

Consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Ysgol y Foryd (Infants) and Ysgol Maes Owen (Juniors)

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is this consultation about?

Conwy Council is proposing to amalgamate Ysgol y Foryd (Infants) and Ysgol Maes Owen (Juniors) to become a primary school on the current school sites with effect from September 2026. The purpose of the consultation is to seek the views of staff, governors, parents and carers of pupils and other interested parties before a decision can be taken on whether to amalgamate both schools.

2. What does “amalgamation” mean?

Amalgamation in this instance involves merging Infant and Junior Schools to create a new primary school. If approved by Cabinet, both schools would “close” and reopen as a new school. The new school would operate under a single Board of Governors, management structure, mission statement, values, logos, uniform, policies, and procedures, while remaining located on the two existing schools' sites.

It is important to note that all the children currently in Ysgol y Foryd (Infants) and Ysgol Maes Owen (Juniors) will automatically become pupils in the primary school if the two schools amalgamate.

3. Why are we proposing to amalgamate both schools to form a primary school?

The rationale behind this proposal is to provide the children in both schools with a seamless transition through the school for their education from age three through to eleven. Conwy Council is committed to considering a move to a primary school, from separate infant and junior schools, when an opportunity arises.

If the proposal is approved, amalgamation will bring the two schools under a single headteacher and will further support smooth transition along the curriculum continuum between the ages of 3 and 11.

4. How would this proposal benefit children?

The amalgamation of both schools will provide clear benefits for pupils' learning as a single primary would have many benefits including:

- better continuity and a smoother transition between along the curriculum continuum between the ages of 3 and 11
- greater opportunities for curriculum development and progression as well as staff recruitment and development;
- building upon best practice and continue improving standards of pupils achievement and attainment;
- the relationship between parents and the school can build over a longer period; staff will know children for longer, allowing the school to better understand the needs of each pupil.

5. How would this proposal benefit staff?

A larger school offers the chance for a more specialised management and staffing structure, which means more room for staff growth and more flexibility in how staff members work to meet the unique requirements of students. Additional professional learning opportunities and experiences for staff will lead to wider expertise which can be shared amongst staff. This would also benefit peer to peer working e.g. team coaching and teaching.

Staff would have more opportunities to develop leadership roles and skills gaining wider experiences and professional learning through teaching and liaising with different phases – for example via like extra-curricular activities/school clubs.

6. What would be the impact on education quality and standards?

It is anticipated that amalgamation will help to raise standards and improve the quality of education provided, strengthen the management of governance arrangements already in place, and ensure ongoing improvement and positive outcomes for all pupils. The amalgamation will allow the school to operate under a single staffing structure, allowing for the sharing and maximisation of resources, expertise, knowledge, and support across the phases.

7. Is this a cost saving exercise and what will be the impact on the schools budget?

Savings will be made through efficiencies as resources may be shared throughout the primary school. The recruitment of a head teacher can result in cost savings, but the choice is more about creating a single primary school with a distinct vision for the pupils in Towyn and Kinmel Bay, particularly to support the vision of the Curriculum for Wales. Any reductions in school budget would be subject to existing CCBC transitional funding arrangements.

8. Would there be any changes to the size and accommodation?

In the event of amalgamation, the school would remain largely the same with all the existing premises being used in the most appropriate and efficient way. The new primary school will have greater flexibility to use the facilities more effectively for example community use which could also generate additional revenue whilst supporting a community ethos

9. Will there be changes to staffing because of the amalgamation?

The governing body will draft a new staffing structure, and any changes will be consulted on with staff and unions. It is anticipated that current staff from both schools will be slotted into relevant and appropriate positions within the new structure. However, leadership roles could be restructured, and the headteacher position will be advertised once a decision to amalgamate is made.

10. What will be the name of the school?

Any new school would have a new name which will be considered by the Governing Body. In making its decision, Governors would be encouraged to consult with parents and pupils.

11. Will there be a new school uniform for the newly established primary school?

A uniform for the school would be decided by the Governing Body of the amalgamated school, taking in to account the current uniforms of both schools and the phasing in of a new uniform. In making its decision, Governors would be encouraged to consult with parents and pupils.

12. What would be the admission arrangements?

Amalgamation would lead to a single admission with no application required between infants and juniors. Conwy County Borough Council as the Admissions Authority is responsible for determining the arrangements for admission to all Community Primary, Secondary and Special Schools and Voluntary Controlled Schools. Conwy County Borough Council will consult school Governing Bodies annually in relation to admissions. Admissions would be administered in accordance with Conwy's policy.

13. How will the Council take stakeholder views into account?

The local authority will seek views from all interested parties and will balance this against its responsibility to raise education standards. Before making any final decision, the local authority will consider a number of factors including views gathered from this consultation, any effect on school standards, governance arrangements, the current schools budget and viability.

14. How you can make your views known?

Stakeholders will have the opportunity to share their views during the consultation period. All responses will be considered and shared with Cabinet; however, we will not be able to acknowledge or respond individually to your comments. Views can be shared by completing the response form online, or in writing, and details of how and when to do this will be shared through the school's communication channels when the consultation is approved.

15. What happens next?

Following Conwy Cabinet approval (8 October 2024), the consultation will take place during the period from 21 October 2024 to 2 December 2024 inclusive. At the end of this consultation period, Cabinet will consider the feedback and views expressed during the consultation and decide whether to go ahead with the proposal.

If the Council then decides to proceed to the statutory stage of the process, it will publish a statutory notice in Spring 2025. This provides the final opportunity for stakeholders to comment on or submit objections to the proposal. Subject to the outcome of the representation period, the Council intends to make a final decision on the proposal by the end of the Summer 2025 term.