

DIRECTORATE OF LEARNING AND SKILLS

Objection Report

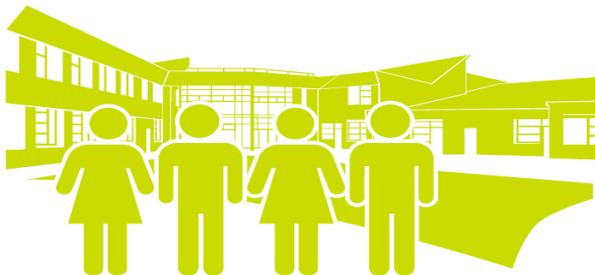
Consultation on the proposal to transform special education in the Vale by:

- **establishing a specialist resource base at Gladstone primary school as a satellite of Ysgol Y Deri from September 2021;**
- **discontinuing Y Daith and establishing a new Centre for Learning and Wellbeing under the management of Ysgol Y Deri from September 2021; and**
- **constructing a new building for the Centre for Learning and Wellbeing pupils on the Court Road Depot site in Barry from January 2023.**

This document can be made available in Braille.

Information can also be made available in other community languages if needed.

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Background

The Council undertook a consultation exercise from **7 September 2020** to **18 October 2020** on the proposal to:

- **establish a Specialist Resource Base (SRB) at Gladstone Primary School as a satellite of Ysgol Y Deri (YYD) from September 2021;**
- **discontinue Y Daith and establish a new Centre for Learning and Wellbeing (CL&W) under the management of YYD from September 2021; and**
- **construct a new building for the CL&W pupils on the Court Road Depot site in Barry from January 2023.**

The aim of the consultation was to inform prescribed consultees about the school re-organisation proposal being put forward under section 2.3 of the School Organisation Code and referred to as a regulated alteration of a school, which includes;

- increasing the capacity of a special school by at least 10% or 20 places;
- a change in the type of special education needs (SEN) for which a special school makes provision;
- the introduction or removal of SEN provision or any change in the type of such provision; and
- the transfer of any school to a new site or sites.

The consultation process followed Welsh Government guidelines as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018. It provided an opportunity for prescribed consultees as well as members of the local community to learn about the proposal and for the governing body to hear the views of all those with an interest so that they can be taken into account before decisions are made.

During the consultation exercise, 44 individual responses were received by the consultation closing date of 18 October 2020. Consultees were asked for their opinion on three key questions (table 1). The responses were published in the consultation report.

Table 1 – Breakdown of consultation responses							
“Do you support the proposal to transform specialist education?”	Number of responses	Total support		Total not support		Total no opinion	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A) By establishing a new resource base at Gladstone primary school as a satellite of Ysgol Y Deri from September 2021	44	30	68%	2	5%	12	27%
B) By discontinuing Y Daith and establishing a new Centre for Learning & Wellbeing under the	43	32	74%	9	21%	2	5%

management of Ysgol Y Deri from September 2021							
C) By constructing a new building for the Centre for Learning & Wellbeing pupils on the Court Road Depot site in Barry from January 2023	44	40	91%	2	5%	2	5%

Consultation Report

A consultation report was published following the consultation exercise. The consultation report was considered by the Council's Cabinet on 16 November 2020.

Statutory Notice

Following consideration of the consultation report, the Council's Cabinet determined to progress the proposal and approve the publication of a statutory notice.

The statutory notice on the proposal was published on 25 November 2020, which triggered the 28-day objection period. The objection period expired on 22 December 2020.

The notice was published on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's website (www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/centreforlearningandwellbeing) and posted at the main entrances of the schools subject to the proposal. Copies of the notice were distributed to parents, carers and guardians, governors and staff members, as well as respondents who wished to be notified. All other organisations and consultees required under the School Organisation Code 2018 were provided with a copy of the letter and notice as an attachment to the email as well as a link to the notice on the website.

Where objections are received to the statutory notice, an objection report must be published summarising the statutory objections and the proposer's response to those objections.

Objections to the Proposal

The Council received 1 individual objection by the end of the objection period. The objection received is summarised below, along with the Council's response.

Objection theme 1: Provision at Gladstone Primary

Respondent expressed concerns over the existing provision which did not meet the needs of their child who currently attends the SRB. The respondent noted that they would prefer closing the unit and setting it up elsewhere in a more secure environment.

Council's response to the objection raised

The proposal would result in the formal establishment on the specialist resource base at Gladstone Primary School which would be managed by the governing body and leadership of YYD, the Council's special school.

The most recent Estyn inspection (March 2019) for Gladstone primary did not highlight any concerns about the security of the site or the care, support and guidance provided within the school. The Estyn report highlighted; 'Nearly all pupils show interest and enjoyment of learning and they behave well, showing care and concern for others. All staff provide high quality care, support and guidance that enables nearly all pupils to take a full part in school life.'

The Loft and the Burrow at Gladstone Primary School provide periods of support within an educational setting for pupils who are affected by past and ongoing trauma. These children display extremely challenging behaviours. The team of trauma informed practitioners; including Specialist Teachers, Learning Support Assistants, and other specialist therapists work together with the pupils' parents to target difficulties related to the pupils' behaviours that are posing a barrier to further inclusion, educational achievement and/or wellbeing. The school has recently been accredited as a trauma and mental health informed school and are the first to be awarded this status in Wales.

The provision has been piloted over the last academic year and has been highly successful in meeting the needs of children with such complex needs. Prior to the development of this provision it would have been difficult to meet the needs of these pupils in the Vale, and many would have required placements in out of county specialist provision.

In order to ensure the ongoing success and future development of this provision it would be beneficial for this highly specialised provision to become a satellite under the umbrella of YYD. This will ensure that staff working in the provision can be part of a wider team of specialists. This will give greater access to professional support, training and development which will benefit staff and children alike.

The individual objection has been forwarded to the relevant service area to address their specific concerns.

Conclusion

The Council concludes that the proposal would have a positive impact on education provision and standards within the Vale by providing specialist support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.

The proposal would build upon existing expertise and successful approaches to ensure continuity for existing pupils. Respondents highlight the success of the Loft & Burrow at Gladstone primary school to date which has enabled some pupils to return to mainstream education. They note this success is due to the committed staff and leadership at Gladstone and that going forward YYD overseeing this provision will increase its resilience. The proposal would also ensure the Council is able to meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places and meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable learners.

The proposal would result in appropriate teaching and learning environments that would promote pupil wellbeing and attitudes to learning. As noted by respondents to the consultation, the existing buildings and sites currently utilised by Y Daith have their limitations. The proposed new CL&W would provide sufficient space for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils to be taught on a single site. The proposed new building would also provide the opportunity to offer full time Key Stage 4 provision which was raised by Estyn during the most recent inspection. The new building and site would be designed to meet the needs of pupils and would provide the opportunity to enhance the curriculum. This was noted as a particular positive by pupils in the engagement sessions; pupils were enthusiastic about improved sporting facilities and adequate “break out” spaces. The buildings and site at Gladstone primary school are a suitable size to accommodate the Specialist Resource Base (SRB). The SRB would utilise existing facilities currently used to support pupils with complex trauma needs.

The CL&W and the SRB at Gladstone Primary School being managed by YYD would ensure consistent support for learners with social, emotional and mental health needs across the Vale of Glamorgan.