



## EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8TH NOVEMBER 2016

**SUBJECT: WELSH MEDIUM PROVISION – CAERPHILLY BASIN**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To respond to the request made at the Scrutiny Committee on 27th September, which also requested details on the impact upon English medium provision in the area.

### 2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 2.1 The report considers provision of school places to ensure the Council's key strategies are best achieved.
- 2.2 The report links directly to the Education for Life, sustainability, regeneration and equality strategies. The report also links to the Learning theme of Caerphilly Delivers, the Local Service Board single integrated plan.
- 2.3 The report contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016. In particular A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving welsh language (in the context of heritage, language and culture) and A prosperous Wales (in the context of a well skilled and educated economy) and a more Equal wales.

### 3. THE REPORT

- 3.1 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to supply sufficient school places, subject to parental preference, and in so doing requires determining the number, size, composition and location of its schools.
- 3.2 The current Welsh medium nursery provision within the Caerphilly Basin area is as follows :-

	Pupil Numbers	Admission Numbers
YGG Caerffili	55	55
Ysgol Y Castell	67	65
Ysgol Ifor Bach	35	38

157 of the 158 nursery places have been allocated on this basis.

3.3 The corresponding admission numbers in 2010/11 were as follows :-

	Admission Numbers
YGG Caerffili	45
Ysgol Y Castell	52
Ysgol Ifor Bach	34

Hence, the combined admission number has increased from 131 to 158 in 6 years, an increase in 27 places per year group.

3.4 Despite the nursery year group reaching capacity, there are presently surplus places in the 3 Welsh medium primary schools, as later year groups are lower in number. Presently, the number of surplus places amount to :-

YGG Caerffili	55
Ysgol Y Castell	80
Ysgol Ifor Bach	3

3.5 The September 2016 overall nursery cohort is the highest projected, as follows :-

2015/16	2031 (actual)
2016/17	2105
2017/18	2052
2018/19	2068

3.6 On this basis the present 157 Welsh medium nursery pupils in the Caerphilly Basin may be the highest number over the 4 year period shown, but the completion of the Y Gwyndy campus is likely to promote further demand in the area.

3.7 Cabinet considered a report as long ago as October, 2003, which identified a potential shortfall in Welsh medium primary provision in the Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen area.

3.8 The present pupil numbers from the Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen area attending the Caerphilly Basin Welsh medium primary schools amounts to 89, as follows :-

YGG Caerffili	27
Ysgol Y Castell	62
Ysgol Ifor Bach	Nil

3.9 The Welsh Government are due to announce details of Band B (2019-2024) of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme soon. In view of the above details, it is very likely that additional Welsh medium primary provision within the Caerphilly Basin will be a priority consideration.

3.10 In the event that this occurs, then there would longer term be a need to review secondary Welsh medium provision within the County Borough, albeit currently there are projected to be sufficient places until 2025 at least.

3.11 All of these assumptions could be affected by a number of factors, including :-

- First Minister's announcement of a target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050, approximately doubling the present number;
- Popularity of the Y Gwyndy 0-19 campus;
- Future LDP / housing proposals / developments.

3.12 The situation as regards English medium primary schools in the Caerphilly Basin area is as follows :-

	Surplus Places (Total)	Surplus Places (Nursery Year)
Bedwas High feeder schools	251	48
St. Cenydd feeder schools	189	64
St. Martins feeder schools	59	4
	<b>499</b>	<b>116</b>

3.13 Only 3 of the 14 English medium schools at nursery age are full, with another 3 close to their admission number. As with Welsh medium, the future LDP/housing proposals/developments will be critical with school places in the area.

3.14 If the number of pupils in the Caerphilly Basin area remained static then any increase in Welsh medium provision/demand would result in a corresponding reduction in English medium provision/demand and vice versa.

#### **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Specific school organisation proposals would be implemented in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2013. As part of this process, detailed equality impact assessments will be developed.

#### **5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

5.1 The report contributes in terms of the 5 ways of working in the context of long term strategy and vision, integration approach, diversity of the population, consultation and collaboration and prevention of surplus places or meeting increased demand.

5.2 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals and in particular in the context of :

- Corporate planning,
- Financial planning, and
- Asset management

5.3 An increase in Welsh Medium provision would link directly to the First Minister's announcement of a Welsh Language target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050. This development would also complement other Welsh Government key strategies such as the development of both the Welsh Language Standards and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP).

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 These will be dependant upon specific proposals, the detail of which will form part of the School Organisation Statutory Processes.

#### **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 These will be dependant upon specific proposals.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 The draft report was distributed as detailed below. All comments received have been reflected in the report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 Members are requested to note the existing provision in relation to Welsh medium provision in the Caerphilly Basin and any consequential impact upon English medium provision.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To apprise Members of existing provision.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 School Organisation Code 2013 (Welsh Government)  
School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013  
School Admissions Code 2013 (Welsh Government)  
School Admissions Appeal Code 2013 (Welsh Government)  
School Standards & Framework Act 1998  
Welsh Government Circular 21/2011 Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales  
Education and Inspections Act 1996  
Education Act 1996  
Education Act 2002  
Equality Act 2010

Author: Bleddyn Hopkins, Assistant Director, Our Schools Our Future  
E-mail: hopkib@caerphilly.gov.uk  
Consultees: Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive  
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer  
Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services & S151  
Councillor Derek Havard, Cabinet Member, Education & Lifelong Learning  
Councillor Wynne David, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor James Pritchard, Vice Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee  
Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer  
Lynne Donovan, Acting Head of People Management and Development  
Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager  
Sue Richards, Principal Finance Officer  
Andrea West, School Admission and Exclusion Manager  
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager

Background Papers: School Places Plan 2013/14-2023/24  
Starting School 2016/17  
21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Strategic Outline Programme.