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sir fynwy

# CONSULTATION REPORT

Proposal to extend the age range at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni from 4-11 years to 3-11 years, to include part time nursery provision

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## Introduction

Monmouthshire County Council is responsible for ensuring there are sufficient early education places to enable all children aged 3 and 4 to access their entitlement to 10 hours of free early education from the term following their third birthday until they commence in Reception in the autumn term following their fourth birthday. In Monmouthshire, early education is provided through a mixed economy of Local Authority nursery classes, private settings and voluntary settings. There are currently 11 LA nurseries offering 660 early education places and 29 non-maintained approved providers offering 1,049 early education places.

Monmouthshire County Council is also committed to increasing the number of pupils choosing to be educated through the medium of Welsh. At present, there are only two settings providing Welsh medium early education places in Monmouthshire; Ysgol Y Ffin in the south of the county and Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni in the north of the county. Ysgol Y Ffin has an age range of 3-11 years, which includes a nursery class providing 30 part time places for 3 and 4 year olds. Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni is a Welsh medium non-maintained setting based in a demountable building on the site of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. They are registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) for 26 children aged 2-5 years and they currently offer morning and afternoon sessions. Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni are an approved provider of early education, they also offer Flying Start places and generic childcare.

Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni is a 210 place Welsh medium primary school admitting children from 4-11 years of age. It is situated in Abergavenny and is currently the only school providing Welsh medium primary education in the north of the county. It is also the only Welsh medium primary school in the South East Wales Consortium that does not have a nursery class. The school governing body feel strongly that having an integral LA Nursery will enable them to raise standards.

A Single Member Decision was made on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2015 to commence statutory consultation on the proposal to extend the age range at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni from 4-11 years to 3-11 years, to include part time nursery provision. The subsequent statutory consultation was undertaken during a six week period from 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2015 to 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2015.

This document represents the County Council's responsibility as part of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to publish a Consultation Report. This report details the consultation process that has taken place, summarises each of the issues raised by consultees and responds to these issues. In addition, all responses received during the consultation period, along with detailed notes from the 'drop-in' session and consultation with children, are included within the appendices.

This report will be considered by Monmouthshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Children and Young People on 9th September 2015.

# Distribution of Consultation Report

This Consultation Report will be distributed to the following:

- Staff and parents of children attending Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni
- Governing body of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni
- Staff and parents of children attending Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni
- Committee of Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni
- Professional Associations and Trade Unions
- All Monmouthshire Primary Schools
- Early Education Non-Maintained Providers
- Neighbouring Local Authorities – Newport, Caerphilly, Torfaen, Blaenau-Gwent
- Church in Wales Diocesan, Roman Catholic Diocesan and Churches Together in Wales - CYTUN
- Local Member of Parliament – David Davies MP
- Local Assembly Member – Nick Ramsay AM
- Regional Assembly Members - Jocelyn Davies AM, Lindsay Whittle AM, Mohammad Asghar AM, William Graham AM
- Welsh Government – Schools Management Division
- Estyn
- Education Achievement Service (EAS)
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Welsh Language Commissioner
- Abergavenny Town Council
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
- Regional Transport Consortium
- Welsh Medium Forum
- Admission Forum

# Consultation Arrangements

## General Arrangements

The Consultation Document was published on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2015. The statutory consultation period commenced on this date and lasted 42 days; hence, it closed on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2015.

The Consultation Document was distributed to all statutory consultees, as listed in Appendix 1 on page 13 of that document.

The Consultation Document was published on Monmouthshire County Council's website at:

[www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/2015/06/22/ysgol-gymraeg-y-fenni-public-consultation](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/2015/06/22/ysgol-gymraeg-y-fenni-public-consultation)

It is also available on Monmouthshire's Family Information Service website at:

[www.monfis.org.uk/news/ysgol-gymraeg-y-fenni-nursery-consultation](http://www.monfis.org.uk/news/ysgol-gymraeg-y-fenni-nursery-consultation)

## Consultation Meeting

A 'drop-in' session was held at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 6.30pm-8pm.

This session was attended by parents of children currently attending Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni or Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni, and prospective parents of both establishments. Senior MCC Officers, the Headteacher of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni and members of Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni's committee were available throughout the session to answer questions.

Copies of all questions and responses are summarised in Appendix 1 on pages 8 and 9 of this report.

## Consultation with Children

Consultation with pupils of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni was facilitated by the School Council on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

A record of this consultation and pupils' views are summarised in Appendix 2 on page 10 of this report.

# Consultation Responses

## General consensus

There were 42 respondents to the consultation document; this consisted of parents, staff, members of the community and other professionals. The overall feeling from the comments made during the 'drop-in session' and correspondence received during the consultation period is that there is strong support for the proposal.

The narrative list of all comments received during the consultation period is attached at Appendix 5.

## Issues Raised by Consultees

Whilst there is almost unanimous support for the proposal, the responses received identified some specific areas of concern:

- The proposal is over complicated, why can't the school run the morning and afternoon sessions?
- It does not deal with the real issue of insufficient capacity for Welsh medium education, in fact it effectively reduces the number of places.
- There are insufficient places to provide wrap around care.
- Home to school transport will not be available for children attending the LA Nursery.

## Issues Raised by Children

There was unanimous support for the proposal from the children consulted with and there were no issues raised. Quotes from the children are listed in Appendix 2.

## Issues Raised by Estyn

Monmouthshire County Council has received a detailed response from Estyn with regards to the proposal. In summary, it is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of provision in the area and they had no specific issues.

The full response to the proposal from Estyn is attached at Appendix 3.

## Issues raised by Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni

The response received from Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni stated they were generally supportive of the proposal although they had a few reservations, namely:

- It may not be possible to offer wrap around care as the morning sessions are already fully taken up by 2-3 year olds.

- This proposal does not take into account the long term future of Welsh medium education in Monmouthshire and the need for increased capacity to accommodate growing demand.
- The prospect of nursery places being oversubscribed; Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni are unlikely to have the capacity to accommodate any children who are not allocated a place in the LA Nursery.

The full response to the proposal from Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni is attached at Appendix 4.

## **APPENDIX 1 – Record of Drop In Session**

### **Will the Local Authority dictate the opening times of the provision?**

- The school will agree the opening times of the LA Nursery, they will probably be arranged to fit in with the end of the school day to make it easier for parents who have siblings in the school.

### **Will there be wrap around care?**

- This is the decision of Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni and largely depends if they have space to accommodate this provision, whilst still meeting the needs of the younger children.

### **Is there any flexibility around attendance at the LA Nursery?**

- No, it is not possible to share places at LA Nursery, if a place was taken up they would be expected to attend 5 sessions a week.

### **When would the LA Nursery open?**

- If everything goes to plan, the intention is for the LA Nursery to open on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

### **How will it affect 2 year olds in Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni?**

- Children who are not due to move on to LA Nursery in April have been offered morning sessions so they should not be affected.
- At present, the LA nursery will only run an afternoon session; Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni will continue to operate in the mornings, as it was felt that morning sessions are better suited to younger children.

### **What is ‘wrap around’ as this is not made clear in the consultation document?**

- Members of the Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni committee felt that the language of the report was not helpful and seemed to suggest this is a given.
- No decisions have yet been made by the setting as to whether or not they will offer wrap around provision; the stumbling block is likely to be growing numbers and, hence, lack of vacant spaces.

### **What is the Council’s longer term view with regards to the school? If the school moves will the Cylch Meithrin move with them?**

- This is a political decision for the future.
- Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni would want to remain with the school as they have built up good links and transition is much smoother for the children.

### **Has there been any research/spoken to other Headteachers that have a school based Meithrin?**

- Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni is the only Welsh medium school in South East Wales without their own Nursery.
- The school governing body feel strongly that transition would be easier and standards would improve if children were immersed in the Welsh language from a younger age.



**With regards to immersion, what would be the method of teaching?**

- It depends on the ability of the child; however, if a child did not understand, the school would use their current policy of Welsh English Welsh.

**Would the uniform be the same as Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni?**

- The school would not expect parents to purchase a new uniform in April for one term.

**Would the school nursery be free?**

- Yes, five sessions of 2.5 hours per week would be provided free of charge.
- Lunch club or wrap around care provided by Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni would have to be paid for.

**What happens if there are more than 30 applications for the LA Nursery?**

- The admission number for the school nursery would be set at 30 and they would not be allowed to exceed this number.
- Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni would remain as an Approved Provider of Early Education and would be able to accommodate any additional children; funding would still be available for this purpose.

**How would people know they would have to apply for LA Nursery?**

- Parents with children at Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni would be sent an application form. FIS and social media would be used to spread the word to a wider audience.

**Would the pupils get free home to school transport for LA Nursery?**

- No, this is not statutory education so free home to school transport is not provided.

**Other comments:**

- We are a first language Welsh speaking family and we would like to record our support for the proposals.
- Throughout the process the Local Authority has tried to help/protect Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni as far as possible.
- It is ultimately about raising standards and increasing bilingualism.
- Local Authority are looking to set up another Cylch Meithrin in the area. Identifying Welsh speaking leaders is the issue but there has been growth in adults learning the Welsh language and Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw have changed their childcare qualification to one on the Care Council's qualification framework for Early Years, so this should help.

## **APPENDIX 2 – Record of Consultation with Children**

Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni School Council met on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2015 to consider the proposal to extend the age range at their school to include nursery provision.

Notes from the meeting are as follows:

School council all present.

### **Do you think that it is a good idea to have a nursery class at school?**

Everyone was in agreement.

### **Why?**

"It is a very good idea and brothers and sisters will be able to come before the reception."

"It will help children to speak Welsh better."

"It will be like a lot of English schools."

"The nursery children can come to play with us in the yard."

"Perhaps the nursery children won't cry when they start."

"The older children can help the nursery children to speak Welsh."

"We would be able to share toys with them."

The School Council, therefore, fully supports the idea of having a nursery class at the school.

## **APPENDIX 3 – Estyn Response**

### **Estyn's response to the proposal to extend the age range at Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni.**

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 that 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 produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer

#### **Introduction**

The proposal is by Monmouthshire County Council.

The proposal is to extend the age range at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni from 4-11 years to 3-11 years, to include part time nursery provision.

#### **Summary/ Conclusion**

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

#### **Description and benefits**

The proposer clearly outlines the rationale for the proposal. The proposal seeks to ensure equality of provision in both of the county's Welsh medium primary schools in the county and in the EAS consortium. The proposal identifies how the county propose to continue with Cylch Meithrin y Fenni, providing childcare for 2-4 year olds from the same building in the morning and lunchtimes, with the school providing nursery education in the afternoons. This will maintain the provision of 56 early education places available on site for children to access from the term following their third birthday until they start in Reception. Currently, Cylch Meithrin y Fenni operates two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The proposal states that the majority of places in the afternoon session are currently taken up by 3-4 year olds accessing early education and who would be in the nursery class should the proposal be implemented.

Should the proposal be implemented, it is likely that it would have a beneficial impact on the transition of children from early education into school. As the demountable currently used for Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni is already in place there is no capital expenditure anticipated. The building is fit for purpose and is in good condition. The

school would need to appoint a part time (0.5) teacher and two teaching assistants and the costs would be met from an increase in the school budget and the Foundation Phase grant.

The proposer identifies a negative impact on the finances of Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni, as a result of the loss of early education funding, but has identified the lunch club and an increase in the session time in the morning as additional revenue to assist with sustainability.

The proposer has identified many of the expected benefits and disadvantages of the proposal well. However there is no reference to the current performance, the quality of leadership and provision at the setting or school. However, it is reasonable to assume that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of provision in the area. The equality impact assessment provided by the proposer is detailed and it provides valuable information on the potential negative, neutral and positive impacts of the proposals on the relevant protected characteristics.

## APPENDIX 4 – Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni Response

Cylch Meithrin y Fenni is generally supportive of the proposals, and on the whole understand the reasoning. We would like it noted that feedback from our recent survey strongly indicates that parents are happy with the Meithrin and are confident that our staff are doing their very best to offer an excellent level of care, education and support to the children who attend. We feel that the ongoing discussions and consultation process have done little for staff moral in the last 12 months as this has been an ongoing ‘threat’, with no real answers; we have 7 members of staff in a mixture of full and part time roles who have very little job security and feel very undervalued.

We see our future tied very much with that of the school, we have worked hard to foster excellent relationships that have eased the transition to school for the children at the Meithrin and wish to continue to do so. In an ideal scenario we would continue to offer 2 sessions as we do currently and as the school grows and is potentially moved (there surely needs to be expansion given the rate of growth in numbers attending?) we would be moved to the same site as part of a successful Welsh-medium learning community. In this way the school could have a LA Nursery and we could run a Mudiad Meithrin offering 2 sessions a day, meaning we could offer proper wraparound care to parents wanting a Welsh-medium education.

We have identified a number of reservations and/or concerns with the proposals, which are detailed below;

- MCC would like to see wraparound care offered at the Meithrin. We feel that this may not be possible on a practical level as we generally fill our 26 morning spaces with non pre-school children (a mixture of Flying Start funded children, parent paid fees & children receiving 3 year old funding) so would not want to limit ourselves by offering these 26 spaces to Pre-school aged children. We will look at the possibility of offering a lunch club however, it is not a foregone conclusion but a discussion that the staff, families and management committee of Cylch Meithrin y Fenni must have in the coming months as more details regarding the school based nursery are finalised.
- Welsh language provision in Monmouthshire is more of an issue that whether or not Ysgol y Fenni should be allowed to increase their numbers. The long term future needs to be seriously looked at, these proposals do not increase capacity, in reality they limit it, as school nursery places cannot be shared in the way Meithrin places currently are.
- From September 1<sup>st</sup> we will have 35 pre-school aged children attending the Meithrin (as they are currently able to ‘share’ our 26 spaces). 32 of these children accessing at least 1 afternoon session – if the school based nursery opens at Easter 2016, where will the children that are not successful in gaining a place in the Ysgol Y Fenni nursery go for their last term before school? We will no longer have an afternoon session to offer them and our morning sessions are also full.

## APPENDIX 5 – Consultees Responses

Name (if provided)	Point of View	Comments
AB	Supportive	I think it will be a great development for the school as the children will have established their Welsh Language skills when they enter the school fully rather than potentially struggle with the language initially while trying to get a grasp of learning in a structured environment. It should see learning levels get even better at the school.
CT	Supportive	<p>I agree with the school governors that it would be beneficial to Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to provide Welsh medium education for children aged 3 years, if this is similar, as is suggested, to raise the standard of provision and to facilitate the transition from nursery school to primary school at age 4 years.</p> <p>It is suggested that the children of the nursery school are currently being taught by teachers who are not fluent in the language, which is unfortunate and extremely inappropriate. I wonder what the plan is to correct this, other than those mentioned in the document.</p> <p>It would be easier to provide further comments if the format of the consultation included specific questions that could be answered within the document, instead of a blank page where comments cannot be identified. I hope that this will not cut down on the number of responses received.</p> <p>If you want to present the information in Welsh and English, it would be good if the format is consistent, and the links to the titles of the documents also in the relevant languages on either side of the website.</p>
DJ	Supportive	Having read your report I am in support of the proposal to introduce an Ysgol Feithrin at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni as the further help that the children will receive will help them when they start school in the reception class and will ease their transition into school as they will be used to the building and the routines of the school.
KH	Supportive	I am just writing to say how essential I think it is that Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni provides nursery provision prior to school entry. I am only a Welsh learner but my wife is a Welsh speaker and when our children went through the existing Cylch Meithrin we know how little Welsh was used. Our children turned to English within the Cylch as a result and their classes when they entered the school reception class were largely unable to speak Welsh. This puts a big pressure on the school and the children in reception class and holds back development in almost all other areas. The

		<p>situation in the Cylch Meithrin has improved with a leader who can now speak Welsh and much more Welsh is being used. But when you bear in mind that well over 90% of children going through this system will be from English speaking households, this is not enough. The additional afternoon hours that the school nursery provision could provide, in a totally Welsh speaking immersive environment would make a huge difference to the language level of the children prior to Reception Class. It also makes Welsh language nursery provision possible for many households who cannot currently use it because both parents work and the Cylch Meithrin can only do a limited number of hours. They therefore have to opt for English language nursery provision.</p> <p>I think that this in school nursery provision in Welsh is essential to enable the school to continue to try and improve its standards and think it would be very short-sighted if this did not go ahead.</p>
EH	Supportive	<p>As a past chairperson of Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni I believe that this proposal for an integral meithrin at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni is the way forward for Welsh education in Monmouthshire. These children will now be able to have qualified fluent Welsh speaking teachers, which has sadly always been lacking at the Cylch Meithrin despite all good intentions. We all know the importance of these children being exposed to the language as early as possible and being under the umbrella of the school this will have such a positive effect.</p>
GE	Supportive	<p>As a Grandfather and Welsh learner living in Monmouthshire, I agree that it is essential that with parents wishing to have their children educated through the medium of Welsh that these children are introduced to the language at the earliest opportunity. This is so important, as most children's parents are non-Welsh speakers, so no Welsh spoken at home.</p> <p>However, the current proposal appears over complicated. I would prefer to see the school take control, so that there is consistency of delivery through the whole school day, by fluent Welsh speaking teachers and Assistants. I understand the school has the resources to implement such an arrangement.</p> <p>From a personal perspective, I have always felt my own education was short changed by not learning Welsh at Primary school, ironically at Llanover School, where as we all know Lady Llanover endeavoured to preserve Welsh during the 19th century. She was responsible for bringing my first language Welsh speaking grandparents to Monmouthshire.</p> <p>It is for this reason I feel strongly about the early introduction of the Welsh language to children.</p>
EM	Concerns	<p>There seems to be a fundamental problem with this proposal in that it is claimed that it will increase the access to Welsh Medium at pre-school level by moving children from the Cylch Meithrin to the Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. In fact looking at the figures given, the number of children</p>

		<p>(3+) that will have access will drop from between 41 and 54 to a fixed number of 30 children. This will be further reduced if the same children take up the proposed 'wraparound' care and also use up a morning session. This will ultimately affect the 2 year olds, especially the Flying Start children which are exactly the children that need the additional support earlier, and arguably are the ones that will determine an improved outcome at the end of the Foundation Phase.</p> <p>Fundamentally, if the interest in Welsh Education keeps on increasing it is more physical space that is needed rather than juggling the limited space that it currently available!</p>
GK		<p>One question that comes to mind straight away is: why, under the distribution list, only Anglican and Catholic (Roman) Churches are named? Perhaps a better way to ensure fairness to all is to distribute to every denomination by using a body such as CYTUN (Churches in Wales together) – who are also in touch with other religious forums.</p>
HF	Supportive	<p>I support extending Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni to include part-time nursery provision because of</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) the higher standard of skills in Welsh from a younger age</li> <li>2) wrap around care and education between the provision of Mudiad Ysgol Meithrin and the school will make it easier for parents in work.</li> </ol>
JW	Supportive	<p>I support this because the standard of the language will be higher when the children go to the Reception class.</p>
AJ	Supportive	<p>I agree with the idea of nursery provision. It's a very good idea for the Welsh language and for the area.</p>
JH	Supportive	<p>I think that the proposal is an excellent idea and long overdue. I have had 3 children go through the Cylch Meithrin and into Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. There is no doubt in my mind that the LA nursery provision now being proposed would have resulted in them and their class mates entering Reception Class with a much higher standard of Welsh which then has a knock on effect on all other aspects of education.</p> <p>My children did not have the opportunity to be taught by fluent Welsh speaking staff before reception class and this has had a knock on effect on standards throughout the school. This is particularly important in a non-Welsh speaking area such as this where probably 95% of the children are coming from non- Welsh speaking backgrounds.</p> <p>I served as a Committee member on the Cylch Meithrin in the past and feel that the addition of LA Nursery provision will only enhance the pre-school provision for children going through the Welsh Language education system.</p>



		The lack of Welsh language nursery provision that meets the needs of working parents has long been a problem in the Cylch Meithrin system, resulting in many children being placed in English language nurseries instead. This proposal makes a Welsh language nursery place feasible logistically for working parents.
MD	Supportive	As a teacher who teaches at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni and has done for 4 years, I welcome the concept here to extend the school's provision from 4-11 to 3-11. A nursery which is part of the school ensures greater consistency and will make the transition process much more convenient for everyone. As a school and as individual teachers, our intention is to ensure a broad education for our pupils and we're raising standards. I anticipate that the extension of school provision will raise standards because of the following reasons: Children will communicate with more adults and result in children who are confident in the Welsh language. This will help with the development of a second language. Our school is growing and shows that the nature of Welsh-medium education is becoming more popular. It will help raise greater awareness of Welsh-medium education and bilingualism. There will be consistency in processes and daily arrangements to help children understand school routine and will enable them to transition between nursery and reception more smoothly. It makes sense to me that teachers are going to teach the children of the nursery. At present, there are no qualified teachers at the Playgroup. This means, in my opinion, that the Cylch Meithrin staff have not received the same level of training. Although the Cylch Meithrin do their best with the provision that they provide, sharing the building with the school enables efficient sharing of resources and expertise. One of the things that disappointed me to stem from the concept here is the fact that the school did not receive a morning session. Research, and any teacher you ask, will tell you that children learn better in the morning. In light of this, doesn't it make sense for the qualified teachers to work within the morning sessions to raise standards and achievement? To be honest, in the end I believe strongly that the school nursery should take place in the afternoon and the morning. I anticipate this will attract many parents to register their children. According to your statutory document, there will be over 50 places provided through the playgroup and nursery school, so you will need to look at the size of the school and how many children come. At present, we are a one stream school, but if this continues the school will turn into a two stream school. I think that this is something positive and something to look forward to.
PG	Supportive	Our two children attended the Meithrin and continued onto YGYF and are doing well however I think that matters could have been improved if the Meithrin had the personnel and the funding to be a full school day taught through Welsh so that the children were fairly fluent in the language

		<p>when they entered reception. Whilst it shouldn't be a prerequisite that they are fully Welsh speakers by the time they enter reception it would certainly help the school, the teachers and the other pupils if the majority had a good grasp of the language. A well sourced, funded and extra hours Meithrin would give the pupils a much better chance of success in school and life through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>There is also the very probable outcome that the Meithrin would have an increased roll call as more working parents who want their children to be educated in Welsh would be able to use the Meithrin as their children would be in Welsh medium education for a full day and not just half a day as present.</p>
PH	Supportive	<p>This is an excellent proposal and should be given full support by MCC, parents of Y Fenni children and the public in general.</p> <p>The proposal will enable children to access professional Welsh speaking teachers from an earlier age which will be a substantial benefit to the children's Welsh language skills and their education and in turn raise standards.</p>
LD	Supportive	<p>I think it would be a wonderful idea to have an Early Years section in our school. It would improve our school greatly and we are the only school in South East Wales not to have one.</p>
RH	Supportive	<p>I strongly support the proposal to extend the school age range. The school was a fantastic experience for both our children and I am sure the addition of Meithrin provision would be a benefit to the children.</p>
SH	Supportive	<p>I think this would be a fantastic addition to the school. It would make the Meithrin and school transition easier for all and would improve the standard of Welsh in Dosbarth Derbyn. A good, positive move for all involved.</p>
KM	Supportive	<p>I agree with the above proposal to include a part time nursery provision at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni.</p>
LS	Supportive	<p>I'm in agreement for the proposal for the nursery.</p>
KM	Supportive	<p>I'm 100% in agreement for the proposal. Will be very beneficial to the pupils, families and school and will therefore raise standards for this fantastic school.</p>
BS	Supportive	<p>We feel it would be beneficial for there to be a nursery connected to the Welsh school.</p>
SB	Supportive	<p>I whole heartedly support the proposal to extend the age range at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. As a parent with a 10 year old child who has been educated at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni and who also spent time at Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni I welcome the proposal. As a mum who worked part-time I found it very frustrating that there was no Welsh medium full day care available in the area for my toddler. It is even more incredible to think that 8 years on it is still the case that this is not available</p>

- either LA maintained or privately. Hopefully this proposal will start to address this issue. Although I understand that priority for the remaining morning sessions at the Cylch Meithrin will be given to 2-3 year olds hopefully if the Cylch Meithrin introduces a lunch club this will allow some full time places for 3-4 year olds to be created and potentially the flexibility of parental choice for a longer session for the 2-3 year olds.

This issue is very dear to my heart as unfortunately I had to remove my daughter from some sessions in the Cylch Meithrin as the morning session was just half-hour too short to fit with my working arrangements. It was very ironic for me at the time, as the work that I was doing was working for Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin; the umbrella organisation that the Cylch Meithrin is affiliated to; promoting Welsh Medium Baby and Toddler Groups but owing to the shortage of Welsh Medium Nursery provision I need to remove my child from the Cylch Meithrin for several sessions and place her in a nursery setting within an English school which provided a lunch club option. It would have been very easy for me to decide to keep my daughter in this English school where she had settled and abandon the idea of a Welsh Medium Education. I am very glad that my daughter did have a Welsh Medium Education and I feel that she could not have received a better education than the education that she has received at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. I feel this proposal with its more flexible approach to childcare will make it possible for more parents to make that same choice and not be forced to select the English medium to provide the solution.

I do not see any problem with the fact that there will now only be provision for 2-3 year olds in the mornings. As stated in the proposal document most 2-3 year olds currently choose the morning session. From my experience of working with this age group when setting up baby and toddler groups and my personal experience as a parent this is because most 2-3 year olds still need to take a nap in the afternoon so parents choose the morning session when they are more active and open to learning.

As a Teaching Assistant working in a LA maintained Welsh Medium Nursery setting within a Welsh Medium School in Blaenau Gwent I welcome the proposal for the Welsh School to provide the funded early years education for 3-4 years old. Within my own work I have witnessed first-hand what a difference having a fully qualified teacher who is trained in the Foundation Stage makes to the outcomes for children at 3-4 years old. A fully qualified teacher better understands the educational needs of the child and is best placed to prepare them for full time education. This proposal would see the 3-4 year old setting being led by a fully qualified teacher and this will be a big improvement on what is being currently offered by the Cylch Meithrin. It is stated in the

		<p>proposal that Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni is the only Welsh medium primary school in the South East Wales Consortium that does not have a nursery class. This begs the question; "Why are the 3-4 year olds of Abergavenny being denied access to being taught within a school by a qualified teacher when it is being offered to everyone else in South East Wales?"</p> <p>As an ex-employee of the Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni I feel the acquisition of Welsh language skills by the 3-4 year olds will be greatly improved if they are taught by fluent Welsh speaking staff from the Welsh school. During my time of working at Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni very little Welsh was spoken in the setting giving the children very little opportunity to acquire the language. The staff were generally Welsh learners who did not have the confidence to use the little Welsh that they had with the children. During my time there, the attitude of the staff to the Welsh language was very poor. There was an undercurrent of "What is the point - this is not even a Welsh speaking area?" I myself felt ostracised by other members of staff because I could speak Welsh and I tried to use it with the children. I know that the committee paid for employees to attend Welsh lessons to enable them to strengthen their language skills but the most of employees did not bother to attend these lessons. I know that the period that I am referring to is in the past but from contact that I have had with people that still work in the Cylch Meithrin and from members of the parent committee I do not think this culture has changed much. So I really welcome the opportunity proposed for our 3-4 year olds to be taught by fluent Welsh speakers who have a positive attitude to the promotion of the Welsh Language in our area. I hope that the proposal is successful and I wish the school every success in this new and exciting venture.</p>
	Supportive	I support this decision as it will increase the educational standards for every child.
	Supportive	Extending the age range of Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni will have a positive effect on the school and on the community. The language standards of the children will increase throughout the school that will have a big effect on their education. It's also an excellent opportunity for parents who wish to send their children to Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni but who cannot afford to send them to the Cylch Meithrin. Nursery provision would also enable the children to become more familiar with the Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni family.
	Supportive	I believe that having nursery provision as part of the school is very important in increasing the linguistic standards in the school. It will also help with transition.
	Supportive	Undoubtedly having nursery provision in Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni will help to increase the standards of welfare and achievements of the pupils. As the consultation document suggests, Y Fenni is the only Welsh school in south-east Wales without nursery provision. Although the

		standards in Y Fenni are very good immersing the children in the language 5 terms earlier will have a positive effect on the standard of Welsh when they start in the Reception class. Transition will be easier as will tracking progress of children from three years old will ensure the best possible educational standards from a young age for the children of the area. Having a reception class in the school will ensure equal opportunities and the children in Y Fenni will have the same provision as all other child attending Welsh-medium schools in the South East. My only concern is that 30 spaces will not be sufficient! There will be equal opportunities for all children.
	Supportive	I believe that nursery provision in school will be good from the point of view of the standard of Welsh amongst the children. The children will receive better Welsh provision and transition will be easier and more homely for the children. The cost of Welsh medium provision also affects where parents send their children, having nursery provision in the school will enable parents to send their children to a Welsh-medium school with nursery provision.
	Supportive	In my opinion having nursery provision as part of Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni will be a great help in improving linguistic standards. The whole school will benefit from children receiving Welsh-medium education at an earlier age.
	Supportive	It's important that Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni has nursery provision in the school. This is the only school in the area without nursery provision and I believe it is long overdue for the situation to change. I worry that there will not be sufficient places to respond to the applications. Having nursery provision in the school will have a big effect on the children's standard of Welsh too, which is vitally important.
	Supportive	Excellent! There will be equal opportunities for every child. The standards will increase from the bottom up. Transition to the reception class will be easier. This is deprived area so the standards will increase amongst disadvantaged children, one of the aims of the Welsh Government. Full day care will be beneficial to us for our children.
	Supportive	I agree with having nursery provision in Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni as it will give the correct start to the language and also make it easier to progress to the Reception class.
	Supportive	The children will have a better chance if there is nursery provision on site that the nursery teachers can speak fluent Welsh to the children. The reception class will not have to take more time teaching the children, they could spend more time teaching them everything that is required, not spending time helping to catch up on the language and small things that they will be taught in nursery.

	Supportive	<p>I would be delighted if the school extended the age range at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni. My son is due to start nursery in April 2016, my daughter attends the school and I would like him to start at the nursery. It is imperative I believe that children immerse themselves in a welsh learning environment as soon as possible if they intend to follow the path of education via the medium of welsh.</p> <p>I would hope that if nursery provision is established at the school, the meithrin would offer wrap around care, thereby offering the children an extending learning environment through the medium of welsh. I would certainly like my child to go to the nursery and the meithrin.</p>
	Supportive	This would be a fantastic addition to our school, expanding the age range will introduce Welsh language to younger children, who will have the support and all interaction with other children and siblings through the medium of Welsh, and becoming part of the Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni family.
	Supportive	This extension will be a fantastic idea to allow children to experience the Welsh language in a familiar environment from an earlier age, to prepare them for school life.
	Supportive	The addition of a nursery to the existing school will be of huge benefit to the pupils because they will have Welsh education from an early age and it will carry on seamlessly from the nursery to the Reception class. It will benefit the parents because of the increased Welsh education and childcare provision. It will benefit the staff because the pupils will be fluent in Welsh from an early age.
	Supportive	This is a fantastic idea, it will give children an easier transition to the main school and in a Welsh medium, will benefit the child. I feel the child will have greater liaisons with the main school and this will enhance confidence within the child. Benefits of learning Welsh from an earlier age and in a school setting will be an advantage for the parent and child.
	Supportive	It's a fantastic idea!! The increase of the medium of Welsh in our area is paramount to the future generations of our county and the surrounding areas.
	Supportive	I think this is an excellent idea. This school is a wonderful provision and I feel it will greatly improve the children's learning.
	Supportive	This is great and a step forward for a great school. Not sure how much Welsh has been spoken in Meithrin as no Welsh speaker till this year, so hard for the school to make up progress.
	Supportive	I would welcome the extension of the Welsh Medium of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni as it would allow the children who attend to reach their true potential by having access to provision earlier. Allowing the teachers within the school to work with parents and children from 3 years onwards, means that they are able to enjoy the fruits of the environment that Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni offers earlier.

## APPENDIX 6 – Equality Impact Assessment

### The “Equality Initial Challenge”

Name: Sue Hall Service area: Early Years Section, CYP Date completed: 21 <sup>st</sup> April, 2015		Please give a <b>brief description</b> of what you are aiming to do. To increase the age range of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to 3-11 years, to include a 30 place Local Authority Nursery class.	
Protected characteristic	Potential <b>Negative</b> impact Please give details	Potential <b>Neutral</b> impact Please give details	Potential <b>Positive</b> Impact Please give details
Age	Welsh medium childcare for 2-3 year olds will only be available in the mornings, where it is currently available in the morning and afternoon sessions; nevertheless, the majority of the places in the afternoon session are currently taken up by 3-4 year olds accessing Early Education.		The age range of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni will be extended. Children aged 3 will be able to access LA Nursery provision through the medium of Welsh, as well as Early Education provision in the non-maintained sector.
Disability		Children with a disability are currently able to access Early Education provision at Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni, which occupies the same building as Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni LA Nursery class, so there should be a neutral impact on this group.	
Marriage + Civil Partnership		X	
Pregnancy and maternity		X	
Race		X	

Religion or Belief		X	
Sex (was Gender)		X	
Sexual Orientation		X	
Transgender		X	
Welsh Language	Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni will have to reduce the hours and flexibility of childcare provided, as they will have to share the premises with the LA Nursery, hence it will be unavailable during the afternoon session.		Children will be able to access LA Welsh medium provision from a younger age and will be immersed in the Welsh language, hence improving the possibility of achieving outcomes 5 & 6 by the end of the Foundation Phase. It will also aid transition from pre-school to Reception and hopefully encourage more families to take up Welsh medium education.

Please give details about any potential <b>negative Impacts</b> .	How do you propose to <b>MITIGATE</b> these <b>negative impacts</b>
<p>➤ <i>Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni currently provide a morning and afternoon session in the demountable building on the site of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni, providing 52 childcare and Early Education places. Utilising the demountable building for an LA Nursery in the afternoon session, which can only be accessed by children from the term following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, will reduce the number and flexibility of places for 2-3 year olds.</i></p>	<p>➤ Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni will give priority to 2-3 year olds who are unable to access the LA Nursery provision; wrap around childcare for children attending the LA Nursery will only be offered if there are surplus places available.</p>



<p>➤ <i>The number of childcare places provided by Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni will be reduced from 52 to 26 (although many of these were previously utilised for Early Education, which will now be provided by Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni) and childcare will only be available in the mornings.</i></p>	<p>➤ The intention is to open a second Cylch Meithrin, possibly in the Raglan area, reducing the pressure on places at Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni.</p> <p>➤ Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni intend to offer a lunch club, hence increasing the length of childcare sessions provided.</p> <p>➤ There will now be the possibility of wrap around childcare for 3-4 year olds, which was not previously available through the medium of Welsh.</p>
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**Signed:** *S. Hall*

**Designation:** Early Years Manager

**Dated:** 21.04.15

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

<b>What are you impact assessing</b>	<b>Service area</b>
Provision of LA Nursery at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni	Early Years
<b>Policy author / service lead</b>	<b>Name of assessor and date</b>
Sue Hall	Sue Hall      21.04.15

**1. What are you proposing to do?**

The proposal is to extend the age range at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to 3-11 years to include a 30 place Local Authority Nursery class. This provision will be located in the demountable building on the site of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni, currently occupied by Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni. The building and resources will be shared with Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni, with Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni providing childcare in the morning session followed by lunch club and Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni nursery class operating in the afternoon session.

**2. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics in a **negative** way? If **YES** please tick appropriate boxes below.**

Age	X	Race	
Disability		Religion or Belief	
Gender reassignment		Sex	
Marriage or civil partnership		Sexual Orientation	
Pregnancy and maternity		Welsh Language	X

3. Please give details of the negative impact

Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni currently provide a morning and afternoon session in the demountable building on the site of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni, providing 52 childcare and Early Education places. Utilising the demountable building for an LA Nursery in the afternoon session will increase the total number of sessions available to 56, however there will be less flexibility around the childcare available; 2-3 year olds will only be able to access childcare in the mornings and places at the LA Nursery are not able to be shared between several children, as they currently are at Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni.

4. Did you take any actions to mitigate your proposal? Please give details below including any consultation or engagement.

The intention is to develop a second Cylch Meithrin in a nearby area hence reducing the pressure on Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni. Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni intend to prioritise places for 2-3 year olds who are unable to access the LA Nursery provision, they will also extend the length of their morning session to include a lunch club. Consultation has taken place with the Manager and Chairperson of Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni, the Headteacher and governing body of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni and Mudiad Meithrin. The proposals were also discussed and agreed by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

5. Please list the data that has been used to develop this proposal? eg Household survey data, Welsh Govt data, ONS data, MCC service user data, Staff personnel data etc..

Monitoring of Early Education places  
Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA)  
Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP)  
Estyn reports and Foundation Phase data

Signed: *S. Hall*

Designation: Early Years Manager

Dated: 21.04.15

## The “Sustainability Challenge”

<b>Name of the Officer</b> completing “the Sustainability challenge” Sue Hall		Please give a <b>brief description</b> of the <b>aims</b> proposed policy or service reconfiguration To increase the age range of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to 3-11 years, to include a 30 place Local Authority Nursery class.	
<b>Name</b> of the Division or service area Early Years Section, CYP		<b>Date</b> “Challenge” form completed 21 <sup>st</sup> April, 2015	
Aspect of sustainability affected	<b>Negative impact</b> Please give details	Neutral impact Please give details	<b>Positive Impact</b> Please give details
<b>PEOPLE</b>			
Ensure that more people have access to healthy food		X	
Improve housing quality and provision		X	
Reduce ill health and improve healthcare provision		X	
Promote independence		X	
Encourage community participation/action and voluntary work		X	
Targets socially excluded		X	
Help reduce crime and fear of crime		X	
Improve access to education and training			Parents will be able to choose to access Welsh medium early education at a Local Authority Nursery or a non-maintained setting.

Have a positive impact on people and places in other countries		X	
<b>PLANET</b>			
Reduce, reuse and recycle waste and water		X	
Reduce carbon dioxide emissions		X	
Prevent or reduce pollution of the air, land and water		X	
Protect or enhance wildlife habitats (e.g. trees, hedgerows, open spaces)		X	
Protect or enhance visual appearance of environment		X	
<b>PROFIT</b>			
Protect local shops and services		X	
Link local production with local consumption		X	
Improve environmental awareness of local businesses		X	
Increase employment for local people	Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni will no longer be able to run an afternoon session, so staff at the setting may have reduced hours of employment.		
Preserve and enhance local identity and culture		X	
Consider ethical purchasing issues, such as Fairtrade,		X	

sustainable timber (FSC logo) etc			
Increase and improve access to leisure, recreation or cultural facilities		X	

What are the potential negative Impacts	Ideas as to how we can look to <b>MITIGATE</b> the <b>negative impacts</b> (include any reasonable adjustments)
➤ <i>Possible reduction in hours of staff at Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni.</i>	➤ Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni intend to extend the hours of their morning session and offer a lunch club, hence minimising the reduction in staff hours. There is also the possibility of staff currently working at Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni being employed part time at the school.

## The next steps

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **positive impact please give full details** below

Currently, parents in North Monmouthshire choosing to educate their children through the medium of Welsh, can only access early education at a non-maintained setting and by the summer term there are not always sufficient places for all children to take up their full entitlement of 5 sessions per week. By increasing the age range at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to include a Nursery class, the number of early education places available will increase slightly from 52 to 56 places and parents will be able to choose between an LA nursery or a non-maintained setting.

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **Negative Impact** could you please provide us with details of what you propose to do to mitigate the negative impact:

Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni intend to extend the hours of their morning session and offer a lunch club, hence minimising the reduction in staff hours. There is also the possibility of staff currently working at Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni being employed part time at the school.

**Signed:** *S. Hall*

**Dated:** 21.04.15