

Proposal to change the age range from 4-11 to 3-11 at Ysgol Llanybydder

Consultation Report



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CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Background	3
3. The Consultation Process	3
4. Analysis of Consultation Responses	4
4.1 Online Survey	4
4.2 Responses received by letter	10
4.3 Pupil Consultation Analysis	11
4.4 Estyn's Response:	14
5. Conclusion	15
6. Recommendation	15
7. Next Steps	16
Appendix A - Estyn Response	17
Appendix B – Consultation with pupils	20

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A statutory consultation was conducted regarding the proposal to change the age range of Ysgol Llanybydder from 4-11 to 3-11. Overall, the balance of sentiment was mixed, with a majority of responses expressing support for the proposal, but with a number of concerns also raised. Main themes in support included improved access to early years education, enhanced Welsh language acquisition, and benefits for the local community and school continuity. Key concerns focused on the potential negative impact on existing Cylch Meithrin provision, the sustainability of local childcare settings, and the need for wraparound childcare and funding. The consultation also highlighted the importance of maintaining strong Welsh-medium provision and supporting community cohesion.

2. BACKGROUND

This report presents the feedback gathered during the consultation period, held from the 4th of September 2025 to the 16th of October 2025. The consultation was undertaken in response to proposals to amend the age range at Ysgol Gynradd Llanybydder from 4–11 to 3–11, incorporating provision for part-time nursery education.

The report sets out the consultation process, summarises the responses received, and provides an analysis of the key issues and comments raised by stakeholders.

3. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation process followed Welsh Government guidelines, in compliance with the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and in line with the School Organisation Code 2018. The consultation processes gave prescribed consultees the opportunity to learn about the proposal and provide feedback.

The consultation document was published on the 4th of September 2025. The consultation document was distributed electronically to prescribed consultees and published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website. Hard copies of the consultation document were available upon request. The consultation document outlined the proposal being considered, the rationale for the proposal and the details of the consultation exercise. The consultation document also incorporated

an individual response form. Consultees were advised of the availability of an online version to complete and where to send written letters or email responses.

Consultation with pupils of Ysgol Gynradd Llanybydder took place in a dedicated session undertaken with members of the School Council.

4. ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The consultation responses received in between the 4th of September and the 16th of October 2025 are outlined below:

Online Survey	E-mail	Letter	Total
13	0	3	16

In addition to the above, Estyn provided a response to the consultation and feedback from the pupils was gathered.

4.1 ONLINE SURVEY

A total of thirteen online survey responses were received. No responses were received after the closure of the consultation. Responses are detailed below.

Q1. Are you responding as a:

Parent, carer or guardian	3	Community Council	0
Governor	5	Other:	2
Member of the community	2	Staff	1
Prospective parent, carer or guardian	0		

Q2. Do you support the proposal?

Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
8	0	5

Overall, the feedback for the proposal from the online survey is mixed but, positive in the main.

Q3. Do you have any comments regarding this proposal that you would like us to consider?

Q3 Analysis of key themes of responses	
Supportive	Unsupportive
Early access to nursery / smoother transition	Impact on existing Cylch Meithrin provision
Welsh language acquisition/immersion	Wraparound childcare / childcare funding
Community cohesion / local access	Risk of children leaving the local area to access provision elsewhere
Equality of access / equity across the county	

Local Authority response

The Local Authority welcomes the support for the proposal and recognises the importance of constructive and inclusive development. In line with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), the Local Authority is committed to increasing Welsh-medium provision, supporting linguistic continuity, and ensuring smooth transitions for pupils. The proposal aligns with statutory duties to promote the Welsh language and provide high-quality educational opportunities for all learners. The Local Authority is also committed to promoting Welsh-medium education and increasing opportunities for children and families to use Welsh, as set out in the WESP. Early immersion is a key strategy for ensuring bilingualism and supporting the Welsh Government’s target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The Local Authority acknowledges concerns regarding the impact on early years provision. The proposal to change the school's age range from 4–11 to 3–11 is intended to complement existing early years provision in the community, including the Cylch Meithrin in the school, rather than replace or negatively impact it. Cylch Meithrin settings primarily focus on wrap-around care and Welsh language immersion, whereas the school-based nursery provision will deliver the educational element of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Families will continue to have the option to use the Cylch Meithrin for childcare and wrap-around services alongside the school nursery, ensuring both settings can work collaboratively to support children and parents.

The emphasis on inclusivity and constructive development reflects our commitment to creating sustainable learning communities that provide equitable access to Welsh language opportunities, as mandated by national policy and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

Q4. Are there any other options that you think the Council should be considering for Ysgol Llanybydder?

	Yes	No
Are there any other options that you think the Council should be considering for Ysgol Llanybydder?	3	10
<p>If yes, please outline the alternative option(s)</p> <p>Increased support and funding for Cylch Meithrin to enable earlier Welsh-medium immersion (age 2).</p> <p>Local Authority response</p> <p>The Local Authority acknowledges parental views on the need for funded 2 year old childcare. Flying Start in Wales is being expanded so that many more two year olds can get free, high quality childcare and early years support. Originally offered only in the most disadvantaged areas, it is now being rolled out in phases across the country, giving families access to funded childcare, help from health visitors, parenting support, and speech and language services. The Welsh Government is continuing to invest so that thousands more families can benefit, including through more Welsh medium childcare places. The overall aim is to give</p>		

young children the best possible start and to support parents across Wales. The Local Authority is continuing to expand its Flying Start provision across the county, in order to provide families with additional options for childcare for 2 year olds.

Q5. a. In your opinion, what positive or adverse effects would this proposal have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

Q5.a Analysis of key themes of responses	
Earlier Welsh language immersion	Increase in Welsh speakers locally
Community language continuity	Alignment with Welsh Government strategies
Equity of access to Welsh-medium early years education	Positive cultural and social impact
Starting school at age 3 is unlikely to improve Welsh language development	

Local Authority response

In line with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022–2032, the proposal supports our long-term vision to strengthen Welsh-medium education and linguistic continuity from early years through to secondary education. The emphasis on inclusivity and constructive development reflects our commitment to creating sustainable learning communities that provide equitable access to Welsh language opportunities, as mandated by national policy and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

The Local Authority is committed to promoting Welsh-medium education and increasing opportunities for children and families to use Welsh, as set out in the WESP. Early immersion is a key strategy for ensuring bilingualism and supporting the Welsh Government’s target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Q5. b. How do you think the proposal could be formulated or revised so that it would have positive or more positive effects on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

Q5.b Analysis of key themes of responses

Default Welsh-medium nursery provision and early immersion.

Recruitment and training of Welsh-speaking staff.

Embedding Welsh in daily routines and play-based learning.

Parental engagement and Welsh lessons for families.

Monitoring and evaluation of Welsh language outcomes.

Local Authority response

The Local Authority reiterates that Ysgol Llanybydder a Welsh Medium language category school and therefore the nursery provision will be through the medium of Welsh. This is in line with the WESP's strategic aim for early immersion and the School Organisation Code's requirement to assess demand and support Welsh language targets.

The Local Authority will continue to invest in workforce development, ensuring sufficient Welsh speaking staff and providing training and continuous professional development, in order to ensure that staff are able and confident in delivering the curriculum through the medium of Welsh.

The Local Authority notes that curriculum planning will embed Welsh language in play and informal routines, consistent with the WESP's principles of immersion education and the School Organisation Code's emphasis on quality and standards.

The Local Authority and the school will explore opportunities for parental engagement and Welsh language sessions, supporting family language transmission as promoted in the WESP.

Q5. c. How do you think the proposal could be formulated or revised so that it would not have adverse effects or have less adverse effects on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

Q5.c Analysis of key themes of responses

Increased support and funding for Cylch Meithrin to enable earlier Welsh-medium immersion (age 2).

Continuity of Welsh language development through early education settings.

Local Authority response

The Local Authority acknowledges parental views on the need for funded 2 year old childcare. Flying Start in Wales is being expanded so that many more two year olds can get free, high quality childcare and early years support. Originally offered only in the most disadvantaged areas, it is now being rolled out in phases across the country, giving families access to funded childcare, help from health visitors, parenting support, and speech and language services. The Welsh Government is continuing to invest so that thousands more families can benefit, including through more Welsh medium childcare places. The overall aim is to give young children the best possible start and to support parents across Wales. The Local Authority is continuing to expand its Flying Start provision across the county, in order to provide families with additional options for childcare for 2 year olds.

In line with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022–2032, the proposal supports our long-term vision to strengthen Welsh-medium education and linguistic continuity from early years through to secondary education. The emphasis on inclusivity and constructive development reflects our commitment to creating sustainable learning communities that provide equitable access to Welsh language opportunities, as mandated by national policy and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

The Local Authority will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that the implementation of this proposal upholds these strategic aims, supports immersion principles in the early years, and contributes to the Welsh Government’s target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

4.2 RESPONSES RECEIVED BY LETTER

Three letters were received during the consultation period. No responses were received via letter after the closure of the consultation.

Analysis of key themes of responses received via letter	
Themes in agreement	Themes against / of concern
Addressing Gaps in Early Years Provision	Staffing and Language Competence
Expanding Early Welsh Immersion	Full Welsh Immersion – amend language category
Smooth Transition for Young Children	Parental Engagement
School Sustainability	Safeguarding the Non-Maintained Welsh Sector
Community and Language Promotion	Transition Risks
Positive experience of current provision	Monitoring and Targets
Childcare accessibility and family impact	Community Initiatives
Support for age range change	
Benefit for own children	

Local Authority response

The Local Authority welcomes the support for the proposals to extend early years Welsh-medium provision and strengthen linguistic continuity. These themes align with statutory guidance and the WESP, which prioritise early immersion, community engagement, and school sustainability. The positive feedback will be considered as part of the statutory decision-making process. The WESP emphasises early immersion and continuity in Welsh-medium education. The proposal supports these aims by enabling earlier access to structured learning.

The Local Authority acknowledges the constructive recommendations regarding staffing, full Welsh immersion, parental engagement, and safeguarding the non-maintained sector. One impact of the removal of the Rising 4s Policy is that children will remain in nursery provision and childcare settings for a term longer than

previously. In the short term, this might create an additional demand for provision of non-statutory education for a greater number of three-year-old children, and possibly an increased demand for wrap-around care. Ideally, this demand would be met by the non-maintained sector where providers will be able to expand provision to cater for additional numbers of children for either or both of the minimum of 10 hours education and for wrap around care.

Llanybydder has been identified as a community where there are gaps in provision of the education element, therefore the Council proposes the change in age range at Ysgol Llanybydder. This would enable the school to deliver the minimum of 10 hours non-statutory Early Years education element and provide greater equity of provision across Carmarthenshire.

The proposal aligns with Outcome 1 of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), which aims to ensure that more nursery-aged and three-year-old children receive their education through the medium of Welsh. The WESP also seeks to increase Welsh-medium provision in Carmarthenshire and ensure linguistic continuity from the nursery sector through all key stages to the secondary sector, so that every pupil becomes fluent and confident in both Welsh and English.

The Local Authority will work with the school to ensure that staff are able to deliver the curriculum with confidence.

All feedback and risks identified will be conscientiously considered, and mitigation measures will be incorporated into implementation plans if required to ensure the proposals deliver maximum benefit for learners, families, and the Welsh language.

4.3 PUPIL CONSULTATION ANALYSIS

Consultation with pupils of Ysgol Gynradd Llanybydder took place on the 13th of October 2025 in a dedicated session undertaken with members of the School Council. A full breakdown of the responses received is in Annex B.

Analysis of key themes of responses
Q1. Do you know that we might be changing the age of the children who can come here?
Pupils were aware of the proposed change.

Q2. How would you feel about having children who are younger than you in school?	
Will help parents with childcare	A chance to see siblings
Younger pupils will feel safe	
Q3. What do you like most about your school?	
Enjoyment	Friendships
Positive relationships across year groups	
Q4. What might be good about more young children coming to our school?	
Earlier learning opportunities	Making more friends
More pupils in classes	More fun and activities
Q5. Is there anything you're worried about if the school changes?	
Concerns about safety if there is overcrowding.	
Q6. What would you like to tell the grown-ups who are making the decision?	
Easier for parents who will have children in the same place	Earlier learning opportunities

Local Authority Response to feedback from pupils:

The Local Authority welcomes pupil engagement and values their inclusion in the consultation process. The Local Authority is committed to ensuring that all stakeholders, including pupils, are informed and have opportunities to contribute to decisions affecting their school.

It is noted that the pupils placed the value on positive relationships, friendships, and enjoyment. It is hoped that these aspects will be maintained and enhanced as part of any organisational changes.

The proposal supports early years education and recognises the benefits of early Welsh language immersion. The proposal aligns with WESP objectives to increase Welsh-medium provision and support families. The Local Authority also notes the additional benefits for parents in having a range of affordable childcare opportunities, particularly for those parents who have multiple children in the same setting.

Concerns about space and safety are noted. The Local Authority and Governing body will ensure that facilities and resources are sufficient to support all pupils safely and effectively. Currently there are no proposals to change or make adaptations to the building to accommodate the proposed changes.

4.4 ESTYN'S RESPONSE:

Estyn considers that the proposal is “likely to deliver Welsh Medium provision for 3-11 year olds at a standard at least equal to its existing 4-11 offer”. The key themes of Estyn’s response are summarised in the tables that follow. The full response from Estyn is included in Annex A.

Theme 1: Overall Educational Merit
Local Authority Response: The Local Authority welcomes Estyn’s view that the proposal will maintain or enhance Welsh-medium educational standards for 3–11-year-olds. In line with the WESP 2022–2032, the Local Authority is committed to ensuring high quality provision, early identification of learning needs, and inclusive support for all learners, including those with ALN and from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Local Authority will continue to monitor standards and wellbeing outcomes throughout implementation.
Theme 2: Rationale, Benefits and Risks
Local Authority Response: The Local Authority notes Estyn’s recognition of the clear rationale, noting that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. The proposal supports the strategic aim of sustainable learning communities and aligns with the School Organisation Code’s requirement to demonstrate educational and organisational benefit.
Theme 3: Impact on Early Years Provision and Community
Local Authority Response: The Local authority notes Estyn’s recognition that the expansion of nursery provision will address gaps in access, support linguistic continuity, and promote long term sustainability, as well as meeting the WESP’s targets for increasing Welsh medium places.
Theme 4: Educational Outcomes and Wellbeing
Local Authority Response: The Local Authority welcomes Estyn’s comments regarding that the provision delivered would be at least equal in standard to its 4-11 and that no negative impact is anticipated. It also noted the positive comments around pupils feeling safe within a supportive and inclusive learning community and that the proposal is

unlikely to have an adverse effect on pupils' wellbeing. The Local Authority would expect this to continue.

Theme 5: Accommodation, Facilities and Viability

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority confirms that existing facilities are sufficient to accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers, with no requirement for additional capital funding. The learning environment will remain fit for purpose and support the needs of all children.

Theme 6: Wraparound Care and Integrated Provision

Local Authority Response:

The Local Authority reiterates that the proposal has been developed to address gaps in access to early years education provision within the local area, and to complement any existing childcare arrangements / provision.

5. CONCLUSION

The Local Authority has reassessed the original proposal and confirms that its earlier assessment remains unchanged.

Implementing the proposal to amend the school's age range from 4–11 to 3–11 is considered the most suitable approach for the following reasons:

- It provides parents with more options for early years provision within the local area.
- It offers a gradual and supported transition for 3-year-olds entering school, starting with half-day sessions and progressing to full school days.
- It may attract more pupils to attend the school, reducing surplus places and making the school more sustainable in the long term.
- Offers early opportunities for immersion in the Welsh language, positively impacting pupils' linguistic skills.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Following consideration of the consultation responses and the assessment of the proposal, it is recommended that permission is sought to implement the proposal to

change the age range of the school from 4–11 to 3–11 without amendment. This recommendation reflects the identified benefits of the proposal, including enhanced parental choice, improved continuity of education, increased sustainability of the school, and positive impacts on equality of opportunity and Welsh language development.

7. NEXT STEPS

The Consultation Report will be presented to the Cabinet who will decide whether or not to approve the proposals or to approve with modifications.

The Consultation Report will be published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website at least two weeks prior to the publication of a Statutory Notice should Cabinet decide to proceed.

APPENDIX A - ESTYN RESPONSE

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 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.

The proposal is to change the age range of Ysgol Llanybydder from 4-11 to 3-11.

Summary/ Conclusion

Estyn considers that the proposal is likely to deliver Welsh medium provision for 3–11-year-olds at a standard at least equal to its existing 4–11 offer.

Description and benefits

The Council presents a clear rationale for this proposal, setting out the advantages of changing the age range at Ysgol Llanybydder from 4–11 to 3–11. While it outlines the statutory procedure and a projected timetable, the only confirmed implementation date is September 2026, with no suggested plan for the transition. Given that the proposal outlines that there are currently sufficient facilities at the school, it would be reasonable to assume that transition requirements would be minimal.

The proposal identifies both benefits and disadvantages in a balanced way and includes measures to manage potential risks. The advantages appear to outweigh the disadvantages. A notable risk is the potential impact on private nursery providers, and the council commits to consulting openly with providers to assess any potential impact. The proposal notes that there are currently no early years education providers within the school's catchment area.

The consultation document compares the proposal against maintaining the status quo with what seems to be clear reasoning. The authority notes that as early years education is non-statutory, free transport is not available for 3-year-old pupils. In reaching its decision, the council takes account of the impact of travel costs on low-income families and how the proposal may have a positive impact on the travel arrangements of those who currently travel outside of their catchment area to access early education. In addition, it suggests the proposal will help close the gap

in early years provision for 3-year-olds in the Ysgol Llanybydder catchment. The changes are also expected to reduce the number of surplus places at the school, currently projected to be 51 places in January 2027.

The proposal considers the impact on Welsh-medium provision and demonstrates alignment with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). A Welsh medium nursery would make the Welsh language more accessible in the local community strengthening the transition between Welsh medium nursery provision and primary education.

If approved, the proposal would not require capital funding. Existing learning areas would be adapted to accommodate additional pupils, and the school would receive delegated formula funding for the new provision.

The local authority has provided a Welsh Language Impact Assessment as part of this proposal.

The local authority has provided a Community Impact Assessment as part of this proposal

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposer appears to give careful attention to educational outcomes. The proposal draws on the most recent Estyn inspection report, noting both current strengths and recommendations for improvement. It assumes reasonably that Ysgol Llanybydder School would deliver Welsh medium provision for 3–11-year-olds at a standard at least equal to its existing 4–11 offer. Therefore, no negative impact on pupil standards or progress is anticipated.

The latest Estyn report highlights that learning and progress within the early years is strong. Nearly all pupils show positive attitudes to learning and feel safe within a supportive and inclusive learning community. This effective and inclusive culture suggests that expanding provision is unlikely to have adverse effects on pupil wellbeing. This appears to be a reasonable statement.

The proposal notes that the principles of the foundation phase have been embedded fully. The learning areas engage pupils' interest and capture their imagination skilfully. An increase in pupil numbers is expected to improve resource efficiency and contribute to long-term school sustainability. This appears to be reasonable.

The needs of vulnerable groups, including learners with additional learning needs (ALN) and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, appear to be carefully considered. Earlier access to education is expected to support timely identification of individual learning needs and the provision of appropriate

interventions, improving learner outcomes. The proposal expresses confidence in the school's ability to create a learning environment that is supportive and stimulating to suit all learners. This appears to be reasonable.

Specific factors where proposals concern adding nursery classes

The Council appears to have considered accommodation, facilities, and long-term viability suitably. The proposed learning environment has a capacity of 17 Nursery pupils. The proposal would increase the admission number to 12. With the school currently operating below capacity, the school has sufficient classroom space to accommodate the additional Nursery pupils. The council expects that additional nursery provision will boost pupil numbers and positively impact its viability. This appears to be a reasonable assumption. However, the proposal does not reference the suitability of the school's available outdoor space for additional Nursery pupils.

The proposal outlines a gap in Welsh medium early years education provision within the Ysgol Llanybydder catchment area. If the proposal is approved, the school aspires to develop wraparound care provision alongside early years education, offering an integrated approach to learning and care.

The proposal recognises the potential impact on Welsh early years education providers in proximity to Ysgol Llanybydder with the closest being 2.9 miles from the school. The proposal states that key stakeholders can respond to the proposal with any concerns they may have and that the Council's Cabinet will consider all views and potential impacts before making a decision.

APPENDIX B – CONSULTATION WITH PUPILS

Ysgol Llanybydder

Pupil Consultation

13th October 2025

1. Do you know that we might be changing the age of the children who can come here?

😊 Yes

 **Tell us what you think about that:**

Happy that new children will be coming to the school. Can help parents and childcare providers.

2. How would you feel about having children who are younger than you in school?

😊 Happy

 **Why do you feel that way?**

Help them feel safer in the school. Happy. A chance to see siblings. Would like having younger pupils in the school.

3. What do you like most about your school?

 **Write or draw your answer here:**

Fun. Everyone gets along. Friends. Everyone gets along with people in different year groups.

4. What might be good about more young children coming to our school?

- 😊 Making more friends
- 🎨 More fun or new activities
- 🏠 More pupils in the classrooms

 **Any other good things you can think of?**

Earlier learning opportunities. Happy to have more children in the school.

5. Is there anything you're worried about if the school changes?

-  Too many children
-  Not sure

 **Tell us more or draw your worries:**

If children get hurt because there are too many children in the school.

6. What would you like to tell the grown-ups who are making the decision?

 **This is your space to share your ideas!**

Easier for parents to have children in the same place. Earlier learning opportunities as children will be starting from a younger age.

Thank you for helping us!

Your thoughts are really important.