

Notes of a meeting held with pupils at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton

Tuesday 20th November 2018 at 2.30 pm

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

Present

Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Sophie Nicholls, Graduate Officer 21st Century Team
Non Morgan, School Organisation and Governance Team Leader
Number of pupils present: 9

Introductions

GD asked if the pupils understood what the proposals were and many did.

GD explained the reasons for the proposals as being - to ensure that all pupils would be in modern 21st century schools.

The changes planned to all schools as part of this proposal were outlined as:

- New sixth form in Bryncelynnog for over 400 learners (closing sixth forms in Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Cardinal Newman);
- Two new schools for pupils aged 3-16 at Pontypridd and Hawthorn;
- More Welsh medium school places at a brand new school on the Heol y Celyn site; Pupils from YGG Pont Sion Norton would also attend this school and it would be all Welsh medium;
- The catchment areas for some schools would change (i.e. which school you would be likely to go to depending on the street where you live could change for some pupils in the future);
- Pontypridd 3-16 School would be Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School together;
- Hawthorn 3-16 School would be Hawthorn High, Heol y Celyn (English medium stream) and Hawthorn Primary School together;
- By 2022 it is proposed for there to be a brand new school building and external play areas on the Heol y Celyn site for Welsh medium pupils;
- English medium pupils from Heol y Celyn school could go to the 3-16 school in Hawthorn which is also having a lot of money spent on it;
- £12m investment at Hawthorn 3-16; plus £10.7m investment at the Heol y Celyn site.

Two short video clips were played showing new schools recently constructed as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme at Cwmaman and Tonyrefail.

GD 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.

To facilitate the discussion GD asked the pupils some initial questions:

Q. GD asked whether the pupils understood the proposals.

A. All pupils agreed that they did.

Q. GD asked what the pupils liked about the proposals?

A. Pupils listed the following:

- If the pupils come together there is an opportunity to create new friendships.
- There will be more after school clubs with more staff and more pupils.
- Brand new equipment.
- A flat yard. Pupils can play football.

GD explained that breakfast clubs can also be established.

Q. GD asked if there were any concerns regarding the proposals?

A. Pupils explained that they had undertaken a questionnaire with pupils and the outcomes were that some were worried about making new friends and losing staff members, but on the whole there were no major concerns.

GD explained that there will be lots of opportunities to make new friends and that pupils may have more friends as they progress to the secondary school.

Q. GD asked the pupils their opinion on how the consultation is being undertaken?

A. Pupils suggested the use of iPad and/or group discussions.

The pupils were then given the opportunity to ask questions.

Q. How many pupils will be attending the new school?

A. The school will have 480 places for reception to Year 6 pupils and then a further 60 places for nursery pupils. There will be more staff, which could mean more clubs can be offered.

Q. What will be the name of the new school?

A. This will be discussed with pupils, the community and staff. It will be for the school governors to come up with suggestions based on your opinions and they then recommend the name to the Council. The Councillors will then decide the final name for the school.

Q. *Ysgol Evan James is named after a person. Could we name the new school William Edwards after the man who built the bridge in Pontypridd?*

A. Pupils will be able to give their opinions on the name of the school.

Q. *What will the new uniform be?*

A. Pupils will be able to give their opinions regarding any new uniform.

Q. *What staff will be in the new school?*

A. The school will be larger and the Local Authority will ensure a process where current staff can apply for positions in the new school.

Q. *Will there be a big yard?*

A. There will be a grassed area and a large yard. The new school will be built on the Heol y Celyn site and once completed the old school building will be demolished, making way for more playing facilities including a Multi-Use Games Area.

Q. *Will the new school be ready by 2022?*

A. If the proposal is agreed, yes. A number of new schools have been built and completed on time.

Q. *Will school times stay the same?*

A. School times will need to be discussed by the temporary governing body and new Headteacher.

Q. *Will there be a fence to separate senior pupils?*

A. Some schools have a fence, some have a drawn line marking out the area, but the nursery will have their own soft play areas.

Q. *What new facilities will be in the new school?*

A. The Local Authority will improve the standard of all facilities, internally and externally. There will be new technology and IT equipment, a heart space, a new hall and dining area and lots of opportunities for outdoor play and learning.

Q. *Will there be enough resources for everybody?*

A. Everything will be brand new.

Q. Why chose the Heol y Celyn site?

A. The Local Authority look at the current school sites and review the condition of the buildings and surplus places. We also look at the needs of the community and if there is a high demand for Welsh education, the Local Authority needs to meet that need. We are looking to give more pupils the opportunity to learn through the medium of Welsh. We want to provide better opportunities for everyone and the Heol y Celyn site is a great site of a really good size to build a new school.

Q. Will there be a Heol y Celyn football team versus a YGG Pont Sion Norton football team?

A. No there will be one school, one team, in a new community.

Q. In the Eisteddfod now there are different schools competing. Will we be competing against Heol y Celyn?

A. No, you will be one big team in the new school, competing against other schools.

Q. Will there be a new School Council and Eco Council in the new school?

A. Yes. The new Headteacher will work with staff and pupils to establish a new School Council and a new Eco Council.

Q. The history of both schools needs to be remembered and maintained

A. This is important. The schools may want to work on project, for example, creating memory books.

Q. Will there be a School Hall?

A. Yes and in new schools we create a heart space.
GD showed pictures of Cwmaman Primary School and the heart space which incorporates break out areas for multiple small group activities.

GD thanked the pupils for their questions and for their excellent input.