

Proposals to Reorganise School Provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn Areas

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Annex C of the School Organisation Code.

As part of our proposals in respect of the above, we are planning to undertake some reorganisation of Welsh Medium Primary education provision in this area of Rhondda Cynon Taf, which will not only improve and enhance the learning environment but also increase Welsh Medium pupil capacity. We are proposing to close the Welsh Medium stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School, which is a dual language school and YGG Pont Sion Norton; Welsh Medium pupils attending both schools will transfer to a new, full Welsh Medium school, that will be constructed on the former site of Heol y Celyn, in a new building that will be constructed to 21st Century School standards. This will of course be subject to parental preference.

Our proposals in respect of the Hawthorn area involve the closure of Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol y Celyn Primary School, and the creation of a new, 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school on the sites of Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary, which are immediately adjacent to each other. The pupils from these schools, together with the pupils from the English Medium stream of Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school, subject to parental preference.

The vacated Heol y Celyn site will be cleared and a new Welsh Medium Community Primary school will be constructed in its place. This new building will be constructed to 21st Century Schools standards and will be a much improved provision compared with the two current school buildings. Information on current building condition and suitability is contained within the consultation document. The capacity of the new school building will be 480 pupils, plus 60 Nursery places, which represents an increase over the existing YGG Pont Sion Norton combined with the Welsh stream of Heol y Celyn of almost 100 places. We consider that this capacity will be sufficient to cater for current and forecasted pupil demand and it will also allow for growth in the Welsh Medium sector.

Any services provided by both YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn outside of school hours, such as breakfast clubs, after school clubs and other community facilities will continue in the new building. Any links with outside organisations such as the Urdd, Menter Iaith etc will be maintained and hopefully strengthened and expanded. The new school building will have a community room facility and the headteacher will be encouraged to consider using this facility to increase participation in the Welsh Language, such as offering opportunities to parents and other community members to learn Welsh.

Information on the standards of provision at both of the existing schools is again contained within the consultation document. It must be stressed that YGG Pont Sion Norton is a well-established, successful school and whereas this proposal involves its closure, its provision will in fact be relocated to a brand new building to be constructed less than 2 miles away from its current site. We would therefore expect this new school to closely replicate and, hopefully improve upon the current provision and high standards currently available at YGG, Pont Sion Norton.

One of the main targets outlined in the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) is to increase the number of children receiving education through the medium of Welsh, which will assist the local authority in working towards the Welsh Government target of having 1 million people in Wales able to speak Welsh by 2050. One of the ways highlighted to work towards achieving this is to consider making our three dual language schools, of which Heol y Celyn is one, in to full Welsh Medium provisions. We consider that this proposal will achieve this aim and in addition, the extra pupil capacity in a new, state of the art building will hopefully encourage more parents to choose a Welsh Medium education for their children.