Estyn's response to the proposal by Cardiff County Council to: Provide sufficient capacity to meet the English-medium and Welsh-medium community primary pupil demand in and around the Llandaff North area.

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.

Introduction

The consultation proposal is from Cardiff County Council. The proposal is to:

- Consolidate Gabalfa Primary School as a one form entry school with 48 part-time nursery places from September 2017
- Permanently establish Ysgol Glan Ceubal on its existing site at Colwill Road, Gabalfa, CF14 2PQ as a one form of entry school from September 2016
- Extending the age range of Ysgol Glan Ceubal from 4-11 to 3-11 which would require the establishment of 48 part-time nursery places from January 2016.

Summary/Conclusion

It is Estyn’s opinion that the proposal is likely to maintain the current standards of education and provision in the area.

The proposal is unlikely to have a negative impact on any other schools in the area. The proposal is likely to have a positive impact on the availability of Welsh medium education in the locality and to reduce overall surplus places in Welsh and English medium schools over time.

However, the proposer has not identified its preferred option at this stage. As such, the proposal does not identify potential financial implications or benefits clearly enough. The proposal contains very little information about the potential impact of the reorganisation on the staffing arrangements at the schools involved. The proposal does not evaluate what impact the proposal may have on any providers of pre-school education in the locality other than schools.
Description and benefits

The proposal contains three possible options to bring about the desired changes. Overall, each option has the potential to support the achievement of the proposal. However, option one has insufficient clarity. For example, the option is not clear as to whether the nursery provision will be in a demountable classroom or in the local church hall. The proposer indicates that this option would not be complete in time for the identified start dates. The proposal contains insufficient detail about the financial implications for this option. Overall, in its current form, the weaknesses would appear to outweigh the strengths for this option.

Option two contains a suitable rationale for remodelling the school sites and identifies significant potential financial savings in the longer term. However, as with option one, the financial details are unclear and a few figures such as the cost of using demountable classrooms are not included.

Option three identifies a number of strengths that include long term financial savings and a modern purpose-built school for pupils. However, the proposer identifies that the cost of this project exceeds the available funding. The proposer acknowledges, in each option, that the financial implications require more detail.

The proposer does not identify clearly the educational benefits of any option, for example, there is no mention of the potential impact on standards of teaching and learning. However, each option does support the overarching aims of the proposal appropriately, for example, a better match between the supply of and demand for English-medium and Welsh-medium primary school places within the local area. Estyn agrees that each option is likely to provide pupils with modern facilities which would be able to support the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum in the longer term. The proposer states that the proposal will enable the schools to implement the seven core aims UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, the proposal does not provide any detail as to how the new arrangements would support this aspiration.

The proposer has compared the benefits of the proposal with the status quo and has considered all other reasonable options fairly. For instance, the proposer raises the possibility of removing English-medium education from the Gabalfa Primary School site and educating pupils in other local schools. However, this is not a viable option due to the restricted size of the sites of these other educational settings.

The proposal indicates that the catchment areas for all schools have changed recently and that these changes have received the required approval. As such, there are unlikely to be any significant transport implications. The proposal states appropriately that the council will apply its transport policy to each of the schools fairly. The proposal recognises that there is potential increased traffic congestion around the school sites at drop off/pick up times. It states that the council would work with the governing bodies of the schools to develop a travel plan to minimise
any potential disruption. However, these plans are not available at the time of the proposal.

The proposal does not identify implications for members of staff or potential staffing requirements clearly, for example, the numbers of staff required or the financial implications. However, it does state reasonably that the council would manage any required changes to the staffing levels within agreed policies and procedures and full consultation.

The proposal is thorough in its use of data with regard to past, present and future pupil numbers in both schools. It clearly demonstrates that the proposal would reduce surplus places significantly in both schools whilst supporting the increased demand for Welsh-medium education in the locality. However, the proposal does not identify the number of pupils that are likely to require places at Gabalfa Primary School in September 2017. It does provide figures for the four year prior to September 2017. In each of these four years, the number of pupils requiring places exceeds 30 which is the intended intake number from September 2017. The proposer states that pupils from within the catchment area are likely to request places at other local schools from September 2017 onwards but this is by no means certain. Both schools will offer 48 nursery places and then only be able to offer 30 full time places. It is unclear whether the proposer has fully considered the potential pinch point in terms of demand for spaces, particularly in the other local Welsh medium schools.

The local authority has considered the current standards of educational outcomes in both schools. It states that both Gabalfa Primary School and Ysgol Glan Ceubal are schools with variable performance in a range of indicators or over time, needing improvement in a number of important areas and that both schools require sustained additional support. The most recent published Estyn inspection report of Gabalfa was in 2009 (the schools was inspected in February 2015, but the report has not yet been published). As such, this is not sufficiently recent to support a current opinion regarding standards. In December 2013, Estyn inspected Ysgol Glan Ceubal and judged the school’s performance and prospects for improvement as good at that time. Overall, Estyn agrees with the local authority’s current evaluation of educational standards in both schools.

As the schools are already established, there are very few implications for the arrangements for leadership and management related to the proposal. However, the local authority has categorised both schools as category ‘C’ for improvement capacity. This does not indicate a judgment of strong leadership.

The proposal contains appropriate information with regard to ensuring provision for pupils with additional learning needs and those with statements for special educational needs. It is Estyn’s opinion, that the proposal is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on provision for these pupils. There is also an equality impact
assessment that explains how the proposal will support the future of Welsh-medium education in the area. The proposer states reasonably that there is no information available that suggests that the proposals would have a negative effect on provision for any group including those who are from Minority Ethnic groups or in receipt of free school meals.

It is Estyn’s opinion that impact of revised admission arrangements will lead to very little disruption to pupils’ learning. It is unlikely that the proposal will have any impact upon transition arrangements to secondary school. However, the proposal does not evaluate the implications for any pre-school educational providers in the locality other than schools.
March 20\textsuperscript{th} 2015

Response by the Headteacher of Gabalfa Primary School to the consultation document “The provision of Welsh-medium and English-medium primary school places in and around Llandaff North”

Do you support the proposal to consolidate Gabalfa Primary School at 1FE with a 48 part-time place nursery from September 2017?
I support, with reservations, the proposal to consolidate Gabalfa Primary School at 1FE with a 48 part-time place nursery from September 2017. Fixing our intake at 30 pupils will sort out the current challenges faced when organising the staffing and class structure of a 43 pupil intake school. However, as there is clearly an ongoing demand for English-medium places in and around the Llandaff North area which we are at present able to accommodate I am concerned about where these additional pupils will be educated. SOAP Officers have indicated that should the demand for English-medium places in our area continue to be sustained or rise then we may be in a situation where additional accommodation is needed on the site. Should this happen I would not want to see demountable accommodation be installed for our school as has happened in many Cardiff schools over the years.

Do you support the proposal to permanently establish Ysgol Glan Ceubal on its existing site at 1FE from September 2016?
I support the permanent establishment of Ysgol Glan Ceubal on its existing temporary site from September 2016 and will continue to encourage the close working of the three\* schools that share the site. I welcome the separation of metered utilities; it has been very difficult to ascertain the exact costs involved in hosting Ysgol Glan Ceubal over the years.

Do you support the proposal to establish nursery provision at Ysgol Glan Ceubal from January 2016?
I do not support the proposal to establish nursery provision for Ysgol Glan Ceubal from January 2016, but would expect that permanent part time nursery provision be available for both schools when the proposed building works is completed in September 2017. I strongly object to the suggestion that Gabalfa pupils and staff vacate a popular and well established Nursery provision merely to benefit another school. The reasons provided in the report are inaccurate; Ysgol Glan Ceubal is accommodated some distance away from the Nursery building of Gabalfa Primary and this would not enable Ysgol Glan Ceubal to work closely as suggested in the report. I am concerned that should Gabalfa Primary school be forced to give up its Nursery provision and move into temporary accommodation my Governors will resign as indicated in their response to the consultation report.

I am also concerned that the costs of providing a Nursery for Ysgol Glan Ceubal in January 2016 would be very expensive. The most obvious solution would be for Ysgol Glan Ceubal’s Nursery to be established when the permanent building has been completed in September 2017.

Option 1
I reject this option as I am concerned that this would mean significant, increased maintenance costs for both school buildings which are already over sixty years old and in need of serious refurbishment both externally and internally.

With regards to the establishment of a nursery for Ysgol Glan Ceubal I reaffirm my concerns as stated above.
Option 2
I reject this option as I find the suggestion that one school be provided with a new building whilst the other simply has a refurbishment to be an insult to the pupils of Gabalfa Primary School. Both schools serve the same community, therefore both schools should offer the same level of provision.
With regards to the establishment of a nursery for Ysgol Glan Ceubal I reaffirm my concerns as stated above.

Option 3
This is my preferred option. It is fair to both schools and would create an innovative means of delivering English and Welsh medium provision to the community.

I am however concerned that should this option go ahead, we are able to continue to provide the number of high quality interventions for our vulnerable pupils. We would continue to require sufficient space to support the many ‘newly arrived’ families to the UK that we receive. This provision is similar to the immersion provision that Ysgol Glan Ceubal offers; newly arrived pupils from many different countries are immersed in the English language with individual and group support to enable them to access the curriculum as soon as possible. This was recently identified by ESTYN as a strength of Gabalfa Primary School.

We also provide a high quality on-site counselling service for our pupils as well as a successful Nurture class for pupils across the primary age range. It is vital that we are able to sustain these services as they have a positive and measurable impact upon standards achieved by the pupils of the school.

It is important that teaching spaces are flexible and spacious to enable independent learning and more fuller learning experiences. Both schools would need reliable wi-fi access to support the good standards of ICT that pupils use to enhance their learning experiences. The needs of the Foundation Phase pupils MUST be met both inside and outside with both schools having access to safe, motivating and stimulating outdoor learning provision.

I am grateful, on behalf of the pupils and parents of the school, for this current consultation and hope, after many years of expectation and disappointment that finally agreement can be made that enables both Gabalfa Primary and Ysgol Glan Ceubal schools to work side by side to provide excellent sustained learning experiences to their pupils.

Yours sincerely,
Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

CE Jenkins
Mrs C L Jenkins
Headteacher

* Gabalfa Primary School, Meadowbank School and Ysgol Glan Ceubal
Response by the Governing Body of Gabalfa Primary School to the consultation document “The provision of Welsh-medium and English-medium primary school places in and around Llandaff North”

The Governing Body of Gabalfa Primary School are, in this letter, responding to the consultation by considering the information and proposals it has seen in the report which was considered by Cardiff Council Cabinet on 26.02.15, the consultation Document made available in hard copy and on the Cardiff Council website and the presentation made to them by the members of the Cardiff Education Department SOAP team.

1. Response to issues outside the formal consultation paper:

   (i) Gabalfa Primary School has a FE of 1.4 (43 pupils) not 1.2.
   (ii) The whole site is part of Gabalfa Primary School and it hosts Ysgol Glan Ceubal and has done so since Ysgol Glan Ceubal in a temporary way occupied part of Foundation Phase Building.
   (iii) Gabalfa Primary School is accommodated in the CURRENT, not former, Junior School and Foundation Phase Buildings.
   (iv) Reception numbers in 2014/15 in Gabalfa Primary School being at 27, like the current years 5 and 6, may well be aberrant, particularly when the current years 1 to 4 show numbers greater than 1 F.E. This also flies in the face of the assumption (page 20 final paragraph) that there would be a reduction in the demand for places at Gabalfa School. A significant number of pupils transfer into Gabalfa during each school year (30 in the last school year) by immigration into the area and demand for places because of the excellent reputation by the school in dealing with the requirements to advance the educational standards of pupils designated FSM, EAL and SEN.
   (v) Paragraphs 4 and 5 on Page 12 contradict each other.
   (vi) The Governing Body cautions that the reliance on NHS birth rate projections is notoriously unsafe, as many local authorities in other parts of the U.K. have found to their cost.
   (vii) Throughout the report there appears to be an assumption that Gabalfa Primary School would become less popular over the years whilst the popularity of Ysgol Glan Ceubal would grow. There is no evidence for either of these assumptions only speculations. Even if Glan Ceubal had a full 1 F.E. intake in the future it would take until 2020 for it to fill to the level that Gabalfa Primary School is at present. Indeed, if the projected figures for both schools are as suggested as in Table 6 on page 22 then Gabalfa Primary School would in each of the following five years be over its current number should the proposals proceed, and even more so should they not.

2. Response to the consultation.

   (i) We support the proposal to consolidate Gabalfa Primary School at 1FE with a 48 part-time nursery from September 2017, although we cannot see any reason to reduce the current number of 64 except the proposal’s desire to make it equal in number to what is proposed for Ysgol Glan Ceubal.
(ii) We support the permanent establishment of Ysgol Glan Ceubal on its existing temporary site from September 2016, but **only** if it does not interfere or encroach on the provision for the Foundation Phase pupils and staff of Gabalfa Primary School, both within the school buildings and in the outdoor spaces, until such time as new arrangements are made for each school’s permanent accommodation. However, Ysgol Glan Ceubal would still need, until that time, to be hosted for its utilities by Gabalfa Primary School as there is only one set of utility meters in the Foundation Phase Building, the cost of use by both schools is paid for by Gabalfa Primary School with re-imbursement from the budget of Ysgol Glan Ceubal.

(iii) We do **NOT** support the proposal to establish nursery provision at Ysgol Glan Ceubal from January 2016. This is not because we do not support, in the future, the establishment of a nursery at Ysgol Glan Ceubal, because we understand why they want one. However, we raise **very strong** objections to the proposals, for reasons which do not appear on the response form but are in the full consultation document. Those reasons are based on the fact that there is at present no suitable accommodation for such a proposal and are as follows:

(a) It is suggested that Gabalfa Primary School gives up its current nursery accommodation to Ysgol Glan Ceubal with Gabalfa Primary School having temporary accommodation so that Glan Ceubal pupils can be advantaged by being close to the rest of their school. This is presumably at the expense of Gabalfa pupils who would be expected to move into temporary accommodation and depending on the option chosen—maybe for ever! If this suggestion is implemented, many of the current Governors of Gabalfa Primary School would have to consider their position as Governors.

(b) The costs involved in establishing the Ysgol Glan Ceubal nursery in January 2016, either on the Gabalfa Primary School site or in Church Hall accommodation, is an expensive waste of money. If they waited until the implementation of any of the three options the costs of establishing the Ysgol Glan Ceubal nursery could be incorporated into the development of any of the proposals.

**OPTION 1**

To accept this option for either school would mean the significant, increasing ongoing maintenance costs of the refurbished school buildings, which are already old and require considerable, ongoing revenue expenditure. The new Foundation Phase unit for Gabalfa Primary School would simply be an add-on and not part of the design of a new or even refurbished school building.

We would reaffirm our objections stated above to the timing and cost of the Ysgol Glan Ceubal nursery proposals.

We therefore **reject** this option, not least due to the disruption it would cause to pupils passing through the school and to staff.

**OPTION 2**

We find this proposal **totally unacceptable**. To have one school in a refurbished building whilst the other has a brand new school built when Gabalfa Primary School has been drawing attention to the deteriorating state of both of its building for many years with promises and proposals to change the situation, is appalling. Gabalfa Primary School pupils would become “second class citizens”. As in Option 1, there would be considerable disruption to pupils passing through the school and to staff.

We would reaffirm our objections stated above to the timing and cost of the Ysgol Glan Ceubal nursery proposals.

**OPTION 3**

The Governing body **PREFER** this Option. It is equitable on both schools. It would create an interesting environment for the development of English Medium and Welsh Medium education alongside one another. However, we do **NOT** believe that it would be possible or sensible to attempt
to deliver SEN or EAL support for both schools using the same areas. The language of delivery would presumably be different and we cannot imagine Ysgol Glan Ceubal having EAL pupils unless they were monoglot Welsh and require English language support.

If this option is chosen it will be essential that the staff and governors are actively involved in the arrangements of the internal and external facilities that the school needs to deliver the high quality curriculum opportunities it delivers to the pupils at the present and hopes to extend with the community involved more in the future.

We note that a Travel Plan will be needed – there are already a number considerable of problems with traffic flows around the existing school.

We would reaffirm our objections stated above to the timing and cost of the Ysgol Glan Ceubal nursery proposals.

The Governing Body are grateful, on behalf of the children and parents of the schools and beyond, for the initiative shown by Cardiff Council and the Welsh Government for this consultation and the details within it, but would urge them to treat the children of this English Medium School and the Welsh Medium School equally.

Yours sincerely

Les Maxim
Chair of Governors
On behalf of the full Governing Body of Gabalfa primary School
To whom it may concern,

Response by class teachers and teaching assistants of Gabalfa Primary School to the consultation document “The provision of Welsh-medium and English-medium primary school places in and around Llandaff North”

1) We support, with reservations, the proposal to consolidate Gabalfa Primary School at 1FE with a 48 part-time nursery from September 2017. While we appreciate that fixing our intake at a one form entry makes class organisation and planning for the future far easier, we are aware that the demand for places maybe higher than this, as is the case in many of our current year groups. We are concerned about where these children will be educated and that, if the LA find that the demand for places at our school is consistently higher than 1 FE, we are provided with demountable accommodation as has happened in many schools over the years.

2) We support the permanent establishment of Ysgol Glan Ceubal on its existing temporary site from September 2016 and, as we have done since its introduction, will strive to ensure that we are as accommodating as possible whilst still prioritising the needs of our pupils.

3) We do not support the proposal to establish nursery provision at Ysgol Glan Ceubal from January 2016 but would expect that a nursery is established when the building works have been completed. It is neither fair nor feasible to expect our Nursery staff and pupils to move into temporary accommodation and the positioning would not benefit the pupils of Ysgol Glan Ceubal as has been suggested.

4) Class teachers and teaching assistants prefer Option 3. However, we have reservations about this option because of the advantages of the spacious KS2 accommodation we would be losing. We would expect that the building of a new school would enable us to provide a 21st century curriculum. The teaching spaces need to be flexible and spacious to enable independent learning whilst also enabling more formal learning when appropriate. Each part of the school must be equipped to enable pupils to use technology to enhance their learning experiences. Sufficient spaces must be available for good quality physical activity in both PE lessons and during playtimes. Sufficient space for children to eat must be available, not in the classroom where staff will be setting up new learning experiences, nor in a hall where currently we provide a range of lunchtime clubs as requested by the parents of our pupils. The needs of Foundation Phase children must be met both inside and outside. We must have sufficient spaces to provide the vital group and individual intervention programmes recently complimented by Estyn, the Nurture and counselling provision so vital to the well-being of our pupils and parents, SEN support and support for pupils new to English, (like the Welsh school who require a separate space for an ‘Immersion Class’, we ‘Immerse’ these pupils using individual and group support in a separate area so they can access the curriculum as soon as possible).

The teachers and teaching assistants of Gabalfa Primary School are grateful for this current consultation and hope, after many years of expectation and disappointment, that finally an agreement can be made that enables both English and Welsh medium schools to provide excellent learning experiences to their pupils.

Yours faithfully,

E.J. Prescott
Deputy Headteacher
On behalf of the teachers and teaching assistants of Gabalfa Primary School