

Notes of a meeting held with the school council of Cilfynydd Primary School

Monday 19th November 2018 at 2:30 pm

Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in the Pontypridd area

Present

Esther Thomas (ET), Temporary Service Director for Access & Inclusion Services
Lisa Howell (LH), Senior 21st Century Schools Officer
Tim Britton (TB), Senior Challenge Advisor
Sophie Nicholls (SN), Graduate Officer 21st Century Schools
10 pupils – members of the Cilfynydd Primary School Council

ET explained that the Council are looking to reorganise some of the schools in Pontypridd. The changes would include new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, a new Welsh primary school in Rhydyfelin and moving the school sixth forms into larger sixth forms in Bryncelynnog and the college.

ET went into more detail about the proposal that would directly affect the pupils in Cilfynydd Primary, as the school would close and become part of the Pontypridd 3-16 School. The pupils would be part of a larger school and would not have to move when they reach secondary school age. ET explained that although the children would be part of one school, the younger pupils would be separate from the older pupils and would have their own yard to play on. Pupils would have new or refurbished classrooms and would be able to use some specialist facilities in the school such as the P.E sports hall, playing fields, science laboratories and ICT rooms from a younger age.

ET explained that the purpose of the meeting with the pupils today was for the Council to hear and record what the pupils think about the proposals, as their views are very important to the Council.

ET asked pupils if they had any questions about the proposals.

Q. How are you going to make sure we receive a 21st Century education in the new school?

- A. We would be spending a lot of money on the buildings, but we haven't yet decided exactly what will happen to the buildings because this is the start of the process. If this is passed by the elected members, pupils would move to the new school in 2022. We would put lots of new ICT equipment into the school and you would have access to the other facilities such as the science laboratories. You would also have access to your own large play area and the grass playing fields.
- A. You would have nice new classrooms and we would ensure that you have the best teachers, as you have good teachers now. You would have excellent new resources in your classes.
- A. We also look at the environment and if we can, we try to put energy efficient

technology into the building too.

Q. *What outdoor resources will you be putting in the new school?*

- A. Firstly, we need to go and have a look what is there now. The facilities there now are for older children so we would need to do a lot of work to make sure it was safe for younger pupils. In other similar schools, we have put fencing, outdoor classrooms, and soft play for the younger pupils. There are also facilities there for you to use such as the grass pitches. What would you like us to put there?

Pupils - A netball court. Football field. We have a trim trail that we would like too. We would like some grass too. I like exercising so maybe you could put things outside that we could exercise on.

Q. *How will you make sure the younger children are safe in the new school?*

- A. That is a question that many parents asked us when we built the new schools. All of the play areas will be completely separate. There is a big building there now and we could possibly move some of the areas around to make sure the school suits you and that primary aged pupils would have your own play areas, toilets and hall.

- A. There would be some areas that you can share but only when your teachers are with you.

Q. *There are lots of roads there. How will you make sure we are all safe walking to and from the new school?*

- A. We ask experts to come and look at everyone's routes to school. They look at pavements, the number of cars and where you would cross the road. They will make sure that it is safe for you to get to school. They have put speed bumps in Porth to make sure cars go slow by the school. There are two separate zebra crossings in Porth too. Sometimes they would make us put a puffin crossing in with the green and red man lights. They are already looking at this and they will advise us on how we can make it as safe as possible for you. Whatever they say we will have to do because your safety is the most important for us.

ET - Do any of you currently cross the road when you come to school?

Pupil - Yes and we have to look both ways.

ET - There are pavements on the road and you have to make sure you are crossing safely too and use any new crossings that are put in place, or traffic calming measures.

Q. *At break time and dinnertime, how will you make sure that younger children feel safe?*

- A. There will be specific playgrounds for you to play in with fencing too. Your teachers and support staff will also be with you looking after you. In many of our 3-16 schools, younger pupils actually have different play times to the older pupils. There will always be supervisors too. There are also children that you can go to

if you are worried about something, like you have the buddy bench here. There won't be anything to make you feel uncomfortable and if you did how would you deal with that?

Pupil - Tell a teacher.

TB - Yes that is the best way to deal with this. You have to say something if you don't feel safe and your teachers can deal with it.

ET – Secondary school age pupils have lessons all afternoon usually so it would be down to the Head teacher and staff to decide when play times are for the younger pupils.

Q. *Where will the primary department be situated on the site?*

A. We don't know yet. We will go to the school and have a look at the site. We need to make sure that it has nice outdoor space and that we can make it safe for you. We may need to build new parts of the buildings such as a new hall or canteen area. We are looking at this and if this proposal goes through we have a planning consultation, which is an open event for your families to come to and then you can tell us what you think about it and if you have any ideas to contribute.

We want to hear your ideas then too.

Q. *What will the new school be called?*

A. That isn't for us to decide. The new governing body will put ideas forward and then the local elected members will decide what the name will be. It could have Pontypridd in the name, in the same way that Tonyrefail have kept their name. Tonypany have changed their name to Nantgwyn School. You could put ideas forward to your governors.

The new governors at Cwmaman asked the pupils what they would like to call the school and then there was a vote. The Council then voted on the final option.

ET - Do you think it should remain as Pontypridd?

Pupils - Yes.

Q. *How will you make sure that the new school is at the heart of the community at Cilfynydd?*

A. When we build new schools we make sure that we build new community spaces. We call them community schools but that means that we want to make sure people from the community can use them. They need their own space that is separate from the school to make sure you are safe. We have outdoor space like 3G pitches and community teams book them to use for training and parties. It will be up to community groups and the schools to decide how they use it.

The Welsh Government are giving us half of the money for the school and they make sure that we put those facilities in place.

Teacher - There are no groups that use this school now.

Q. *What will happen to this school after we move?*

- A. This proposal would have to be approved first, but we do not know what will happen to it yet. What do you think should happen?

Pupil - I think it should stay as a school.

ET - We don't know what will happen yet. Some schools are being used for other things like clubs. Sometimes they are knocked down and the land used to build houses. It depends on the condition of the building and the Council's Estates Department decide what to do with it. They wouldn't leave it empty because it could become vandalised.

Q. *Why are you knocking the school down?*

- A. We don't know what we will do yet, but as I said we are looking at the condition of the schools and there are currently spaces in Pontypridd High which are costing lots of money. The buildings there are much newer. I know that this school looks lovely and it is historic, but there are better buildings in Pontypridd High that could be better for your education and could be used better by you. We don't think that this is a bad school, but the building isn't very good.

Q. *What happens at post 16?*

- A. The school-based option would be Bryncelynnog, or pupils could choose to go to Coleg Y Cymoedd.

Q. *How will you make sure all of the children like the new school?*

- A. There will probably be many of the same teachers. Also, you said you like your classrooms but there will probably be better classrooms there. There will be easier transitions for pupils that go to year 7 as they are already in the school. We will try to make sure everyone is happy there.

We come and speak to you to make sure we get your opinions. If you discuss this with your class, you can let us know what you and all of your friends think of the plans.

A pupil thanked the officers present for answering the pupils' prepared questions.