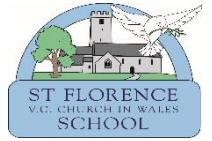


St Florence Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled School



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Pembrokeshire County Council Cyngor Sir Penfro



Regulated Alteration to St Florence Church in Wales VC School

Proposal to Extend Age Range to Admit Part Time Three Year Old Pupils

CONSULTATION REPORT

February 2018

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Foreword

Pembrokeshire County Council is responsible for promoting high educational standards and for delivering efficient primary and secondary education. Having the right schools in the right places and ensuring that they are fit for the 21st century learner is a challenge facing councils across Wales.

Meeting this challenge involves reviewing the number and type of school the Council has in its area and assessing whether or not best use is being made of its resources and facilities.

The Council reviews its provision on the basis of:

- Quality and future sustainability of educational provision
- Sufficiency and accessibility of school places
- The condition, suitability and standard of school buildings
- Value for money

This Consultation Report sets out the statutory consultation undertaken regarding the case for change in relation to extending the age range of St Florence Church in Wales VC School in order to admit part time three year old pupils. In addition, all responses received during the consultation period are recorded, together with a summary of each of the issues raised by consultees.

The governing body of St Florence Church in Wales VC School will consider this Consultation Report and whether or not to publish a Statutory Notice.

Kate Evan-Hughes
Director for Children and Schools

Jocelyn Morris
Chair of Governors
St Florence Church in Wales VC School

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1. Introduction

Pembrokeshire County Council has a statutory duty to secure sufficient and suitable school places in its area and to determine whether it is making the best use of the resources and facilities to deliver the opportunities that children deserve.

At its meeting on 20 July 2017, Pembrokeshire County Council considered the report of the Director for Children and Schools in relation to a request from the governing body of St Florence Church in Wales VC School of the merits of extending the age range of the school in order to admit three year old pupils.

As a result of this report, the decision of the County Council was as follows:

That the Director for Children and Schools be authorised to undertake statutory consultation on the proposal to make a regulated alteration to St Florence Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled School in order to admit part time three year old pupils.

Consultation with the Director of Education of the St David's Diocese took place between 21 July 2017 and 25 August 2017. The Diocese's comments were considered by the governing body of the school at its meeting held on 11 October 2017. At this meeting, the Director for Children and Schools was authorised to undertake general (statutory) consultation on the above proposal.

The subsequent statutory consultation was undertaken during the period 17th October 2017 to 5th December 2017.

This document represents the County Council's responsibility as part of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to publish a Consultation Document. This document:

- Summarises each of the issues raised by consultees;
- Where appropriate responds to these issues by means of clarification or rejection of the concerns with supporting reasons, and
- Sets out Estyn's view of the overall merits of the proposal.

2. Distribution of Consultation Report

This Consultation Report will be distributed to the following:

The Governing Bodies, parents/carers/guardians, staff and pupils/School Councils of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Florence VC • Sageston CP • Manorbier VC • Saundersfoot CP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenby VC • Ysgol Hafan y Mor • St Teilo's Catholic • Stepside CP
Director of Education – Diocese of Menevia	Director of Education – The Diocese of St David's
The Welsh Ministers	Estyn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angela Burns AM – Constituency • Simon Thomas AM – Regional • Joyce Watson AM – Regional • Eluned Morgan AM – Regional • Neil Hamilton AM - Regional • Simon Hart MP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NUT • NASUWT • UCAC • ATL • NAHT • ASCLE • UNISON • GMB
ERW – Regional Education Consortium	County Council transport unit
Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner	The following Community Councils: St Florence, Penally, East Williamston
Independent nursery providers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered Day Nurseries/Playgroups • Registered Childminders 	Childcare & Young People's Partnership – Early Years, Childcare and Learning Group
County Council Members: Cllrs. P Kidney, J Preston, P Rapi, J Williams	Neighbouring authorities: Carmarthenshire & Ceredigion county councils

In addition, this report will be distributed to all consultees who have specifically requested to be advised of its availability.

3. Consultation Arrangements

3.1 General Arrangements

The Consultation Document was published on 17th October 2017; this date also represented the beginning of the statutory consultation period. The consultation period ended on 5th December 2017. The Consultation Document was distributed / links sent to all statutory consultees listed on Page 3 of that document.

The Consultation Document was made available on the County Council's website at www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/haveyoursay.

3.2 Consultation with the Diocese of St David's

In view of its status as a voluntary school, consultation with the Director of Education of the Diocese of St David's has taken place. This took place prior to the publication of the Consultation Document and the decision of the proposer (the governing body) to proceed to consultation. A 28 day consultation period was allowed for this purpose.

It is the Diocese's view that extending the age range of St Florence is "*an important development which will help in sustaining primary education in the area*".

4. Consultation Correspondence

4.1 Volume and Profile of Responses Received

A total of 45 community responses were received in total, as follows.

Community Responses	42
St Florence VC School Governing Body	1
School Council	1
Estyn	1
TOTAL	45

The profile of community respondents is given below and reflects all descriptions given. This profile indicates respondents' role as part of the consultation and may indicate multiple roles, e.g. parent, staff and local resident; as a result the total does not equal the total number of responses received.

Pre-school parent	5
Parents	27
Governors	3
Residents	17
Staff	5

4.2 Response from Estyn

The County Council has received a detailed response to the proposal from Estyn. Its overall conclusion of the proposal is as follows:

The proposal has been developed in line with the Council's programme to improve its educational provision and give children a valuable start to education. It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standard of early year's provision in the area.

The full response to the proposal from Estyn is attached in **APPENDIX A**.

5. Consultation Responses

5.1 General

In relation to the responses received from the community and where respondents chose to utilise the online or hard-copy form provided, they were asked to respond to one question in order to establish which of the following statements best reflected their views:

Please indicate which of the following reflects your views on the proposal (i.e. to extend the age range to admit part time three year old pupils at St Florence VC School)

The findings are as follows:

	Total	
	Number	%
I do not feel strongly one way or the other	1	2.4
I support the proposal	39	92.8
I do not support the proposal	1	2.4
Left blank	1	2.4
TOTAL	42	

It is clear from the responses received that there is overwhelming support for the proposal and the comments received as part of the consultation reflect this.

The main themes of the comments received are as follows:

- Proposal provides parity with other schools able to admit pupils at the age of 3; important to have local early years provision;
- Keeps local children in their local school; good for the village of St Florence and the local community;
- Less disruption to children in that they don't have to move between early years providers prior to commencing school;
- Proposal is good for local working parents and should reduce child care costs;

- St Florence VC School provides a good environment for young children, a strong feature being its approach to wellbeing and pupils eligible to Free Schools Meals.

The list of all comments received during the consultation period is attached as **Appendix B**.

5.2 Issues raised by Estyn

Estyn's overall conclusion is shown at Para. 4.2; there appear to be no supplementary issues arising from its consideration of the proposal.

APPENDIX A

Estyn response to the proposal by Pembrokeshire County Council to change the provision of nursery education at the St Florence Church in Wales VC school from the age of three years old by making a regulated alteration to the age range of the school.

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 and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

The proposal is by Pembrokeshire County Council.

The proposal is to change the provision of nursery education at the St Florence Church in Wales VC School from the age of three years old by making a regulated alteration to the age range of the school to admit part time nursery pupils.

Summary/ Conclusion

The proposal has been developed in line with the council's programme to improve its educational provision and give children a valuable start to education.

It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standard of early year's provision in the area.

Description and benefits

The proposer has given a clear rationale for the proposal. The proposer explains in detail the background to the proposal including age range, capacity at January 2107, admission numbers, pupil population and forecasts. The proposer clearly states that it believes that children are being denied the opportunity to start their education early as there is currently no independent childcare provision in the area. The school

The proposer has included a statement about the financial position and future funding arrangements. No capital investment is required and it is unlikely there will be any revenue savings should the proposal be accepted.

The proposal includes suitable arrangements for consultation. It explains appropriately that objections can only be registered following publication of the statutory notice.

currently has approximately 37 percent of surplus places and the proposal believes using the accommodation for nursery provision will potentially reduce this surplus. It gives a clear rationale as to why the school should extend the age range to admit part time nursery pupils, and the proposer believes the provision would strengthen the position of the school in the community.

The proposer includes information about the quality of the accommodation and states it is fit for purpose and appropriate for teaching and learning.

The proposer details the schools in the area that they have considered will not be affected by the proposal.

The proposer has included the outcomes from the most recent Estyn inspection in 2014 and the ERW category.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposer clearly defines the expected advantages of the proposal. These appear to be reasonable and include:

- increased nursery provision
- improved choice for parents
- provide seamless faith-based education provision from nursery to year 6 ensuring continuity of teaching and learning approaches
- reduction of surplus places

The proposer has identified one disadvantage of the proposal, which is the potential detrimental effect on the number of pupils in other early years' settings.

The proposer has given clear evidence to show it has considered the impact on the quality and standards in education. The proposer suggests that the proposal will enable pupils to access school at an earlier age and their needs will be better met. The proposer also suggests that this will lead to better outcomes for the school.

The proposer has considered the impact on provision and support for pupils and it appears that the proposal will help to ensure a seamless transition into school. It will also help and support families to engage meaningfully in their child's learning.

The proposer states there will not be any impact on Welsh language nor on pupil travel arrangements. The proposer has carried out a suitable equalities impact assessment

The proposer has included a statement about the financial position and future funding arrangements. No capital investment is required and it is unlikely there will be any revenue savings should the proposal be accepted.

The proposal includes suitable arrangements for consultation. It explains appropriately that objections can only be registered following publication of the statutory notice.

St Florence VC School

Proposal to Extend Age Range to Admit Part Time Three Year Old Pupils

Correspondence received as part of statutory consultation

Ref.	Comments
2	Yea I think this would be very beneficial. All the other schools in the area seem to take children's from an earlier age so why should our school be any different .there are plenty of children in the village who could start that are going to other schools because they can't start at St Florence school until 4
3	The proposal would be great for St Florence village as well as the school... with the village extending bigger and bigger will be a great for new and old families to take advantage of.
5	It would be a welcome addition to the school and the wider community. The school offers a lovely environment for young children.
6	I have 6 children. 4 of whom have/do attend St Florence VC. I currently have 2 children ages 3 and 2 at home. My 3 year old turns 4 in a few weeks time and is able to start St Florence fulltime in January. She is more than ready for school. My 2 year old times 3 in January and he definitely needs part time schooling asap. Other schools take them from 3 so they are progressing faster than children that can't start until they are 4. I did think about placing them in other local schools but I decided to wait until they are 4 and attend St Florence VC as we live in the village already and my other children already attend there. There are numerous children in the village that attend neighbouring schools due to the age 4 rule which is a shame. There are a lot of babies/young children in the village whom I know will attend at Florence VC if the age is lowered to 3. It is a great local friendly school with great staff.
8	Had this been in place when my two children started school I would have registered them at St Florence. They both attended the playgroup, and had a wonderful time there.
9	100% this is needed in St Florence we have lost so many children to other local schools because we have lacked this facility. We need to support our village school.
11	<div></div> (comments redacted for the purposes of this document - respondent does not want their comments to be made publically available)
12	<div></div> (comments redacted for the purposes of this document - respondent does not want their comments to be made publically available)

Ref.	Comments
13	I think it's important to support this to prolong the village life and encourage residents to stay in St Florence rather than taking children out of the village.
14	The school will benefit greatly if they accepted 3 year olds. Not only will this help local families it will give young children a boost in education and confidence. Being open for 3 year olds will encourage local families to keep their children in their local area.
16	Why Not?? Give it the Go Ahead Please
18	This is a great school and creates a real sense of community within St Florence. The progress and wellbeing of the pupils is a strong feature.
20	Hopefully extending the age range will attract more children to the school and will ensure we keep a school in St Florence.
21	The proposal would benefit the school by potentially boosting student numbers. Pupils starting age three would benefit by less disruption than starting with another provider, then having to move. Most other schools in the area accept three year olds and St. Florence is at a disadvantage by not currently being able to.
22	This is a much needed provision in the area
23	<div></div> <i>(comments redacted for the purposes of this document - respondent does not want their comments to be made publically available)</i>
24	I agree and support the proposal. I feel it would have a positive impact on the school as a whole. I have young children and due to the current age have considered placing my children in another school due the age of starting and worries it would be disrupting for them to move. Luckily I have a lot of family support but if this wasn't the case this may have happen.
25	As the school does not have provision for 3 year old children they are lose children "in catchment" as parents take them to that offer facilities for 3 year olds.
26	I feel that the children at present are at a disadvantage by not having nursery provision and are entering St Florence school at 4yrs of age when they could be entering at 3yrs of age if nursery provision was in place. As the nearest pre-school provision is no longer available in New Hedges, we, as a school could provide our children with this facility if and when the status of the school is changed, At present, I feel they are disadvantaged by having a later entry age compared to other local schools.

Ref.	Comments
27	I think for the long term future of the school, the proposed changes are essential. It will lead to better achievement for the children as they will be entering school at a younger age. Staffing levels need to be looked at carefully as the foundation phase class already caters for 3 or 4 year groups at a time.
28	I feel it is a must to provide part time schooling for three years olds! It will benefit the children in the local area and the school.
29	A nursery form 3 years up within the school will improve the flow children into the school, increase pupil numbers, and offer local parents the free child care provision that they are entitled too. Allowing children to start in the school from 3 will facilitate their development and transition to full time education.
30	I strongly agree with the proposal as it will allow the families of St Florence to access education at three years old within their local area. It will allow pupils to build friendships with their peers who live in the village and will help to prevent the loss of potential pupils to other local schools who offer access to three year old education.
31	<p>A desperately needed provision that is long overdue.</p> <p>This should be implemented as a matter of urgency!</p>
32	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p><i>(comments redacted for the purposes of this document - respondent does not want their comments to be made publically available)</i></p>
33	As the Head Teacher I strongly believe the proposal will have a positive impact on the community. The increased provision for 3 year olds in the area will allow the school to increase its numbers by giving parents a fair choice, especially working parents within the community who have no option but to find alternative provision. Over the past years the percentage of pupils eFSM has consistently risen. The gap between attainment of pupils eligible for FSM and Non FSM pupils is rising at Foundation Phase. I believe this is partly due to pupils eFSM not accessing provision before they are 4 years of age and that they are at a disadvantage before they start school. This makes it further difficult for staff to close the attainment gap in the limited time.
34	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p><i>(comments redacted for the purposes of this document - respondent does not want their comments to be made publically available)</i></p>
35	Taking 3 yr olds would help so many working parents who pay huge amounts for child care. Children would also benefit being in an educational setting a year earlier.

Ref.	Comments
36	I welcome this proposal with the understanding that there will be an increase in standards and provision. With an increase in pupil numbers within the Foundation Phase, I would like to see the recruitment of additional staff to ensure that all pupils continue to have the ability to thrive in the school environment; both within the areas of learning (currently achieving below the county average) and personal and social development.
37	<div style="background-color: black; height: 1.2em; width: 100%;"></div> <i>(comments redacted for the purposes of this document - respondent does not want their comments to be made publically available)</i>
38	This will be positive for the school in securing a longer term future - attracting more pupils. This is important for the school + potential parents perceptions of the longer term - no one wants to send their child to a school if the longer term is in doubt. The school culture will cope easily with younger pupils - there is a very nurturing, supportive approach promoted throughout the school that is well established with staff + pupils. There are facilities being developed that will accommodate younger pupils - inside + outside the environments have improved considerably over the last couple of years.
40	<div style="background-color: black; height: 1.2em; width: 100%;"></div> <i>(comments redacted for the purposes of this document - respondent does not want their comments to be made publically available)</i>
42	A very good idea.
SF1	<p>The School Council met to discuss the proposal to extend the school age range from 4-11 to 3-11 years of age. They listed reasons for and against the proposal and concluded that they would like to have 3yr old pupils attend St Florence School because ...</p> <p>(pupils' own words)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be better to come to school at a younger age to allow more education. • We would like more children to attend from the village as we feel we don't know them that well. • It would save travel time. • Allows us to make more friends. • We don't always know the children in our village • We have spare spaces. • To give parents and children more choice. • More education more choice • It will strengthen our community • Help for working parents.

Ref.	Comments
SF2	<p>I am writing on behalf of the governing body of St Florence School to add to the online form with regard to the change of status of our school to include the following points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will allow parents a choice of school by allowing children to attend St Florence School at 3yrs of age not 4 as at present. • There is sufficient room to accommodate nursery children in the building without structural changes being made. • It will narrow the gap between children on FSM and those not by giving them the opportunity to attend school a year earlier. • Targets will be met earlier with children attaining expected levels at the end of F.P. • With more children attending the school there will be a stronger feeling of community within the village. • As St Florence is a church school parents will have the choice of accessing a school with a strong church ethos for their nursery children. • As the school is in the centre of the village most parents can access the school on foot and so encouraging sustainability and a healthy lifestyle. • As there is at present no other nursery provision locally St Florence will be offering parents the opportunity to send their children to school at 3 yrs of age and therefore accessing the Foundation Phase a year earlier than at present, which at present is not available to them. They are therefore disadvantaged greatly. <p>I hope that the above backs our case for changing the status of St Florence school from 4 yrs to 3yr of age.</p>