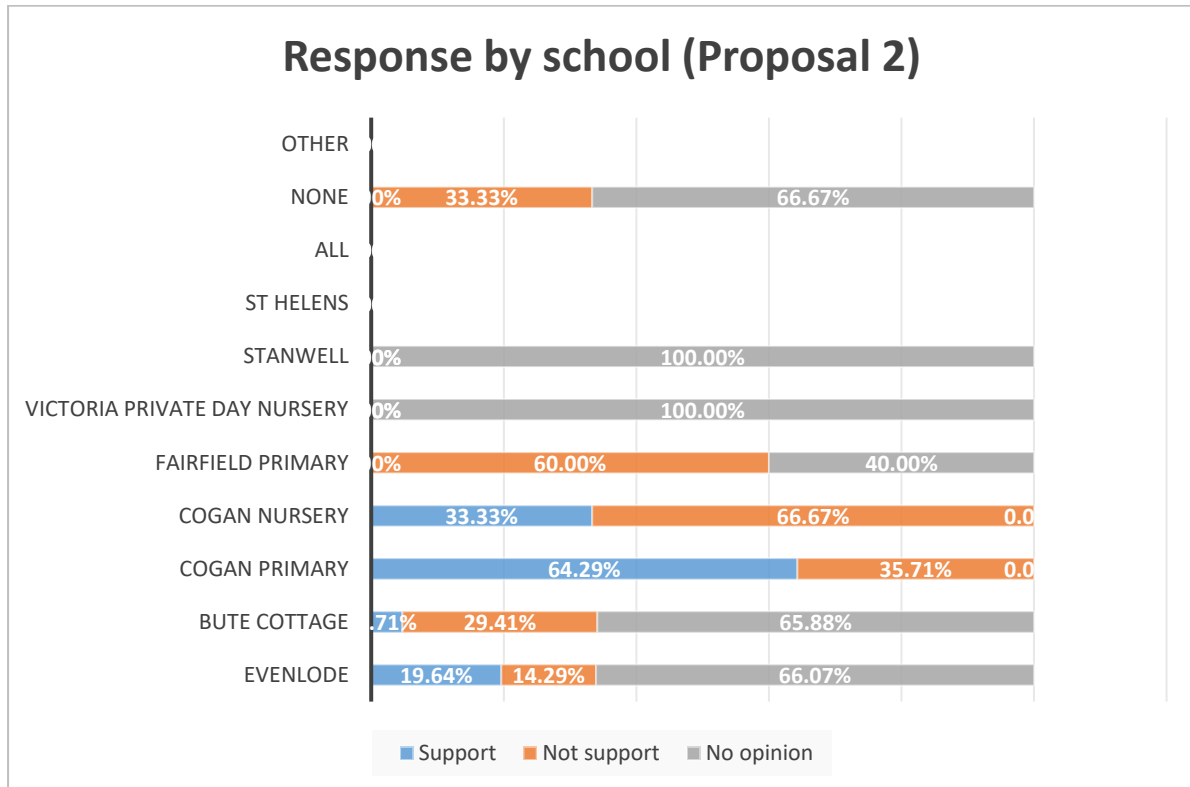
As Table 8 and Chart 3 below show, most respondents with a connection to (a) school/s did not have an opinion either way regarding Proposal 2. The largest group of respondents were connected to Evenlode (112 respondents); 19.64% of which were in favour of Proposal 2. Responses have been received from all schools directly affected by the proposals except for St. Helens with no representations being received which noted an affiliation with this school.

It should be noted respondents were able to tick more than one option (e.g. they could be connected to Evenlode and Cogan Primaries). An option for “Other” schools was included but no respondents selected this option.

Table 8: Breakdown of consultation responses by school (Proposal 2)

Response by school (A):	Support	Not support	No opinion	Total
Evenlode	22	16	74	112
Bute Cottage	4	25	56	85
Cogan Primary	18	10	0	28
Cogan Nursery	9	18	0	27
Fairfield Primary	0	3	2	5
Victoria Private Day Nursery	0	0	1	1
Stanwell	0	0	1	1
St Helens	0	0	0	0
All	0	0	0	0
None	0	1	2	3
Other	0	0	0	0

Chart 6: Split of consultation responses by school (Proposal 2)



4. CONCLUSION

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

4.1. QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

The latest Estyn inspection for the schools noted Standards as 'Good' for Bute Cottage Nursery School, Evenlode Primary School, and Cogan Primary School, and 'Excellent' for Cogan Nursery School. It is noted in the inspection reports that all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make good progress and attainment performance is strong.

In Estyn's response to the consultation, they concluded that the proposal is likely to maintain the current standards in terms of education, provision, and leadership and management.

The Council considers if the proposals are approved, these proposals would ensure the schools are able to continue providing high quality education. Amalgamation would develop continuity and progression in children's learning from the age of three. This would ensure there is a consistent approach to planning and delivery of the foundation phase (nursery to year two) and minimise the potential for disruption during transition from nursery to primary school. The introduction of consistent policies, strategies and pedagogy across all ages would result in clear expectations and a shared ethos which is understood by children, parents and carers throughout all phases of primary education. The proposal would also support a coordinated approach to planning for the needs of vulnerable pupils across the foundation phase.

4.2. COMMUNITY IMPACT

A Community Impact Assessment was undertaken and published alongside the consultation document. The proposal would likely have a neutral impact on the local community across 8 of the 8 measures assessed. Overall, the proposal would likely have a neutral impact on the local community. No comments were received in relation to the Community Impact Assessment during the consultation.

4.3. TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

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

The Vale of Glamorgan Council does not provide free school transport for nursery-age children other than those children who have a Statement of Special Educational

Needs (SEN). Under these proposals there are no plans to change the Council's policy on the transport of children to and from schools.

As the nursery phases would remain on their current sites with their current capacity, there are no envisaged implications for transport and learner travel arrangements.

4.4. FACTUAL CHANGES FOLLOWING CLOSE OF CONSULTATION PERIOD

As part of the consultation Table 9 contained within the Consultation Report in the sub-section Key Dates under The Statutory Consultation Process Section, listed the indicative dates for the statutory process. However, since the close of the consultation the publication of the Consultation Response Report has been delayed due to staffing matters. Consequently, the indicative dates noted under Table 9 of the Consultation Report have changed. An updated table of key dates is detailed below:

Table 9: Updated Key dates of the process

Statutory Process	Timescale
Issue consultation document	20 th September 2021
Closing date for views on the proposals	5 th November 2021
Consultation report considered by Cabinet and published on the school and Council's website	10 th January 2022
Subject to Cabinet approval, Statutory notice issued during which time formal written objections will be invited	24 th January 2022
End of Statutory Notice Period	21 st February 2022
Determination by Cabinet with objection report.	28 th March 2022
Decision notification	April 2022
Proposal implemented	September 2022

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

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

5.1. ISSUES RAISED IN RELATION TO BOTH PROPOSALS:

THEME 1

Nursery schools would lose their identities

Respondents raised concerns that Bute Cottage and Cogan nursery schools would lose their independent identities if amalgamated with the primary schools. There is a risk that disadvantages associated with the loss of dedicated headteachers has not been fully considered.

Council's response to the concerns raised

Over the years, the Council has been moving towards a 3-11 model for primary education. This is considered an efficient model of education, providing equality of provision across the Vale of Glamorgan. Whilst the Council understands that there are some benefits associated with the standalone nursery school model, this could not be provided across the Vale of Glamorgan due to the increased costs to manage the provision. If this proposal goes ahead, the Governing Bodies would be supported to ensure that these benefits and good practice from the existing nurseries would transfer to the amalgamated schools. Transition measures would be put in place to support the amalgamation of the schools and mitigate any risks associated with the loss of a dedicated headteacher by ensuring a resilient and experienced senior leadership team with appropriate specialisms reflected within it. The Council would work closely with staff and governors to develop a comprehensive transition plan to retain the good practice currently in place at both Bute Cottage Nursery School and Cogan Nursery School.

Amalgamation would enable the strengths present in the existing separate nursery and primary schools to be combined to deliver high quality provision operating across separate sites. Nursery provision would continue to be operated from the existing buildings which would provide a level of separation from the rest of the primary school.

Existing staff would transfer to the amalgamated schools, ensuring continuity in provision. The governing bodies of Evenlode Primary School and Cogan Primary School would need to reflect the inclusion of the nursery phase. This would include exploring opportunities to offer vacant positions to existing governors for Bute Cottage Nursery School and Cogan Nursery School. If approved, these proposals

would ensure the schools are able to continue providing high quality education. The proposals facilitate a consistent education philosophy for children for up to 9 uninterrupted years of education, thereby minimising the potential for disruption during transition from nursery to primary.

A single leadership team and governing body across each school would result in the removal of duplication of management and governance functions. For example, the standalone nursery schools are currently inspected by Estyn and have to submit separate data returns to the Council, Central South Consortium and Welsh Government. The streamlining of management and administrative functions, as well as the ability to arrange joint contracts and service level agreements for buildings and other support services, would result in available funding being utilised more effectively. The amalgamated schools would make it easier to engage with parents particularly where they have children of both nursery and primary ages. Parents would only need to familiarise themselves with one set of policies and one set of communications.

There are also benefits associated with nursery provision being delivered as part of a 3-11 school. This includes a single vision, strategy and ethos across all phases which can support transition across phases of education. A single 3-11 school can also result in improved communication between parents and staff with a single point of contact throughout all phases of primary education.

THEME 2

Nursery schools tailor provision specifically for nursery pupils

Respondents emphasised the specialist support the nursery schools provide for young children and that this would be lost through amalgamation. There were concerns that education would be formalised too soon and that children would miss out on learning through play.

Council's response to the concerns raised

Both nursery schools are excellent in terms of standards and provision and the purpose of the proposals is not to address education standards. This proposal would have the advantage of reflecting on sharing and benefitting from the best practice in both the nursery and primary sectors. As outlined above, the Council has been moving towards a 3-11 model of primary education, providing equality in provision across the Vale of Glamorgan. This has also been the case across Wales. According to StatsWales, there are currently 9 maintained nursery schools across the 22 local authorities in Wales. In 2005/6 there were 32 maintained nursery schools representing a 72% reduction.

If the proposals are approved, the Council would work closely with staff and governors to support the transition to the new model. The key focus of this transition

would be to ensure the schools maintain and build on best practice and the pupils receive the best provision from both the nursery and primary phases.

There would likely be changes to the overall ethos more widely as part of the transition to the new curriculum, but this would be an opportunity for both the nursery and primary schools to build upon successful approaches and learn from each other.

Nearly all primary schools within the Vale of Glamorgan have their own nursery provision. Nursery educational or personal development outcomes have not been raised as a concern in any inspections of other primary schools. There are also many independent nursery providers within the Vale of Glamorgan should parents wish their children to attend private provision exclusive of a primary school.

THEME 3

Considers cost cutting exercise motivation behind proposals

Respondents were concerned that the proposals are motivated by a cost cutting exercise and that it would lead to staff shortages or that the nursery would lose out on funding.

Council's response to the concerns raised

The consultation document sets out the rationale behind the proposals. The main driver for the proposals is to ensure equality and consistency across primary provision in the Vale of Glamorgan, furthering the move towards the 3-11 primary model.

This model has several benefits, including developing continuity and progression in children's learning from the age of three. This would ensure there is a consistent approach to planning and delivery of the foundation phase (nursery to year two) and minimise the potential for disruption during transition from nursery to primary school.

The introduction of consistent policies, strategies and pedagogy across all ages would result in clear expectations and a shared ethos which is understood by children, parents and carers throughout all phases of primary education. The proposals would also support a coordinated approach to planning for the needs of vulnerable pupils across the foundation phase.

A single leadership team and governing body across each school would result in the removal of duplication of management and governance functions. For example, the standalone nursery schools are currently inspected by Estyn and have to submit separate data returns to the Council, Central South Consortium and Welsh Government.

Parents would only need to familiarise themselves with one set of policies and one set of communications.

The proposals are not motivated solely by a cost-cutting exercise; however, it is noted within the consultation document that the proposals would result in a saving of £140k. All schools in the Vale of Glamorgan receive a delegated budget which is determined by the school funding formula. The formula is broken down into two separate sections: pupil-led funding and lump sum (or overhead) payments. Pupil-led funding allocates a set amount per pupil on roll at a school which is applied consistently across all schools. Lump sum or overhead payments are set costs which can vary across schools, this includes allocations to fund the headteacher salary and repairs and maintenance. These proposals would result in a reduction of the lump sum costs as the nursery phase would no longer require a headteacher. This saving would be re-invested into the overall funding formula and would result in a fairer distribution of school funding.

Streamlining of management and administrative functions, as well as the ability to arrange joint contracts and service level agreements for buildings and other support services, could result in available funding being utilised more effectively.

Should the proposal be implemented, Evenlode Primary School and Cogan Primary School would each receive an individual budget including allocations for the nursery phase. As most of the school funding is based on the number of pupils on roll, the proposals would improve the overall budget position for Evenlode Primary School and Cogan Primary School. Budgets would be shared across the nursery and primary phases to enable all pupils within the schools to receive access to high quality education and resources.

Therefore, from a Vale wide educational perspective, more pupils would benefit from a fairer distribution of funding.

THEME 4

Relationships between nursery and school already working

Respondents felt that the relationship between the primary schools and nurseries was already adequate and therefore they would not need to be amalgamated to improve in this area.

Council's response to the concerns raised

Whilst the Council agrees there are good working relationships between the primary and nursery schools, there would still be opportunities for greater collaboration and streamlining of communications between the schools and with parents.

If approved, these proposals would ensure the schools are able to continue providing high quality education. The proposals facilitate a consistent education philosophy for children for up to 9 uninterrupted years of education, thereby minimising the potential for disruption during transition from nursery to primary.

The amalgamated schools would make it easier to engage with parents particularly where they have children of both nursery and primary ages. Parents would only need to familiarise themselves with one set of policies and one set of communications. There would also be greater professional development opportunities for staff by being part of a primary school teaching across all phases of primary education. The proposed amalgamation would allow for a sharing of pedagogical practices across staff in all age groups thus ensuring consistency.

THEME 5

Nursery pupils would be overwhelmed in a bigger setting

Respondents raised concerns that nursery school pupils would be overwhelmed in a setting with primary school pupils and as part of a larger school.

Council's response to the concerns raised

There would be no increase in the overall places available as a result of these proposals (there would be 4 fewer part-time nursery places available at Cogan) and the nursery phase of the schools would remain on their current sites.

Therefore, the everyday experience within the schools would not change for either nursery or primary pupils as the physical settings will not change as a result of these proposals. One of the main benefits of amalgamation would be improved transition. Pupils could be introduced to the primary phase gradually throughout the year informally in discussion with parents/guardians taking into account the statutory age for compulsory education, which would reduce the impact of the September transfer.

THEME 6

Rationale for proposal unclear

A few respondents raised concerns that the rationale for the proposals and/or moving the nursery schools was unclear.

Council's response to the concerns raised

The rationale for the proposals is set out in the consultation document in line with the School Organisation Code 2018. Specific details can be found on pages 8-10 and potential benefits and disadvantages found on page 26.

No proposals have been presented to relocate either nursery school. Therefore, no rationale is set out within the consultation document as this relates to the proposals to amalgamate the primary and nursery schools and keep the nursery schools on their current sites.

Any plans to move the nursery schools from their current sites would be subject to a review of the feasibility of such a proposal and a separate consultation would follow if this was considered appropriate as part of the planning process. However, it should be noted that if in the future the nursery schools were moved to a different location within 1 mile of the existing location, this would not engage schedule 2 of the 2013 Act as regards to a regulated alteration relating to a transfer of any school to a new site (which applies to a maintained nursery). This means that there would not be a requirement to undertake a statutory consultation on this aspect of a future proposal if it occurs.

5.2. ISSUES RAISED IN RELATION TO PROPOSAL 1 (BUTE COTTAGE NURSERY SCHOOL AND EVENLODE PRIMARY SCHOOL AMALGAMATION):

THEME 7

Evenlode oversubscribed

A few respondents raised concerns that Evenlode primary school is already oversubscribed, and that the proposal (1) would exacerbate the situation.

Council's response to the concerns raised

The number of nursery places available would remain unchanged as a result of proposal 1 and the admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria in place would not change as a result of this proposal.

Children on roll in the nursery phase would not have an automatic right to continue education at the same school when moving up to a reception class. Parents would be required to apply for their chosen school. Where there are more applications than there are places available in the reception class, places would be allocated applying the Council's oversubscription criteria which prioritises residency within the catchment area.

Therefore, this proposal would have no impact on the demand for places at Evenlode Primary School.

THEME 8

Loss of outdoor space and increased traffic

Respondents raised concerns that there would be a loss of outdoor provision at the sites if the nurseries were to move location, this issue mainly centred around Bute Cottage nursery school and Evenlode primary school. There were also concerns moving Bute Cottage nursery school to the Evenlode primary school site in terms of increased traffic and difficulties with parking arrangements.

Council's response to the concerns raised

Neither of the affected nurseries would move site as a result of these proposals.

However, the Council has allocated £1.362m as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme to support reconfiguration of nursery provision in Penarth. The Council will need to consider this scheme in the context of the pressures of the current climate and industry price rise implications. The Council will consider the need to redevelop Evenlode Primary School to include nursery provision on a single site as part of future school programme proposals. As part of any scheme the Council would undertake a full feasibility assessment and any plans would be subject to a separate consultation exercise as part of the planning process. However, it should be noted that if in the future the nursery schools were moved to a different location within 1 mile of the existing location, this would not engage schedule 2 of the 2013 Act as regards to a regulated alteration relating to a transfer of any school to a new site (which applies to a maintained nursery). This means that there would not be a requirement to undertake a statutory consultation on this aspect of a future proposal if it occurs.

5.3. ISSUES RAISED IN RELATION TO PROPOSAL 2 (COGAN NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL AMALGAMATION):

THEME 9

Cogan nursery takes in pupils from beyond the Cogan catchment area

Respondents raised concerns that nursery pupils from Cogan Nursery attended from outside of the catchment area. It is considered this results in nursery pupils not attending Cogan Primary but benefitting from the Nursery offer at Cogan Nursery before attending alternative primary education.

Council's response to the concerns raised

The Council prioritises the admission of pupils who reside within the catchment area of Cogan Primary School. Proposal 2 would result in 96 part time English-medium nursery places in Cogan Primary School. This is 4 fewer part time places than currently available at Cogan Nursery School. However, this is sufficient to meet demand within the local area (see table 2 in admissions section of consultation document). Other than this minor change, the admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria in place for both nursery and primary admissions would not change as a result of this proposal. Although it is noted that not all nursery pupils go on to attend Cogan Primary School, in 2021 the majority of nursery pupils (62.5% or 25 pupils) went on to attend Cogan Primary School. This reflects a growing trend from 2019 where nursery pupils attending Cogan Primary was 47.91% which has continued to increase. In 2021 the remaining pupils went on to attend the following schools:

- Albert Primary – 2.5%
- Dinas Powys – 5%
- Evenlode Primary – 2.5%
- Fairfield Primary – 5%
- Llandough Primary – 10%
- Out of County – 2.5%
- St Joseph's Primary – 2.5%
- Victoria Primary – 5%
- Ysgol Y Deri – 2.5%

The split between other primary schools is considered relatively low and is reflective of previous years. Consequently, although nursery pupils attend from outside of the catchment most pupils go on to attend Cogan Primary School.

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

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

All comments relate to both proposals (i.e. these comments were either found in responses to both proposals, or the same comments appeared in separate responses to either proposal 1 or 2).

THEME 10

Single governance and vision / policies

Respondents noted that a single governance and vision for the educational settings would be beneficial for long-term standards and excellent provision. Policies and practices could be built upon from both nursery and primary phases. Respondents highlighted the similar ethos between the nursery and primary schools in terms of pupil wellbeing.

Respondents emphasised the timing of the proposals if implemented would provide the opportunity to take a joint approach to integrating the new curriculum, which would take the best aspects of both institutions approaches and pedagogy.

THEME 11

Smoother transition and streamlined communication

Respondents felt that the proposed 3-11 model would benefit teaching and learning, along with supporting learner's emotional and wellbeing development. One of the examples given is that it would have a positive effect on all learner's basic skills, leading to raising standards at both settings. Nursery pupils would also be more familiar with the primary phase and become accustomed to the school identity from an earlier age which could help decrease anxiety during transition.

Respondents noted that arrangements and communications would be easier for parents with children at both stages of education. For example, co-ordinating inset days, drop-off and pick-up times, and only needing to be familiar with a single set of policies.

THEME 12

Financial saving efficiencies

Respondents felt that there would be opportunities for financial and resource savings through economies of scale and that this would enable efficient use of limited budgets.

THEME 13

Education from earlier age / children understand clear expectations

Respondents noted that receiving education from a single educational establishment would also provide greater continuity and enable rapport to be built between pupils and staff from an earlier point in the pupil's educational journey.

THEME 14

Facilitate learning experiences; shared activity days / learning

Respondents noted that there would be opportunities for collaborative learning experiences. Examples included shared activity days, festive celebrations and concerts, and mentoring of younger pupils by primary pupils.

THEME 15

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and safeguarding early identification

Current ALN provision would not be changed as a result of these proposals. However, respondents noted that the support and safeguarding needs of pupils could be identified at an earlier age and monitored within a single setting to ensure continuity.

7. ANNEX C - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.

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

If implemented, what would the proposals mean?

Bute Cottage Nursery School and Cogan Nursery School would be discontinued and all staff and pupils from the nursery phases would be transferred under the governance of Evenlode Primary School and Cogan Primary School respectively. However, nursery provision would continue to be provided from the existing buildings with both proposals.

What is the intended timescale of implementation?

It is intended that the proposals would be implemented by September 2022.

How would these proposals impact upon admissions arrangements?

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is the admission authority for the schools. All admissions arrangements within the Vale of Glamorgan are subject to annual review.

The capacity for the nursery phase of Evenlode Primary School and Cogan Primary School would be 96 part-time places. The admission number for the primary phase of Evenlode Primary School and Cogan Primary School would not be impacted by these proposals.

Children on roll in the nursery phase would not have an automatic right to continue education at the same school when moving up to a reception class. Parents would be required to apply for their chosen school. Where there are more applications than there are places available in the reception class, places would be allocated applying the Council's oversubscription criteria which prioritises residency within the catchment area.

How would these proposals impact upon the existing governing bodies?

Bute Cottage Nursery School and Cogan Nursery School staff would transfer under the management of the governing bodies of Evenlode Primary School and Cogan Primary School respectively.

Whilst the governing bodies of Bute Cottage Nursery School and Cogan Nursery School would be disbanded from September 2022, the Council would work with the governing bodies of Evenlode Primary School and Cogan Primary School to identify opportunities for governors to transfer to ensure continuity.

The governing bodies of Evenlode Primary School and Cogan Primary School would need to amend their terms of reference and structure to reflect the inclusion of the nursery phase.

Do I need to respond to both proposals?

You can respond to either or both proposals by filling out the relevant sections of the consultation response form (via the form or link below). You do not need to respond to both if you do not wish to.

7.1. NEW FAQs:

Can the nursery offer full day places?

Children are eligible for a part time nursery place, usually five mornings or five afternoons, from the term after their third birthday. Other than a reduction of 4 places being available at Cogan, there is no change to the admission arrangements in place in terms of eligibility proposed as part of this consultation. Further information on nursery admissions can be found on the Councils [Nursery Admissions](#) Webpage.

Can community garden be opened up to wider schools / nurseries?

This would be a matter for the governing body and is not an aspect of this proposal.

How long will nursery provision be offered from the existing sites? Who will offer this? On what terms? For how long?

Bute Cottage Nursery School and Cogan Nursery School would remain within their current sites and buildings with no increase to their current capacity. There is no plan to change the location of the nurseries as part of this proposal.

Bute Cottage Nursery School is located 0.7miles from Evenlode Primary School. The existing buildings are classed as being in satisfactory condition and of good suitability. Should this proposal be implemented, nursery provision would continue to be provided from the existing building, with Evenlode Primary School being managed as a split-site school.

Cogan Nursery School is located 0.2miles from Cogan Primary School. The existing buildings are classed as being in satisfactory condition and of good suitability. Should this proposal be implemented, nursery provision would continue to be provided from the existing building, with Cogan Primary School being managed as a split-site school.

There is £1.362m included within the Capital Programme as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme to support reconfiguration of nursery provision in Penarth. The Council will need to consider this scheme in the context of the pressures of the current climate and industry price rise implications. The Council will consider the need to redevelop Evenlode Primary School to include nursery provision on a single site as part of future school programme proposals. As part of any scheme the Council would undertake a full feasibility assessment and any plans would be subject to a separate consultation exercise as part of the planning process. However, it should be noted that if in the future the nursery schools were moved to a different location within 1 mile of the existing location, this would not engage schedule 2 of the 2013 Act as regards to a regulated alteration relating to a transfer of any school to a new site (which applies to a maintained nursery). This means that there would not be a requirement to undertake a statutory consultation on this aspect of a future proposal if it occurs.

8. ANNEX D - CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.

8.1. CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO RECONFIGURE NURSERY PROVISION IN PENARTH FROM SEPTEMBER 2022 BY: AMALGAMATING BUTE COTTAGE NURSERY SCHOOL AND EVENLODE PRIMARY SCHOOL; AND AMALGAMATING COGAN NURSERY SCHOOL AND COGAN PRIMARY SCHOOL.

BACKGROUND

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

On 13 September 2021, the Council's Cabinet authorised the Director of Learning & Skills to undertake a consultation from 20 September 2021 to 5 November 2021 on two proposals to reconfigure nursery provision in Penarth from September 2022.

- A consultation workshop was arranged with Evenlode Primary School pupils on 5 October 2021 and Bute Cottage Nursery School pupils on 20 October 2021 to gather their views about the proposal.

METHODOLOGY WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN (EVENLODE PRIMARY)

- An interactive workshop which gave pupils an opportunity to discuss and share ideas together.
- It started with a discussion on the meaning of consultation and why it was important to talk to pupils
- Agreement was reached on what made a good discussion/consultation
- The consultation document was then explained to them, including the background and the timeline for the activity.
- The pupils were divided into 2 groups to share and note their own ideas. The two groups then merged to have further discussion on these ideas, based on the rules of engagement as agreed at the beginning of the session.

- Following the feedback pupils were given information on the advantages and shortcomings noted in the consultation document, they were reminded of the timeline and it was explained to them that their comments would be fed into a report on this session and that it would be presented to the council as part of the evidence gathered on this consultation.

PUPILS' RESPONSES (5 X YEAR 6 PUPILS – FROM SCHOOL PARLIAMENT)

What is a consultation?

- A debate
- Opportunity to listen to what you think about something
- Gathering of opinion
- A meeting
- Talk to each other
- Asking questions

What makes a good discussion:

- Listen to others' ideas
- Respect
- Identify who wants to talk
- Everyone has their own idea in the group
- Different opinions

Benefits of the proposed plan

- They get a school to go to share resources with
- More funding
- Familiar faces and surrounding
- Happy children
- If you're happy better work – more opportunities
- Access to a good feeder school e.g. Stanwell
- Opportunity to learn an instrument
- Relaxed atmosphere
- Different languages
- Bigger population
- Interaction between ages
- Open days
- More staff
- Better communication
- Get to know Headteacher
- Happiness levels rise
- More connection for communities
- Intertwine two entities
- Being already under the same headteacher so less change in learning
- Sharing

Possible pitfalls of the proposed plan

- Spending
- Separation of sibling
- Stress on head teacher because so much to do
- Feeder school impact on other primary schools
- Overpopulation
- Separation of family – transfer – hassle
- Extension fees [if the site needs to be extended]
- Confusion
- Fees e.g. breakfast club and after school fees

METHODOLOGY WITH NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN (BUTE COTTAGE)

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

COHORT: 5 NURSERY PUPILS FROM LOCAL PRIMARIES WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY ATTENDED BUTE COTTAGE (SULLY: 1, ST JOES: 1, EVENLODE: 3)

Good

- share good things between schools

Bad

- A strong feeling that they would lose something special
- Also losing toys/good stuff,
- worried about 'snatching' the teachers

Things pupils like about nursery:

- 'there's so much to play with here'
- outside areas
- forest school
- cooking marshmallow over the fire
- learning about safety
- trains
- chickens,
- friends

Things they'd need to keep [should they amalgamate]:

- the teachers and how they help then learn,
- feeling (ethos),
- good stuff

Vote:

2 - for

3 – against

8.2. CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO RECONFIGURE NURSERY PROVISION IN PENARTH FROM SEPTEMBER 2022 BY: AMALGAMATING BUTE COTTAGE NURSERY SCHOOL AND EVENLODE PRIMARY SCHOOL; AND AMALGAMATING COGAN NURSERY SCHOOL AND COGAN PRIMARY SCHOOL.

BACKGROUND

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

On 13 September 2021, the Council's Cabinet authorised the Director of Learning & Skills to undertake a consultation from 20 September 2021 to 5 November 2021 on two proposals to reconfigure nursery provision in Penarth from September 2022.

- A consultation workshop was arranged with Cogan Primary School pupils on 5 October 2021 and Cogan Nursery School pupils on 20 October 2021 to gather their views about the proposal.

METHODOLOGY WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN (COGAN PRIMARY)

- An interactive workshop which gave pupils an opportunity to discuss and share ideas together.
- It started with a discussion on the meaning of consultation and why it was important to talk to pupils
- Agreement was reached on what made a good discussion/consultation
- The consultation document was then explained to them, including the background and the timeline for the activity.
- The pupils were divided into 2 groups to share and note their own ideas. The two groups then merged to have further discussion on these ideas, based on the rules of engagement as agreed at the beginning of the session.
- Following the feedback pupils were given information on the advantages and shortcomings noted in the consultation document, they were reminded of the timeline and it was explained to them that their comments would be fed into a

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

PUPILS' RESPONSES (GOOD REPRESENTATION OF PUPILS RANGING FROM YEAR 2-YEAR 6 – APPROX. 10 PUPILS)

What is a consultation?

- Meet with people to get their opinions
- To discover more things
- To lay down what's happening
- To get good ideas

What makes a good discussion:

- Listen
- Don't be afraid to share your ideas
- Give everyone a chance
- Think outside the box – be creative
- Collaborate

Benefits of the proposed plan

- When they go to this school, they will know Mrs Sibert
- They will be able to interact and communicate more
- If they communicate now, we give them advice for our school in the future
- We could be good role models for them
- End of year they could play and have a meet with us
- They could take part in our events, they can join Christmas concert
- They could have lunch with us
- They could have the same badges as us [i.e. a sense of belonging already]
- The peer supporters could go to Cogan nursery
- We could see our siblings more
- More interaction
- Once you get into Cogan Nursery you don't have to worry about getting into Cogan primary
- They'll know Mrs Sibert all the way through
- Mrs Sibert can go to the nursery to do assembly
- Mrs Sibert would like to run both schools
- Mrs Sibert can run more activities for the children
- We can help them with their concerts

Possible pitfalls of the proposed plan

- They could stop thinking for themselves
- If we're there too much they will keep having to stop their learning
- We don't want to interact too much because there's still Covid
- Not giving opportunities to other nurseries
- They shouldn't worry about older children judging them because everyone [needs to be] kind and inclusive

- Too much work for Mrs Sibert – it might make her too busy [to see pupils] so she will need support from pupils and staff
- Don't make them work too hard
- They don't get to meet a new head teacher when they move to the primary school
- There'll be a lot of names to remember

General comments

High regard for the Primary Head teacher and how her influence will benefit the nursery pupils.

METHODOLOGY WITH NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN (COGAN NURSERY)

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

COHORT: 5 NURSERY PUPILS (FIRST TERM – 1 / SECOND TERM - 4)

Good

Cogan is a big school,
They would have new toys,
It would have the same feeling [not that different]

Bad

We could lose nursery,
Reference to ghosts [suggesting they are a bit scared with the concept]?
Not knowing teachers
It could be bad because it is good here

Things pupils like about nursery:

mud kitchen,
puddle game (computer),
playdough,
bikes,
climbing

i.e. the range and variety of activities on offer to them

What they would want to keep:

Teachers and activities, not worried about losing anything but want to keep playing

Vote:

4 – for

1 - against

9. ANNEX E - RESPONSE FROM ESTYN

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

Estyn's response to the proposal by the Vale of Glamorgan Council to reconfigure nursery provision in Penarth from September 2022.

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.

Summary/ Conclusion

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has provided a comprehensive proposal which explains clearly the reasoning behind:

- amalgamating Bute Cottage Nursery School and Evenlode Primary School
- amalgamating Cogan Nursery School and Cogan Primary School.

Estyn is of the opinion that the proposal is likely to maintain the current standards in terms of education, provision, and leadership and management.

Description and benefits

The proposer has provided a clear and coherent rationale for this proposal. It follows the Council's plan for providing a primary school education model for 3-11 years olds across the county. The proposal would see the closure of the last two standalone nursery schools within the Vale of Glamorgan, and provision for nursery age children provided in the last two primary schools that do not offer it currently. The amalgamations would not involve catchment area changes or compulsory redundancies. The Council has provided detailed descriptions of the proposals along with the projected timetable for statutory procedures and for implementation of the proposals.

The proposer has set out the potential benefits clearly. For example, a single governance and accountability regime with a single headteacher and governing body with responsibility for all phases of education at each primary school. They also envisage revenue savings associated with increased running costs for standalone nursery schools which would release additional funding into the overall schools' funding formula. This is in addition to opportunities for making efficiency savings through economies of scale. Other benefits include prospects for greater professional development opportunities by being part of a primary school teaching across all phases of primary education. They have identified a couple of possible disadvantages to the proposal that includes disruption as pupils and staff become accustomed to new policy arrangements, and the possibility of the loss of a small school ethos as capacity increases. In the case of the second of these, the proposer has not outlined well how they will deal with this.

The Council has identified three possible risks associated with the proposal, one of which is the possibility of friction between amalgamated schools. The proposer feels confident that this risk can be mitigated by ensuring robust transition arrangements are implemented at an early stage of the proposal. However, the proposer has not considered the risks and disadvantages associated with the loss of a dedicated headteacher whose focus is providing effective early year's education, and the impact this may have on the quality of education provision.

The Council considered four alternatives to the preferred proposal and has listed the reasoning behind discounting each one fairly. Each alternative proposal would result in higher costs and in one case, major disruption to pupils and staff. The proposer has considered the impact of the changes on learner travel arrangements, but as there is no change to buildings or catchment areas, it's reasonable to assume that there will be no implications for transport and learner travel arrangements or on the accessibility of provision.

The proposal details admission numbers for primary schools and nursery schools serving Penarth and the nearby area. It seems that these proposals are unlikely to have a significant impact on any other schools in the local area as no change to the existing catchment area is proposed. The proposal is unlikely to affect Welsh medium education in the area as the Welsh medium school serving Penarth has over 20% capacity. The proposal refers to the current provision for the Welsh language within the schools and nurseries affected by the proposal, but is not specific about how the proposal supports the targets in the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The proposer has clearly outlined the financial case for the proposal and the savings associated with it.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The Council has considered the impact of the proposals on the quality and standards in education suitably, and considers that the proposals would provide a consistent approach to planning and delivery of the foundation phase and ease the transition process from nursery to primary school. The proposal considers the information from the most recent Estyn reports well for each school affected. However, the proposal

does not provide the view of the local authority or regional consortium on the quality of leadership and management in each of the providers.

It is reasonable to assume that the provision for pupils with Additional Learning Needs would continue to be identified at an early age and that the proposal would support a coordinated approach to planning for the needs of vulnerable pupils across the foundation phase. The proposal notes that a single leadership team and governing body across each school would result in the removal of duplication of management and governance functions.

The proposal takes into consideration specific factors as laid out in the code regarding school closures and when adding a nursery class to a school. In respect of these, the council conducted a community impact assessment and concluded that the proposal would likely have a neutral impact on the local community. The proposal is also unlikely to affect institutions, including private and third sector providers.

10. ANNEX F - MINUTES OF THE LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON THE PROPOSAL

LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

[THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 14TH OCTOBER, 2021](#)

REFERENCE FROM CABINET: 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2021

“C662 RECONFIGURING NURSERY PROVISION IN PENARTH (DL/ER) (SCRUTINY – LEARNING AND CULTURE) –

Councillors Gray and McCaffer had declared an interest in the item at the start of the meeting but had dispensations as LEA Governors to remain and vote at the meeting.

The report sought Cabinet approval to consult on a proposal to reconfigure nursery provision in Penarth by:

- amalgamating Bute Cottage Nursery School and Evenlode Primary School; and
- amalgamating Cogan Nursery School and Cogan Primary School.

Nursery provision would continue to be provided within the existing buildings with the overall management arrangements being changed.

Over the past 10 years the Council had sought to move towards a primary school model for 3 to 11 years education. This had included merging infant and junior schools, such as at Dinas Powys Primary School and St. Helens Primary School, as well as amalgamating separate nursery and primary provision, such as at Cadoxton Primary School.

Bute Cottage Nursery School and Cogan Nursery School were the only two standalone nursery schools within the Vale (i.e. separate entities with their own governing bodies and a delegated budget).

At the same time, Evenlode Primary School and Cogan Primary School were the only two remaining primary schools in the Vale which did not provide, or had approved plans to provide, nursery provision.

The headteacher post at Bute Cottage Nursery School became vacant at the end of August 2019 and was currently being covered through a temporary acting-up arrangement. The headteacher post at Cogan Nursery School became vacant at the end of August 2021 and would be covered for one year through a temporary acting up arrangement with St. Andrews Major CIW Primary School. This provided the opportunity for the Council to reconfigure nursery provision in a way that benefitted pupils and staff whilst also avoiding compulsory redundancies.

It was proposed that Evenlode Primary School and Bute Cottage Nursery School be merged. This would result in 96 part time nursery places being provided at Evenlode Primary School (on the existing Bute Cottage Nursery School site). It was also proposed that Cogan Primary School and Cogan Nursery School be merged, resulting in 96 part time nursery places being provided at Cogan Primary School (on the existing Cogan Nursery School site).

The main benefits of the proposal were:

- A smoother transition from nursery to primary education for pupils;
- Streamlined communication between parents/carers and staff with a single point of contact throughout all phases of primary education;
- A single governance and accountability regime with a single headteacher and governing body with responsibility for all phases of education at each primary school;
- Opportunities for greater professional development opportunities by being part of a primary school teaching across all phases of primary education;
- A single set of policies across all year groups, incorporating areas of best practice from the individual schools;
- A single vision, strategy and ethos across all phases;
- Generated revenue savings associated with increased running costs for standalone nursery schools which would release additional funding into the overall schools' funding formula;
- Opportunities to make efficiency savings through economies of scale and joined up procurement.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council was committed to ensuring that consultations were meaningful, relevant and appropriate for the communities that were involved, and the Council had a duty of care to ensure that proposals were clear, transparent, and reflective of those affected. This was a vision that could only be realised by working in partnership with schools, governors, parents and the wider communities the Council served.

Consultation would be undertaken with prescribed consultees in accordance with the School Organisation Code 2018. The Council would publish a Consultation Document, which would provide a comprehensive overview of the proposal, outlining any potential implications. Any person could respond to the consultation during the consultation period, either in writing or through completion of an online form hosted on the Council's website. Following the consultation, the Council would publish a consultation report, which would provide an overview of the feedback received, as well as outlining the Council's response to any issues raised. This would be presented to Cabinet for consideration.

The Deputy Leader said that communication had been received from individuals and groups in order to make their views known which would have responses produced assuring them that no decisions had been taken and there would be a full consultation process in which they could submit their views.

Councillor Gray said he had also received communication about the matter and that the report today was not an outcome and that there would be a full consultation. The Cabinet report, if agreed, would offer anyone with an interest in the matter the opportunity to take part in the consultation and he looked forward to seeing the responses.

Councillor King said he had also been approached on the matter, assured residents that no decisions had yet been made and said that the report was simply the start of a process to start a consultation. He asked the Deputy Leader to reply fully to a technical letter that had been received on the matter. The Deputy Leader said a full response would be prepared, but that all the issues raised could also be discussed as a part of the formal consultation process and documented in the final report that would come back to Cabinet for consideration.

The Leader referred to the detail contained in the report which was available online for those with an interest in the matter which could answer some questions, but that people would be able to express any further concerns through the formal consultation process.

This was a matter for Executive decision. Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the Director of Learning and Skills be authorised to undertake a consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Bute Cottage Nursery School and Evenlode Primary School from September 2022 by:

- Changing the lowest age range of pupils at Evenlode Primary School from 4 to 3, to include 96 part time nursery places;
- Increasing the capacity of Evenlode Primary School to accommodate the 96 part-time nursery places; and
- Discontinuing Bute Cottage Nursery School and transferring all staff and pupils of the nursery phase under the governance of Evenlode Primary School from September 2022.

(2) T H A T the Director of Learning and Skills be authorised to undertake a consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Cogan Nursery School and Cogan Primary School from September 2022 by:

- Changing the lowest age range of pupils at Cogan Primary School from 4 to 3, to include 96 part time nursery places;
- Increasing the capacity of Cogan Primary School to accommodate the 96 part-time nursery places; and
- Discontinuing Cogan Nursery School and transferring all staff and pupils of the nursery phase under the governance of Cogan Primary School from September 2022.

(3) T H A T the report be referred to the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee for consideration as part of the proposed consultation exercise.

Reasons for decisions

(1) To authorise the carrying out of a statutory consultation in compliance with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018 on the proposal to amalgamate Bute Cottage Nursery School and Evenlode Primary School from September 2022.

(2) To authorise the carrying out of a statutory consultation in compliance with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018 on the proposal to amalgamate Cogan Nursery School and Cogan Primary School from September 2022.

(3) To ensure that the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee is consulted on the proposals.”

11. ANNEX G – RESPONSES FROM GOVERNING BODIES

11.1. ANNEX G (1) – RESPONSE FROM BUTE COTTAGE GOVERNORS



Bute Cottage Nursery School

Bute Lane
Off Grove Place
Penarth
CF64 2ET

Tel/Ffôn : (029) 20702957

Email: btecottNS@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Bute Cottage Governing Body Response to Consultation on the proposals to reconfigure nursery provision in Penarth from September 2022. This response relates to Proposal 1.

Headline response of Bute Cottage Governing Body to these proposals: After due consideration and discussion we, the Governing Body, DO NOT support the implementation of these proposals. We believe that if these proposals were to be implemented in their current form, they would be very likely to have a negative impact on the high standards of nursery age provision and education currently delivered to 3-4 year olds within our catchment area.

I Current situation

Bute Cottage Nursery School is a long established early years provider offering excellent standards of education for 3-4 year olds in our catchment area. Beyond that, Bute Cottage Nursery School works in partnership with families and carers in providing for the broader development and welfare of these children in a highly specialist and hugely valued way. These standards are achieved via a blend of culture; leadership & governance; specialist staffing; autonomy & independence over direction setting and budget; its relationships with local families; and its unique setting.

The Nursery School has existed for over 45 years. During this time it has established itself as a unique and exceptional provider of early years education, nurturing and developing generations of local residents. In part this has been enabled by the wonderful location of the nursery school which offers extensive enclosed grounds

with a superb garden space. In the main however, it is the people who work at Bute Cottage Nursery School, who are at the heart of what is provided and have created such an exemplary learning climate for the 3-4 year old children who are fortunate enough to attend the nursery school. It is the view of the Governing Body that, over the past 3 years, the Nursery School has been exceptionally well led by Acting Head Teacher Mrs Amanda Gould, supported in our vision by a remarkably experienced teaching staff.

The headteacher, staff and Governing Body of Bute Cottage Nursery School all share one vision – to continue to deliver exceptional early years provision to the 3-4 year olds in our catchment area. It is people who bring places to life, imbuing them with values and meaning and ultimately creating experiences for those who inhabit them.

The strength of feeling around Bute Cottage Nursery School within the community can be evidenced by the number of signatures on the petition to ‘Save Bute Cottage’: over 700 signatures were added in the first 48 hours.

Culture

- The culture at Bute Cottage Nursery School today is one where the experience and wellbeing of the child is at the heart of every decision. Learning is achieved through play. Parents often speak of the ‘magic’ of Bute Cottage Nursery School. Children are safe to explore and are gently nurtured and supported to become happy, ambitious, capable learners who are confident, creative and healthy individuals, ready to contribute to the future of Wales and the wider world.

Leadership & Governance

- Our acting headteacher Mrs Gould has over 40 years of teaching experience and is recognised as a specialist in early years provision dedicating almost half of her working life to this age group.
- Mrs Gould’s approach has been instrumental in instigating ‘in the moment’ planning and teaching policies whilst preparing for the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales in the context of nursery age children. She is a progressive early years leader.
- There is a strong emphasis on continuous improvement; specifically focused on the unique needs of the target age group. Staff are well versed in a wide range of pedagogical approaches and use their experience, knowledge and research to inform decisions. They engage in action research and networking to ensure that the ethos and values of the school are constantly questioned, challenged and progressive. The child is at the heart of everything the school does.
- The Governing Body is made up of a strong set of individuals who are greatly invested in the continuation of the standards of education at the nursery school. It is worth noting that five members also have children at Evenlode Primary School and are equally invested in standards of education at Evenlode Primary School.

Teaching Staff

- Teaching staff have an average of over 20 years teaching experience each, with the majority of those years being dedicated to early years provision. They have close to 200 years teaching experience between them, with over 150 years being dedicated to early years education.
- Teachers at Bute Cottage Nursery School have chosen to specialise in early years provision because they share a passion and total commitment to teaching 3-4 year olds. The teaching staff consider it a privilege to work with, and teach, the children everyday. We are acutely aware that not every primary school teacher would be as delighted to work with this age group.
- The staff also cite the high levels of job satisfaction and pride in excellent standards that they experience from being part of such a well established, high performing team.
- Bute Cottage Nursery School is excellently positioned to deliver the new Curriculum for Wales because of the significant investment in staff to date including welsh language development, outdoor learning and child led in the moment learning through play. This professional development has resulted in Bute Cottage Nursery School being used as a showcase by the central south consortium to assist other schools in developing similar pedagogies. The school has recently achieved the Siarter Iaith Bronze Award and is the first Nursery to do so across the five Local Authorities of the CSC. It is currently working towards gaining the Silver Award. Bute Cottage Nursery School is a 'United Nations Rights Respecting School' (UNRRS) and proudly holds the Silver Award (July 2021). The school is working with other schools to share its work on its 'In the Moment' approach to teaching and learning, having been recognised by its Improvement Partner and the CSC Early Years Adviser. It has also been promoted as an exemplar to other schools in relation to its work on Forest School and outdoor learning.
- The school's setting and highly trained staff enable children with complex needs to enjoy an accessible mainstream school environment alongside the in-house delivery of more common developmental supports at nursery age, such as speech and language and emotional programmes. Staff work closely with a wide range of agencies to ensure that all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, receive appropriate support. The school has created bespoke programmes for children who need specific support. SPARKLES is a nurture programme, GAMERS helps children to learn how to play appropriately with a range of provision on offer across the learning environment, and CWTCH provides support for children who need support with well-being. More Able and Talented children attend the Thinking Group and lead the school's work on UNRRS. Maths Monsters support children with numerical reasoning and mathematical skills.
- SPARKLES has been identified by an Improvement Partner as something to celebrate and share with other schools/settings.

Budget

- Bute Cottage Nursery School is currently provided with adequate funds to deliver excellent standards of provision to 3-4 year olds at the nursery.
- The leadership of the nursery is empowered to direct the use of the funding in the best interests of its children.

- The stated pupil funding level is the Government allocated level of funding that all 3 to 4 year olds in Wales should receive regardless of whether they are in a stand-alone nursery or an amalgamated setting.

Independence & Autonomy

- Being an independent school with our own site, budget, leader, staff and governing body allows us to create complete focus on the 3-4 year old children we teach. In the same way as all other nurseries in Wales, we focus on delivering excellent learning provision and establishing the new Learning for Wales curriculum. But we do not have to compete for limited resources to deliver our aims and ambition. Our independence is one of the main factors in enabling our standards.

Site location

- Bute Cottage Nursery School, with the help of the local community, has invested significant time and effort in its current site; and it is a critical component of the learning offer and experience. In particular, the emphasis on learning through outdoor play and the associated emphasis on the environment and sustainability has a lasting impact on attendees.

Transition

- The nursery school recognises the critical transition from home to Nursery and exemplifies the approach recommended by Donaldson of working hand in hand with families and carers in managing this transition. Examples include Stay and Play sessions through which parents and carers can observe and contribute to their child's learning experience.
- The nursery school also currently invests significant time and effort in ensuring children and their families are supported with smooth transition to primary school. The Governing Body is not aware of any concerns raised about the quality of those transition relationships and links.

II Future Impact of Proposed Changes

If the proposed changes were to be made the Governing Body believe that a number of factors that are fundamental to enabling current standards of provision are highly likely to be adversely affected. The interdependency and relationship between these factors could be critically compromised, leading to the current standards of provision worsening.

Culture

- There is little assurance provided in the consultation of the intent to understand and maintain the unique culture currently benefitting the children and families of Bute Cottage Nursery School. Overall the Governing Body consider there to be a significant risk that all the benefits of the long established culture at Bute Cottage Nursery School could be lost and subsumed to the culture at Evenlode.

Leadership & Governance

- The Head Teacher at Evenlode has a broad scope of responsibility with children currently ranging between 4-11 years of age.
- Progressive teaching methods specific to 3 to 4 year olds may not be as well supported under one leadership and management team responsible for a wider age range.
- Amalgamating with Evenlode could mean that the unique focus given to 3-4 year old pupil experience could be diluted among the competing priorities of the school.

Teaching Staff

- The consultation states greater professional development is a benefit of the merger, however this fails to recognise the early years specialism of the staff by choice, nor of the ongoing professional development undertaken by all staff. The Governing Body has been long assured of the current emphasis on staff development.
- If the proposals were to go ahead, Bute Cottage Nursery School teaching staff would become part of the Evenlode teaching staff. The Council cannot guarantee that the current Bute Cottage Nursery School teaching body would not be redeployed within a broader integrated model. They could be moved to other areas of teaching and we could lose the benefit of all their years of experience and expertise for 3-4 year olds
- The consultation does not rule out future redundancies under the new proposals, nor guarantee that after the 12month 'sunset' period is over, staff are not at risk of detrimental changes to their current Grade, and/or, terms and conditions through contractual change in line with the future staffing needs of Evenlode Primary School.

Budget

- The most substantive argument put forward in the case for change is considered to be financial: to attract a financial premium per pupil and benefit from efficiencies through amalgamation.
- There is little detail on how the stated savings will be achieved.
- The amalgamation will not fully address the funding deficit at Evenlode Primary School.
- The poor funding of Evenlode Primary School is a very real and ongoing issue that should be considered separately by the Local Authority as pupils at Evenlode receive far less funding than other pupils within the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Adding a further 48 full time equivalent (FTE) children's money along with 48 FTE children to teach will make no difference and the proposed £70,000 reduction in funding is likely to adversely affect all children. Newly added nursery children would then be part of the lowest funded age 3 – 11 primary school in the Vale.
- It is inconceivable that decreasing the total budget between the two schools by £70,000 while expecting the organisations to also absorb the costs involved

in reorganisation, will not adversely impact the educational standards for all pupils.

- There is no assurance provided that investment in nursery provision will be maintained at current levels in the amalgamated model.
- Given the above, the Governing Body's view is that there is a significant risk that investment in nursery provision could be diluted over time. Furthermore, the predicated efficiencies may dilute the unique focus on early years provision currently provided by Bute Cottage Nursery School leading to a significant adverse impact on current standards of education and experience provided by the Nursery.

Independence & Autonomy

- The consultation document does not provide a strong commitment to recognise and maintain the unique elements of Bute Cottage Nursery School's culture and autonomy that has resulted in it securing such a highly valued status among the families of current and past attendees, and within the Vale of Glamorgan and Central South Consortium.
- There is a significant risk that the nursery age provision would lose all independence and autonomy and all the benefits this currently brings in terms of focus on delivering excellence for 3-4 year olds. It would simply become part of Evenlode Primary School.
- The consultation document references the benefit of a single set of policies across all year groups highlighting a lack of understanding that nursery children require a specialist approach. Having a single set of policies should be seen as a disadvantage to any merger as again, it would be detrimental to any nursery age children.

Site Location

- We understand that the location of nursery provision for our catchment area would, in the short term, remain located at the current Bute Cottage Nursery School site. The report does then however go on to say: *'should the proposals be approved, the Council would prioritise relocating nursery provision at Evenlode Primary School on to a single site'*. Moreover, the potential for co-location is cited as a potential benefit on multiple occasions.
- Some of the perceived benefits of the merger are predicated on a future relocation of the Bute Cottage Nursery School site. However, we are concerned that the splitting of the consultation process into a two staged approach fails to recognise this. Moreover, we are concerned that the strength of feeling in relation to the benefits of Bute Cottage Nursery School's site location, including it being a quiet and safe environment uniquely designed for 3 to 4 years olds, and the potential negative impacts of co-location including additional traffic and congestion, which are already a significant problem on the Evenlode site, are not going to be taken into account in this first phase.

Transition

- As noted above, significant efforts are already made in ensuring a smooth transition between Bute Cottage Nursery School and relevant primary schools. The transition between Nursery and Reception will always be significant, not

least with the move from a part time to a full time school day, and transition to be part of a larger school environment. This will not change if the two schools are amalgamated: children would still need to adapt and acclimatise to the Evenlode setting and to a full school day. The Governing Body is not of the view that the transition arrangements would be significantly improved under the merger, and are of the view that any perceived benefits would be outweighed by the risks of the loss to the dedicated early years focus cited above.


III The Case for Change

The report states that provision for 3 to 11 year olds under one management and leadership team is desirable, but provides no evidence that this will benefit Bute Cottage Nursery School pupils.

We understand that the council has a stated aim to 'move towards a primary school model for 3 to 11 years education'. The consultation lacks a strong rationale or compelling vision for this model and does little to recognise the benefits offered by a plurality of provision. It does little to recognise the unique offer provided by Bute Cottage Nursery School, and to the attachment of local families to Bute Cottage Nursery School as a crucial part of their community fabric.

Both Evenlode Primary School and Bute Cottage Nursery School are currently recognised as exemplary organisations, and rightly so. They have strong organisational cultures, standards and attributes, again recognised and valued by the local community. However, they are different organisations. In the absence of a compelling vision for an amalgamated organisation, it is therefore the view of Bute Cottage's Governing Body that the proposals are not in the best interests of current and future children of Bute Cottage Nursery School. We fear that, if the proposals were to go ahead, there would be a significant detrimental effect on the education, and wider experience, of our early years pupils.

The Governing Body of Bute Cottage is committed to seeing both organisations, and the relationship between them, go from strength to strength.

 20/10/21

Richard Disley, on behalf of the Governing Body of Bute Cottage Nursery School.

From the Chair of Governors
Evenlode Primary School
Evenlode Avenue
Penarth
Vale of Glamorgan
CF64 3PD
Tel. 029 2070 2168



*Always being our best,
for ourselves
and for each other*

3rd November 2021

Re: Evenlode Primary School and Bute Cottage Nursery School Amalgamation

Dear 21st Century Schools,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Governing Body at Evenlode Primary School. This is the school's formal response to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Consultation on its plans to amalgamate our school with Bute Cottage Nursery School.

We believe that the needs of children are best met when schools and teachers collaborate and are able to maintain close links with the communities they serve, and that we can build on the already strong collaboration between both schools for the benefit of all the children in the two communities. We are aware that each setting has its own unique identity, and we strongly believe that this can be maintained with a shared ethos. The proposed amalgamation would enable the transition between Nursery and Reception to be seamless, and impact positively on the wellbeing and emotional development of all our learners.

We would like to start by highlighting the excellent work that already goes on between staff at both schools to ensure the transition of pupils between nursery and primary school is as smooth as possible. This collaborative approach enables staff at both schools to prepare children in the best possible way to enrol at Evenlode each year.

As we understand it, the current proposals, if implemented, include the nursery remaining on its current site at Bute Cottage and with its current capacity. Although this would become part of Evenlode Primary School, there are no plans for any staff redundancies, or to change any personnel between sites. The governors at Evenlode recognise the specialist provision and expertise of the staff at Bute Cottage Nursery.

Educational benefits

It is our view that the amalgamation of Bute Cottage Nursery and Evenlode Primary School would have the following educational benefits:

- By being part of the same school community from the day they start Nursery provision, learners will benefit from an even stronger transition process and

allow nursery pupils to build bonds with staff and other children. The amalgamation would provide more strategic opportunities for joint working to support the transition from the nursery site into the reception classrooms on the primary site. Staff knowing children from the start of their learning journey will enhance understanding of each child and their individual strengths and needs.

- Enhancing professional development of staff - deeper collaboration and the sharing of specialist expertise and knowledge of early years provision. This will enhance even further the early years provision, and opportunities for learning and development for the children in these communities.
- With the statutory implementation of the Curriculum for Wales in September 2022, the proposed amalgamation would be timely in ensuring the curriculum approaches of both settings dovetail and complement each other to ensure that all learners have a firm and consistent grounding at the start of their academic journey.
- Partnership with Parents will be strengthened further. By being part of the same community from the day children start Nursery provision, Parents and Carers will be able to build relationships with staff across both settings more easily.
- Governance of both settings will be strengthened, with the amalgamated governing bodies working together to ensure the best provision for children from Nursery to Year Six.

Wider community benefits

We strongly believe there are many opportunities for community improvement under the proposals.

These include:

- Better communication with members of both school communities, which naturally have a large crossover of membership between the two schools given their close geographical proximity and shared parent members.
- Better coordination surrounding school drop off and collection arrangements with parents, carers, and wrap-around care facilities.
- Development of wrap around care facilities for Parents, for example access to 'Saplings' out of hours club.
- Increased use of school facilities across a wider community membership
- Improved opportunities for professional development across all phases of primary education for staff looking to develop their careers further.
- Although not expected to be significant we even believe that local business links and transport will be improved with a larger coordinated approach to these areas.

Relocating nursery provision

As governors we recognise the unique setting that is offered at Bute Cottage Nursery School. There are many strengths and important features that have been developed over the years on site that make it the ideal teaching and learning environment.

A very public campaign to “Save Bute Cottage” has drawn on the emotions of the local community and garnered lots of support publicly. We also recognise that this is misleading the public because there are no plans under this consultation process or plans to change any of these buildings, locations or features that are so loved by so many.

At this stage, we just want to add that it is our intention, under any subsequent plan to relocate the nursery provision onto the Evenlode site, that we will do everything we can to transfer all these strengths onto our site. We truly believe that Evenlode has its own unique setting within our extensive, peaceful grounds and that there is plenty of space to accommodate everything currently on offer to the nursery children when the time comes to move home in the future. By supporting this proposed amalgamation we believe we are truly “Saving Bute Cottage.”

Financial observations

It is our general view that by amalgamating our schools there will be general efficiencies and shared purchasing that will result in some financial savings. However, we are not sure that many of these will be realised with the school operating across a split site.

As there are no plans to make any redundancies and we are expected to continue to operate the Bute Cottage site as it currently exists, we cannot see where the council can find the identified £70,000.00 savings from within the existing school budgets, without putting pressure on already limited classroom resources.

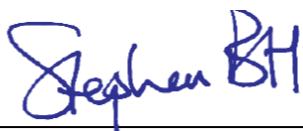
Savings identified in the consultation document for site maintenance for example are unlikely to be able to be procured as one contract due to the different locations for works needing to be carried out across the two sites. Site maintenance contracts are also more likely to be procured by the Council from other capital maintenance or environmental development budgets and it may be that it is planned that the savings will be made from these areas and not as identified from the existing school budgets.

We believe the savings will be much smaller initially until the resulting school is embedded and administration systems are established and efficient. In fact we would ask the council to consider maintaining the budgets allocated to both schools initially at their current levels at least until the amalgamation has been established and we become more aware of the costs involved in the running of the nursery site. This will ensure that at this time we are able to allocate additional resources needed to embed the new curriculum and to put additional resources in place to counter any pandemic gaps that may have emerged over the past two years.

We certainly support the principal that savings can be identified as part of this process and that they may be realised as part of any longer-term strategic aim to co-locate the nursery onto the Evenlode site in any future process.

As a governing body we commend this proposal and ask members of the council to support its progress. We are prepared to work together with the council and governors of Bute Cottage Nursery School to develop a comprehensive transition plan. As Governors, we also promise to exercise our responsibility to challenge and support this process fully and fairly as it is developed in the coming year. As always, our decisions are made in the best interests of the children and staff in our school community.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Burkitt-Harrington

Cadeirydd y Llywodraethwyr

Chair of Governors



Ysgol Gynradd Cogan Primary School
'Encourage Effort: Celebrate Success'

From the Chair of Governors

October 2021

Open Letter

Re: Cogan Primary School and Cogan Nursery School Amalgamation

Dear Cogan School Community,

We are writing this letter on behalf of the Governing Body at Cogan Primary School. It is our intention to set out our position on how we intend to respond to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Consultation on its plans to amalgamate our school with Cogan Nursery School.

We believe that the needs of children are best met when schools and teachers collaborate and are able to maintain close links with the communities they serve, and that we can build on the already strong collaboration between both schools for the benefit of all the children in the two communities. We are aware that each setting has its own unique identity, and we strongly believe that this can be maintained with a shared ethos. The proposed amalgamation would enable the transition between Nursery and Reception to be seamless, and impact positively on the wellbeing and emotional development of all our learners.

We would like to start by highlighting the excellent work that already goes on between staff at both schools to ensure the transition of pupils between nursery and primary school is as smooth as possible. This collaborative approach enables staff at both schools to prepare children in the best possible way to enrol at Cogan each year.

The current proposals, if implemented, include the nursery remaining on its current site at Cogan Nursery and with its current capacity. Although this would become part of Cogan Primary School, there are no plans for any staff redundancies. The governors at Cogan recognise the specialist provision and expertise of the staff at Cogan Nursery.

Educational benefits

It is our view that the amalgamation of Cogan Nursery and Cogan Primary School would have the following educational benefits:

- By being part of the same school community from the day they start Nursery provision, learners will benefit from an even stronger transition process and allow nursery pupils to build bonds with staff and other children. The amalgamation would provide more strategic opportunities for joint working to support the transition from the nursery site into the reception classrooms on the primary site. Staff knowing children from the start of their learning journey will enhance understanding of each child and their individual strengths and needs.
- Enhancing professional development of staff - deeper collaboration and the sharing of specialist expertise and knowledge of early years provision. This will enhance even further the early years provision, and opportunities for learning and development for the children in these communities.
- With the statutory implementation of the Curriculum for Wales in September 2022, the proposed amalgamation would be timely in ensuring the curriculum approaches of both settings dovetail and complement each other to ensure that all learners have a firm and consistent grounding at the start of their academic journey.
- Partnership with Parents will be strengthened further. By being part of the same community from the day children start Nursery provision, Parents and Carers will be able to build relationships with staff across both settings more easily.
- Governance of both settings will be strengthened, with the amalgamated governing bodies working together to ensure the best provision for children from Nursery to Year Six.

Wider community benefit

We strongly believe there are many opportunities for community improvement under the proposals. These include:

- Better communication with members of both school communities, which naturally have a large crossover of membership between the two schools given their very close geographical proximity and shared parent members.
- Better coordination surrounding school drop off and collection arrangements with parents, carers, and wrap-around care facilities.
- Increased use of school facilities across a wider community membership.
- Improved opportunities for professional development across all phases of primary education for staff looking to develop their careers further.

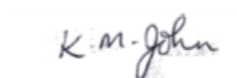
As a governing body we commend this proposal and ask members of our school community to respond to the consultation process after consideration of this open letter. We want to ensure that all views are represented and can be considered by the council fully when the time comes. As Governors, we also promise to exercise our responsibility to support this current consultation process fully and fairly.

The consultation documents and response form are available at:
www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/nurseryprovisionpenarth

The closing date for responses to this consultation is the 5th November 2021.

If you have any questions, or would like a hardcopy then please contact a member of the 21st Century Schools Team on 01446 709828 or email 21stcenturyschools@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,



Kath John
Cadeirydd y Llywodraethwyr
Chair of Governors

Headteacher / Pennaeth: Susan Sibert BA Ed (Hons), MA Ed, NPQH, NNEB

Pill Street, Cogan, Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan CF64 2JS Tel: 029 20708497 email: coganps@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Website: coganprimary.ik.org Twitter: @CoganPrimary Founded 1884