

Newport City Council

School Reorganisation Proposal

Consultation Report

Proposal to expand Millbrook Primary School with effect from September 2018

**Formal Consultation Period:
11th September 2017 to 22nd October 2017**

Purpose

This report is published in line with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code, July 2013.

This consultation report includes the following sections:

- The Proposal
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Everyday Summary Version – Children & Young People
- Learner Voice
- Consultation Responses
- Estyn
- Copy of the Pupil Questionnaire (at Appendix A)

The Proposal

To increase the capacity of Millbrook Primary School from 210 to 315, therefore creating a permanent 1.5 form entry school from September 2018.

Stakeholder Engagement

An invitation to take part in the statutory consultation was issued to the following stakeholders, with either a link to the consultation pack on the Council's website and an electronic version of the pack sent by e-mail or alternatively by hard copies of the consultation material being issued:

- Teachers, staff and the governing body of Millbrook Primary School;
- Parents, carers and guardians of pupils attending Millbrook Primary School;
- Pupils at Millbrook Primary School;
- The Headteachers and Governing Bodies of all local primary schools and those schools within the Newport High School cluster, ie., Newport High School, Kimberley Nursery School, Crindau Primary School, Malpas Church in Wales Infant School, Malpas Church in Wales Junior School, Malpas Court Primary School, Malpas Park Primary School, Monnow Primary School, Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Teyrnnon and Ysgol Gymraeg Ifor Hael;
- All Newport City Council elected members;
- The Welsh Ministers;
- Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the area served by the schools subject to the proposals;
- Other Local Authorities across the South East Wales Consortium region, including relevant Transport departments;
- The South East Wales Education Achievement Service;
- The Church in Wales, Diocese of Monmouth;
- Roman Catholic Archdiocese;
- Estyn;
- Teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and staff at Millbrook Infant School and Millbrook Junior School;
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent;
- The local Communities First partnership (or equivalent).

The following consultation events were arranged and were publicised via a letter to stakeholders. This information was also shared on the Council website and outlined throughout the consultation document.

Venue	Date and Time	Event type
Millbrook Primary School, Parrett Road, NP20 7DQ	Thursday 12 th October 2017 10am – 12 noon	Drop-in event
Millbrook Primary School, Parrett Road, NP20 7DQ	Tuesday 17 th October 2017 2.00pm – 4.00pm	Drop-in event

Two drop-in events were held at Millbrook Primary School and were attended by five parents in total who were mainly in support of the proposal but wished to raise two separate concerns.

At the first event, an issue was raised in relation to the additional traffic that could potentially arise if the pupil numbers were increased beyond those currently on roll, and the resultant parking issues around properties in close proximity to the school. The majority of pupils attending Millbrook Primary School live within walking distance of the school, and whilst walking to and from school is encouraged, it is inevitable that some parents will use vehicles to transport their children even if not on a regular basis.

The increase in pupil numbers is not considered to have any significant impact on this, as it is anticipated that the pupil demographic will continue to come from the Bettws estate and will therefore be within walking distance of the school. Notwithstanding this however, the school does benefit from a large on-site visitor car park which parents are able to use at the start and end of the school day. Parents are reminded of this in monthly newsletters from the Headteacher.

At the second event, one parent raised concerns over the effect mixed-age classes might have on pupils, Whilst this was noted within the consultation document as being a disadvantage of the proposal, mixed-age classes are currently operated successfully across a number of Newport schools, the majority of which have been categorised as either “Green” or “Yellow” schools. The proposal to move to 1.5 form entry means that the school would increase from the current 7 class arrangement to an 11 class arrangement. Traditionally where this model is employed, schools operate two small Reception classes, with mixed-age arrangements starting in Year 1 / Year 2. This ensures that the very youngest pupils are given appropriate support when first starting mainstream school.

Everyday Summary Version – Children & Young People

An Everyday Summary Version of the main consultation document was published and shared with stakeholders. This document was also targeted at children and young people.

In addition a children’s questionnaire was created and shared with Millbrook Primary School for distribution amongst pupils. A copy of the questionnaire is shown at Appendix A, although it is unfortunate that no completed responses were returned to the Council.

Learner Voice

The Education Service Development Manager visited Millbrook Primary School on 17th October 2017 and met with six members of the School Council from across the Year Four, Five and Six groups to discuss the proposal and allow an opportunity for them to share their views.

As a group, they made the following comments:

- Having more pupils in the school will be good as children will make more friends and will be given the opportunity to represent the school at more events;
- Mixed-age classes will allow pupils to make friends more easily with children in different year groups;
- Increasing the school incrementally from Reception upwards is a good idea.

They also raised two questions as follows, the responses to which are also outlined below:

- **Why can't the second wing in the junior building also be used as classroom space to make the school even bigger?**

The area on the first floor is currently used for Flying Start and this provision cannot be accommodated elsewhere. In addition, the current and projected demand for additional primary school places in the area is not significant enough at present to require an increase to a 2-form entry arrangement. The nearest alternative primary school, Monnow Primary School, is currently a 2-form entry school.

- **Will children in mixed age classes have to do harder or easier work than children in straight-age classes?**

No, pupils will be taught the curriculum relevant to their age group. This might be achieved by arranging pupils into groups for certain parts of the school day.

All 6 of the pupils present thought that the proposal was a good idea.

Consultation Responses

Unfortunately no stakeholder responses were received other than that from Estyn as detailed below.

Estyn

The formal response from Estyn concluded that “the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standard of education provision in the area.”

However, whilst acknowledging the view that the proposal will provide increased opportunities for staff, Estyn commented that there is no information to state how this will be carried out. The Headteacher has outlined however that the increased capacity and growth of the school will provide greater opportunity for existing staff to develop professionally. Staff teams will work together to cater for the growing school. This includes enhanced planning and whole school learning opportunities. In addition staff will be encouraged to work across the school sharing expertise in Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 practice. Currently two staff members are undertaking additional training and assessment to attain Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) and Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

In addition, the response felt that there was no full explanation as to how the proposed mixed-age classes might impact on the education of the children. The Headteacher has confirmed however that as the larger published admission number moves through the school, it will be necessary to organise some classes into mixed age groups. The school already has experience of working in this way as most classes were mixed age groups when the primary school originally opened. This experience has proven that a mixed age class organisation does not hinder a child's progress as teachers will ensure that work is appropriately planned to meet the needs of every child.

In accordance with the School Organisation Code (2013) this report is published electronically on Newport City Council's website at www.newport.gov.uk

To request a hard (paper) copy of this document please contact Newport City Council's Education Service Development Manager on 01633 656656 or email school.reorg@newport.gov.uk



Expansion of Millbrook Primary School

We think Millbrook Primary School is big enough to take more children than it does at present and therefore would like to increase the number of pupils who are allowed to join each year group. Before doing this, we would like to know what you think about this plan.

1. Do you think there is enough room at the school for this to happen?



No



Don't know



Yes

2. What do you think will be good about this?

3. Can you think of any reasons why we shouldn't do this?

4. If we do this, some pupils will be taught in a class with children from other year groups. Do you think this is a good or bad idea?



Bad idea



Don't know



Good idea

5. Why do you think this?

6. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about our plan?

Thank you for taking the time to tell us what you think!

