



SUBJECT: STATUTORY CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE AGE RANGE OF DURAND PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM 3-11 YEARS TO 4-11 YEARS

MEETING: CABINET

DATE: 21ST JANUARY 2026

1) PURPOSE:

- a) The purpose of the report is to seek Members' permission to consult with stakeholders on the Council's intention to change the age range of Durand Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years.
- b) The proposal is to replace the LA maintained school nursery with a non-maintained setting based on the school site that is approved to provide funded early education.

2) RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Members:

- a) Agree to enter into a statutory consultation process as set out in the School Organisation Code (a document produced by virtue of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013) to obtain the views of consultees on changing the age range of Durand Primary School and replacing the school nursery with an approved non-maintained setting on the school site.
- b) Agree and approve the attached draft consultation document (appendix 1) which proposes to change the age range of Durand Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years.

3) KEY ISSUES:

- a) The Council is committed to giving every young person in Monmouthshire the best possible start in life, as set out in the Corporate Plan. At its heart is improving the educational achievement and attainment of all children and young people in the county.
- b) The duty to ensure appropriate provision of school places is not limited to statutory school places. The Council has a duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to ensure that families can access their entitlement to a minimum of 10 hours a week of early education from the term following their child's 3rd birthday until they are offered a full-time school place.
- c) The Childcare Offer for Wales was first introduced in Monmouthshire in 2019 and was fully rolled out in September 2020; through this scheme working parents can access up to 30 hours a week of funded early education and childcare. As a result, we have seen a shift to parents choosing an approved non-maintained setting that is able to offer the full 30 hours a week, in preference to school nurseries that are only able to offer 12.5 hours a week.
- d) Numbers attending Durand Nursery have reduced significantly since the introduction of the Childcare Offer. The school has a capacity of 60 part time places (30 morning and 30 afternoon), but they haven't been close to being full since 2018-19, and some years they have only required a morning session.

| Numbers on roll at Durand Primary Nursey | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| 58 | 36 | 30 | 37 | 35 | 39 | 40 |

- e) Running the nursery class with significant surplus places negatively impacts the school budget.
- f) In the recent Estyn inspection, teaching and learning at Durand Primary was judged to be good in most classes, but it was noted that the classes for younger learners was an area for development.
- g) The school is currently using a supply teacher to lead the nursery class and they would be able to redeploy the other nursery staff within the main school; hence, there would be no need for any redundancies if the age range was changed and the school nursery was replaced with a non-maintained setting.
- h) In the summer term the Headteacher of Durand Primary School entered discussions with a private provider that already has two successful day nurseries in other areas of Monmouthshire that are approved for early education and Flying Start childcare. As a result, Little Gems at Durand

opened in September 2025 and is currently offering wrap around childcare for children attending the school nursery.

- i) The non-maintained setting is currently sharing the space with the school nursery, as there was no other space available on site, so the school nursery provides early education in the mornings, and Little Gems takes over at 11.30am and offers wrap around childcare. This isn't a long-term solution as it is difficult for two providers to share a space. It also limits the length of sessions the non-maintained setting is able to provide, and the owner of Little Gems has already expressed concerns that they won't be sustainable in the long term if they can only offer part time places.

4) EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

An integrated impact assessment associated with the proposals has been completed and can be found under appendix 2. This assessment will be reviewed and updated to incorporate the feedback received during the consultation period.

5) OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- a) The attached consultation document outlines three options for nursery provision at Durand Primary School:
 1. Do nothing and maintain the status quo. This would mean that Durand Primary School would continue with its current age range of 3-11 years offering 30 part time nursery places (mornings only) and a non-maintained setting would offer wrap around childcare in the afternoons.
 2. Change the age range of Durand Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years and replace the school nursery with a non-maintained setting approved to provide funded early education and wrap around childcare.
 3. End the lease agreement with Little Gems to enable Durand Nursery to offer 60 part time places (morning and afternoon sessions), with no wrap around childcare available on site.
- b) The preferred option on which we would like to consult is option 2, which is to change the age range of Durand Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years and replace the school nursery with a non-maintained setting approved to provide funded early education and wrap around childcare.
- c) This option is not only the most financially viable, but it also delivers excellent teaching and learning facilities, whilst offering greater flexibility for parents.

- d) The consultation process is proposed to run over the next 6 months in line with the timescales outlined below:

Consultation stage

| Statutory Consultation Period to commence | Statutory Consultation Period concludes | Period of consultation required |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 29 th January 2026 | 13 th March 2026 | 6 weeks (including 20 school days) |

Post consultation stage

| Stage of process | Key date |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cabinet considers the results of the consultation and determines whether to proceed with proposal | 15 th April 2026 |
| Should the Council wish to proceed, statutory notices will be published and we will enter objection period | 23 rd April 2026 |
| Closure of the objection period | 22 nd May 2026 |
| Cabinet considers the objection report and determines whether or not to implement the proposal | 8 th July 2026 |
| Implementation of Proposal | September 2026 |

6. REASONS:

- 6.1 The Council has a statutory duty as part of the School Organisation Code 2018 to consult with appropriate stakeholders when considering any significant school reorganisation proposals.
- 6.2 The proposed change will help to address the Council's commitment to provide children with the best possible start in life and to be ready for school.
- 6.3 The proposed change will offer more flexibility to families and enable parents/carers to remain in work or return to work or training.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 The proposal would have no specific resource implications for the Council.
- 7.2 Offering nursery provision with significant surplus places has placed a strain on the budget of Durand Primary School; therefore, the proposal to change the age range of Durand Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years and replace the school nursery with a non-maintained setting approved to provide funded early education and wrap around childcare would have a positive financial impact for the school.
- 7.3 The non-maintained setting is privately owned, so they manage their own finances. The early education would be funded through the non-maintained element of the Local Authority Education Grant and eligible parents would be able to access funding for the wrap around childcare directly from the Welsh Government through the Childcare Offer Scheme.

8. CONSULTEES:

Children, Learning, Skills & Economy (CLSE) DMT
Cllr Laura Wright, Cabinet Member for Education

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Welsh Government School Organisation Code 2018
Childcare Act 2006

10. AUTHOR:

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11. CONTACT DETAILS:

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