

6th February 2017

Dear Carwyn

Primary school education delivery in Llangennech

On 18th January 2017, Carmarthenshire County Council decided to change primary school delivery in the community of Llangennech near Llanelli. The Council's decision includes the following three elements:

1. To close Llangennech Infant School and Llangennech Primary School Juniors and create a new community primary school on the site and in the same buildings as present;
2. To widen the school's age range from 4-11 to 3-11, by introducing new part-time education for children aged 3 years; and
3. To create the new school as a Welsh language school instead of the current arrangement of the two streams in the two schools.

These proposed changes were announced by the County Council in the usual manner and 267 responses were received to the formal consultation. I think it's fair to say that very little focus was given in the responses to the offer to create a new primary school instead of the two current schools. On the whole, there was support too for the intention to provide a part-time nursery in the school although some responders expressed concern about the effect this could have on current nurseries in the independent sector

The element of the offer that produced the most responses, however, was the intention to change the medium of teaching for all pupils to Welsh, instead of the two streams that currently exists, which offers provision side by side either in Welsh or in English. Opinions were received from both sides with some strongly objecting the proposal with others in favour.

I have been of the opinion from the start that this would be a natural follow-on for the school, considering the changes that have taken place on balance in terms of language provision over the last few years and the changes would be advantageous to every child.

On top of this, the decision concerning Llangennech was taken in the context of a number of key strategies, developed nationally and locally to support the development the Welsh language.

We are confident that the decision in relation to Llangennech supports the vision launched by Alun Davies AM in the National Eisteddfod in 2016 to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050 and the recognition in the consultation document that the "statutory education system is the main method the Welsh Government has to ensure that children can develop their Welsh language skills and to create new speakers".

