

Proposal to change the nature of provision at Ysgol Y Felin

Objection Report



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Executive Summary

The Consultation Period

On the 22nd February 2021 Carmarthenshire County Council published proposals to:

- Change the nature of provision in the Foundation Phase from dual stream to Welsh medium.

The consultation period commenced on the 22nd February 2021 in line with the publication of the proposal and closed on 16th July 2021, with a total of 40 responses received (excluding the responses received from Estyn and the pupils' consultation event) in response to the formal consultation.

Following the end of the consultation period, a Consultation Report was prepared summarising the observations received and the Local Authority's responses to these observations. The report was presented to the Cabinet for a decision on whether or not to publish a Statutory Notice. On the 6th December 2021 the Cabinet resolved to proceed to publish a Statutory Notice.

Publication of the Statutory Notice

Following the Cabinet's approval, Carmarthenshire County Council published the proposal by way of a Statutory Notice on 10th January 2022 for 28 days until 6th February 2022.

The table below notes the objections received. It must be noted that of the 4 objections received, they were received prior to the end of the consultation period.

Objections Received	
Online survey	Total 4

Responses Received

The responses received to the Statutory Notice are similar to the observations received during the consultation period.

Workshops

Following the end of the Statutory Notice period on the 6th February 2022, a workshop was held to analyse the objections received.

The Objection Report

The objection report summarises the submissions received in objection to the proposal and the Local Authority's responses to these submissions.

For completeness, these responses have also been included within this report and the themes for the objections received are as follows:

Concerns

- Theme 1 - Status Quo is Successful
- Theme 2 – Coping with the Welsh Language
- Theme 3 - Transfer to English Medium Schools
- Theme 4 - Additional Learning Needs (ALN)
- Theme 5 - Parents won't be able to help support their child

Next Steps

The objection report will be presented to the Cabinet and then ultimately to the County Council who will determine whether or not to implement the proposal.

Summary of Objections received and Local Authority Responses

Point Number	Point Raised	Local Authority Response	Number of responses raising this point	% of responses raising this point
Concerns Raised				
1.	<p><u>Status Quo is Successful</u></p> <p>Respondents noted that the current linguistic arrangements at the school are working well and there is no need for change.</p> <p>Respondents noted that the school should remain as dual stream as it gives the local community a choice in which language, they wish their children to be taught in and benefits the county as those who study through the medium of English are able to speak to more children who speak Welsh.</p>	<p>The Local Authority acknowledge that the school is performing well and is successful. This proposal seeks to improve even further the opportunity for children attending the school to secure continually improving outcomes. Carmarthenshire County Council has a statutory responsibility under Part 4 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for its area with the explicit aim of improving planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh, from improving the standards of that education and of the teaching of Welsh.</p> <p>In April 2014 the County Council formally adopted a comprehensive strategy for the development of the Welsh language in Carmarthenshire, endorsing the</p>	2	50%

		<p>recommendations of a politically balanced group of elected members that had examined in depth the status of the Welsh language in the county in the wake of the 2011 census of the population. The strategy required action on 73 points, 21 of which applied to the education service.</p> <p>The language strategy received cross-party support from elected members when it was adopted at a meeting of the full County Council. On 25th June 2018, the Local Authority launched Carmarthenshire’s most recent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The WESP has been subject to public consultation during its preparation and subsequent review. Its contents have, therefore, been subject to a test of public opinion in line with statutory requirements. It has also been approved by the Welsh Government in accordance with the requirements of the Act.</p> <p>The plan seeks to achieve the following outcomes relevant to the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 1 - More seven year old children being taught through the medium of Welsh. • Outcome 2 - More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school. 		
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 5 – More students who have higher language skills in Welsh. • Outcome 6 – Welsh medium provision for learner with additional learning needs (ALN); and • Outcome 7 – Workforce planning and continuing professional development. <p>The proposal is adhering to the recommendations as set out in Carmarthenshire’s WESP.</p> <p>It is important to note that the WESP requires all primary schools in Carmarthenshire, including English medium schools, to move along the language continuum, progressively expanding the proportion of education that is delivered through the medium of Welsh, with a view to ensuring that in time all children leaving primary school are fully bilingual.</p> <p>The pace at which schools will be able to expand bilingualism and Welsh medium education will depend upon local circumstances but the expectation for progress applies to all schools. The school has been identified as having the potential to move quickly along the language continuum.</p>		
2.	<p><u>Coping with the Welsh Language</u> Respondent is concerned that not all children will be able to cope with learning</p>	<p>The school will continue to provide support for current pupils through the medium of which</p>	1	25%

	<p>through the medium of Welsh, especially pupils from non-Welsh backgrounds. In addition, there are concerns that non-Welsh speaking parents may find it hard to support and help their children with their schoolwork and homework should the school the proposal be implemented.</p>	<p>they currently receive their education. Should the proposal be implemented, sufficient support will be provided to all new pupils in accordance with the needs of each individual. It is also important to note that staff are required to differentiate the curriculum and make reasonable adjustments when required to meet the needs of every pupil. “Athrawon Bro” who provide support to the schools around the county will also be supporting the school. Welsh Language Immersion Centres will also be available for those pupils who may need extra input linguistically. The schools currently offer a range of support to pupils and parents from non-Welsh speaking families and are committed to increasing provision as necessary to meet the future needs of individual families.</p> <p>Several organisations who attended the formal drop-in session during the consultation period have also offered their help and support to the community with the development of the Welsh language.</p>		
3.	<p><u>Transfer to English Medium schools</u> Respondents believe that it is unfair for pupils who desire/require an English medium education to have to transfer to another school outside of their catchment. In addition, it is felt that pupils who struggle</p>	<p>It is the Local Authority’s intention that all current pupils remain at the school and continue to receive their education through the current language arrangements. The proposals will not therefore, affect current pupils. The school will continue to provide sufficient</p>	2	50%

	<p>with the Welsh language will also have to transfer to another school.</p>	<p>support for all current pupils through the medium in which they currently receive their education so there is, consequently, no need for any child to be moved from the school. Similarly, it is the Local Authority's desire that in the future local children attend their local school. Sufficient support will be provided for all future pupils in accordance with each individual's needs.</p> <p>Please see point 2 above which refers to the help and support which is currently and will continue to be provided to all pupils and parents with regards to the Welsh language.</p> <p>Please see point 4 below which refers to pupils with additional learning needs, special educational needs and the help and support which is and will continue to be provided to these pupils.</p>		
4.	<p><u>Additional Learning Needs (ALN)</u> Respondent is concerned that children with special education needs, or additional learning needs may not be able to cope with learning through the medium of Welsh and may require English medium education. It is unfair to assume that all children with SEN/ALN will be able to learn through the medium of Welsh.</p>	<p>Carmarthenshire County Council's policy is that all its schools should be inclusive, with children with additional learning needs being educated in a mainstream setting alongside their peers wherever possible.</p> <p>For this proposal, the support provided to children currently in the schools with additional needs will continue through the medium in which they currently receive their education.</p>	1	25%

		<p>Should the proposal be implemented, all future pupils will receive support which is individually tailored to their needs.</p> <p>All pupils with additional learning needs have specific individual plans based on their circumstances and a tailored support programme is provided according to need.</p> <p>Generally, an additional learning need is not a barrier to learning two languages. It is important to assess and monitor progress in each or all the languages that a child is using or learning, including sign and visually supported communication systems required for some pupils, particularly as the stronger developed language can be used to support and build learning through a lesser developed language medium. Staff are required to differentiate the curriculum and make reasonable adjustments to the language of instruction and response to accommodate additional needs and ensure access to the curriculum and learning progress. At times it may be appropriate to target additional support in one language for a period to consolidate and accelerate learning, e.g., in literacy. There will be rare instances, however, where a child may be diagnosed with a condition that is not conducive to a fully bilingual education. In these circumstances a package of support is identified by professional practitioners and discussed with parents.</p>		
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		<p>Whilst the system is designed to meet the needs of learners through a universal and inclusive approach, for a small number of children with significant and complex additional needs this is not always possible and specialised provision offers a more appropriate learning setting.</p> <p>To make sure that the needs of all learners are met the school's system in Carmarthenshire includes a range of provision for children with additional needs. A specialised school or unit offer education to children with the most profound or complex needs where a mainstream setting is either not suitable for the children's needs or where parents prefer an alternative setting. Selected secondary and primary schools across the county include specialised units for children with particular needs, such as autism, sensory impairment or speech and language delay. The Department for Education and Children provides specific additional support in schools wherever practicable so that as many children as possible remain in their local school. Whilst the Council's preference is to meet the needs of all children in a mainstream setting wherever possible, this is not always practicable. It is this Council's experience that the vast majority of pupils with a wide range of additional learning needs and abilities are successful in our schools irrespective of the</p>		
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		<p>language of instruction, but the Council does acknowledge that there will be a very few children whose needs cannot be met other than through provision at a specialist unit.</p> <p>It should be noted that this proposal does not affect the current arrangements at the special Unit at Ysgol Y Felin.</p>		
5.	<p><u>Parents won't be able to help support their child</u> Respondents are concerned that parents will no longer be able to play an active role in their child's education.</p>	<p>Welsh schools set homework instruction in Welsh and in English so there will be no problem in understanding what children are being asked to do at home. Work set will be appropriate to the pupil's age and ability level and therefore should be within reach. Developing increasingly as independent learners, parents may find that children are happy to progress without extra parental guidance as they get older.</p> <p>The school currently offers a range of support to pupils and parents from non-Welsh speaking families and are committed to increasing provision as necessary to meet the future needs of families.</p>	2	50%

