



# **Newport City Council**

## **School Reorganisation Proposal**

### **Consultation Report**

**Proposal to reduce the Published Admission Number and extend the age range at Malpas Church in Wales Primary School**

**Formal Consultation Period:**

**19 June 2023 – 30 July 2023**

#### **Purpose**

This report is published in line with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code, November 2018.

This consultation report includes the following sections:

- The Proposal
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Learner Voice
- Drop-in Sessions
- Consultation Responses
- Estyn's Response
- Impact on the Welsh language
- Assessment of the Proposal
- Recommendations
- Appendices

## The Proposal

This consultation report concerns a joint proposal between the Governing Body of Malpas Church in Wales Primary School and Newport City Council to reduce the published admission number of Malpas Church in Wales Primary School from 54 to 45 from September 2024; and extend the age range of the school from 4-11 to 3-11 with effect from September 2025.

## Stakeholder Engagement

An invitation to take part in the statutory consultation was issued to the stakeholders outlined below, with a link to the consultation pack on the Council's website sent by e-mail:

- The Headteacher, teachers, staff and the governing body of Malpas Church in Wales Primary School;
- Pupils at Malpas Church in Wales Primary School;
- Parents, carers and guardians of pupils attending Malpas Church in Wales Primary School;
- The Headteachers and Governing Bodies of all Newport schools;
- All Newport City Council elected members;
- All Newport Community Councils;
- The Welsh Ministers;
- Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the area served by the school subject to the proposal;
- Other Local Authorities across the South East Wales Consortium region, including relevant Transport departments;
- The South East Wales Education Achievement Service;
- The Church in Wales, Diocese of Monmouth;
- Roman Catholic Archdiocese;
- Estyn;
- Teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and staff at all Newport schools;
- The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
- All non-maintained registered nursery education providers in the local area
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent;
- Gwent Police;
- South Wales Fire and Rescue Service;
- Aneurin Bevan University Health Board;
- Public Health Wales;
- Newport Serennu Centre;
- SNAP Cymru;
- Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations;
- Preventative Services.

### Affected Schools

The school directly affected by this proposal is **Malpas Church in Wales Primary School**.

### Distribution of Information

In addition to the formal (main) consultation document, a Children & Young People's Everyday Summary version was also produced. All documents were available bilingually in Welsh and English.

Hard copies of the full consultation document and the Children and Young People's Everyday Summary version were provided to Malpas Church in Wales Primary School.

Hard copies could also be requested by emailing [school.reorg@newport.gov.uk](mailto:school.reorg@newport.gov.uk) or telephoning 01633 656656 and these were available bilingually in Welsh and English. The document was also offered in other languages on request, although no such requests were received.

The consultation information has been shared on the Newport City Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts. The information was also shared on Malpas Church in Wales Primary School's website.

### **Learner Voice**

The Council is keen to gain the views of learners, and this was facilitated with pupils from various year groups at Malpas Church in Wales Primary School on Tuesday 4th July 2023.

The following attendees were present:

- 10 pupils representing different year groups
- Deputy Headteacher
- Education Transformation Manager
- Education Information and Development Officer

The Council officers attending the session introduced themselves to the pupils, and the session was led by the Education Transformation Manager. To start, the Education Transformation Manager explained the proposal to the pupils. Pupils were asked if they had any younger siblings and the benefits they would see if a nursery was established in the school. The pupils were then given the opportunity to ask questions, which are outlined in the table below.

<b>Question/Comment</b>	<b>Council's Response</b>
Where in the school will the nursery class be set up?	The nursery will take up half of the current reception classroom with the conservatory attached. (The pupils were shown the planned layout from the main consultation document)
How will the Reception and Nursery be separated?	There will be a partition installed that will split the classroom into two rooms.
Will the Nursery class have their own outside play area?	The Nursery class will require access to an outside play area, the school leadership team and governors would decide the arrangements on how the play area is shared.

The pupils were invited to give their views on the proposal by way of a show of hands. No pupils thought the proposal was a bad idea. Three pupils were not sure, and seven pupils thought the proposal was a good idea.

The pupils who were not sure about the proposal said that this was because they weren't sure if there was enough room, and how the sharing of outdoor areas would work.

The pupils were given the opportunity to complete hard copies of the Consultation Response Pro-forma during the session, but no responses were received.

The Council is very grateful to the staff and pupils who took part in this session and would like to thank them for their valuable contributions to this consultation process.

## Drop-in Sessions

The Council facilitated two drop-in sessions as outlined below, and these were publicised via the Council's website and within all correspondence and documentation relating to the proposal. The drop-in sessions were an opportunity for attendees to ask questions and for Council officers and the Governing Body to explain the proposal in greater detail.

<b>Table 1: Drop-in Sessions</b>		
<b>Location</b>	<b>Date &amp; Time</b>	<b>Session</b>
<b>Malpas Church in Wales Primary School – Infant Hall</b>	Tuesday 27 June 2023 15:00 – 16:00	Drop-in
<b>Malpas Church in Wales Primary School – Staff Room</b>	Tuesday 4 July 2023 09:00 – 10:00	Drop-in

### Drop-in Session 1 – Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023

The first drop-in session, held at Malpas Church in Wales Primary School was supported by the Deputy Headteacher of the school (also a member of the school Governing Body) and two Council officers from the Central Education Service. Hard copies of the main consultation document, the Children and Young People's Everyday Summary version and response forms were available at the session in both Welsh and English.

No stakeholders attended this session.

### Drop-in Session 2 – Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023

The second drop-in session, also held at Malpas Church in Wales Primary School was supported by the Headteacher and vice Chair of Governors of the school and two Council officers from the Central Education service. Hard copies of the main consultation document, the Children and Young People's Everyday Summary version and response forms were available at the session in both Welsh and English.

One stakeholder attended this session and completed a consultation pro-forma. The stakeholder attending the session was positive about the proposal, in particular the extending of the age range which would establish a nursery class in the school.

## Consultation Responses

Overall, a total of 35 responses were received during the consultation period.

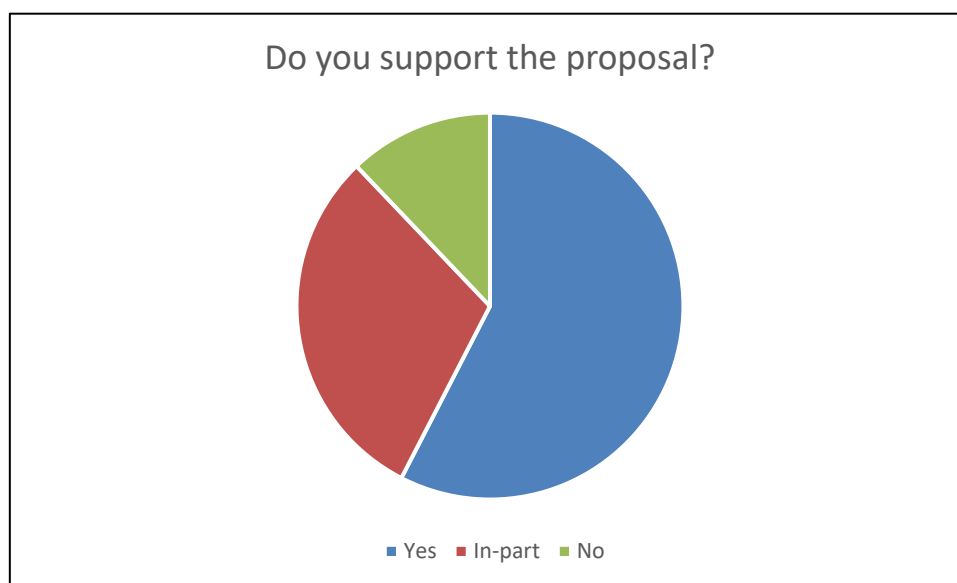
33 responses were received via the response pro-forma (see Appendix A) online and via hard copies, by a variety of stakeholders including:

- Parents/Carers
- Teachers
- Local residents

There were also 2 written responses received by email from a Teachers' Trade Union and Estyn (His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales).

The response pro-forma offered the opportunity for respondents to answer a direct question in relation to the proposal, as follows:

*'Do you support the proposal to reduce the published admission number by 9 places from 54 to 45 from September 2024 and increase the age range from 4-11 to 3-11 by establishing a nursery class at Malpas Church in Wales Primary School with effect from September 2025'*



19 out of 33 respondents (58%) supported the proposal, with many of the responses also providing comments that a nursery is crucial to the school and should in fact have been considered in previous years.

10 out of 33 respondents (30%) supported the proposal in part, with the majority supporting the need for a nursery at the school. However some respondents raised some concerns, which have been outlined below:

Comment / Question	Number of Similar Comments	Council's Response
Whilst the school needs a nursery, introducing this within the current building could impact current provision, especially in the Reception year group, and other facilities such as toilets might also be unsuitable or inadequate.	2	<p>Due to low numbers at the school, there are currently empty classrooms within the school building. There would be some small alterations to classrooms to enable the school to establish the nursery class.</p> <p>The provision of a nursery class is not expected to affect the excellent provision being provided to other year groups.</p>
Concerns over mixed-age classes.	2	The school currently uses mixed-age classes as do many other schools. There is no evidence to indicate mixed-age classes have any negative impact on teaching and learning. The teachers would continue to provide education to the quality and standards aligned with the Estyn Inspection framework.
The school is situated on a large site, a nursery class could be better provided by building a separate classroom.	1	Building a standalone nursery would entail significant cost and leave insufficient outdoor space for the pupils. This would also leave an area of the school building vacant which is not cost effective.
The reduction in the capacity of the school should not impact on children currently attending the school.	1	<p>The reduced Published Admission Number (PAN) would not affect any pupils already on roll at the school. Therefore, if on the implementation date any year group contained more than 45 children, these children would continue to attend the school and would not be displaced.</p> <p>The new PAN would therefore apply to any current year groups operating at or below that number, and any future admissions only.</p>
The two elements of the proposal are contradictory	1	Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposal seeks to reduce the number of statutory school age pupils that the school is able to admit and at the same time looks to introduce an extra year group, the average intake to Reception over the last 4 years has been much less than the school's PAN of 54. Reducing the PAN will make planning and managing the school easier and more cost-effective and secure the necessary space to enable the Governing Body to extend the age range of the school to support establishment of a nursery class. This will provide Early

		Years education places and increase consistency and familiarity for pupils who then transition into Reception class the following year.
There needs to be sufficient places at the school to meet local demand	1	Applications for admission will continue to be assessed in accordance with the Council's School Admissions Policy. In accordance with this policy, parents can express a preference for any school, but there is no guarantee of admission to the chosen school, even if it is the catchment school.  Where a school is oversubscribed, preference requests will still be considered, but the Council's over-subscription criteria, which considers catchment areas and home-to school distance, will be applied to determine priority.
The reduction in school capacity will result in less funding for the school and therefore could impact on the number of teaching staff.	1	School funding is directed by the number of pupils on roll, rather than school capacity. The number of pupils on roll has been less than the proposed capacity of 315 for the last three years. It is the recent low intake of pupils that has impacted funding. The proposed addition of a nursery class therefore provides an opportunity to increase funding levels compared to the current position and mitigate the risk of staff cuts.
The Council should seek to attract more children to the school rather than reduce capacity and therefore staff.	1	In accordance with the school's admission policy, parents can express a preference for any school. The recent changes introduced by the new leadership team, combined with the proposed addition of a nursery class will likely lead to an increase in the number of pupils applying for places at the school.

4 out of 33 respondents (12%) did not support the proposal; some of these put forward additional views and questions, which have been outlined below:

<b>Comment / Question</b>	<b>Number of Similar Comments</b>	<b>Council's Response</b>
There are adequate nursery places elsewhere and therefore this proposal will impact on other settings in the community.	1	Across the Malpas and Bettws areas, there are 219 nursery places available, including at two non-maintained settings. As of January 2023, there were only 12 places available for new applicants.  The proposed nursery class will provide additional nursery education places in the community and provide the opportunity to attend a nursery closer to home and increase consistency and familiarity for pupils who

		then transition into Reception class the following year.
The proposal will require investment at the school and may also require additional staff.	1	The proposal will require some small alterations to classrooms and toilets. These costs are not expected to be significant and will be funded from the school's budget. The addition of a nursery class would provide an opportunity to retain staff whose positions could otherwise be at risk due to declining pupil numbers.
As new houses are being built, the number of school places available should not be reduced.	1	There are currently no known housing developments under construction or planned in the Malpas and Bettws area in the next 5 years. We believe the proposal provides a sufficiency of places for the local population.

The response received from a School Trade Union was **not supportive** of the proposal. The full response is included at Appendix B.

The School Trade Union noted the consultation document states the proposal would “provide stability for planning and staffing” and “the school and governing body are confident that the staffing costs for the nursery can be met from the school’s budget”. The School Trade Union found this concerning as later in the consultation document it states: “There may be staffing implications for Malpas Church in Wales Primary School in terms of reducing teaching and support staff where necessary to support the reduction in pupil numbers in Reception – Y6.” The Union stated that they would not accept any proposal that would lead to a reduction in teacher numbers at the school and that public data is clear that such a reduction in staffing is not required.

The School Trade Union provided data from My Local Schools to support their points, stating:

- “(i) The school held a financial reserve of £158,000 in 2021-22.
- (ii) The school pupil-to-teacher ratio was 21.1 in 2022, which compares less favourably to the all-Wales average (21.0).
- (iii) The school has been consistently underfunded when compared to other schools in Newport for the past six years. In 2022-23, the school received just £3,811 [per pupil] compared to the Newport average of £4,133.”

The School Trade Union then stated: “Should this proposal be realised, therefore, the NASUWT would expect that the school’s financial reserve and a review of the NCC school funding formula would be sufficient to cover staffing costs. We do not agree that there is a rationale for a reduction in teacher numbers and the NASUWT therefore rejects this proposal.”

#### **Response from The Governing Body of Malpas Church in Wales Primary School:**

*Unfortunately, the NASUWT objection cites inaccurate data and is based on a misreading/misinterpretation of the school’s current position.*



As of July 2023, the school has a projected end of year surplus of £40,365. Further projections show this surplus reducing to zero by the end of the 2024-25 financial year.

Reception admission numbers over the previous four years have been:

Sept 2020	Sept 2021	Sept 2022	Sept 2023
35	35	22	26

Meanwhile cohorts leaving the school have numbered:

July 2021	July 2022	July 2023	July 2024
53	52	40	54

The number of pupils in the school is therefore declining year on year and is projected to do so going forward. The proposal to incorporate a Nursery provision is therefore one that seeks to stabilise this decline; provide greater job security for school staff over time and align provision with other primary schools in the cluster.

The reduction in PAN (to incorporate a Nursery) is unlikely therefore to have any impact on overall pupil numbers as the cohorts entering the school are significantly below this number. Currently the school admits around half of the children compared to the PAN.

## Estyn's Response

The full response from Estyn is included at Appendix C of this report. However, in summary, the response states that the proposal is likely to, at least, maintain the standard of provision in the area.

Estyn states that 'the local authority has given a clear rationale for the reduction in the published admission number (PAN) at Malpas Church in Wales School due to the current number of surplus places (around 25%). The rationale for the addition of a nursery is less clear, it appears to be based on equity of provision rather than a need to meet demand.'

'In 2021, the availability of nursery places was reduced by 80 due to the amalgamation of Fairoak and Kimberley Nursery Schools however, it is not clear if there is now an increase in demand in the local area for an additional nursery.'

### Response from the Council:

The Council agrees with Estyn's assessment that the proposed addition of a nursery class is based on equity of provision. Malpas Church in Wales Primary School is the only primary school in the Newport High School cluster that does not provide a nursery class. Previously, pupils attending Kimberley Nursery School would often progress to Malpas Church in Wales Primary School. In March 2021, the proposal to amalgamate Fairoak Nursery School and Kimberley Nursery School into a single nursery school on the Fairoak Nursery site from September 2021 was approved.

Across the Malpas and Bettws area (including the two non-maintained settings) there are 219 nursery places. As of January 2023 there were only 12 places available. By establishing a nursery class, this will provide greater parental choice and result in

more Rising 3 places being made available and provides the opportunity to attend a nursery closer to home and increase consistency and familiarity for pupils who then transition into Reception class the following year.

Estyn's response goes on to state that *'the alternative options considered, focus on alternative PANs for Malpas Church in Wales School and alternative nursery sizes. They do not consider any other alternative solutions across the Newport cluster. There is no indication of the possible impact on two local non-maintained settings who have recently increased their number of registered places.'*

#### **Response from the Council:**

The likely impact of the proposal on the wider cluster is considered, but the proposal is a joint proposal brought forward at the request of the school's governing body, and specifically concerns Malpas Church in Wales Primary School. The two non-maintained providers identified were sent the consultation pack for information and invited to provide comments, but none were received. There is not expected to be any significant impact on the local non-maintained settings. As the school proposal doesn't include wrap around provision, those providers that deliver early education and the Childcare Offer for Wales in the area would not likely be adversely effected. Furthermore, there has been a recent reduction in childcare places available in the Malpas cluster with the closure of a full day nursery. It is expected that children who were attending that provider have been absorbed by childcare providers in the area, which will help with overall sustainability.

Estyn also note that *'the cost of classroom alterations and additional staff for the nursery is expected to be funded from within the school budget. There is no indication within the proposal of expected costings and whether the current school budget will be able to meet these additional costs.'*

#### **Response from the Governing Body:**

The proposal to establish a nursery class will require some small alterations to classrooms and toilets. These costs are not expected to be significant, and the governing body is committed to funding these from the school's budget. The governing body is also confident that the staffing costs for the nursery can be met from funding allocated through the school's delegated budget.

A final point from Estyn notes that *'The proposal acknowledges the impact of staffing in terms of a reduction in the number of teaching staff at Malpas Church in Wales School if the PAN is reduced. It does not detail the impact in terms of the requirement to ensure appropriate staff are employed to provide a high-quality nursery education.'*

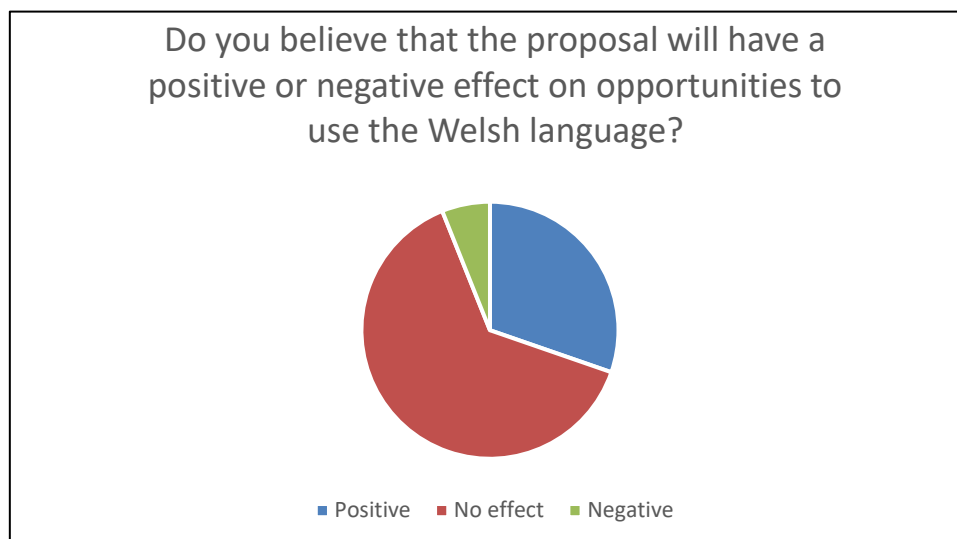
#### **Response from the Governing Body:**

Any staffing requirement for the new Nursery class will be taken initially from the school's current staff in order to mitigate against any loss of jobs due to low pupil numbers. Further recruitment would then be undertaken were it required. It should be noted that current pupil number projections are lower than the proposed PAN and as such any reduction in staff would be due to number on roll and not from reducing the PAN.

## Impact on the Welsh language

The consultation response pro-forma also asked respondents to give their views on the likely impact of the proposal on the Welsh language.

'Do you believe that the proposal will have a positive or negative effect on opportunities to use the Welsh language?'



10 out of 33 respondents (30%) answered 'Positive'. 21 respondents (64%) answered 'No effect', and 2 respondents (6%) answered 'Negative'. No further comments were received.

In response to the question 'Do you believe that the proposal will treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language?' 1 respondent answered 'Yes'. No further comments were received.

## Assessment of the Proposal

Following the public consultation period, the Council and the Governing Body maintain the view that the proposal (option 2) represents the best and most achievable solution to reduce the amount of surplus places forecast by 2026/27 and to provide a manageable 16 place nursery limiting any potential impact on other nursery providers. The consultation has identified some concern amongst stakeholders over the suitability of the facilities available, and the Governing Body of the school should develop more detailed plans to address these concerns. Council officers will support the school in developing these plans. The proposal is still preferred over the alternative options available:

### Published Admission Number and School Capacity

Option #	PAN	Capacity	Appraisal
1 (no change)	54	378	Large number of surplus places, difficult to plan staffing and budget.
2	45	315	Usual 1.5FE arrangement. Reduced surplus places. Sufficient capacity for forecast demand and some growth, and releases

			room for nursery provision. Easier to plan and budget.
<b>3</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>273</b>	1.5FE arrangement adjusted to best fit room sizes. Reduced surplus places, but limited capacity for growth. Releases room for nursery provision. Easier to plan and budget.

Of the above options, option 2 is the preferred option. Reducing the PAN to 45 helps to manage staffing levels and the school budget and reduces surplus places. It also releases space which can be used to provide nursery places, while leaving some capacity for any future growth in pupil numbers due to demographic change, parental choice and migration.

### Age range (nursery provision)

Option #	Age range	Nursery capacity (FTE)	Appraisal
<b>1(no change)</b>	<b>4-11</b>	<b>0</b>	No nursery provision at the school; pupils start in Reception at age 4
<b>2</b>	<b>3-11</b>	<b>16</b>	32 part-time nursery places offered enabling children to start at age 3, improving familiarity with the school and learning.
<b>3</b>	<b>3-11</b>	<b>24</b>	48 part-time nursery places offered enabling children to start at age 3, improving familiarity with the school and learning. More places offered, but more staff required resulting in greater costs.

Of the above options, option 2 is the preferred option. Establishing a small nursery of 16 morning and 16 afternoon sessions will be manageable and limit any potential impact on other nursery providers, while still offering the benefits of Early Years education places in an established school setting.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that permission be sought to move this proposal forward by publishing a statutory notice. This decision will be referred to the School's Governing Body and the Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years and taken through the Council's agreed democratic process.

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In accordance with the School Organisation Code (2018) this report is published electronically on Newport City Council's website at [www.newport.gov.uk/schoolreorganisation](http://www.newport.gov.uk/schoolreorganisation)

To request a hard (paper) copy of this document please contact Newport City Council's Education Information and Development Officer on 01633 656656 or email [school.reorg@newport.gov.uk](mailto:school.reorg@newport.gov.uk)

## Appendix A - Consultation Response Pro-forma

**This response relates to the joint proposal to reduce the published admission number by 9 places from 54 to 45 from September 2024 and extend the age range from 4-11 to 3-11 by establishing a nursery class at Malpas Church in Wales Primary School with effect from September 2025.**

Your views matter. Please tell us what you think about the proposal by completing this questionnaire. **The closing date for the submission of responses to this consultation is midnight on 30 July 2023.** Please note that negative responses made to this consultation will not be counted as objections to the proposal, they will be recorded as adverse comments. Objections can only be registered following the publication of a statutory notice.

### 1) Do you support the proposal to:

Reduce the published admission number by 9 places from 54 to 45 from September 2024 and increase the age range from 4-11 to 3-11 by establishing a nursery class at Malpas Church in Wales Primary School with effect from September 2025

Yes  No  In part

**Please use the box below to provide comments or explain which element of the proposal you do/do not support.**

The Council has a duty to consider and identify all the possible effects a policy decision may have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language or treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

### 2) Do you believe that the proposal will have a positive or negative effect on opportunities to use the Welsh language?

Positive  Negative  No effect

### 3) If you think it will have a negative effect, what steps could we take to lessen or remove this and improve positive effects?

4) Do you believe that the proposal will treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language?

Yes  No

Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent/carer of a child attending a local nursery)

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Please select your Ethnic group			
White British		Asian-Bangladeshi	
White Irish		Asian-Indian	
Any other White background (please state): _____		Asian-Pakistani	
		Any other Asian background	
Gypsy or Irish Traveller		Black Caribbean	
White and Asian		Black African	
White and Black African		Any other Black background	
White and Black Caribbean		Arab	
Any other Mixed background (please state): _____		Chinese	
		Any other ethnic group (please state): _____	
Asian-Bangladeshi		Prefer not to say	
Asian-Indian			
Asian-Pakistani			

Welsh language			
<b>Do you consider yourself a Welsh speaker?</b>			
Yes		No	Prefer not to say

Caring Responsibilities			
<b>Do you care for children of school age?</b>			
Yes		No	Prefer not to say
<b>Do you care for children of pre-school age?</b>			
Yes		No	Prefer not to say
<b>Do you care for a dependent adult or child above school age?</b>			
Yes		No	Prefer not to say

If you wish to be notified of the publication of the consultation report, please supply your contact details:

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B – Response from the NASUWT

FAO: The Governing Body of Malpas Church in Wales Primary School  
Newport City Council's Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years  
(sent via e-mail [school.reorg@newport.gov.uk](mailto:school.reorg@newport.gov.uk))

RE: **Formal Consultation Response** - To reduce the published admission number of Malpas Church in Wales Primary School from 54 to 45 from September 2024; and to extend the age range from 4-11 to 3-11 with effect from September 2025;

Tuesday 20 June 2023

Dear Members of the GB and Cabinet,

Thank you for inviting the NASUWT to formally respond to the consultation above. In addition to this written response, we would be willing to enter into dialogue with the Governing Body and Cabinet Member should further clarity be required.

The NASUWT notes the consultation document states that the proposal, if realised, would "provide stability for planning and staffing" (p.4).

The consultation document also states that:

"reducing the PAN to 45 helps to manage staffing levels and the school budget and reduces surplus places" (p. 16)

"the school and governing body are confident that the staffing costs for the nursery can be met from the school's budget" (*ibid*).

It is concerning, however, that the statements above appear to contradict elsewhere in the consultation pack. Later in the pack, it is admitted that the proposal, if adopted, could have a negative impact upon staffing at the school. It is stated:

"There may be staffing implications for Malpas Church in Wales Primary School in terms of reducing teaching and support staff where necessary to support the reduction in pupil numbers in Reception – Y6." (p. 18).

The NASUWT will not accept any proposal that would lead to a reduction in teacher numbers at the school. Public data is clear that such a reduction in staffing is not required.

*My Local School* confirms that:

- (i) The school held a financial reserve of £158,000 in 2021-22.
- (ii) The school pupil-to-teacher ratio was 21.1 in 2022, which compares less favourably to the all-Wales average (21.0).
- (iii) The school has been consistently underfunded when compared to other schools in Newport for the past six years. In 2022-23, the school received just £3,811 compared to the Newport average of £4,133.

Should this proposal be realised, therefore, the NASUWT would expect that the school's financial reserve and a review of the NCC school funding formula would be sufficient to cover staffing costs.

We do not agree that there is a rationale for a reduction in teacher numbers and the NASUWT therefore rejects this proposal.



## Appendix C – Estyn’s Response

### Estyn response to the proposal to reduce the capacity (from September 2024) and extend the age range (from September 2025) at Malpas Church in Wales Primary School

#### Introduction

This report has been prepared by His 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.

#### Summary / Conclusion

It is Estyn’s view that the proposal should at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area.

#### Description and benefits

There is a clear description of the proposal timetable for statutory procedures.

The local authority has given a clear rationale for the reduction in the published admission number (PAN) at Malpas Church in Wales School due to the current number of surplus places (around 25%). The rationale for the addition of a nursery is less clear, it appears to be based on equity of provision rather than a need to meet demand.

Malpas Church in Wales School is the only primary School in the Newport High School cluster that does not currently provide a nursery class. This proposal is seeking to bring equity of provision across all schools and make use of space available due to the decrease in numbers of pupils attending Malpas Church in Wales School. The proposed nursery class will use a classroom made available due to the low pupil numbers currently attending the school.

In 2021, the availability of nursery places was reduced by 80 due to the amalgamation of Fair oak and Kimberley Nursery Schools however, it is not clear if there is now an increase in demand in the local area for an additional nursery. The proposal states *‘If uptake of nursery places in the area does not improve as a result of the increased offer, then a similar number of pupils as currently attend nursery classes could be spread across more local providers. In this case some providers, including the new provision, may reduce their offer by running morning or afternoon sessions only.’*

The local authority has considered one other school which may be affected by this proposal, Malpas Park Primary School. This school may see a reduction in their

nursery places and then potentially fewer applications for their reception class if families decide to remain at Malpas Church in Wales School.

Declining pupil numbers at Malpas Church in Wales School, with particularly low reception intakes in the last three years have resulted in an increasing number of surplus places at the school, and present challenges for the school in budget management, staffing and class structure. The local authority forecast that the proportion of surplus places will increase to around 36% by 2026/27 if no action is taken. However, the proposal also identifies other schools with a surplus across the Newport cluster.

The alternative options considered, focus on alternative PANs for Malpas Church in Wales School and alternative nursery sizes. They do not consider any other alternative solutions across the Newport cluster. There is no indication of the possible impact on two local non-maintained settings who have recently increased their number of registered places.

The cost of classroom alterations and additional staff for the nursery is expected to be funded from within the school budget. There is no indication within the proposal of expected costings and whether the current school budget will be able to meet these additional costs.

As this proposal is to reduce the PAN and establish a nursery class at an English-medium school. The proposal has no impact on the Council's plans for Welsh-medium education provision.

### **Educational aspects of the proposal**

The proposal has given due consideration to the quality and standards of education at Malpas Church in Wales School, including consideration of the outcome of the 2019 inspection and monitoring visit in November 2022.

The proposal recognises that the leadership at Malpas Church in Wales School will *'receive an appropriate **level of challenge and support** to ensure that the school vision is well communicated and that the school's aims, strategic objectives, plans and policies focus on meeting the needs of pupils; so pupils achieve well and a safeguarding culture is promoted.'*

The proposal acknowledges the impact of staffing in terms of a reduction in the number of teaching staff at Malpas Church in Wales School if the PAN is reduced. It does not detail the impact in terms of the requirement to ensure appropriate staff are employed to provide a high-quality nursery education.

There is no specialist additional learning needs (ALN) provision planned for Malpas Church in Wales Primary School, and this proposal will have no effect on the existing provision within the cluster.