

Proposal to discontinue Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim

Consultation Report



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A statutory consultation was undertaken regarding the proposal to discontinue Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim. The consultation received responses from a range of stakeholders, including parents, staff, governors and community members.

This statutory consultation received a total of 260 responses. The overall balance of sentiment was strongly weighted towards opposition to the discontinuation of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, with a number of respondents expressing concerns about the potential impact on the community, the Welsh language, children's wellbeing and the Additional Learning Needs provision.

Nevertheless, a smaller proportion of responses expressed support for the proposal, particularly the financial efficiency and sustainability, the resource re-allocation to larger schools, the educational breadth and opportunities in larger settings and the acceptance of increased travel.

2. BACKGROUND

A proposal paper was prepared in line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code (2018), setting out the main challenges facing Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, including:

- Low pupil numbers
- High surplus places
- Low pupil projections going forward
- School budget issues
- High budget share per pupil
- Issues with quality and standards
- Issues with delivery of the curriculum caused by low pupil numbers
- Challenges with education provision due to multiple year groups in same classes
- Unstable leadership over a period of time

Cabinet considered the proposal paper on 17 November 2025 and agreed to proceed with a formal consultation on the following proposal:

- **To discontinue Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim on 31 December 2026, with pupils transferring to Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog from 1 January 2027.**

This report presents the feedback gathered during the consultation period, held of 16 January 2026 to 2 March 2026. This report set 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 process gave prescribed consultees the opportunity to learn about the proposal and provide feedback.

The consultation document was published on 16 January 2026. 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 e-mail responses.

Consultation with Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim pupils took place on 9 February 2026, with the School Council submitting an online response outlining their views. Pupils from Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim were also able to provide individual feedback through an online survey.

Consultation with the pupils of Ysgol Griffith Jones pupils took place on 25 February 2026, with the School Council submitting an online response outlining their views. A dedicated consultation session was held with the School Council of Ysgol Hafodwenog on 26 February 2026.

4. ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The formal consultation period commenced on 16 January 2026 and closed on 2 March 2026.

In total, 260 responses were received in response to the consultation period, of which 247 responses raised concerns to the proposal and 13 responses supported it.

The table below notes the concerns received.

Concerns Received			
Online Survey	E-mail	Letter	Total
158	87	2	247

The table below notes the supportive comments received.

Supportive Comments Received			
Online Survey	E-mail	Letter	Total
13			13

In addition to the above, Estyn provided a response to the consultation and feedback from the pupils of the affected school and proposed schools were gathered.

5. OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED

The consultation report summarises the submissions received in concern or support to the proposal and the Local Authority's responses to these submissions.

During the consultation period, 247 responses (94.9%) raised concerns to the proposal to close Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim. The concerns raised a range of detailed and interrelated issues. Each theme summarised below reflects the number of distinct responses that raised the issue. A single response may reference more than one theme and, therefore, percentages do not total 100%.

For completeness, these responses have also been included within this report and the themes for the concern or supportive comments were received as follows:

Concerns

- **Theme 1 – Impact on community cohesion and village sustainability**
- **Theme 2 – Welsh language and Welsh-medium education**
- **Theme 3 – Children’s wellbeing, emotional security and stability**
- **Theme 4 – Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision**
- **Theme 5 – Transport, travel, accessibility and environmental impact**
- **Theme 6 – Educational quality of small rural schools**
- **Theme 7 – Consultation process and procedural concerns**
- **Theme 8 – Financial case and value for money**
- **Theme 9 – Alternative options to closure**

During the consultation period, 13 responses (5.1%) supported the proposal. These responses raised a number of consistent themes in favour of closure.

Supportive Comments

- **Theme 1 – Financial efficiency and sustainability**
- **Theme 2 – Purpose of schools as educational institutions**
- **Theme 3 – Educational quality, curriculum breadth, and pupil experience**
- **Theme 4 – Leadership capacity and governance effectiveness**
- **Theme 5 – Parental choice, community uptake and viability**

6. SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED AND LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSES

The following table notes the themes of the concerns received and the Local Authority's responses, in accordance with the School Organisation Code, to those themes. Each theme's count reflects the number of distinct responses that mention it:

Concerns Raised			
Point Number	Point Raised	Number of responses raising this point	% of responses raising this point
1.	Impact on community cohesion and village sustainability	221	85%

A substantial majority of respondents consistently highlighted the central role of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim in sustaining the social, cultural and intergenerational life of the village. The school was repeatedly described as the “heart” or “hub” of the community, reflecting its importance beyond its statutory educational function. Respondents emphasised that the school acts as a focal point for daily interaction, shared experiences and community identity, bringing together children, parents, older residents and local organisations.

Many respondents pointed to the school's role in facilitating engagements with the community events, local activities and partnerships with village organisations. Through these interactions, Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim was seen as fostering strong intergenerational links and supporting social cohesion, particularly in rural context where opportunities for connection can otherwise be limited. Its presence was viewed as integral to maintaining a sense of belonging and continuity within the village.

The most frequently raised concern to the proposal concerned the viability and long-term sustainability of Meidrim as a rural community should the school close. Respondents expressed concern that the loss of the school would weaken social networks, reduce opportunities for informal contact between residents, and diminish community life overall. Concern was raised about the potential impact on older residents, with many fearing increased isolation, especially for those with limited mobility or access to transport.

Respondents also highlighted the likely demographic consequences of closure. A prevailing view was that the absence of a local school would make the village less attractive to young families, leading to declining enrolment, reduced family settlement and an acceleration of population ageing. This, in turn, was seen as compounding challenges around community sustainability, local participation and the viability of other services and activities within the village.

Overall, respondents regarded Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim as far more than an educational institution. It was widely perceived as fundamental to the village's identity, social interaction and intergenerational cohesion, with its potential closure seen as posing significant risks to the social fabric and future sustainability of the Meidrim community.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority recognises the important role that schools can play as community assets, particularly within rural villages, and acknowledges the strong feelings expressed regarding Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim's contribution to community cohesion. Schools can act as community anchors, supporting social interaction, local identity and intergenerational engagement. In accordance with the School Organisation Code (2018), the potential impact on the community, especially in rural areas has formed a central and integral part of the Authority's consideration of this proposal. A Community Impact Assessment has been undertaken and will be updated, where necessary, to reflect consultation feedback.

The governing body of a maintained school holds the legal responsibility for controlling the use of school premises during and outside school hours. Under the Control of School Premises (Wales) Regulations 2008 and subsequent amendments, governing bodies must have regard to the desirability of making premises available for community use. As a result, many schools support their communities by hosting activities such as childcare, adult learning, youth provision and voluntary sector services. However, while legislation requires governing bodies to consider and facilitate reasonable community use of premises, there is no statutory requirement for schools to lead, sustain or underpin wider community development. The legal duty relates to enabling access rather than delivering community development itself.

Schools are also subject to a wide range of statutory duties, including implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, safeguarding responsibilities, attendance monitoring, inclusion, Additional Learning Needs provision and compliant governance arrangements. While these statutory frameworks impose clear obligations in relation to curriculum delivery, learner welfare and

organisational accountability, they do not require schools to sustain or lead wider community provision.

The Authority acknowledges concerns that changes to educational provision may affect community cohesion, particularly in rural areas, and confirms that these concerns have been carefully considered within the wider context of rural school reorganisation. However, community impact cannot be considered in isolation or act as the sole determinant of an outcome. The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to secure sustainable, high-quality education across the county and must therefore take a holistic view, considering factors such as pupil numbers, surplus capacity, leadership sustainability, educational standards, financial viability and the effective use of public resources. While Welsh Government guidance on Community Focused Schools encourages collaboration and the potential for schools to act as community hubs, this guidance is non-statutory and does not create a duty to retain a school regardless of educational quality, sustainability or value for money.

In relation to Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, both the consultation documentation and the Community Impact Assessment acknowledge the school's links with local organisations, including the Cylch Ti a Fi which meets at the school weekly. It is recognised that implementation of the proposal would affect these existing arrangements and that alternative provision would need to be explored. Nevertheless, other community facilities within the village, such as the Church and the Youth Hall, will continue to provide opportunities for community activity and engagement.

Where feasible and in line with Council policy, the Authority will explore options to mitigate potential community impacts. This will include considering future community use or repurposing of facilities, or identifying alternative arrangements to support local activities. The Authority remains committed to constructive engagement with community stakeholders to identify ways in which community needs may continue to be met, while acknowledging that community use alone cannot determine the final decision on the future of the school.

National and local policy require Welsh-medium education to be delivered in settings that are sustainable, capable of supporting strong linguistic progression and compliant with the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 and the County's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. Consolidating provision can support more resilient staffing structures, broader curriculum opportunities and increased use of Welsh across a range of educational contexts. Community activity and Welsh language use are not dependent solely on a school site, and opportunities for engagement can continue through local groups, community venues and partnership working.

Should the proposal be implemented and the school building becomes surplus to the Local Authority's educational requirements, the Council's general approach is to first consider whether the site is required for any other internal corporate purpose. Where no such requirements are identified, it may, in certain circumstances, be appropriate to explore the potential for continued community use of the building. This could include use by voluntary or charitable organisations or social enterprises, subject to the identification of a clear and evidenced local need.

Any such use would be considered separately from the school organisation proposal and would be subject to the Council's established asset management and governance arrangements. Where appropriate, a business plan would be required to demonstrate viability, affordability and long-term sustainability, including its potential contribution to the social or economic resilience of the rural community. No decision has been made at this stage regarding the future use of the site.

Taken together, while the Local Authority recognises and values the contribution of the school to community life, it must also consider the wider educational and linguistic planning framework within which decisions are made. This framework seeks to secure long-term, sustainable Welsh-medium education, deliver consistent educational quality, and ensure effective use of public resources, while continuing to support opportunities for Welsh language use and community engagement beyond the school site. On this basis, the Authority considers that the proposal represents a balanced and proportionate response, reflecting both community considerations and its statutory responsibilities to current and future learners.

2.	Welsh language and Welsh-medium education	177	68.1%
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A substantial proportion of respondents highlighted Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim's role as a fully Welsh-medium school and expressed strong concern about the potential impact of closure on Welsh language use and transmission. The school was widely viewed as providing a linguistically immersive environment that supports not only formal learning through the curriculum, but also the informal and social use of Welsh that occurs naturally in day-to-day interactions between pupils, staff and families. Respondents repeatedly emphasised that this immersion is a defining feature of the school and central to its contribution to the linguistic life of the community.

Many respondents noted that Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim operates within a predominantly Welsh-speaking or bilingual area and plays an important role in sustaining Welsh as a living community language. Particular emphasis was placed on the school's role in supporting children

from non-Welsh-speaking households, for whom daily immersion was seen as critical to developing confidence, fluency and natural language use. Respondents expressed concern that the loss of a locally embedded, fully Welsh-medium environment could disproportionately affect these learners and reduce opportunities for Welsh to be used consistently beyond the classroom.

Concerns were also raised regarding the potential impact of transfer to dual-stream or bilingual settings. Some respondents expressed the view that such settings may not provide the same depth of linguistic immersion or Welsh-first ethos as a fully Welsh-medium school. It was felt that the presence of parallel English-medium provision could lead to a dilution of Welsh language use, particularly in social and informal contexts, and reduce opportunities for pupils to use Welsh naturally with peers.

In addition, respondents highlighted the importance of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim in supporting intergenerational transmission of the Welsh language. The school was seen as contributing to language continuity by reinforcing Welsh use among children, encouraging use within families, and supporting wider community language practices. Many respondents expressed concern that closure could weaken these intergenerational links and undermine efforts to maintain Welsh as an everyday language within the village.

Within responses relating to Welsh language provision, some parents indicated that elective home education might be considered if closure significantly limited access to Welsh-medium education within a reasonable travelling distance. Respondents raised concerns that available alternative schools may not be realistically accessible due to distance, transport or capacity, and that this could undermine their commitment to Welsh-medium education for their children. In this context, home education was presented as a way of preserving Welsh-language use and cultural identity where families felt that suitable Welsh-medium provision could no longer be accessed locally.

Overall, respondents regarded Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim as making a significant contribution to Welsh language sustainability that extends beyond statutory education. The school was seen not only as a place of learning but as a key mechanism for embedding Welsh within the social fabric of the community, supporting both linguistic confidence and cultural continuity. The potential loss of this environment was therefore viewed as presenting risks to the vitality of Welsh language use locally, particularly in informal, social and intergenerational contexts.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority recognises the strength of feeling expressed by respondents regarding the role of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim as a fully Welsh-medium school and the importance attributed to its contribution to Welsh language use within both the school and the wider village community. The Authority acknowledges that, for many families, the school is experienced not only as a place of formal education but also as an important social and cultural space in which Welsh is used naturally, confidently and across generations.

The Authority fully recognises that a fully Welsh-medium environment can provide significant linguistic benefits, particularly in supporting pupils from non-Welsh-speaking households to develop fluency, confidence and everyday language use through sustained immersion. The concerns raised regarding the potential impact of change on informal language use, social interaction and intergenerational transmission are therefore understood and have been carefully considered as part of the proposal development process.

The Local Authority remains unequivocally committed to the promotion, protection and development of the Welsh language, in accordance with its statutory duties under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and national policy frameworks including Cymraeg 2050 and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022–2032. Ensuring that learners can acquire, develop and use Welsh with increasing confidence remains a central consideration in all educational planning and decision-making.

The Authority confirms that, should the proposal proceed, pupils from Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim would continue to have access to Welsh-medium education through identified alternative schools. These schools are designated Welsh-medium providers or have a designated Welsh-medium stream, and are required to deliver Welsh-medium education in line with school language categories, Curriculum for Wales requirements and local strategic planning. The Authority is satisfied that these schools provide high-quality Welsh-medium teaching and learning while supporting pupils' continued linguistic progression. It is the aspiration of the Local Authority that all schools progress along the Welsh Language continuum in line with the WESP.

The Authority recognises that some pupils transferring from a fully Welsh-medium school embedded within their local community may experience linguistic, social and emotional challenges during transition. If the proposal were to proceed, transition planning would therefore place explicit emphasis on linguistic continuity, including maintaining Welsh as the normal medium of teaching,

learning and social interaction. The Authority will collaborate with receiving schools to ensure appropriate support arrangements are in place, particularly for learners from non-Welsh-speaking households, to sustain confidence and everyday use of Welsh during and after transition. Parental preference is a statutory right, and the Authority continues to work with families to promote the benefits of Welsh-medium education.

In accordance with statutory requirements, the Authority has undertaken a Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA) as part of the proposal process. This assessment has considered both educational and wider community language impacts, including potential effects on social use and language transmission. Where potential risks to Welsh language use have been identified, proportionate mitigation measures have been incorporated into planning, including strengthened transition support, ongoing engagement with families, and continued promotion of Welsh-medium ethos and culture within receiving schools.

Whilst the Authority acknowledges the positive contribution made by Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim to daily Welsh language use within the village, it must also consider the long-term sustainability of Welsh-medium education across the wider area. National and local policy frameworks place increasing emphasis on ensuring that Welsh-medium provision is resilient, high-quality and sustainable over time. The Authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan seeks to secure this sustainability through a network of strong Welsh-medium schools rather than reliance on a single site, while maintaining accessibility and continuity of provision.

Evidence from Estyn and national thematic reviews consistently indicates that strong Welsh language outcomes are most closely associated with high-quality teaching, a clear Welsh-medium ethos, strong leadership, and effective planning for immersion and language progression. These factors can be secured across different school sites where there is clear strategic intent and robust implementation. Under the Curriculum for Wales, responsibility for developing learners' Welsh language skills is embedded across teaching, school culture and community engagement, supporting transferable and sustainable language use that is not dependent on a single physical location.

The Authority also recognises the importance of Welsh language use beyond the classroom and will continue to collaborate with schools, families and partners to encourage opportunities for Welsh use within communities, including through extracurricular activities, community organisations and partnership working. Engagement with families will remain a key element of this approach.

The Authority acknowledges the concerns raised regarding continued access to Welsh-medium education and the desire of families to maintain Welsh language provision for their children. Ensuring the sustainability and quality of Welsh-medium education is a key priority, and the Authority has assessed the availability, accessibility and capacity of alternative Welsh-medium schools as part of the consideration process. While some respondents expressed concern that reduced local access could lead families to consider elective home education, the Authority is satisfied that high quality, Welsh-medium provision remains available within the area and that alternative settings are capable of supporting pupils to continue their education through the medium of Welsh.

The Local Authority remains fully committed to safeguarding and strengthening Welsh-medium education and Welsh language use. While changes to provision are being considered, the Authority will ensure that Welsh-medium education continues to be accessible, that transition arrangements are robust and learner-focused, and that potential impacts on Welsh language use are carefully monitored and managed in line with statutory duties, national policy expectations and the long-term aim of securing a vibrant and thriving Welsh language for future generations.

3.	Children’s wellbeing, emotional security and stability	159	61.2%
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A substantial number of respondents expressed concern about the emotional, psychological and wellbeing impact that school closure could have on pupils. A consistent theme across responses was anxiety linked to disruption and change, particularly the prospect of leaving a familiar environment in which children feel safe, secure and supported. Respondents highlighted that uncertainty around closure and transition was distressing for many pupils and had the potential to undermine their emotional wellbeing.

Many respondents emphasised the significance of familiar relationships with staff and peers, describing these as central to pupils’ sense of security, trust and belonging. Concerns were raised that the loss of trusted adults and established friendships could be unsettling for children and may negatively affect their confidence, emotional stability and readiness to learn. Several responses included parental observations of children’s anxiety and emotional distress, as well as references to children’s own expressed fears, behaviours or worries.

Adjustment to larger school environments was also identified as a key concern. Respondents felt that larger settings could feel overwhelming for some pupils, particularly those who benefit from smaller, more nurturing environments where individual needs are well recognised. Concerns

focused on social pressures, navigating unfamiliar spaces and routines, and the potential loss of a close-knit school community.

Emphasis was placed on younger pupils and those at key transition stages, who were viewed as especially vulnerable to disruption. Respondents noted that pupils approaching transition points may already be experiencing uncertainty, and that additional change could heighten anxiety, affect emotional resilience and disrupt their sense of stability. For these pupils, continuity, predictability and emotional support were seen as critical.

Several responses reflected the views of children themselves, highlighting fears around safety, fitting in, and losing a sense of belonging. These contributions underscored the importance of schools not only as places of learning, but also as environments that provide emotional security, consistency and trusted relationships.

Some respondents expressed concern that the proposed closure of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim could negatively affect their children's wellbeing, emotional security and sense of stability, to the extent that elective home education might be considered. Parents described home education not as a preferred option, but as a potential last resort if their children were required to move to a larger or more distant school environment. Particular emphasis was placed on anxiety, emotional vulnerability and the impact of disruption on young children, with respondents highlighting the importance of familiar relationships, routine and a nurturing setting. These responses reflect fears that the loss of a small, supportive school environment could lead to distress or disengagement from education for some learners.

Overall, respondents stressed that any consideration of closure should take into account the emotional and wellbeing needs of pupils, particularly those who may struggle with change. The concerns raised demonstrate a strong belief that maintaining stability, fostering a sense of belonging and safeguarding children's emotional wellbeing are essential considerations alongside educational and organisational factors.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority acknowledges the concerns raised regarding children's wellbeing and recognises that stability, familiarity and continuity of care are fundamental to positive educational experiences. Supporting learner wellbeing is a central priority for the Authority and is embedded within the principles of the Curriculum for Wales, which places strong emphasis on emotional health,

confidence and resilience. These considerations have informed the Authority's approach throughout the development of this proposal.

The Authority recognises that periods of uncertainty and change can be challenging for children and that transitions, if not carefully managed, may contribute to anxiety or emotional distress. Should the proposal be implemented, a comprehensive, structured and child-centred transition plan would form a core part of the implementation process, with the aim of minimising disruption and supporting pupils' emotional and pastoral needs.

Transition planning will be undertaken in close partnership with receiving schools, parents and carers and, where appropriate, other relevant professionals. Arrangements will prioritise continuity of care and include opportunities for pupils and families to become familiar with the new setting, such as visits to the school, opportunities to meet staff and clear, timely communication throughout the transition period. Where appropriate, phased or gradual transition approaches could be considered to support pupils to settle confidently and securely.

Each pupil would be supported through an individualised approach to transition. This would include the use of a One Page Profile setting out what is important to and for the child and how they can best be supported. Relevant information relating to pupils' learning, strengths, needs and wellbeing would be shared with receiving staff to ensure continuity of support. Building positive and trusting relationships between pupils and staff would be a key focus throughout the transition process, helping to foster a sense of safety, belonging and emotional security.

Particular attention would be given to pupils who may be more vulnerable to change, including younger learners and those requiring additional emotional or pastoral support. Where necessary, enhanced or tailored support would be put in place, alongside ongoing monitoring to ensure pupils are settling well and that any emerging concerns are identified and addressed promptly.

The Authority recognises the concerns raised by some respondents regarding the potential impact of the proposed change on children's wellbeing, emotional security and stability. The importance of minimising disruption, supporting emotional resilience and ensuring continuity of education for vulnerable learners has been carefully considered throughout the process. In assessing the proposals, the Authority has taken account of the statutory requirement to prioritise learner wellbeing and has evaluated the capacity of alternative schools to provide appropriate pastoral support, transition planning and nurturing learning environments. Where change is implemented, the Authority is committed to working with schools, families and partner services to support pupils

through well-planned transition arrangements designed to minimise anxiety and promote positive engagement with learning.

In conclusion, the Local Authority reaffirms its strong commitment to pupil wellbeing and to ensuring that, should the proposal proceed, children are supported before, during and after any transition. Through careful planning, partnership working and a clear focus on pastoral care, the Authority aims to safeguard pupils' wellbeing and ensure that they continue to feel safe, supported and confident within their educational environments.

4.	Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision	140	53.8%
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A significant number of objectors highlighted the personalised Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision currently in place at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, expressing concern about the potential impact of closure on vulnerable learners. Respondents provided specific examples of tailored support for deaf learners, neurodivergent pupils, and pupils with complex or ongoing medical needs, emphasising that this provision is closely matched to individual circumstances and needs.

A key concern raised across responses related to the continuity of Individual Development Plans (IDPs). Respondents expressed anxiety that disruption could affect the consistency and effectiveness of support, particularly where IDPs rely on detailed knowledge of the child, established routines, and long-standing relationships between pupils, staff and families. There were worries that changes in setting could delay reviews, affect implementation, or result in a loss of nuanced understanding of individual needs.

Many responses also focused on the suitability of learning environments, noting that the physical and sensory characteristics of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim were seen as well-matched to pupils with specific needs. Particular emphasis was placed on acoustic considerations for deaf learners, as well as the importance of predictable, low-stimulus environments for neurodivergent pupils. Objectors questioned whether larger school settings could realistically replicate these conditions or provide the same level of environmental adaptation.

Respondents further highlighted that ALN provision at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim was perceived as being highly relationship-based, built on consistency of staffing, familiarity and trust. Concerns were raised that larger schools may face challenges in maintaining the same level of staffing continuity or individualised attention, potentially impacting pupils who rely heavily on stable relationships for emotional regulation, communication and engagement in learning.

Concerns about elective home education were also raised in relation to Additional Learning Needs. Some parents of children with ALN, including social, emotional or anxiety-related needs, expressed apprehension that alternative settings may not be able to provide the same level of individualised support and understanding as Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim. Respondents highlighted the school's small size, nurturing ethos and familiarity with their child's needs as critical factors in their children's ability to engage with education. In this context, parents indicated that if appropriate support could not be secured in an alternative setting, elective home education might be considered to protect their child's wellbeing and prevent further disengagement.

Overall, objectors expressed concern about whether equivalent ALN provision could be practically secured in larger settings, even where statutory duties remain unchanged. These concerns reflected a broader view that the effectiveness of ALN support is not solely dependent on formal processes or documentation, but also on environment, relationships, and deeply embedded understanding of individual learners. As a result, respondents regarded the current provision at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim as uniquely tailored and were anxious about the potential risks to continuity, quality and outcomes for pupils with additional learning needs.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority recognises and fully acknowledges its statutory duties under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. These legal responsibilities apply irrespective of any school organisation proposals and would not be diminished or altered as a result of the proposal. The Authority therefore remains legally responsible for securing appropriate Additional Learning Provision (ALP) for all learners identified as having Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

Should the proposal be implemented, the Authority confirms that pupils with ALN would continue to receive the provision set out in their Individual Development Plans (IDPs) without interruption. IDPs would be reviewed in advance of any transfer to ensure that provision remains appropriate, effective and responsive to each learner's identified needs. There would be no reduction in entitlement, and all statutory processes and timescales would continue to be met in full.

The Authority recognises the importance of continuity, consistency and suitably adapted learning environments for pupils with ALN. Transition planning would therefore be undertaken through close collaboration between receiving schools, the Authority's ALN service, specialist support teams, parents and carers, and relevant health professionals where appropriate. This coordinated

approach would ensure that staffing arrangements, learning environments and support strategies are fully in place from the point of transfer. Receiving schools would be provided with comprehensive information relating to pupils' needs and the provision detailed within their IDPs, with reasonable adjustments secured in advance and ongoing monitoring following transfer.

The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales sets out clear principles in Chapter 3, confirming that all learners are entitled to equitable access to appropriate support, high-quality teaching and inclusive provision, regardless of the size or type of school they attend. Chapter 15 further reinforces that robust arrangements for identifying needs, planning provision and supporting learners must be applied consistently across all maintained schools.

The Local Authority considers that the needs of any pupil identified with Additional Learning Needs could be appropriately met at the proposed receiving schools, or at other nearby schools, through established ALN frameworks, reasonable adjustments and access to appropriate support services.

The Authority also recognises that additional learning needs may be temporary, emerging or undiagnosed, and that parental insight and professional judgement are important considerations alongside formal data. Should the proposals be implemented, and where families wish to explore how a supported transition to an alternative school could be managed, the Authority would facilitate discussion and individualised planning through appropriate support mechanisms. The Authority therefore acknowledges that some pupils currently attending the school may benefit from aspects of a smaller school environment, such as quieter learning spaces, consistent staffing and highly personalised support, and recognises that transition to a different setting could present challenges if not carefully planned and supported.

The Authority is satisfied that the proposed receiving schools have established and effective systems in place to support learners with ALN, as evidenced through recent Estyn inspection findings. Ysgol Griffith Jones was last inspected in March 2020, with Estyn reporting that provision for pupils with additional learning needs was purposeful, supported through effective individual plans and strong collaboration with external agencies, including speech and language therapy. Ysgol Hafodwenog was last inspected in February 2019, where Estyn found that pupils with additional learning needs had suitable individual plans with clear targets, supported by effective working with specialist agencies and comprehensive pastoral care.

More widely, high-quality teaching is recognised as the most significant factor in improving outcomes for learners with ALN. Estyn's thematic work consistently highlights that effective ALN provision is rooted in inclusive, well-planned teaching that is responsive to individual needs and

supported by strong whole-school systems. Where leadership and teaching practice are well aligned, learners with ALN are able to make appropriate progress regardless of school size.

This position is reinforced by an Education Tribunal for Wales decision dated 1 April 2021, which confirmed that class size alone does not determine the quality of teaching, learning or provision. Inclusive practice in Carmarthenshire is characterised by high-quality teaching and learning, including effective differentiation, targeted interventions and appropriate strategies to enable learners to access the curriculum and make progress. The determining factors in securing positive outcomes for learners with ALN are therefore the quality of provision and support, rather than the physical scale of a school.

The Authority recognises that parents of children with Additional Learning Needs have expressed particular concerns about continuity of support and the suitability of alternative settings. The Authority is committed to meeting its duties under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and to ensuring that all learners with ALN continue to receive appropriate, person-centred support. Alternative schools have access to ALN expertise, specialist services and local authority support to meet pupils' identified needs, and transition planning would include detailed information sharing to support continuity. While some respondents indicated that elective home education may be considered if concerns about ALN provision are not addressed, the Authority is confident that appropriate support arrangements can be put in place to meet learners' needs within maintained settings.

Taken together, the Local Authority reaffirms its firm commitment to meeting its statutory responsibilities under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. Should the proposal be implemented, robust transition planning, strong partnership working and effective monitoring would ensure continuity of ALN provision, appropriate learning environments and full compliance with legal requirements, safeguarding the needs and wellbeing of all learners with additional learning needs.

5.	Transport, travel, accessibility and environmental impact	140	53.8%
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A significant number of objectors raised concerns about the potential impact of increased travel distances and journey times should the proposal proceed. Respondents expressed anxiety about younger children having to travel longer distances to school, often relying on organised transport

rather than being able to walk or travel actively within the local community. These concerns were particularly pronounced in relation to the suitability of extended travel for primary-age pupils.

Many respondents highlighted increased reliance on school transport, noting that longer journeys could have a cumulative impact on pupils' wellbeing, particularly for younger children and those with additional learning needs or health considerations. It was suggested that extended travel times may contribute to fatigue, anxiety and reduced readiness to learn, especially where journeys take place early or late in the day.

Concerns were also raised about road safety, both in relation to increased traffic movements and the routes pupils may be required to travel. Respondents questioned the safety of roads used for school transport, particularly during peak times, and expressed concern about congestion, visibility and the suitability of existing infrastructure. In addition, some respondents highlighted the loss of active travel opportunities, such as walking or cycling to school, which were seen as beneficial for children's physical health, independence and social development.

The environmental impact of increased transport was a further area of concern. Respondents noted that longer journeys and greater reliance on motorised transport could lead to increased emissions and reduced alignment with sustainability and climate objectives. Some objectors felt this represented a step away from encouraging environmentally responsible behaviours within local communities.

Respondents also raised the wider impact on family life, particularly in relation to childcare arrangements, daily routines and parental employment. Longer travel times and fixed transport schedules were seen as potentially limiting flexibility for parents and carers, affecting their ability to manage work commitments and childcare responsibilities. Some respondents expressed concern that these pressures could disproportionately affect families with limited transport options or less flexible working arrangements.

A further concern raised by respondents relates to the capacity of receiving schools to accommodate both current pupils and potential future demand arising from planned and ongoing housing development within the Meidrim and St Clears areas. Respondents questioned how future population growth has been accounted for within pupil projections and whether sufficient permanent capacity exists within Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog to absorb additional pupils over the longer term. It was suggested that increasing housing provision may lead to a rise in the school-age population, placing pressure on available places, particularly where schools are already operating closer to capacity. In this context, concerns were expressed that insufficient forward

planning could result in overcrowding or the need for temporary accommodation, such as portable classrooms, to meet demand. Respondents highlighted that such outcomes may undermine the perceived benefits of consolidating provision and could reintroduce capacity challenges in alternative forms. Overall, these views reflect a broader concern regarding the alignment between education planning and local housing development, and the need to ensure that school organisation proposals are supported by robust, evidence-based forecasting of future demand.

Overall, objectors emphasised the cumulative impact of increased travel, noting that while individual factors such as journey length, transport reliance or environmental considerations may appear manageable in isolation, together they could place additional strain on pupils and families. These concerns were particularly highlighted in relation to more vulnerable children, for whom increased travel demands were viewed as an additional challenge potentially affecting wellbeing, health and day-to-day functioning.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority acknowledges the concerns raised in relation to travel distance, transport arrangements, road safety and the potential environmental impact associated with the proposal. The Authority recognises that travel and accessibility can have wider implications for pupils, families and daily routines, and these matters have therefore been carefully considered as part of the statutory assessment undertaken in accordance with the School Organisation Code (2018).

Should the proposal be implemented, home to school transport would be provided for eligible pupils in line with Carmarthenshire County Council's School Transport Policy. Eligibility would be assessed consistently and fairly, and the Authority would remain responsible for ensuring that qualifying pupils can access their education safely and reasonably.

Travel routes and journey times have been reviewed in advance to ensure that transport arrangements are safe, proportionate and appropriate, taking account of pupils' age and individual circumstances. Consideration would be given to road safety, the suitability of pick-up and drop-off arrangements, and the overall length and practicality of journeys, particularly for younger learners regardless of which school they choose to attend.

Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim is not located within a designated Built-Up Area (BUA) as prescribed by Welsh Government and therefore does not have any identified active travel routes contained within the Active Travel Network Map. Furthermore, the school does not, to the Authority's knowledge, have an Active School Travel Plan that would provide detailed information on travel mode,

propensity for modal shift or links to key destinations within the village or neighbouring education centres.

The Local Authority also recognises the importance of considering environmental impacts as part of its wider decision-making framework. Environmental considerations are assessed alongside other strategic factors, including sustainability, accessibility and the efficient use of public resources. However, these must be balanced with the Authority's statutory duty to secure sustainable, effective and high-quality education provision across the county.

The closure of a school operating below capacity would remove the need to heat and maintain an inefficiently used building, resulting in a significant reduction in emissions associated with the school estate. While shared school transport would generate some additional emissions, these are expected to be relatively limited. Across an academic year, the emissions produced by a shared vehicle operating a short route would be considerably lower than those associated with keeping an under-utilised school building operational.

The receiving schools, Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog, operate on a more sustainable basis, accommodating larger pupil numbers within buildings designed to support more efficient energy use. Consolidating provision within these settings improves overall energy efficiency and is consistent with national expectations for the sustainable management of the school estate.

Carmarthenshire County Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, alongside Welsh Government commitments to decarbonising the public sector estate, reinforces the importance of reducing unnecessary energy consumption. Minimising emissions from inefficient buildings is a key component of this approach.

Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, constructed circa 1900 and heated using an oil-fired system, recorded a carbon footprint of 11.37 tonnes CO₂e in 2024/25, with benchmarked energy consumption of 172.6 kWh/m². This metric provides a normalised basis for comparison across sites of differing size and operational use.

Similarly, Ysgol Hafodwenog, constructed in 1971 and heated via liquid petroleum gas (LPG), recorded a higher carbon footprint of 21.2 tonnes CO₂e in the same period, with a comparable energy consumption of 172.9 kWh/m².

In contrast, Ysgol Griffiths Jones, constructed in 1963 and heated via natural gas, has a significantly larger gross internal area (3,676 m²) compared to both Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim (268 m²) and Ysgol Hafodwenog (566 m²). Despite this, it recorded emissions of 70.41 tonnes CO₂e in 2024/25,

alongside a markedly lower energy consumption of 98.6 kWh/m²—just over half that of the other schools.

These figures highlight the disproportionately high emissions associated with maintaining smaller, less energy-efficient school buildings, particularly where occupancy levels are low.

In considering pupil transport to alternative provision, a shared bus undertaking a 13-mile return journey between Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and Ysgol Hafodwenog, Trelech, over 190 teaching days would generate approximately 2.5 tCO₂e per annum, based on DEFRA-derived emission factors (approximately 13 kg CO₂e per trip).

Alternatively, a shared bus operating a shorter 6-mile return journey between Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and Ysgol Griffiths Jones, St Clears, over the same period would generate approximately 1.1 tCO₂e per annum (approximately 6 kg CO₂e per trip).

While these estimates exclude emissions associated with vehicle positioning journeys, the total transport-related emissions remain significantly lower than those associated with the continued operation of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim.

Carmarthenshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency on 20 February 2019, reinforcing its commitment to reducing emissions across the public sector estate and aligning with the environmental considerations set out in this proposal.

The Local Authority also acknowledges the concerns raised regarding the capacity of receiving schools to accommodate both current pupils and potential future demand arising from planned and ongoing housing development within the Meidrim and St Clears areas. Pupil projections used to inform the proposal incorporate a range of data sources, including historic birth rates, migration patterns and known housing developments, in line with Welsh Government planning guidance. These projections are reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain accurate and responsive to changing local circumstances.

The proposed receiving schools have been assessed in terms of both current capacity and projected future demand and are considered capable of accommodating pupils arising from this proposal, alongside anticipated population growth within the area. Where necessary, the Authority retains the ability to manage capacity through established processes, including the reconfiguration of internal accommodation or the strategic planning of additional provision. However, there is no current expectation that the proposal would result in overcrowding or a reliance on temporary accommodation.

The Authority recognises the importance of aligning education provision with housing growth and continues to work collaboratively with planning colleagues to ensure that emerging development patterns are reflected in school place planning. This forms part of the Authority’s ongoing statutory duty to ensure that sufficient and suitable school places are available across the county, both now and in the future.

The Local Authority confirms that transport, accessibility, capacity and environmental implications have been fully assessed as part of the proposal. Where transport is required, arrangements would be made in accordance with the Council’s School Transport Policy and kept under review to ensure they remain safe and reasonable. While environmental and capacity considerations form an important part of the wider policy context, they must be balanced alongside the Authority’s responsibility to secure sustainable education provision for all learners, with all factors considered in line with the School Organisation Code (2018).

6.	Educational quality of small rural schools	127	48.8%
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Some respondents argued that small rural schools provide a high-quality and distinctive educational experience, particularly through small class sizes, strong relationships and inclusive practices. These respondents suggested that smaller cohorts allow for more individualised attention, greater understanding of pupils’ needs, and more responsive support, which they viewed as contributing positively to pupils’ learning and wellbeing.

A number of responses highlighted the perceived benefits of mixed-age teaching, which is common in small rural schools. Respondents expressed the view that mixed-age classes can foster peer support, collaboration and social development, enabling younger pupils to learn from older peers while allowing older pupils to consolidate learning through mentoring roles. Mixed-age groupings were also seen by some as offering increased flexibility for differentiation and personalised learning approaches.

Respondents also emphasised the strength of relationships between pupils and staff, noting that smaller school communities can support a nurturing and inclusive environment. It was suggested that pupils in smaller schools may benefit from feeling well known and valued, with universal participation in school activities such as performances, sports and leadership opportunities contributing to confidence and a sense of belonging.

In addition, some respondents referred to recent improvements identified through Estyn activity, indicating that they perceived positive progress in educational standards and practice at the school. These improvements were cited as evidence that small rural schools can be effective and capable of responding constructively to inspection processes, professional challenge and school improvement priorities.

Overall, respondents presenting this view argued that the characteristics of small rural schools—including scale, mixed-age teaching and close relationships—can support a high-quality educational experience. They suggested that these features should be recognised as strengths and considered carefully within the context of discussions about educational provision and school organisation.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority recognises that small schools can offer positive and supportive learning environments, including the potential benefits of small class sizes, strong relationships and, where appropriately resourced, effective mixed-age teaching. Such settings can promote inclusion, pupil engagement and personalised learning experiences, and these strengths are fully acknowledged.

However, in assessing educational quality, the Authority is required to take a long-term, system-wide view. Educational quality is not determined solely by current classroom experience, but also by a school's capacity to sustain high standards over time. This includes leadership capacity, staffing resilience, curriculum breadth, access to professional support and overall, long-term viability. These factors are particularly relevant in smaller schools, where limited staffing structures can present challenges in relation to leadership workload, staff absence, succession planning and the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum.

In developing the proposal, the Authority has therefore considered the perceived strengths of small schools alongside inspection outcomes, current and projected pupil numbers, and wider assessments of sustainability and viability. While recent inspection activity and identified improvements are recognised, the Authority must also consider whether such progress can be maintained in the context of low or declining pupil numbers and increasing pressures on leadership and staffing capacity.

The Authority's approach seeks to secure high-quality education for all learners over the long term. This includes ensuring access to a broad curriculum, appropriate peer interaction, resilient leadership arrangements and the sustainable use of resources. The proposal reflects the Authority's

judgement, based on a holistic assessment, of how these objectives can be most effectively achieved across the education system.

The Authority considers that school effectiveness is influenced less by absolute size and more by the quality of leadership, teaching and resourcing. Estyn consistently identifies strong leadership and high-quality teaching as the most significant factors in securing and sustaining improved outcomes for learners in Welsh primary schools. Estyn’s thematic work further highlights that effective leadership provides clear strategic direction, strengthens teaching practice and creates the conditions in which learners can thrive, with leadership widely recognised as second only to classroom teaching in its impact on pupil outcomes.

The Authority is therefore confident that the leadership arrangements within the proposed receiving schools will support stability and sustained standards for pupils transferring under the proposal. It is satisfied that the receiving schools have the capacity to maintain and further develop effective teaching and inclusive practice, supported by strong leadership, consistent systems and comparable organisational structures that provide a sound foundation for continuity of learning, wellbeing and support for all pupils.

Welsh language outcomes are likewise secured through high-quality teaching, consistent linguistic progression and sustainable Welsh-medium provision, all of which can be maintained and, where appropriate, strengthened through the proposed arrangements.

On this basis, while the Authority recognises the positive aspects often associated with small rural schools, these have been carefully balanced against considerations of sustainability, leadership capacity and long-term educational quality. The proposal reflects the Authority’s responsibility to plan provision that is not only effective in the present, but also viable, resilient and capable of meeting future needs. On this basis, while parental perceptions regarding the benefits of small schools are acknowledged, the Authority does not consider that the proposal would result in a reduction in educational standards or the quality of learners’ experiences and remains confident that pupils would continue to be educated within a supportive learning environment underpinned by effective leadership and high-quality teaching.

7.	Consultation process and procedural concerns	109	41.9%
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A number of respondents raised concerns about the consultation process, questioning both its content and its conduct. A recurring theme within responses was the perceived accuracy and

reliability of information presented within the consultation documentation. Some respondents expressed the view that elements of the documentation contained inaccuracies, lacked sufficient clarity, or did not fully reflect the context or circumstances of the school, leading to concerns about whether stakeholders had been provided with a complete and balanced basis on which to respond. Respondents also questioned the use and interpretation of inspection evidence, particularly the weighting given to Estyn findings within the proposal. Some responses suggested that inspection outcomes were either over-emphasised or selectively interpreted, while others felt that more recent improvements or contextual factors had not been sufficiently recognised. These concerns led some respondents to question whether inspection evidence had been applied consistently and proportionately within the overall assessment.

The timing of the proposal was another area of concern. Some respondents felt that the consultation was introduced at an inopportune point, potentially limiting the opportunity for recent improvements to take effect or be fully evidenced. It was suggested that the timing created uncertainty for pupils, families and staff and may have affected the ability of stakeholders to engage meaningfully in the process.

A further concern related to whether all reasonable and viable alternatives to the proposal had been sufficiently explored and presented. Some respondents questioned whether options other than closure or reorganisation had been given adequate consideration or weight, and whether the consultation demonstrated a genuine openness to alternative approaches. This led to perceptions among some respondents that the proposal may have been predetermined.

Several responses explicitly referenced compliance with the School Organisation Code (2018), questioning whether the consultation fully met its requirements. Concerns were raised in relation to the adequacy of information provided, the assessment of alternatives, and whether the process aligned with the principles of transparency, fairness and meaningful engagement set out within the Code.

Overall, respondents expressing these views conveyed a degree of lack of confidence in the consultation process, highlighting concerns about accuracy, evidence, timing and procedural compliance. These responses reflected a belief that consultation processes should not only meet statutory requirements but also ensure that stakeholders are fully informed, confident in the information presented, and assured that their views are being genuinely considered within decision-making.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority is satisfied that the consultation has been conducted in full accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code (2018). The consultation process was designed to support informed decision-making by enabling stakeholders to understand the proposal and to express their views. The Authority considers that the process has adhered to the Code's principles of fairness, transparency and meaningful engagement.

All responses received during the consultation period have been carefully considered. The Authority acknowledges that consultees expressed a wide range of views, including objections and concerns. Consultation feedback has formed a key part of the evidence base and has been considered alongside statutory assessments, professional advice and other relevant information in evaluating the proposal.

The Authority recognises that consultation does not require unanimity and that not all participants will agree with the proposal or its potential outcomes. The purpose of consultation is to gather representations so that these can inform decision-making, rather than to determine the final outcome. The Authority is satisfied that stakeholders were given appropriate opportunities to engage with the process and to raise matters for consideration.

In reaching its position, consultation responses have been assessed alongside the Authority's wider statutory responsibilities, including maintaining educational standards, ensuring sustainability, responding to pupil numbers and securing the efficient use of public resources. On this basis, the Authority considers that the consultation process has been undertaken appropriately and that the requirements of the School Organisation Code (2018) have been met.

It is also noted that the shaping discussion (Stage 0) does not form a statutory requirement of the School Organisation Code. This stage was adopted by the Local Authority as an additional element of its democratic approach, providing an opportunity for early engagement, discussion and information sharing to help shape proposals at an early stage. It should be noted that no options were submitted by the school in response to the shaping discussion. However, we acknowledge that a number of proposals have subsequently been submitted and considered as part of the evaluation of the consultation. In addition, further alternative options and representations submitted by stakeholders during the formal consultation period have also been considered and are reflected in this report.

PLASC data provides a consistent, comprehensive, and standardised dataset across all schools in Wales. PLASC is collected annually from every maintained school in Wales, ensuring a uniform and up-to-date snapshot of pupil numbers, demographics, and school characteristics. This consistency allows for accurate comparisons and trend analysis across schools and local authorities. The Welsh Government and Estyn use PLASC data as a baseline for funding allocations, performance monitoring, and strategic planning. Using the same dataset in local authority reports ensures alignment with national policy frameworks and avoids discrepancies. PLASC is an official data source subject to rigorous validation processes. Its use in formal reporting supports transparency and accountability, particularly when justifying decisions around school organisation, funding, or educational outcomes. Referring to a single, recognised data source, such as PLASC, creates clarity and ensures that all stakeholders, schools, parents, inspectors, and policymakers are working from the same evidence base.

In accordance with the School Organisation Code (2018), the Authority has undertaken the required impact assessments, including Welsh Language, Community, Transport and Equality Impact Assessments. Carmarthenshire County Council also applies an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) approach, which brings together considerations arising from a range of legislative frameworks, including the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, equality legislation, Welsh language requirements, socio-economic considerations, children's rights and the Environment (Wales) Act.

The Integrated Impact Assessment is a working document developed as part of the proposal process and is reviewed and refined as further evidence becomes available. An initial IIA was completed at the outset of the process and has since been updated to reflect new data, professional evidence and feedback received during the formal consultation period.

All analysis has been undertaken by officers from across the Authority, offering a wide range of experience and expertise. The Authority is satisfied that the impact assessments provide a fair, proportionate and balanced evaluation of the proposal, based on the information available at each stage of the process.

In relation to the Welsh Language Impact Assessment, the evaluation considers the Welsh-medium strengths of all schools involved, including teaching quality, language outcomes, sustainability and capacity to meet long-term Welsh-medium education objectives. The assessment also considers cultural and heritage-based immersion opportunities within each setting, enabling a balanced and comparative evaluation of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog.

The assessment methodology places primary emphasis on the quality and continuity of Welsh-medium education within the classroom. This reflects evidence that structured provision, strong pedagogy and consistent linguistic progression are the most significant drivers of Welsh language acquisition. While location-based opportunities and extra-curricular activities are acknowledged, the assessment focuses on statutory linguistic requirements, curriculum delivery and progression pathways that support learners to become confident and competent Welsh speakers.

8.	Financial case and value for money	94	36.2%
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Some respondents questioned whether the projected financial savings associated with the proposal were sufficient to justify closure. A recurring theme within these responses was scepticism about whether the anticipated savings accurately reflected the full range of costs that would arise as a result of the proposal. In particular, respondents highlighted concerns that potential savings may be offset by increased transport costs and Additional Learning Needs (ALN)–related expenditure, thereby reducing or negating the overall financial benefit.

Several respondents expressed concern that the financial modelling did not fully capture the ongoing costs of home-to-school transport, particularly for younger pupils and those with additional needs who may require specialist or individualised transport arrangements. It was suggested that increased journey distances and reliance on transport could lead to higher long-term costs, which may not have been sufficiently factored into the financial case.

Concerns were also raised regarding the potential impact on ALN provision costs. Respondents noted that changes in setting could require additional support, environmental adaptations, staffing, or transitional arrangements for pupils with identified needs. Some questioned whether these potential pressures had been fully incorporated into the financial projections, particularly where provision is currently locally embedded and highly personalised.

In addition, respondents queried the assumptions underpinning the financial projections, including the basis on which savings were calculated and the extent to which variables such as transport demand, ALN needs and future cost fluctuations had been tested or stress-assessed. Some expressed concern that projected savings may rely on optimistic assumptions and may not adequately reflect real-world complexities or cumulative costs arising from implementation.

Overall, respondents raising these issues expressed uncertainty about whether the financial benefits of closure were sufficiently robust and transparent to justify the proposal. These concerns reflected a desire for clarity around how savings had been calculated whether all associated costs had been fully considered, and how financial risks would be managed over time.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority acknowledges the concerns raised regarding the financial case presented in support of the proposal and recognises the importance of transparency, consistency and robustness in financial assessment, particularly where school organisation proposals may have implications for pupils, families and communities.

Financial assessments are undertaken using a consistent and systematic approach across all school organisation proposals. These assessments consider a full range of direct and indirect costs, including staffing, premises and maintenance, transport, and potential pressures associated with Additional Learning Needs provision. This approach is intended to ensure that all relevant financial factors are captured as part of a comprehensive and balanced evaluation, rather than focusing on individual cost elements in isolation.

In addition to current budget position, the Authority places significant emphasis on long-term sustainability and viability. This includes consideration of ongoing budget pressures, surplus capacity, projected pupil numbers and the efficient use of public resources. The Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that education funding is deployed effectively, equitably and sustainably across the county, and that financial decisions support the long-term resilience of the education system as a whole.

Financial considerations do not operate in isolation. They form part of a wider evidence base that includes educational quality, pupil sufficiency, leadership capacity and long-term viability. Decisions are therefore informed by a holistic assessment of need and sustainability, rather than by projected savings alone.

The overall budget delegated to the Authority's schools is under significant pressure. Challenging national and local funding settlements, combined with steadily declining pupil numbers in recent years, have resulted in the current primary school estate, comprising 94 schools, many with very small pupil cohorts, becoming increasingly unsustainable. A substantial number of schools are currently operating in deficit or are forecast to enter deficit within the next two financial years, and

the overall schools' budget is projecting an in-year overspend of £8.9m for 2026/27. This presents a significant risk to the overall Council budget.

There is also a significant level of surplus capacity across the school network. As school funding is largely driven by pupil numbers, maintaining an estate that exceeds demographic need places additional strain on already constrained budgets. Reducing the overall footprint to a level where a smaller number of schools is able to operate efficiently and manage budgets sustainably has therefore become a corporate priority. This position has been reinforced by external scrutiny, including Estyn (2023), which highlighted delays in decision-making and their impact on progress in reorganising the education estate, and the Panel Performance Assessment (2025) commissioned via WLGA. This recommended the implementation of the Authority's Modernising Education Programme to address excess capacity and optimise the overall footprint of the school estate, reduce school budget deficits and inform future capital investment decisions.

In respect of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, the school is projected to be in deficit by £61k at the end of the 2025/26 financial year, with a current in-year overspend of approximately £41k. Consolidating pupils within Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog, or any other primary school in accordance with parental choice, would strengthen those schools' financial positions by increasing cohort size, improving pupil-led funding allocations and supporting greater long-term financial sustainability.

Should the proposal be implemented, the Authority would also assume responsibility for a redundant school building within its estate. In the absence of identified corporate or community use, and in accordance with the Council's Future Use and Disposal of Redundant Land and Buildings Policy, the site would be placed on the open market. This could generate an estimated capital receipt of approximately £150,000, which could be reinvested in line with corporate priorities.

In conclusion, the Local Authority recognises the concerns expressed regarding financial assumptions and projections. However, it is satisfied that financial assessments have been undertaken rigorously, consistently and in line with established processes, and that they appropriately inform the wider evaluation of efficiency, sufficiency and long-term educational viability underpinning the proposal.

9.	Alternative options to closure	76	29.2%
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A number of respondents proposed alternative approaches that they felt should be explored as potential means of sustaining provision and addressing the challenges facing the school, rather

than proceeding directly to closure. These suggestions reflected a desire to retain a local school presence and to explore flexible or incremental solutions tailored to the rural context.

One frequently suggested option was federation or shared leadership arrangements. Respondents argued that such models could reduce leadership and management pressures by sharing headteacher or senior leadership roles across more than one school, while allowing schools to retain their individual identities. It was suggested that shared leadership could provide greater resilience, professional support and cost efficiencies without removing local provision.

Some respondents proposed enhanced early years provision as a means of supporting long-term sustainability. It was suggested that expanding early years or childcare offer could attract more families to the area, support parental employment, and increase pupil numbers over time, thereby strengthening the viability of the school.

Others suggested developing the school as a community hub, making greater use of the building for community activities, services or partnerships beyond the school day. Respondents felt that increased community use could strengthen the school's role within the village, increase footfall and engagement, and potentially contribute to financial sustainability through shared use or joint initiatives.

A number of responses also put forward the idea of a time-limited sustainability plan. Under this approach, respondents suggested that the school could be given a defined period during which targeted support, revised leadership arrangements or additional investment could be implemented, with progress monitored against agreed criteria. This was viewed as a way of allowing time for recent improvements or new initiatives to take effect before irreversible decisions were made.

Overall, respondents proposing these alternatives expressed the view that closure should be a last resort, and that options such as federation, shared leadership, enhanced early years provision, community hub models or time-limited sustainability measures warranted fuller consideration. These suggestions reflected a belief that structural flexibility and community-based solutions could potentially address challenges while preserving local educational and community provision.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority acknowledges the range of alternative options suggested by respondents and confirms that these were actively considered during the development of the proposal. It recognises that these suggestions were put forward with the intention of addressing the challenges identified while retaining local provision.

Each alternative option was subject to detailed evaluation against a consistent set of criteria, including current and projected pupil numbers, surplus capacity, leadership sustainability, educational standards and financial viability. Particular emphasis was placed on whether alternative approaches could realistically and sustainably address the underlying challenges over the long term.

While the Authority acknowledges that some of the alternatives identified potential advantages, it concluded that, when assessed collectively and against the full evidence base, they did not sufficiently resolve the fundamental issues identified. In particular, concerns remained regarding the ability of alternative options to secure resilient leadership arrangements, maintain consistent educational quality, ensure effective use of resources and deliver long-term viability in the context of low or declining pupil numbers and excess capacity.

The Authority is required to take a strategic, system-wide view of education provision and to ensure that decisions support sustainable and effective outcomes across the county as a whole. Having carefully considered all reasonable alternatives alongside statutory assessments, professional advice and consultation responses, the Authority concluded that the proposal represents the most appropriate and viable option for securing long-term educational sustainability.

Taken together, while alternative options were given due and thorough consideration, the Authority's assessment is that the proposal most effectively addresses the combined challenges of pupil numbers, surplus capacity, leadership sustainability, educational quality and financial viability.

Further detail on the alternative options raised during the consultation period, including the SWOT analysis undertaken for each, is set out in Section 8 of this report.

7. SUMMARY OF SUPPORTIVE COMMENTS RECEIVED AND LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSES

The table below notes the themes of the supportive comments received and the Local Authority's responses to those themes:

Supportive Comments			
Point Number	Point Raised	Number of responses raising this point	% of responses raising this point
1.	Financial efficiency and sustainability	4	1.54%
<p>A number of respondents expressed support for the proposal on the basis of the need to ensure the efficient and responsible use of public resources. These respondents emphasised that, in a context of finite education funding and increasing pressures across the school system, it is important that resources are deployed in a way that delivers the greatest overall educational benefit.</p> <p>Supportive respondents highlighted concerns about the long-term financial sustainability of very small schools, particularly where there is significant surplus capacity. They argued that maintaining schools with low pupil numbers can result in disproportionately high costs per pupil, limiting the ability to invest effectively across the wider education network. From this perspective, respondents viewed the continued operation of very small schools as increasingly difficult to sustain in the longer term without diverting resources from other priorities.</p> <p>Several respondents suggested that reallocating resources to schools with greater capacity would allow funding to be used more effectively. They argued that larger or more viable schools may be better positioned to benefit from economies of scale, support a broader curriculum offer, and maintain staffing and leadership capacity more sustainably. In this context, the redistribution of resources was seen as a pragmatic approach to ensuring value for money and supporting consistent educational provision.</p> <p>Overall, respondents holding this view emphasised the importance of balancing local considerations with the wider responsibility to manage public funds efficiently. They expressed the belief that difficult decisions are sometimes necessary to protect the long-term sustainability of the education</p>			

system as a whole, and that prioritising efficient use of resources is essential to maintaining educational quality and resilience across the network of schools.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority acknowledges the views expressed by respondents regarding the importance of financial sustainability and the efficient use of public resources in school organisation. These considerations sit at the core of the Authority's statutory responsibilities and are fundamental to effective and responsible education planning.

In developing the proposal, the Authority has carefully considered the long-term sustainability of the school network as a whole. This has involved assessing whether existing arrangements represent a proportionate and effective use of limited public funding, particularly where schools operate with very low pupil numbers and significant surplus capacity. The Authority has a duty to ensure that resources are deployed in a way that supports resilient staffing structures, curriculum breadth and sustained educational quality across the county.

The proposal seeks to address these challenges by enabling resources to be managed more strategically, reducing inefficiencies associated with surplus places and supporting a more sustainable school footprint. This approach is intended to safeguard educational standards while ensuring that public funding is not disproportionately committed to provision that is increasingly difficult to sustain over the long term.

The overall schools budget is under significant pressure. Challenging national and local funding settlements, combined with declining pupil numbers, have resulted in the current footprint of 94 primary schools, many with very low pupil numbers, becoming increasingly unsustainable. A substantial number of schools are already operating in deficit or are forecast to enter deficit within the next two financial years, and the schools budget is projecting a shortfall of £9.2 million by March 2026. As school funding is largely pupil-led, addressing surplus capacity and supporting a smaller number of financially sustainable schools has therefore become a corporate priority.

This position has been reinforced through external scrutiny. In 2023, Estyn identified that delays in decision-making had limited progress in reorganising and modernising education provision. Similarly, the Panel Performance Assessment (2025) recommended the implementation of the Authority's Modernising Education Programme to address excess capacity and optimise the overall footprint of the school estate, reduce school budget deficits and inform future capital investment decisions.

In respect of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, the school is projected to be in deficit by £61k at the end of 2025/26 financial year, with a current in-year overspend of approximately £41k. Consolidating pupils within Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog would strengthen those schools' financial positions by increasing cohort size, improving pupil-led funding allocations and supporting greater long-term financial sustainability.

If the proposal proceeds, the Authority would also assume responsibility for a redundant school building. Subject to any identified corporate or community interest, and in accordance with the Council's Future Use and Disposal of Redundant Land and Buildings Policy, the site could be placed on the open market and is expected to generate a capital receipt of approximately £150,000.

Taken together, the Local Authority confirms that financial sustainability and the efficient use of public resources are key drivers of school organisation planning. The proposal reflects the Authority's responsibility to manage public funds prudently while supporting a sustainable, resilient and high-quality education system that meets current and future needs across the county.

2.	Purpose of schools as educational institutions	2	0.77%
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A strong and consistent theme across supportive responses was a clear distinction between the educational purpose of schools and broader community functions. Many respondents stated explicitly that the primary role of a school is to provide education, not to sustain communities, preserve buildings, or fulfil wider social or cultural objectives.

Supportive consultees cautioned against conflating educational decision-making with community preservation. They expressed the view that keeping a school open primarily to maintain village life risks prioritising adult sentiment over children's educational entitlement. From this standpoint, respondents argued that education policy must be learner-focused rather than emotionally driven.

Several respondents directly challenged the notion that every village must retain a school. They argued that this expectation no longer reflects modern patterns of settlement, employment, transport, and parental choice. In their view, insisting on retaining all small schools regardless of viability places an unreasonable burden on the education system.

Respondents acknowledged that schools often contribute to local identity but maintained that this contribution is secondary to educational quality. They argued that a school which is no longer able to meet contemporary educational expectations cannot reasonably be justified solely on the basis of its symbolic value to the community.

In this context, closure was framed as a recognition of the school's educational role rather than a rejection of the community. Respondents emphasised that communities are not dependent on schools alone and may find alternative ways to sustain social cohesion outside the education system.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority acknowledges the views expressed by respondents regarding the potential benefits associated with larger schools, including economies of scale, increased staffing capacity, and stronger leadership resilience. It recognises that these factors can contribute positively to organisational stability, operational flexibility, and long-term sustainability, particularly within an increasingly challenging financial and workforce environment. Such considerations are relevant when assessing how best to secure consistent, high-quality education for learners.

In developing the proposal, the Authority has given careful consideration to staffing capacity and leadership sustainability, including schools' ability to manage staff absence, respond to recruitment challenges, and plan effectively for succession. Larger schools are often better positioned to distribute leadership responsibilities across a wider staff base, sustain robust management structures, and provide professional peer support for teaching and leadership teams. These factors can support continuity, reduce fragility, and strengthen a school's capacity for sustained improvement over time.

The Authority has also taken account of the organisational advantages linked to economies of scale. These include the more efficient use of staffing and financial resources, opportunities to share expertise across teams, and increased capacity to absorb short- and medium-term operational pressures. Such efficiencies are particularly relevant when considering long-term viability and ensuring that public funding is directed in a manner that maximises educational benefit for learners across the wider school network.

However, the Authority considers that school effectiveness is not determined by size alone. Evidence from Estyn consistently identifies high-quality leadership and effective classroom teaching as the most significant factors influencing learner outcomes in Welsh primary schools. While organisational scale can support resilience and sustainability, it is the quality of leadership, teaching practice, and resourcing that ultimately determines educational success.

Estyn's thematic work further highlights that strong leadership provides the strategic direction necessary to drive improvement, strengthen teaching and learning, and establish positive, inclusive

learning environments. Leadership is widely recognised as second only to classroom teaching in its impact on pupil outcomes. In this context, the Authority is confident that the leadership and governance arrangements within the receiving schools will support stability, continuity, and sustained standards for pupils transferring as a result of the proposal.

The Authority is satisfied that the receiving schools have sufficient capacity to maintain and further develop effective teaching, inclusive practice, and appropriate support for all learners. Their established leadership structures, consistent systems, and comparable organisational arrangements provide a secure foundation to ensure continuity of learning, pupil wellbeing, and effective progression.

Welsh-medium education and Welsh language outcomes are similarly underpinned by high-quality teaching, consistent linguistic progression, and sustainable provision. The Authority is satisfied that these elements can be maintained and, where appropriate, strengthened through the proposed arrangements, ensuring that pupils continue to develop strong Welsh language skills within a supportive and viable educational environment.

In summary, the Authority recognises the organisational advantages identified by respondents, including enhanced staffing capacity, leadership resilience, and economies of scale. These factors have informed the overall assessment of the proposal alongside pupil numbers, surplus capacity, educational standards, Welsh-medium provision, and financial sustainability. Taken together, these considerations form part of the Authority’s strategic approach to securing long-term, high-quality, and sustainable education provision across the county.

3.	Educational quality, curriculum breadth and pupil experience	4	1.54%
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Supportive responses highlighted concerns about the educational limitations faced by very small schools. Respondents noted that low pupil numbers restrict a school’s ability to deliver a broad, balanced curriculum and limit opportunities for specialist teaching, enrichment activities, and progression.

A particular concern raised was the necessity of teaching wide age ranges within a single class. Respondents argued that while mixed-age teaching can be effective in some settings, the extreme age spread required in a school of this size places excessive demands on staff and makes sustained differentiation exceptionally difficult.

Supporters of the proposal suggested that these structural limitations affect pupils' learning experience despite the commitment of teaching staff. They expressed concern that children may not receive the same breadth of challenge, support, or variety as they would in a larger school with multiple classes and peers of the same age.

Several respondents contrasted Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim with neighbouring schools, stating that alternative provision offers better facilities, more robust learning environments, and improved educational opportunities. From this perspective, closure was viewed as enabling pupils to access richer and more developmentally appropriate learning experiences.

Overall, respondents framed educational quality as central to their support for closure. They argued that maintaining a school structure that inherently limits curriculum delivery and learner experience risks compromising pupils' long-term educational outcomes.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority acknowledges the views expressed by respondents regarding the potential benefits of larger schools in offering broader curricular and extracurricular opportunities, including access to specialist staff, enrichment activities and a wider range of learning experiences. These considerations have formed an important part of the Authority's assessment in developing the proposal and align with the Authority's duty to secure high-quality educational provision for all learners.

As part of the evaluation process, the Authority has carefully assessed the capacity of the proposed receiving schools to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum in line with statutory requirements and the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales. This assessment has included consideration of curriculum breadth, staff expertise, leadership capacity and each school's ability to sustain progression across all year groups. The Authority is satisfied that the receiving schools have appropriate systems in place to ensure continuity, coherence and progression in learning.

The Authority has also considered the extent to which the receiving schools are able to offer enrichment opportunities and access to additional provision that supports pupils' wider development. This includes extracurricular activities, access to specialist facilities, and the availability of staff with subject-specific or professional expertise. These elements contribute to an engaging and varied educational experience that supports academic attainment, creativity, personal development and readiness for future learning.

In reviewing these matters, the Authority has adopted a whole-school and system-wide perspective, recognising the importance of educational provision that is not only effective in the short term but also sustainable and resilient over time. The ability of the receiving schools to maintain a broad curriculum and diverse learning opportunities has therefore been considered alongside pupil numbers, staffing resilience, leadership sustainability and long-term viability.

The Authority notes that school effectiveness is influenced less by absolute size and more by the quality of leadership, teaching and resourcing. Estyn inspection evidence consistently identifies strong leadership and high-quality teaching as the most significant factors in securing and sustaining improved outcomes for learners in Welsh primary schools. These principles have been central to the Authority's consideration of the proposal.

In this context, it is important to note that the receiving schools are themselves relatively small schools, with class structures and teaching approaches comparable to those currently experienced by pupils. The learning environments offered remain familiar, supportive and age-appropriate. Leadership arrangements are already shared across the schools, providing continuity of vision, expectations and pedagogical approach. Both schools are currently judged to have satisfactory standards, indicating that learners' educational needs are being met appropriately within each setting.

Estyn's thematic work highlights that effective leadership underpins school improvement by providing clear strategic direction, strengthening teaching practice and creating the conditions in which learners can thrive. Leadership is widely recognised as second only to classroom teaching in its influence on pupil outcomes. The Authority is therefore confident that the continuity of leadership arrangements will support stability, consistency and sustained standards for pupils transferring as a result of the proposal.

The Authority is satisfied that the receiving schools have the capacity to maintain and further develop effective teaching and inclusive practice. Shared leadership, consistent systems and comparable organisational structures provide a strong foundation for ensuring continuity of learning, pupil wellbeing and appropriate support for all learners, including those with additional learning needs.

Welsh-medium education and Welsh language outcomes are similarly secured through high-quality teaching, consistent linguistic progression and sustainable provision. The Authority is confident that Welsh language development can be maintained and, where appropriate, strengthened through the

proposed arrangements, supported by stable staffing, coherent curriculum planning and meaningful opportunities for language use.

Inspection evidence across Wales also demonstrates that high-quality wellbeing provision is not dependent on a particular physical location, but rather on skilled practitioners, consistent relationships and purposeful curriculum design. Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog demonstrate strengths in these areas, supporting pupils’ emotional wellbeing alongside their academic learning.

In line with the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales, the Authority is confident that Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog are well placed to sustain, promote and enhance pupils’ wellbeing. This includes continuity in outdoor learning opportunities, creative and experiential learning, and access to staff who are able to provide consistent support before, during and after transition.

On this basis, while the Authority recognises parental views regarding the perceived benefits associated with small schools, it does not consider that the proposal would result in a reduction in educational standards or the quality of learners’ experiences. The Authority remains confident that pupils would continue to be educated within comparable, supportive learning environments, underpinned by effective leadership, high-quality teaching, strong wellbeing provision and a broad, balanced and enriching curriculum.

4.	Leadership capacity and governance effectiveness	2	0.77%
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Leadership capacity was another theme within supportive responses. Contributors highlighted that in very small schools, headteachers are often required to teach for a significant proportion of the week, leaving limited time for strategic leadership, school improvement planning, staff development, and safeguarding oversight.

Respondents argued that the demands placed on modern school leaders are substantial and continue to increase. They maintained that leadership time is essential for curriculum development, accountability, wellbeing responsibilities, and engagement with external agencies, and that these requirements cannot be adequately met alongside extensive teaching commitments.

Concerns were also expressed about governance effectiveness over an extended period. Some respondents questioned what actions governing bodies had taken over the past decade to address declining enrolment and promote the school to local families. Sustained low pupil numbers were seen as evidence that previous interventions had not been successful.

Supportive consultees emphasised that long-term decline does not reflect individual staff effort but rather structural limitations inherent in very small schools. They argued that governance models that may have been effective historically are no longer sufficient in the current educational landscape.

From this perspective, closure was viewed as the outcome of cumulative challenges rather than a sudden failure. Respondents suggested that recognising these limitations is part of responsible governance and long-term planning.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority acknowledges the views expressed by respondents regarding the challenges associated with leadership capacity and governance in very small schools. Consultees highlighted concerns about the ability of school leadership teams to balance teaching commitments with strategic responsibilities, including school improvement, safeguarding oversight, and engagement with accountability processes. These matters have been carefully considered as part of the Authority's evaluation of the proposal.

In developing the proposal, the Authority has taken account of the increasing complexity of school leadership roles within the current education landscape. Expectations associated with the Curriculum for Wales, wellbeing, additional learning needs, safeguarding, and inspection readiness all place significant demands on school leaders. In very small schools, where headteachers are often required to teach for a substantial proportion of the week, leadership capacity can be constrained, increasing organisational fragility and limiting opportunities for sustained strategic development.

The Authority has therefore considered the benefits of leadership resilience, including the ability to distribute leadership responsibilities across a wider staff base and to provide professional support and challenge within leadership teams. Shared or collaborative leadership arrangements can strengthen decision-making, support professional learning, and reduce reliance on single-post holders. These factors contribute to greater operational stability and continuity, particularly in the context of staff absence, recruitment challenges, or succession planning. It has become increasingly difficult to recruit headteachers to smaller schools and shared headship arrangements.

In relation to governance, the Authority recognises respondents' views that long-term declines in pupil numbers prompt questions about the effectiveness of previous strategic interventions. Governing bodies play a key role in setting strategic direction, challenging school performance, and

ensuring sustainability. Where pupil numbers decline over a prolonged period, it is appropriate to review whether structural or organisational factors have limited the governing body's capacity to effect change, rather than attributing responsibility to individual governors or staff.

The Authority is satisfied that the leadership and governance arrangements within the receiving schools provide sufficient capacity, resilience and accountability to support pupils transferring as a result of the proposal. Existing shared leadership arrangements promote continuity of vision, expectations and practice, while governance structures provide oversight proportionate to school size and complexity. Taken together, these arrangements support stability, effective management and sustained educational standards.

5.	Parental choice, community uptake and viability	1	0.38%
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Parental choice featured in supportive responses, with respondents questioning the proportion of children living within the Meidrim catchment area who actually attend the school. They argued that enrolment patterns provide a clear indication of parental confidence and perceived educational quality.

Supportive respondents stated that if families within the local community consistently choose alternative schools, this decision should be respected as a legitimate expression of parental judgement. In their view, sustained low uptake undermines arguments that the school is essential or strongly supported locally.

It was questioned why the wider county should continue to subsidise a school that local families themselves do not choose to use, particularly when other schools are available within a reasonable distance.

Respondents also argued that parental choice reflects forward-looking considerations, such as access to peer groups, facilities, stability, and educational outcomes. Where these factors lead families elsewhere, respondents felt this should inform reorganisation decisions.

Overall, supportive consultees characterised closure as the consequence of established parental behaviour rather than a cause of declining enrolment. From this perspective, the proposal was viewed as aligning provision with actual demand.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority recognises the views expressed by respondents concerning parental choice and community engagement, particularly the proportion of children residing within the Meidrim catchment area who do not attend the school. It is acknowledged that patterns of parental preference can provide insight into perceptions of educational quality, provision, and long-term viability. The Authority acknowledges that parental choice is an important factor within a modern education system and has been considered as part of the assessment.

In evaluating the proposal, the Authority has examined pupil numbers and enrolment trends over time alongside projected future demand. Sustained low enrolment, particularly where it is not linked to short-term demographic fluctuation, indicates underlying viability challenges. Where families consistently select alternative provision, this may reflect considerations such as curriculum breadth, peer group size, leadership stability or future sustainability, rather than simple proximity.

The Authority also recognises respondents' concerns regarding equity and the use of public resources. Continued operation of schools with very low enrolment requires a level of subsidy that may not reflect actual community uptake. In this context, the Authority has a responsibility to consider whether maintaining such provision represents a fair and proportionate use of funding, particularly when alternative schools are available within a reasonable distance and have the capacity to accommodate additional pupils.

At the same time, the Authority acknowledges that parental choice is influenced by a wide range of factors, including personal preference, family circumstances and perceptions of provision. The proposal does not seek to criticise individual parental decisions, but rather to respond to long-established patterns of demand in a way that supports long-term sustainability and educational quality across the school network.

On this basis, while the Authority recognises the importance of local schools to communities, it considers that sustained low uptake from within the catchment area is a significant factor in assessing ongoing viability. The Authority is satisfied that the proposal reflects both current and projected patterns of pupil demand and seeks to align educational provision with actual community use, ensuring that learners continue to access high-quality education within viable and sustainable settings.

8. PUPIL CONSULTATION ANALYSIS

Consultation with the pupils of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog took place in a dedicated session undertaken with members of the School Council. The key themes from each pupil consultation's responses are summarised in the table below.

Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim

Point Number	Point Raised
Pupil Consultation – Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim	
1.	Emotional Attachment to Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim
<p>Pupils consistently described Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim as a place where they feel happy, safe and emotionally secure. Many referred to the school as being “like a family”, emphasising the close relationships between pupils and staff and the sense of care and belonging they experience on a daily basis. The potential closure of the school generated strong emotional responses, including sadness, fear and distress. Several pupils indicated that learning about the proposal caused significant anxiety, with some describing physical or emotional reactions to stress. Overall, the responses highlight the central role Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim plays in pupils’ emotional wellbeing and sense of stability.</p>	
<p>Local Authority Response</p> <p>The Local Authority acknowledges and respects the strong emotional attachment pupils have expressed towards Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim. The Authority recognises that pupils view the school as a safe, caring and nurturing environment where they feel known, valued and supported, and it understands that the prospect of closure has caused distress and anxiety for many. Pupils’ descriptions of the school as “like a family” have been carefully noted, and the Authority accepts that such environments play an important role in supporting pupils’ emotional wellbeing and sense of belonging. These views have been fully considered as part of the wellbeing assessment associated with the proposal and have informed the Authority’s approach to transition planning and pastoral support.</p>	

2.	Anxiety about moving to a larger school
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A dominant theme across the responses was concern about transitioning to a larger school environment. Pupils expressed worries about larger class sizes, increased noise and the possibility of feeling overwhelmed or unnoticed. Many stated that they value the calm, predictable and quieter environment of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and fear that these conditions would not exist in a larger setting. This anxiety was particularly strong for pupils who find change difficult or who rely on familiar routines. Several older pupils expressed concern about having to move schools close to the end of primary education, feeling that such a transition would be particularly disruptive and unfair at that stage.

Local Authority Response

The Authority recognises pupils' concerns about moving to a larger school environment, including worries relating to noise, class size, unfamiliar surroundings and feeling overwhelmed. It accepts that smaller school settings can provide a calmer and more predictable environment which some pupils find particularly beneficial. In assessing the proposal, the Authority has considered whether the receiving schools are capable of supporting pupils transitioning from a small school context. It is satisfied that receiving schools have appropriate systems, staffing and pastoral arrangements in place to provide support and reassurance, and that any transition would be carefully planned to ensure pupils are supported both emotionally and educationally.

3.	Importance of small classes and individualised support
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Pupils spoke at length about the benefits of small class sizes and the personalised support they receive at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim. They described how staff understand them as individuals, know how they learn best and adapt teaching accordingly. This theme was especially prominent in responses from pupils with additional learning needs, medical conditions or sensory sensitivities. These pupils expressed concern that a larger school would not be able to provide the same level of individual understanding, support and adjustment that they currently receive. Familiar adults and consistent support were described as essential to their ability to learn and feel confident.

Local Authority Response

The Authority acknowledges the importance pupils place on small class sizes and personalised support, particularly the ability of staff to understand individual learning needs and adapt their

approach accordingly. This is recognised as especially important for pupils with additional learning needs, medical conditions or sensory sensitivities. The Authority confirms that it retains a statutory responsibility to secure appropriate support for all learners and that this responsibility would continue unchanged should the proposal be implemented. Individual support needs would be planned for in advance through transition planning, detailed information sharing and ongoing monitoring to ensure continuity of provision and appropriate reasonable adjustments.

4.	Relationships with Friends and Staff
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The potential loss of relationships with friends and staff emerged as a significant concern. Pupils spoke about the importance of their friendships, including mixed-age friendships that they value and feel would be difficult to replicate elsewhere. Many were worried about being separated from siblings, cousins or close friends. Pupils also expressed strong attachment to teachers and support staff whom they trust and who understand their needs. There was a clear fear that having to rebuild these relationships in a new setting would be emotionally challenging and could affect their confidence and wellbeing.

Local Authority Response

The Authority recognises the significant value pupils place on their relationships with friends and trusted members of staff and understands concerns about losing these relationships. It accepts that friendships, mixed-age relationships and familiarity with adults contribute positively to pupils' wellbeing and confidence. Should the proposal proceed, transition arrangements would seek, where possible, to preserve friendship groups and provide opportunities for pupils to build relationships with new staff gradually. Familiarisation visits, supported meetings and phased transitions would be used to help pupils adjust and develop new relationships in a supportive way.

5.	Feelings of safety and concerns about bullying
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Many pupils stated explicitly that they feel safe at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and that bullying is not an issue within the school. In contrast, a number expressed fear that bullying could occur in a larger school, where staff may not know pupils as well and where relationships might be less personal. These concerns were often linked to pupils' sense of emotional security and their ability to engage

positively with learning. For some pupils, fear of bullying was a central reason for not wanting to move schools.

Local Authority Response

The Authority has noted pupils' clear statements that they feel safe at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and their concerns that bullying could occur in larger schools. It recognises the importance of pupils' perceptions of safety as well as the existence of formal safeguarding arrangements. The Authority is satisfied that receiving schools have strong safeguarding procedures, behaviour policies and anti-bullying systems in place, as reflected in inspection outcomes. Nevertheless, the Authority acknowledges pupils' worries and confirms that safeguarding, pastoral care and wellbeing monitoring would be key priorities throughout any transition process to ensure pupils feel safe and supported.

6.	Welsh language, culture and community identity
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Pupils clearly articulated the importance of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim in supporting the Welsh language and strengthening their sense of cultural identity. Many described pride in being Welsh and in using the Welsh language daily, noting that the school plays a key role in keeping Welsh alive within the community. Pupils from English-speaking homes spoke positively about becoming confident Welsh speakers and developing a strong connection to Welsh culture and history through the school. The school was also seen as central to village life, with pupils expressing concern that closure would weaken community ties and traditions.

Local Authority Response

The Authority acknowledges pupils' strong views regarding the importance of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim in supporting the Welsh language, Welsh culture and the life of the local community. It recognises pupils' pride in using Welsh and the role the school plays in fostering linguistic and cultural identity. The Authority reaffirms its commitment to Welsh-medium education and confirms that pupils would continue to receive Welsh-medium provision that supports linguistic progression, cultural understanding and opportunities to use Welsh confidently, in line with national policy and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The Authority also recognises the wider community role of the school and has considered these factors through the Community and Welsh Language Impact Assessments.

7.	Impact of change, transition and uncertainty
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Uncertainty and the prospect of change were identified as major sources of worry for many pupils. Several described finding change particularly difficult and expressed anxiety about not knowing what would happen next. For some pupils, this uncertainty affected their emotional wellbeing significantly. A number of pupils indicated that they would prefer home education rather than move to another primary school, especially those nearing the end of Year 6. These responses highlight the importance pupils place on stability and predictability in their educational environment.

Local Authority Response

The Authority recognises that uncertainty and change can be particularly challenging for children and that the prospect of moving schools has caused anxiety for some pupils. It accepts that stability and routine are important factors in pupils' emotional wellbeing, especially for those nearing the end of primary education or those who find change difficult. Should the proposal proceed, the Authority would ensure robust, child-centred transition planning, with particular attention given to vulnerable pupils and individual circumstances. Transition support would be phased, flexible and responsive to pupils' needs, with additional support provided where required.

8.	Environmental and travel concerns
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Some pupils raised concerns about the loss of being able to walk to school and the increased reliance on car travel if the school were to close. They linked this to daily routines they value, their independence and wider environmental considerations. For these pupils, longer journeys and changes to travel arrangements were seen as an additional negative consequence of the proposal.

Local Authority Response

The Authority notes pupils' concerns regarding increased travel, the loss of being able to walk to school and the potential environmental impact. It recognises that daily routines and independence are important to pupils and families. Transport arrangements would be managed in accordance with the Council's School Transport Policy, with safety, suitability and reasonableness as core considerations. Environmental factors have been considered as part of the wider assessment, alongside educational sustainability and statutory duties.

9.	Pupils' messages to decision-makers
<p>Pupils were clear and direct in their messages to those making the decision. Many asked that the school not be closed and expressed feelings that their views had not been sought early enough. Pupils encouraged decision-makers to explore alternative ways of addressing challenges, including being creative in finding solutions that allow small schools to remain open. Several pupils asked adults to visit Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim to see how it supports them, describing it as a school with a strong sense of care, inclusion and community.</p>	
<p>Local Authority Response</p> <p>The Authority acknowledges pupils' clear messages asking decision-makers to consider alternative solutions and to recognise the value of their school. It understands pupils' feelings that their voices are important and notes their desire for creativity and flexibility in addressing the challenges faced. While the Authority must make decisions based on a range of statutory, educational and financial considerations, pupil voice has been an important element of the consultation process and has informed the Authority's understanding of how proposals may impact children directly.</p>	

Summary of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim's pupil views

The pupil consultation responses present a powerful and consistent picture of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim as a nurturing, inclusive and emotionally significant environment to which pupils feel deeply connected. While some pupils were able to identify potential benefits of attending a different school, these were overwhelmingly outweighed by concerns relating to wellbeing, relationships, safety, language and identity. From the pupils' perspective, the proposed closure represents not simply a change of school, but a significant emotional and personal loss that they fear could have lasting impacts on their happiness and ability to learn. The Local Authority recognises the strength of these views and the depth of attachment expressed by pupils, and confirms that they have been carefully considered alongside professional advice, statutory assessments and wider evidence. Should the proposal be implemented, the Authority is committed to ensuring that pupils are supported through comprehensive, sensitive and child-centred transition arrangements, with a strong focus on wellbeing, continuity and individual needs.

Ysgol Griffith Jones

Point Number	Point Raised
Pupil Consultation – Ysgol Griffith Jones	
1.	Openness to new pupils and positive attitudes
<p>Pupils at Ysgol Griffith Jones expressed an overall positive and welcoming attitude towards the possibility of pupils from another school joining their school. Several responses highlighted excitement about having more children to play with, make new friends of a similar age, and work collaboratively with. Pupils identified potential benefits in terms of increased social opportunities and a broader peer group, suggesting a generally inclusive and open school culture.</p>	
<p>Local Authority Response</p> <p>The Local Authority welcomes the positive and inclusive attitude expressed by pupils at Ysgol Griffith Jones towards the possibility of pupils from another school joining their school community. The Authority recognises pupils’ openness to welcoming new classmates and values their recognition that increased peer interaction can create opportunities for friendship, collaboration and shared learning. These views demonstrate a strong culture of inclusion and positivity within the school, which is an important foundation for supporting successful transitions should the proposal be implemented.</p>	
2.	Opportunities for learning and facilities
<p>Pupils recognised that welcoming additional pupils could enhance access to facilities and learning experiences. References were made to having different classrooms and shared spaces such as the gym, music room and large hall, as well as increased opportunities for group work and collaboration. These responses indicate that pupils see the school’s physical environment and resources as positives that could support a larger school community.</p>	
<p>Local Authority Response</p> <p>The Authority notes pupils’ views that the school’s facilities, learning spaces and resources could support a larger school community and create additional opportunities for learning and</p>	

collaboration. Pupils' references to shared spaces such as the hall, gym and specialist rooms reflect an understanding of how the physical environment can enhance educational experiences. The Authority is satisfied that Ysgol Griffith Jones has the capacity to make effective use of its facilities to support a broader pupil cohort while maintaining high standards of teaching and learning.

3.	Awareness of emotional needs and kindness
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While pupils were broadly positive, there was also a clear awareness that joining a new school could be challenging for incoming pupils. Pupils expressed hope that everyone would be kind and acknowledged that change can cause sadness or worry. This demonstrates empathy and emotional understanding, with pupils recognising that new arrivals may feel anxious or unsettled.

Local Authority Response

The Authority acknowledges pupils' recognition that joining a new school can be emotionally challenging for incoming pupils and their emphasis on kindness, reassurance and understanding. It welcomes pupils' empathetic awareness that change can cause worry or sadness and considers this an important indicator of emotional maturity and a caring school ethos. These views align closely with the Authority's commitment to pupil wellbeing and to ensuring that any transition arrangements prioritise emotional support and reassurance.

4.	Supporting new pupils to settle in
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Pupils gave thoughtful suggestions about how they could help new pupils feel welcome and supported. These included being friendly, creating friendship groups, helping new pupils get to know the school through tours, offering reassurance if someone feels worried or sad, and helping with schoolwork when needed. Pupils also highlighted the importance of making sure everyone feels safe, showing an understanding of both practical and emotional aspects of settling into a new school environment.

Local Authority Response

The Authority notes with appreciation the practical and thoughtful ways pupils suggested they could support new pupils, including forming friendships, offering help with learning, giving tours of the school and providing reassurance to those who may feel anxious. Pupils' emphasis on safety

and inclusion reflects a strong pastoral culture within the school. The Authority recognises that peer support plays an important role in helping children settle and would seek to build upon this positive approach through structured transition activities and staff guidance should the proposal proceed.

5. Recognition of transition time and adjustment

A clear theme within the responses was the understanding that pupils moving from a smaller school may need time to adjust to a larger setting. Pupils explicitly stated that adults should remember that adjustment does not happen immediately and that time is needed to settle in after moving schools. This reflects maturity and insight into the transition process and aligns with best practice in supporting pupils through change.

Local Authority Response

The Authority particularly notes pupils' understanding that transitioning from a smaller school to a larger setting may take time and that adjustment does not happen immediately. Pupils' messages encouraging adults to allow sufficient time for settling in are fully aligned with best practice in transition planning. Should the proposal be implemented, the Authority confirms that transition arrangements would be phased and flexible, recognising that pupils respond to change at different paces and may require varying levels of support.

6. Messages for decision-makers

Pupils emphasised the importance of adults remembering the impact that change can have on children, particularly the need for time, patience and support. Their responses suggest that pupils value decisions that are made with empathy and an understanding of pupils' lived experiences.

Local Authority Response

The Authority acknowledges pupils' messages to adults making decisions, particularly their emphasis on empathy, patience and awareness of how change affects children. The Authority recognises the value of pupil voice in providing insight into lived experience and confirms that these views have informed its understanding of how best to support pupils through any period of

transition. Pupils' comments underline the importance of decisions being accompanied by strong pastoral planning and clear communication.

Summary of Ysgol Griffith Jones pupil views

Overall, pupils at Ysgol Griffith Jones expressed a positive, welcoming and empathetic response to the possibility of pupils joining their school. They identified social, learning and facility-based benefits and demonstrated a strong awareness of the emotional challenges associated with transition, clearly articulating ways in which they could actively support new pupils through kindness, friendship, safety and reassurance. These responses reflect a school culture that values inclusion, cooperation and wellbeing, alongside an understanding that successful transitions take time and careful support. The Local Authority is encouraged by these views and considers that they provide reassurance that, should the proposal proceed, pupils transferring to Ysgol Griffith Jones would be joining a caring and supportive school community. The Authority will continue to place significant emphasis on promoting inclusive practices and ensuring that transition arrangements are sensitive, well-planned and responsive to pupils' needs.

Ysgol Hafodwenog

Point Number	Point Raised
Pupil Consultation – Ysgol Hafodwenog	
1.	Positive attitudes towards welcoming new pupils
Pupils at Ysgol Hafodwenog expressed positive and enthusiastic feelings about the possibility of pupils from another school joining their school community. The School Council described feelings of excitement and happiness, indicating that the idea of welcoming new pupils is viewed positively. This reflects an open, friendly and inclusive pupil culture in which pupils are receptive to change and new relationships.	

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority welcomes the positive and enthusiastic views expressed by the School Council at Ysgol Hafodwenog regarding the potential for pupils from another school to join their community. The Authority recognises pupils' excitement and happiness at the prospect of welcoming new classmates and values the inclusive and open attitude demonstrated. These views reflect a supportive and welcoming school ethos, which the Authority considers an important foundation for enabling pupils to integrate successfully should the proposal proceed.

2.

Opportunities for extended learning and enrichment

The School Council highlighted a wide range of curricular and extracurricular opportunities available at Ysgol Hafodwenog that they felt would benefit new pupils. These included cultural activities such as the Eisteddfod, sports, music and instrument lessons, Welsh-language activities, swimming and physical education. Pupils also referenced clubs and enrichment provision, noting the value of after-school activities such as Clwb Hwyl, which offers varied experiences including cooking, cycling and creative activities. Pupils recognised these opportunities as positive features of school life that support both learning and enjoyment.

Local Authority Response

The Authority acknowledges pupils' identification of the wide range of curricular and extracurricular opportunities available at Ysgol Hafodwenog, including cultural activities, sports provision, music and instrumental lessons, swimming and physical education. The pupils' reference to enrichment opportunities, including after-school provision such as Clwb Hwyl, highlights the breadth of experiences available to support pupils' learning, wellbeing and enjoyment of school. The Authority recognises the value of such opportunities in supporting holistic development and is satisfied that these can continue to be delivered effectively within the school.

3.

Awareness of the need for time to settle

While pupils were positive, they also demonstrated an understanding that joining a new school can take time. The School Council noted that it may take a while for everyone to get to know each other, recognising that new pupils may need a period of adjustment. This shows empathy and

awareness of the emotional impact of transition on children and highlights pupils' insight into the importance of patience and support.

Local Authority Response

The Authority notes pupils' recognition that it may take time for new pupils to get to know others and feel comfortable in a new school environment. This demonstrates a thoughtful and empathetic understanding of the challenges associated with transition. The Authority agrees that adjustment does not happen immediately and confirms that, should the proposal be implemented, transition arrangements would take account of the need for time, reassurance and gradual settling-in to support pupils' emotional wellbeing.

4. Peer support and inclusive practices

Pupils identified a range of supportive actions they could take to help new pupils feel welcome and included. These included talking with new pupils, playing with them, helping them mix with others and ensuring that no one is left out. The School Council also referred to structured peer-support approaches, such as the use of pupil ambassadors with badges and a buddy system, as well as practical help such as showing new pupils around the school and avoiding overcrowding them. These responses reflect a strong commitment among pupils to kindness, inclusion and shared responsibility for wellbeing.

Local Authority Response

The Authority welcomes the practical and inclusive actions identified by pupils to help new pupils feel welcome and supported. These include talking with new pupils, playing with them, helping them mix with others, operating buddy systems and pupil ambassador roles, and ensuring that no one is left out. The Authority particularly notes pupils' emphasis on avoiding overwhelming new pupils and ensuring they feel safe and included. These peer-led approaches align well with best practice in supporting successful transitions and would be encouraged and supported through structured transition planning and staff oversight.

5. Inclusion of younger children and continuity

Pupils specifically noted the importance of welcoming the Cylch Meithrin, indicating awareness of early years inclusion and continuity within the school community. This reflects an understanding

of the wider school structure and the importance of ensuring that children at different stages feel equally supported and included.

Local Authority Response

The Authority acknowledges pupils' comments regarding the importance of welcoming the Cylch Meithrin and ensuring that younger children are included within the school community. This reflects pupils' awareness of continuity across age phases and the importance of inclusive practices from early years onwards. The Authority recognises the value of strong links between early years provision and the wider school community in supporting smooth transitions and positive early experiences of education.

6. Strong community links and school as a community hub

The School Council placed strong emphasis on the school's role within the local community. Pupils highlighted a range of community-based activities connected to the school, including community lunches, bingo, coffee mornings, litter-picking events, cultural days, Christmas shows and volunteering. Pupils also referenced participation in Welsh cultural and community organisations such as 'Yr Aelwyd', Menter Treftadaeth Cymreig and Diwrnod Shwmae/Sumae. These responses demonstrate pupils' understanding of the school as a focal point for community life and social connection.

Local Authority Response

The Authority notes with appreciation the School Council's emphasis on the strong community links associated with Ysgol Hafodwenog. Pupils' references to community lunches, cultural events, volunteering, litter-picking activities, coffee mornings and wider Welsh cultural initiatives highlight the school's role as a focal point for community engagement. The Authority recognises that such activities contribute positively to pupils' sense of belonging, civic awareness and community identity and has taken these factors into account through the Community Impact Assessment.

7. Messages for decision-makers

In their messages to adults, pupils expressed the view that an increase in pupil numbers could support the continued viability of Ysgol Hafodwenog and expand opportunities for pupils. They described the school as a place for children to be happy and emphasised the value of the school

remaining open. These comments reflect pupils' awareness of sustainability and their desire for decisions that support positive educational and community outcomes.

Local Authority Response

The Authority acknowledges pupils' messages regarding the importance of Ysgol Hafodwengog's sustainability and their view that increased pupil numbers could support additional opportunities for pupils and long-term viability. The Authority notes pupils' emphasis on the school as a happy and supportive place. While decisions must be informed by a range of statutory, educational and financial considerations, the Authority recognises the value of pupil voice in highlighting lived experiences and aspirations, and these views have been considered as part of the wider assessment.

Summary of Ysgol Hafodwenog Pupil Views

Overall, the Ysgol Hafodwenog School Council responses present a strongly positive, inclusive and community-focused perspective. Pupils demonstrated enthusiasm for welcoming new pupils, empathy for those experiencing change, and a clear willingness to play an active role in supporting others through peer support and inclusive practices. Their views highlight the school's strengths in enrichment activities, Welsh culture, community engagement and shared responsibility, reflecting a pupil culture that values kindness, belonging and wellbeing. The Local Authority is encouraged by these views and considers that these strengths would play an important role in supporting pupils joining the school and underpinning effective transition arrangements should the proposal proceed.

Overall Summary of Pupil Consultation Feedback (All Three Schools)

The pupil consultation process has provided a comprehensive and valuable insight into pupils lived experiences, priorities and concerns across the three schools involved. Taken together, the responses present a balanced and emotionally informed picture, reflecting both the significant impact of the proposal on pupils at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and the inclusive, empathetic and welcoming attitudes expressed by pupils at Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog.

Emotional Wellbeing, Attachment and Sense of Belonging

Pupils at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim expressed a deep emotional attachment to their school, consistently describing it as a safe, nurturing and family-like environment where they feel secure, known and valued. For these pupils, the school plays a central role in supporting their emotional wellbeing, confidence and sense of identity. The proposed closure was widely perceived as a significant personal loss rather than simply a change of school, eliciting feelings of sadness, anxiety, fear and uncertainty. Concerns were particularly strong among pupils who find change difficult and those approaching the end of primary education, for whom stability was described as especially important.

Pupils at the proposed receiving schools consistently demonstrated strong emotional awareness and empathy. While expressing positivity about welcoming new pupils, they also acknowledged that transition can be challenging and may generate worry or sadness. Across both Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog, pupils showed insight into the emotional impact of change and emphasised kindness, patience and reassurance as central to helping others settle successfully.

Transition, Change and Adjustment

Transition emerged as a key theme across all consultations. Meidrim pupils expressed significant anxiety about moving to a larger school environment, citing concerns about increased noise, unfamiliar routines, larger class sizes and the fear of feeling unnoticed. These worries were closely linked to pupils' reliance on familiarity, predictability and consistent adult support.

In contrast, pupils at Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog demonstrated a strong understanding that adjustment takes time. They clearly articulated that new pupils should not be expected to feel settled immediately and that adults should allow flexibility and patience. Their responses reflected maturity and awareness, aligning closely with best practice in supporting pupils through change.

Relationships, Peer Support and Safety

Strong relationships were consistently identified as central to pupils' school experience. Meidrim pupils placed high value on their friendships, including mixed-age relationships, and on trusted relationships with staff who understand their individual needs. Many expressed concerns about losing these relationships and the emotional

challenge of rebuilding trust and confidence in a new setting. Feelings of safety were closely linked to familiarity, with pupils commonly stating that they feel safe at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and expressing anxiety that bullying might occur in a larger, less personal environment.

Conversely, pupils at the receiving schools demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusion and peer support. They suggested practical ways to support new pupils, including buddy systems, pupil ambassadors, friendship groups, school tours and shared play opportunities. Pupils emphasised the importance of ensuring that no one feels isolated and that safe, welcoming environments are actively created.

Learning Opportunities, Enrichment and Environment

Pupils at Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog highlighted the benefits of their learning environments, including access to shared facilities, specialist spaces and a wide range of curricular and extracurricular opportunities. Pupils at Ysgol Hafodwenog, in particular, described rich experiences linked to Welsh culture, music, sport, outdoor learning and after-school provision, recognising these as positive features that support enjoyment, confidence and wellbeing.

Environmental and travel concerns were primarily raised by Meidrim pupils, who highlighted the value of walking to school, independence and environmental sustainability. Longer journeys and changes to daily routines were viewed as additional challenges associated with the proposal.

Welsh Language, Culture and Community

Welsh language and cultural identity featured strongly across all three consultations. Meidrim pupils expressed pride in using Welsh daily and concern that closure could weaken language use and community cohesion. Pupils at Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog also demonstrated strong engagement with Welsh language, culture and community life through participation in cultural events, enrichment activities and community initiatives.

Transition Planning and Support

Across all three consultations, pupils' responses strongly emphasised the importance of sensitive, well-planned and child-centred transition arrangements. Pupils at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim highlighted the need for reassurance, stability and continuity, while

pupils at the receiving schools emphasised the importance of kindness, patience and allowing time to settle. This feedback reinforces the need for transition planning that is phased, flexible and responsive to individual needs.

Should the proposal proceed, the Local Authority is committed to implementing robust transition arrangements that place pupils' wellbeing at the centre. This would include early engagement with pupils and families, opportunities for familiarisation visits, preservation of friendship groups where possible, structured peer-support approaches, detailed information sharing between schools, and enhanced pastoral support during and after transition. Particular attention would be given to vulnerable pupils, those with additional learning needs, and pupils approaching the end of primary education, ensuring that support is tailored, proportionate and ongoing.

Overall Conclusions

Across all consultations, pupils demonstrated thoughtful engagement, emotional maturity and a clear understanding of how change affects children. Wellbeing, relationships, safety, stability and kindness emerged as consistent priorities. While pupils at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim focused on what they value and fear losing, pupils at Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog focused on how they could help ensure others feel welcome, supported and included.

Overall, the pupil consultation responses highlight both the emotional significance of the proposal for affected pupils and the strengths of the receiving schools in promoting inclusion, empathy and pastoral support. The Local Authority recognises the importance of pupil voice and confirms that these views have been carefully considered alongside statutory assessments and professional advice. Should the proposal proceed, the feedback strongly reinforces the need for a careful, compassionate and child-centred approach to transition, ensuring that all pupils are supported to feel safe, valued and able to thrive in their new school environments.

9. ESTYN RESPONSE

Estyn considers that this proposal is “likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area”. The key themes of Estyn’s response are summarised in the table below. The full response from Estyn is included in Appendix A.

Point Number	Point Raised
Estyn Comments	
1.	Overall educational viability and standards
<p>Estyn’s overarching judgement is that the proposal to discontinue Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim is likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area. This conclusion reflects a system-wide perspective rather than a judgement on the day-to-day effectiveness of the school alone. While Estyn acknowledges that Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim has identifiable strengths, it considers that the structural challenges facing the school limit its capacity to sustain improvement over time. Although the consultation document records that the school has been removed from special measures, Estyn notes that there is limited detail on progress against individual inspection recommendations. Taken together, this leads Estyn to conclude that the proposed reorganisation does not pose a risk to overall educational standards and may offer greater long-term stability for learners.</p>	
<p>Local Authority Response</p> <p>The Local Authority welcomes Estyn’s conclusion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain educational standards across the area. The Authority recognises the strengths identified at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and acknowledges the efforts made by staff and the wider school community, particularly following the school’s removal from special measures. However, the Authority agrees with Estyn’s assessment that the structural challenges associated with low pupil numbers, leadership capacity and sustainability limit the school’s ability to secure and maintain long-term improvement. In bringing forward this proposal, the Authority has sought to ensure that learners are able to access a stable, sustainable educational environment with the capacity to deliver consistent standards over time. The Authority is confident that the proposed reorganisation</p>	

provides a sound basis for maintaining standards and supporting learners' ongoing educational progress while addressing the longer-term risks highlighted by Estyn.

2.	Low pupil numbers and long-term sustainability
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A consistent theme in Estyn's response is the impact of pupil numbers on sustainability. Estyn recognises that numbers have remained broadly consistent in recent years, but highlights that they remain significantly below the school's capacity, resulting in a very high proportion of surplus places. This is seen as a persistent structural issue rather than a short-term fluctuation. Estyn accepts that small rural schools can be effective, but indicates that the combination of low enrolment, limited staffing flexibility and financial pressure increases the risk that effectiveness cannot be sustained. This analysis supports the consultation document's position that retaining the status quo is unlikely to resolve the underlying challenges to viability in the longer term.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority notes Estyn's clear recognition that low pupil numbers at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim represent a persistent structural challenge rather than a temporary fluctuation. While acknowledging that small rural schools can and do provide positive educational experiences, the Authority agrees that the combination of sustained low enrolment, limited staffing flexibility and associated financial pressures creates increasing risks to long-term sustainability. The Authority therefore considers that maintaining the status quo would be unlikely to resolve these underlying issues or provide a sustainable basis for future provision. In bringing forward this proposal, the Authority seeks to address these challenges proactively by securing more resilient educational arrangements that are capable of supporting consistent provision and long-term viability for learners.

3.	Financial pressures and efficient use of resources
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Estyn identifies ongoing financial pressure as a significant factor underpinning the proposal. The response highlights the persistent deficit position at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and the comparatively high per-pupil cost relative to the county average. Estyn accepts that financial considerations form a major part of the rationale for closure, but views this as a legitimate concern in the context of public accountability and the efficient use of resources. At the same time, Estyn

raises a note of caution regarding financial sustainability at Ysgol Hafodwenog, pointing out that projected improvements depend on pupil transfer levels and that contingency arrangements are not fully articulated. Overall, Estyn considers the proposal to be a credible means of addressing surplus places and improving value for money, provided financial risks at receiving schools are actively managed.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority acknowledges Estyn’s view that financial pressures are a significant and relevant factor within the proposal. The Authority recognises that ongoing budget deficits and above-average per-pupil costs at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim are closely linked to sustained low pupil numbers and high levels of surplus places. In the context of wider responsibilities to ensure the effective and equitable use of public resources, the Authority considers it necessary to address these inefficiencies. While recognising that financial considerations are not the sole driver for change, the Authority agrees with Estyn that the proposal offers a feasible means of improving long-term financial sustainability, subject to ongoing monitoring and careful management of the receiving schools’ financial positions.

4.

Quality of learning experiences and curriculum provision

Estyn accepts the consultation’s argument that learners may benefit from improved learning opportunities at the alternative schools. The response emphasises that access to better facilities, a broader curriculum offer and a wider peer group could enhance pupils’ educational and social experiences. Estyn views these anticipated benefits as reasonable rather than speculative, noting that larger or more stable school settings are typically better placed to support collaboration, curriculum coherence and enrichment activities. This assessment aligns with the consultation document’s emphasis on Curriculum for Wales delivery and the advantages of learning within a broader educational community.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority notes Estyn’s acceptance that the proposal has the potential to provide educational benefits for learners through access to improved facilities and a broader range of learning experiences. The Authority considers that increased opportunities for social interaction, collaboration and engagement with a wider peer group are important factors in supporting pupils’

educational and personal development. In line with the consultation document, the Authority believes that the proposed receiving schools are better placed to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, aligned with the Curriculum for Wales, and to offer enhanced enrichment opportunities. These factors are considered to strengthen the overall educational experience available to pupils in the longer term.

5.	Leadership capacity and stability
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Leadership sustainability is identified by Estyn as a key consideration. The absence of a permanent headteacher at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, combined with significant teaching commitments, is seen as limiting the school’s capacity for strategic leadership, self-evaluation and long-term improvement. In contrast, the receiving schools are described as having more secure leadership arrangements, which Estyn considers a strength in terms of educational resilience. However, Estyn also notes that future permanent leadership arrangements at Ysgol Hafodwenog are not fully detailed, indicating some residual uncertainty. Overall, Estyn views leadership stability as a strong justification for the proposal, while signalling the need for clarity in implementation.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority recognises Estyn’s comments regarding the importance of leadership stability in sustaining school improvement. While acknowledging the efforts of staff at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, the Authority accepts that the absence of a permanent headteacher places additional pressure on leadership capacity and limits the school’s ability to plan strategically for the future. In contrast, the receiving schools currently benefit from more secure leadership arrangements, which the Authority considers essential for maintaining standards, supporting staff and driving improvement. Leadership sustainability has therefore been a key consideration in the development of the proposal, with the aim of securing more resilient leadership structures for pupils going forward.

6.	Mixed-age classes and teaching complexity
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Estyn adopts a balanced position on mixed-age teaching. It explicitly acknowledges that mixed-age classes can be effective and cites Ysgol Hafodwenog as an example of this in

practice. However, Estyn also indicates that delivering the full breadth of the curriculum through mixed-age classes becomes increasingly complex in very small schools with limited staffing capacity. This supports the consultation document's analysis that curriculum planning and progression are particularly challenging at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim. Estyn's response therefore does not criticise mixed-age teaching in principle but emphasises that scale and staffing flexibility are critical to its success.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority notes Estyn's balanced assessment of mixed-age teaching, recognising that such arrangements can be effective when sufficient staffing capacity and flexibility are available. However, the Authority agrees that delivering the full breadth of the curriculum becomes increasingly challenging in very small schools where classes span wide age ranges and staffing resources are limited. These challenges place additional demands on planning, assessment and progression. The Authority therefore considers that the current scale of provision at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim restricts the school's capacity to sustain effective curriculum delivery over time, reinforcing the case for reviewing existing arrangements.

7.

Buildings, suitability and learning environment

The suitability of the school buildings is treated by Estyn as a relevant educational factor. The response highlights the difference between the Grade C suitability rating of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and the Grade B ratings of the receiving schools. Estyn accepts that the physical environment can influence curriculum delivery, school organisation and learner experience, and therefore regards building suitability as a legitimate part of the overall educational case. This reinforces the consultation document's argument that accommodation constraints place additional pressure on teaching and learning at the existing school.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority acknowledges Estyn's view that the suitability of school buildings is a relevant factor in supporting effective teaching and learning. The Authority notes the difference in suitability ratings between Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and the proposed receiving schools and accepts that accommodation constraints can limit organisational flexibility and curriculum delivery. While recognising that building condition alone does not determine educational quality,

the Authority considers that improved accommodation offers greater potential to support modern teaching approaches, learner wellbeing and the effective implementation of the Curriculum for Wales. This has therefore formed part of the wider consideration of the educational benefits associated with the proposal.

8.	Community impact and rural considerations
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Estyn clearly acknowledges that closure is likely to have a negative impact on the local community, particularly given the school’s role as a venue for community organisations and activities. The loss of the building as a community hub is described as a significant challenge. However, Estyn also notes that the consultation document identifies mitigating factors, including the availability of an alternative community hall. Importantly, Estyn confirms that the additional procedural requirements for rural schools have been appropriately addressed. While community impact is recognised as real and meaningful, Estyn does not regard it as sufficient to outweigh the educational and sustainability considerations outlined elsewhere in the proposal.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority acknowledges Estyn’s recognition that the proposed closure of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim is likely to have a negative impact on the local community, particularly in light of the school’s role as a community hub. The Authority recognises the importance of this role within rural communities and has carefully considered the implications as part of the consultation process. While alternative community facilities are available within the locality, the Authority accepts that any loss of access to the school building presents challenges. These impacts have been weighed alongside educational sustainability considerations, and the Authority is satisfied that the additional requirements relating to rural schools have been appropriately addressed.

9.	Learner wellbeing, transition and travel
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Estyn considers that learner wellbeing and accessibility have been given appropriate consideration. The response notes that projected journey times to alternative schools fall within statutory limits and that transport arrangements align with the local authority’s policies. Estyn places particular emphasis on the importance of well-planned transitions, clear communication with families and targeted support for vulnerable learners, including those with additional learning

needs. While disruption is acknowledged as an inherent risk of reorganisation, Estyn is satisfied that the measures described in the consultation document are capable of mitigating potential adverse effects on pupils.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority notes Estyn’s view that learner wellbeing, accessibility and travel arrangements have been given appropriate consideration within the proposal. The Authority recognises that school reorganisation can be a period of uncertainty for pupils and families and is therefore committed to ensuring that transition arrangements are carefully planned and supported. The Authority is satisfied that projected travel times remain within statutory limits and that transport will be provided in line with the Council’s policy where pupils are eligible. Particular attention will be given to supporting vulnerable learners and those with additional learning needs to ensure continuity of care and support throughout the transition process.

10.

Balanced evaluation and risk awareness

Finally, Estyn’s tone throughout the response reflects a balanced and evaluative approach rather than unqualified endorsement. The strengths of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, particularly its caring ethos and community role, are recognised alongside the educational benefits of the proposal. At the same time, Estyn identifies risks and uncertainties, including leadership continuity and financial sustainability at receiving schools. This demonstrates that Estyn’s support for the proposal is conditional and evidence-based, with an expectation that identified risks will be addressed through careful planning and implementation.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority welcomes Estyn’s balanced and evidence-based evaluation of the proposal. The Authority recognises Estyn’s acknowledgment of the strengths of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, including its caring ethos and importance to the local community, alongside the challenges relating to sustainability, leadership and financial viability. In developing the proposal, the Authority has sought to weigh both benefits and risks carefully and to compare the implications of maintaining the status quo with those associated with change. The Authority is confident that, with appropriate planning and ongoing monitoring, the proposal offers a sustainable way forward that supports learners’ educational needs while addressing the longer-term challenges identified.

Summary

In summary, Estyn's response provides a measured and evidence-based assessment of the proposal to discontinue Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim. While recognising the school's strengths, including its caring ethos and role within the community, Estyn concludes that the proposal is likely to at least maintain educational standards across the area. Estyn highlights persistent challenges relating to low pupil numbers, leadership capacity, financial sustainability and surplus places, and concurs that maintaining the status quo is unlikely to address these issues in the longer term. At the same time, Estyn acknowledges that the proposed receiving schools offer potential educational benefits through greater stability, improved facilities and broader learning opportunities. Although noting areas of risk, particularly in relation to sustainability and transition, Estyn's overall view supports the Local Authority's assessment that the proposal offers a viable and sustainable way forward, subject to careful implementation and ongoing monitoring.

10. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The following table notes the alternative options received for consideration during the consultation period and the Local Authority's analysis of response to those alternative options. These options are in addition to the 4 options already considered within the consultation document, of which the Local Authority deems its analysis still valid.

Option 5 – Create a Community Hub	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Builds on strong local attachment to Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim as a focal point for village life.	No statutory requirement or guaranteed funding for the Local Authority to establish or sustain a community hub.
Potential to provide space for community activities, meetings, Welsh-language use and intergenerational engagement.	Relies on uncertain sources of capital funding. Ongoing revenue costs (utilities, maintenance, insurance, staffing and safeguarding compliance) likely to exceed income generated.

Could retain a visible community presence within the village if statutory education provision ceases.	Limited population base within the village may restrict usage and long-term viability.
Aligns with non-statutory Welsh Government guidance encouraging community use of school buildings.	Requires additional governance, management capacity and accountability arrangements.
	School building may require capital investment to meet accessibility, health and safety or community-use requirements.
	Would require the Council to enter into an unconventional license arrangement where they would not have exclusive possession of the premises to deliver education.
Opportunities	Threats
Potential partnership working with community groups, voluntary organisations or other agencies.	Financial unsustainability once short-term funding or grants end.
Possible use for Welsh-language activities, wellbeing initiatives, childcare or adult learning.	Risk of under-utilisation, resulting in ongoing costs without sufficient community benefit.
Opportunity to explore community asset transfer options, subject to feasibility and local capacity.	Diverts limited Council resources away from statutory education provision during a period of significant financial pressure.

Access to time-limited external grant funding for specific projects or activities.	Limited community capacity to manage, govern or fund the asset independently.
	Loss of potential capital receipt from disposal of the site, reducing funds available for wide educational priorities.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

The proposed option is assessed as having a neutral to indirect impact on the overall quality and standards of education. While it may offer short-term reassurance to some stakeholders, it does not introduce any clear mechanisms that would directly enhance educational standards or improve long-term outcomes for learners.

In particular, the option does not address the underlying challenges currently affecting educational sustainability. These include low and declining pupil numbers, limited leadership capacity, constraints on curriculum breadth, and the difficulties associated with sustaining high-quality provision within very small settings. Without resolving these structural issues, there remains a risk that standards could become increasingly difficult to maintain over time.

Furthermore, this option does not remove or reduce the need for wider reorganisation of education provision across the system. The Authority has a responsibility to secure consistent educational standards for all learners, which requires addressing surplus capacity, ensuring resilient leadership structures and supporting sustainable curriculum delivery. As such, while this option may provide a temporary alternative, it does not negate the need for strategic reorganisation to ensure long-term consistency, quality and resilience across the education system.

Likely impact on the community

The option under consideration has the potential to deliver some short-term positive impacts for the local community, particularly through the continued

availability of a familiar and accessible local meeting place. Retaining the site for community activity could support social interaction, provide space for local groups and events, and help maintain a sense of continuity and local identity in the immediate term. For some residents, this may offer reassurance and preserve opportunities for informal community engagement.

However, the long-term benefits of this option are uncertain. The viability of a community-based facility would be heavily dependent on sustainable funding, effective governance arrangements and ongoing levels of community participation. In the absence of statutory funding or a clear, long-term operational model, there is a significant risk that the facility would struggle to meet ongoing running costs, including maintenance, utilities, insurance and compliance requirements. These uncertainties limit the extent to which long-term positive community outcomes can be assured.

There is also a risk that, should sustainable funding or management arrangements fail to materialise or be maintained over time, the facility could face future closure. This would result in renewed disruption for the community and could lead to further uncertainty regarding the future use of the site. As such, while this option may offer short-term community benefits, it carries inherent long-term risks that could ultimately undermine its ability to provide a stable and lasting contribution to community wellbeing.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

This option is expected to have a limited impact on pupil travel arrangements, as it does not constitute an education solution or involve changes to the organisation of statutory school provision. As such, it does not address or alter the transport arrangements already required to ensure pupils access education elsewhere, nor does it remove the need for wider consideration of home-to-school transport as part of any education reorganisation.

From a community perspective, retaining a local facility for non-educational use may provide some benefit to community users by reducing the need to travel to alternative venues for meetings or activities. For those able to access the site locally, this could support convenience and accessibility in the short term.

However, when considered at a wider level, the overall transport implications of this option are minimal. The option does not materially reduce pupil travel demand or associated transport costs, nor does it contribute to addressing broader system-wide transport considerations linked to sustainable education provision. As a result, its impact on travel arrangements is limited and largely indirect.

Reason for discounting / preferring this option

- Does not address the core educational issues of low pupil numbers, surplus capacity, leadership sustainability and long-term viability.
- High ongoing financial risk with no statutory funding support.
- Reliant on uncertain external funding, community capacity and long-term demand.
- Retaining the building for community use prevents disposal and release of capital that could support wider educational needs.

On this basis, while the option has been carefully considered, it has been discounted as it does not provide a sustainable or appropriate solution to the identified educational and financial challenges and would not meet the Local Authority’s statutory duty to plan a viable education system.

Option 6 – Create a wellbeing focussed school	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Aligns with the principles of the Curriculum for Wales, which places wellbeing at the heart of learning and development.	Wellbeing is already a statutory requirement for all schools, meaning this option does not represent a distinct or additional model of provision.
Builds on existing strengths associated with small school environments, including strong relationship and personalised support.	Does not address the underlying challenges of low pupil numbers, surplus capacity or long-term financial viability.

Could create a clear wellbeing ethos, potentially benefiting pupils' emotional health, confidence and engagement.	Limited staffing capacity in a very small school restricts the ability to sustain specialist wellbeing provision without additional funding.
May be particularly supportive for vulnerable learners or those requiring enhanced pastoral provision.	Risks narrowing focus, potentially impacting curriculum breadth and opportunities for wider peer interaction.
	Requires ongoing investment in training, staffing and support services without a guaranteed funding stream.
Opportunities	Threats
Opportunity to strengthen partnerships with health, wellbeing or third-sector organisations where capacity exists.	Financial unsustainability if specialist wellbeing staffing or services cannot be maintained long term.
Potential to pilot innovative wellbeing-led approaches that could inform wider practice across the Authority.	Risk that educational outcomes may be perceived as secondary if wellbeing focus is not balanced with strong curriculum delivery.
May increase parental confidence for some families seeking a nurturing, small-scale environment.	Vulnerability to staffing absence or turnover, given small staff teams and reliance on key individuals.
Could complement broader Authority wellbeing strategies if delivered alongside sustainable education provision.	Does not mitigate the Authority's wider system-wide pressures relating to surplus places and budget deficits.

	Potential inequity if similar wellbeing-focused provision cannot be replicated across the school network.
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Likely impact on quality and standards in education

The proposed option is assessed as having a limited or largely neutral impact on the overall quality and standards of education. While a strong focus on wellbeing can positively support engagement, emotional security and readiness to learn, this option does not introduce structural changes that would, in themselves, lead to sustained improvements in educational standards.

Although wellbeing is widely recognised as a key enabler of learning, this approach does not address the wider challenges that influence long-term educational quality. It does not resolve issues relating to curriculum breadth, leadership capacity, staffing resilience or succession planning, all of which are critical factors in maintaining consistent standards over time. Without addressing these underlying elements, there remains a risk that educational provision would continue to face constraints that limit its ability to meet future demands.

Furthermore, high-quality wellbeing provision is already a core expectation of all schools under the Curriculum for Wales and can be delivered effectively within existing and receiving school settings. These schools are able to provide nurturing environments, strong pastoral support and consistent wellbeing practice alongside sustainable leadership structures and curriculum delivery. As such, the retention of a very small school solely on the basis of a wellbeing-focused model is not necessary to secure positive wellbeing outcomes for learners and does not represent a proportionate or sustainable approach to maintaining educational quality in the long term.

Likely impact on the community

This option may offer a degree of short-term reassurance to some families and community members who value a nurturing, wellbeing-centred approach to education. The emphasis on pastoral care and strong relationships may be welcomed locally and could help maintain confidence during a period of

uncertainty, particularly for families with younger children or those who place high importance on emotional support within school settings.

However, the longer-term impact on the community is uncertain. The wellbeing-focused model does not address the wider demographic and financial pressures facing the education system, including low pupil numbers, surplus capacity and ongoing budgetary constraints. As these underlying challenges remain unresolved, the sustainability of this option cannot be assured, limiting its capacity to provide lasting stability or certainty for the community.

There is also a risk of future disruption if the provision becomes unviable over time. Should staffing, financial or leadership pressures increase, further intervention or reorganisation may be required, leading to additional change and uncertainty for families and the wider community. As such, while this option may provide short-term reassurance, it carries longer-term risks that could ultimately result in renewed disruption rather than sustained community benefit.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

This option is likely to have minimal immediate impact on travel arrangements if provision were to remain on the existing site. In the short term, maintaining activity at the current location could avoid changes to established travel patterns for families and may offer reassurance by limiting disruption during the initial period of implementation.

However, the longer-term implications for travel are less certain. As this model does not secure long-term sustainability or address underlying demographic and financial pressures, there is a risk that the provision could become unviable over time. Should this occur, further reorganisation would be required, potentially resulting in additional disruption for families, including changes to travel arrangements and increased journey times.

As such, while the option may temporarily limit the need for changes to travel, it does not remove the risk of future disruption. The Authority must therefore consider whether deferring changes to travel arrangements through an unsustainable model represents a proportionate or effective approach when planning for long-term stability and certainty for pupils and families.

Reason for discounting / preferring this option

- Wellbeing-focused practice is already embedded within statutory expectations for all schools and does not require a distinct school model.
- Does not address the core challenges of low pupil numbers, surplus capacity, leadership sustainability and financial viability.
- Creates additional risk by relying on enhanced provision that cannot be guaranteed long term.
- Does not align with the Authority's responsibility to plan sustainable, resilient education provision at a system-wide level.

On this basis, while the Authority recognises the importance of wellbeing and the positive intent of this option, it has been discounted as it does not provide a sustainable or effective solution to the identified educational and financial challenges.

Option 7 – Create an Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Hub

Strengths	Weaknesses
Aligns with duties under the ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and supports inclusive mainstream education.	Requires significant initial capital investment to adapt or develop specialist ALN accommodation.
Enables early intervention and preventative support, reducing escalation to specialist or out-of-county placements.	Ongoing revenue funding would be needed to recruit and retain suitable qualified bilingual ALN staff.
Supports the Local Authority's inclusion strategy by co-locating specialist ALN provision in a mainstream school.	Success depends on effective multi-agency partnership working, which may take time to establish.

<p>Supports the school's wider vision as a community hub integrating education, wellbeing and family support.</p>	<p>Scale of provision would be limited, making it unsuitable for pupils with highly complex or medical needs.</p>
<p>Strengthens Welsh-medium education and support the objectives of 'Cymraeg 2050'.</p>	<p>Transitional arrangements would be required to establish referral pathways, governance and operational clarity.</p>
	<p>The Authority already has sufficient specialist ALN provision and there are no plans to develop additional capacity.</p>
	<p>The addition of such provision would have little overall impact on pupil numbers as ALN classes are normally small.</p>
	<p>There will be a growing need to increase ALNCo allocation time and to consider the recruitment of additional assistant staff to ensure pupils receive support that aligns effectively with their identified needs.</p> <p>This expansion will have implications for funding, workforce planning and ongoing professional learning, including the need to allocate resources for staffing costs, targeted training, and sustained capacity-building to maintain high-quality provision.</p>

Opportunities	Threats
Provides the opportunity to re-engage pupils currently electively home education due to unmet additional learning needs.	Closure of the school would permanently remove the opportunity to develop this rural ALN provision.
Creates an additional base for workforce development, training and collaboration with further and higher education partners.	Capital and revenue funding availability may be constrained or subject to competing strategic priorities.
Aligns with the preventative focus of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.	Challenges in recruiting and retaining bilingual specialist staff in a rural location.
	Risk that centralised ALN planning reduces flexibility or limits support for locally delivered hub models.
.	Changes in national or local policy priorities could affect long-term viability.
<p>Likely impact on quality and standards in education</p> <p>The development of an ALN hub at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim has the potential to positively influence the quality and standards of education for learners with additional learning needs by enabling earlier identification and more targeted, preventative support within a Welsh-medium mainstream context. The school demonstrates a caring and inclusive ethos, with appropriate arrangements currently in place to support pupils with a range of learning, emotional, health and social needs. Engagement with external agencies and the use of inclusive practices, such as developing signing skills across the school, provide a sound foundation for supporting pupils' wellbeing and participation.</p>	

However, current provision is described as appropriate rather than highly specialised. While staff effectively support pupils with identified needs, the existing skillset, capacity and level of specialist expertise would require significant development to deliver a fully integrated ALN hub model. The transition from a mainstream primary setting with suitable support arrangements to a centre of specialised provision would necessitate enhanced professional knowledge, greater depth of intervention strategies, and increased experience in delivering bespoke, intensive ALN programmes.

Without substantial investment in workforce development, including specialist training, ongoing professional learning and increased ALNCo leadership capacity, there is a risk that the quality and consistency of provision may not meet the more complex and diverse needs associated with a hub model. Additionally, the requirement to recruit and retain suitably qualified bilingual ALN practitioners presents a further challenge, particularly in a rural context.

If these workforce and capacity challenges were successfully addressed, the model could support improved learner outcomes through strengthened inclusion, improved attendance, reduced anxiety and greater continuity of learning within the local community. However, at present, the gap between existing provision and the level of specialist expertise required introduces a degree of risk to the sustained delivery of high-quality ALN provision and, consequently, to the consistency of educational standards over time.

Likely impact on the community

Establishing an ALN hub at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim would have a positive and sustaining impact on the local community by reinforcing the school's role as a central and trusted community asset. Local access to specialist support would reduce pressure on families, improve engagement with education, and strengthen collaboration between education, health and community services. Supporting vulnerable learners locally helps maintain rural population stability, encourages young families to remain in the area, and strengthens daily use of the Welsh language. The proposal aligns with the school's vision as a community hub and supports the wider wellbeing, resilience and cohesion of the community.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

Dependent on where pupils live, there would be travel implications.

Reason for discounting / preferring this option

- Requires significant capital investment and ongoing revenue funding at a time of financial constraint.
- Long-term sustainability depends on the ability to recruit and retain suitably qualified, bilingual ALN staff in a rural setting.
- Scale of provision would be limited, restricting the number of learners who could benefit and potentially reducing overall cost-effectiveness.
- Successful delivery relies on sustained multi-agency collaboration, which may be difficult to secure and maintain.
- Strategic focus on consolidating provision within larger settings may limit alignment with wider service planning.
- Risk associated with funding certainty and long-term viability may outweigh the potential educational and community benefits.
- There is insufficient demand for additional provision.

On this basis, while the Authority recognises the potential educational, wellbeing and community benefits associated with the development of an ALN hub at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, this option has been discounted as it does not provide a sufficiently sustainable or proportionate response to the identified educational, organisation and financial challenges. The scale of provision, funding requirements and reliance on long-term staffing and partnership arrangements present risks to long-term viability and cost-effectiveness when considered alongside wider strategic priorities and financial constraints.

Option 8 – Federation with another rural school	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Provides an opportunity to retain Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim as an open school while sharing leadership and management capacity.	Federation does not in itself address low pupil numbers or long-term demographic challenges.
Enables cost efficiencies through shared headship, governance, policies and back-office functions.	Financial savings are limited and may not be sufficient to address the school's ongoing budget pressures.
Maintains local access to Welsh-medium education within the community.	Benefits are dependent on the capacity, location and willingness of a suitable partner school.
Can provide professional support and increased resilience for staff through collaboration and shared expertise.	Risk of leadership dilution, with reduced on-site presence of senior leadership at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim.
May slow decline in pupil numbers by improving leadership stability and school confidence.	Operational complexity increases, particularly where schools differ in size, context or priorities.
Aligns with the School Organisation Code as a recognised alternative to closure.	Does not fundamentally change the education offer or address ALN-related pressures.
Opportunities	Threats
Potential to create a stronger joint leadership model across rural schools.	Limited availability of a geographically appropriate and sustainable federation partner.

Opportunity for joint curriculum planning, moderation and staff development.	Risk that federation only delays rather than prevents future consideration of closure.
Could provide short to medium-term stability while longer-term strategic solutions are explored.	Parental and community concerns about loss of school identity or gradual erosion of provision.
Enables collaborative working without immediate large-scale capital investment.	Differences in school performance or Estyn judgments could create imbalance or reputational risk.
May support smoother transition arrangements and shared pupil experiences.	Ongoing financial pressures may persist despite shared leadership arrangements.
	Potential withdrawal of a partner school if benefits are not realised.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

Federation with another rural school is likely to have a moderately positive impact on quality and standards in the short term, primarily through strengthened leadership capacity and increased opportunities for professional collaboration. A shared headship and governing body could support greater consistency in school improvement processes, curriculum planning, assessment and self-evaluation. Staff may benefit from access to a wider professional network, enabling the sharing of effective practice, joint moderation and enhanced professional learning opportunities, which could, in turn, contribute to incremental improvements in teaching quality.

However, the extent of this impact would be highly dependent on the strength, capacity and compatibility of the partner school. Federation does not, in itself, address the fundamental challenges associated with low pupil numbers, mixed-age teaching complexities or the sustainability of provision in a small school context. As a result, any improvements in standards may be limited and difficult to

sustain over time without a corresponding increase in pupil numbers or broader structural change.

There is also a risk that reduced on-site leadership presence could affect the immediacy and effectiveness of day-to-day monitoring, pastoral oversight and responsiveness to individual pupil needs. While strategic leadership may be strengthened, operational leadership at a local level could weaken if not carefully managed. Furthermore, as federation does not significantly alter the core educational offer, it is unlikely to address specific pressures such as the growing complexity of additional learning needs within the school.

Overall, while federation may provide short-term stability and modest improvements in professional practice, it is unlikely to deliver significant or sustained gains in educational standards unless accompanied by wider changes that address the school's underlying demographic, financial and curriculum-related challenges.

Likely impact on the community

Federation would allow Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim to remain open, which would be welcomed by the local community in the short term. Maintaining a local school continues to support community cohesion, Welsh-medium language use and local identity. However, concerns may arise around perceived loss of autonomy or influence, particularly if leadership and decision-making are shared across sites. If federation is seen as a temporary measure rather than a long-term solution, community confidence and engagement may be affected.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

Federation would have minimal immediate impact on pupil travel arrangements, as learners would continue to attend Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim. However, increased staff travel between federated sites may be required, particularly for senior leadership and specialist staff. There may also be occasional requirements for pupils to attend joint activities or events at partner schools, though these are likely to be limited. Overall, federation avoids the significant transport implications associated with closure.

Reason for discounting / preferring this option

- Does not provide a long-term solution to declining pupil numbers or financial sustainability.
- Financial savings are limited and may not offset ongoing budget deficits.
- Success depends heavily on securing a suitable federation partner, which may not be feasible.
- Does not significantly enhance the educational offer or address specialist needs.
- Risk that federation only postpones difficult decisions rather than resolving underlying challenges.

On this basis, while the Authority recognises that federation may offer short-term leadership stability and mitigate immediate disruption to learners and the community, this option has been discounted as it does not provide a sufficiently sustainable or effective response to the long-term educational, demographic and financial challenges identified at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim. The limited scale of potential savings, reliance on a suitable partner school and absence of a transformational change in provision mean that federation is unlikely to secure the school's future viability.

Option 9 – Federation with a Welsh-medium Secondary School

Strengths	Weaknesses
Allows Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim to remain open when benefiting from shared leadership and strategic oversight.	Secondary leadership expertise may not be directly transferable to the operational and pedagogical demands of a small rural primary school.
Creates potential continuity and progression between primary and secondary Welsh-medium education.	Risk of reduced focus on early years and primary-specific priorities.

May strengthen curriculum planning and transition arrangements for learners.	Limited financial savings, as staffing structures and costs differ significantly between primary and secondary phases.
Provides access to broader leadership experience and specialist subject knowledge.	Increased complexity of governance and management across very different settings.
Supports the Welsh language continuum and aligns with 'Cymraeg 2050' objectives.	Potential reduction in local autonomy and decision-making.
Avoids immediate closure and the associated disruption to pupils and the community.	Day-to-day leadership presence at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim may be diluted.
May enhance pupil and parental confidence through association with an established secondary setting.	Federation does not address low pupil numbers or demographic challenges.
Opportunities	Threats
Opportunity to strengthen primary-to-secondary transition through shared planning and collaboration.	Cultural and operational differences between primary and secondary sectors may limit effectiveness.
Potential to develop innovative Welsh-medium curriculum pathways and enrichment activities.	Risk that the needs of a small rural primary school become secondary to the priorities of a larger secondary institution.
Strengthened professional development opportunities for staff through cross-phase working.	Parental concern about loss of school identity or increased centralisation.

May provide short-term stability while longer-term strategic solutions are explored.	Limited number of suitable Welsh-medium secondary schools able or willing to federate.
Encourages a wider view of learner progression and aspiration within Welsh-medium education	Federation may delay, rather than resolve, longer-term sustainability issues.
	Withdrawal from federation if anticipated benefits are not realised.

Likely impact on quality and standards in education

Federation with a Welsh-medium secondary school may offer some strategic benefits, particularly in strengthening progression between key stages and improving transition arrangements for learners. Greater alignment in curriculum design, assessment approaches and Welsh-language continuity could support a more coherent 3–16 learning journey. Access to broader leadership experience and subject expertise may also contribute to enhanced professional learning opportunities for staff and raise aspirations for pupils through stronger links with secondary provision.

However, the overall impact on quality and standards at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim is likely to be constrained by the fundamental differences between primary and secondary phases. The pedagogical approaches, curriculum design, and developmental priorities of early years and primary education require specialist knowledge and consistent on-site leadership, which may not be sufficiently prioritised within a federation led from a secondary context. There is a significant risk that primary-specific improvement priorities—particularly in areas such as early literacy, numeracy, and holistic pupil development—may receive less focused attention.

The geographical distance between the two settings further compounds these challenges. A split-site 3–16 model across separate locations would limit the practical integration of provision, reducing opportunities for meaningful day-to-day

collaboration, joint teaching practice, and shared school culture. As a result, the theoretical benefits of an all-through approach may not be fully realised in practice.

Reduced on-site leadership presence at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim also presents a risk to the consistency and quality of teaching, learning and pastoral support. Immediate oversight, responsiveness to emerging needs and sustained engagement with staff, pupils and families are critical in a small primary setting and may be more difficult to maintain within a cross-phase federation model.

Furthermore, as with other federation models, this approach does not address the underlying challenges of low pupil numbers, mixed-age class organisation and limited curriculum breadth. While it may provide short-term stability and a strengthened strategic framework, it is unlikely to deliver significant or sustained improvements in educational standards without additional structural changes.

Overall, while there are potential benefits in terms of transition and strategic alignment, the mismatch in phase expertise, combined with the practical challenges of distance and split-site working, introduces considerable risk to the sustained improvement of quality and standards in the primary phase.

Likely impact on the community

Maintaining the school through federation would be welcomed by the community in the short term, as it preserves local access to Welsh-medium education. Strengthened links with a secondary school may also be viewed positively in terms of progression and aspiration. However, concerns may arise regarding loss of local identity, reduced community influence and decision-making being removed from the village. If federation is perceived as a temporary or transitional measure rather than a secure long-term solution, community confidence and engagement may be affected.

Likely effect of different travel arrangements

Federation would not significantly alter pupil travel arrangements, as learners would continue to attend Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim for their primary education. Some additional travel may be required for staff moving between sites, and there may be occasional pupil travel for joint activities, transition events or enrichment opportunities. These impacts are likely to be limited compared to those associated

with school closure, and overall, the option avoids large-scale transport implications.

Reason for discounting / preferring this option

- Does not address declining pupil numbers or long-term financial sustainability.
- Limited financial savings and potential inefficiencies across sectors.
- Risk that primary-specific needs are not sufficiently prioritised.
- Reliance on availability and ongoing commitment of a suitable secondary partner.
- Federation represents a structural change rather than a transformational improvement.

On this basis, while the Authority recognises that federation with a Welsh-medium secondary school could provide leadership support and short-term stability, this option has been discounted as it does not offer a sustainable or effective response to the long-term educational, demographic and financial challenges facing Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim. The differences between primary and secondary provision, limited financial benefits and lack of impact on pupil numbers mean that this option is unlikely to secure the school's future viability.

11. POST-CONSULTATION REASSESSMENT IN RESPECT OF RURAL SCHOOL STATUS

In line with the School Organisation Code (2018), the Local Authority has carried out a further review of the proposal after the consultation period ended. Particular attention was given to Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim's position as a rural school and to the expectation that rural schools should not close unless there are strong reasons. This review took full account of all comments received during the consultation, including new information, local views and alternative suggestions.

The Local Authority re-examined all realistic alternatives to closing Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim. These included keeping the school open as it is, changing the age range, working more closely with other schools through federation, creating a community hub at the school, or by creating a wellbeing focused school. Each option was reconsidered in terms of how it would affect the quality of education, the local

community and travel arrangements, considering consultation responses and professional advice.

While consultation responses clearly showed how important the school is to the Meidrim community, including its Welsh-language role, the review did not identify any new evidence that would change the Authority's original view. The key challenges facing the school remain the same, including low pupil numbers, surplus places, a growing budget deficit and permanent leadership difficulties.

Having carefully considered all feedback and applied the additional scrutiny required for rural school proposals, the Local Authority has concluded that none of the alternatives considered would resolve these challenges in a sustainable way. The Authority therefore remains of the view that discontinuing Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim is the most appropriate option, taking into account the impact on the community and travel arrangements, and the wider need to secure high-quality, sustainable Welsh-medium education for learners in the area.

12. CHANGES ARISING FROM THE CONSULTATION

The Local Authority has carefully reviewed all comments received during the consultation, including concerns raised, alternative ideas and suggestions about how impacts could be reduced. After considering this feedback, the Authority looked again at whether the proposal should be changed.

Although the consultation helped to better understand how the proposal may affect pupils, families and the wider community, it did not provide any new evidence that would justify changing the proposal to close Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim. The main reasons for the proposal remain the same.

For this reason, the proposal remains unchanged. However, the issues raised during the consultation, such as pupil transition arrangements, the timing of any transfer, support for vulnerable learners, transport and access to childcare or wrap-around provision, will be considered by Cabinet. If the proposal goes ahead, these matters will help shape the detailed planning and support arrangements to reduce any negative effects on pupils, families and staff.

13. CONCLUSION

The Local Authority recognises that the proposal to close Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim has generated a high level of engagement and reaction, with a total of 260 responses received, of which 247 (94.9%) raised concerns to the proposal and 13 (5.1%) supported it. The consultation responses demonstrate the strength of feeling within the community and highlight the significance of the school to pupils, families and residents.

The concerns raised were wide-ranging and detailed, with the most frequently cited issues relating to the school's role in supporting community cohesion and village sustainability, the importance of Welsh-medium education, children's wellbeing and emotional security, continuity of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision, and the impact of increased travel. Concerns were also raised regarding the educational value of small rural schools, and the extent to which alternative options had been fully explored.

The Local Authority has carefully considered these concerns alongside its statutory responsibilities under the School Organisation Act (2018). In reaching a position, the Local Authority has had regard to a broad range of factors including pupils numbers, surplus places, leadership and staffing sustainability, financial viability, educational standards and long-term resilience of the school network. These considerations must be balanced against community impact and parental views, particularly in the context of a rural school.

The Local Authority is aware that closure of a rural school can have significant local impact and that these impacts are deeply felt by communities. It is also recognised that Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim provides a nurturing environment and that many pupils and families value the personalised nature of the provision. However, having considered the evidence as a whole, the Local Authority is of the view that the proposal is required to address long-term sustainability challenges and to ensure that educational provision across the area remains viable, equitable and capable of delivering consistent educational standards.

Supportive responses, although limited in number, emphasised the importance of financial sustainability, efficient use of public resources, leadership capacity and the

educational opportunities available within larger school settings. These perspectives have also been taken into account alongside the concerns.

The Local Authority is satisfied that the consultation has been conducted in accordance with the School Organisation Code (2018), that consultees have been given a meaningful opportunity to express their views, and that those views have been fully considered as part of the decision-making process.

All statutory duties have been considered and met, with the preferred option of closure being evaluated against all other options.

14. RECOMMENDATION

Having carefully considered the responses received during the consultation period, the themes raised through both concerns and supportive comments, and the statutory assessments undertaken, the Local Authority recommends that the proposal to close Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim proceeds as set out in the consultation document.

In making this recommendation, the Local Authority confirms that:

- All consultation responses have been considered in full and weighted appropriately.
- Key concerns relating to community impact, Welsh-medium education, learner wellbeing and ALN provision have been considered alongside statutory duties and long-term sustainability requirements.
- Mitigation measures, including transition planning, continuity of ALN provision, Welsh-medium education and transport arrangements, will be implemented where the proposal proceeds.
- The proposal aligns with the Local Authority's responsibility to ensure effective, sustainable and high-quality education provision across the county.

The Local Authority recognises that this is a difficult decision and acknowledges the strength of feeling expressed by many respondents. However, having balanced these views against the wider educational, operational and financial considerations, the Local Authority remains of the view that proceeding with the proposal represents the most appropriate option in the long-term interests of learners and the wider school system.

15. NEXT STEPS

Following completion of the statutory consultation process and the publication of this Consultation Report, the next steps in the School Organisation process will proceed in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code (2018).

This Consultation Report will be presented to the Council's Cabinet for consideration. Cabinet will review the consultation responses, the key themes raised and the Local Authority's assessment of the issues identified, in order to determine whether to:

- Proceed with the proposal as consulted upon;
- Amend the proposal; or
- Not proceed further with the proposal

If Cabinet decides not to proceed, the proposal will come to an end at that stage and no further statutory action will be taken.

If Cabinet decides to proceed with the proposal, a Statutory Notice will be published in accordance with the School Organisation Code (2018). The Statutory Notice will set out the details of the proposal and will be published for a minimum of 28 days, during which time any person may submit a formal objection in writing.

Should objections be received during the statutory objection period, the Local Authority will be required to prepare an Objection Report. The Objection Report will summarise the objections received and the Local Authority's response to them and will be presented to Cabinet before any final determination is made.

Following consideration of the Objection Report (if required), the proposal will be determined by the County Council, in accordance with the decision-making responsibilities set out in the School Organisation Code (2018). A final decision will be made within the statutory timescales.

Should the proposal ultimately be approved, the Local Authority will work closely with pupils, parents, carers, staff and the receiving schools to ensure appropriate transition arrangements are implemented. This will include planning to support pupils' wellbeing, continuity of learning, Additional Learning Needs provision, Welsh-medium education and transport arrangements, as appropriate.

The Local Authority acknowledges the importance of clear and timely communication throughout the remainder of the process and will continue to keep stakeholders informed of key decisions and next steps in line with statutory requirements.

APPENDIX A – ESTYN RESPONSE

Estyn's response on the proposal to close Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim from 31st December 2026, and to provide education for learners at either Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog.

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

Carmarthenshire County Council is proposing to close Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim on 31 December 2026 and to provide education for learners at either Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog from 1 January 2027.

It is Estyn's view that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area.

Description and benefits

The local authority has set out a suitable rationale for its proposal. The school was identified for a review of its educational provision following a Viability Assessment of all Primary schools in Carmarthenshire County. The proposal outlines financial advantages associated with the proposal along with perceived benefits for pupils learning in improved facilities, with access to a wider range of educational experiences along with improved social and collaboration opportunities with peers.

The evidence presented suggests that learner numbers have remained broadly consistent over recent years, averaging approximately thirty-one. This remains well below the school's capacity of fifty-four places. The proposal suggests that the suitability of the building, the high percentage of surplus places, small class sizes with a wide age range and the relatively high number of pupils attending from outside the catchment, illustrate the challenges the school faces. It is worth noting however that small class sizes comprising a range of ages can be taught effectively as appears to be suggested at Ysgol Hafodwenog.

The additional requirements for rural schools appear to have been addressed. The local authority provides a suitably detailed description of the proposal, including information about the nature and scope of the planned changes and the schools and learners affected. The proposal also sets out an appropriate projected timetable for all statutory procedures.

The consultation document highlights a range of risks associated with the closure of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and outlines actions that appear to mitigate these. In considering the status quo, the local authority recognises the school's strengths, including its caring ethos and its role within the local community. However, the proposal suggests that maintaining current arrangements would be unlikely to address longer-term challenges, particularly in relation to sustainability, low pupil numbers and financial viability.

The proposal appears to provide a clear comparison between the expected benefits of maintaining the status quo and those associated with closure. While financial considerations seem to be a significant factor in the rationale for the proposal, the local authority identifies potential educational benefits for pupils transferring from Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim. These include, for example, improved opportunities for social development, collaboration and engagement in a wider range of learning experiences through access to a larger peer group. These appear to be reasonable suggestions and overall, the anticipated benefits of the proposal appear to offer some advantages when compared with maintaining the status quo.

The proposal acknowledges that closing Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim appears likely to have some negative impact on the community. The school building is used extensively by community organisations and groups. The loss of this space would present a significant challenge for the community, as these organisations currently rely on the school building as their main hub. The proposal does note that there is a separate community hall available for public use in the locality.

The proposal provides information about changes to learner travel arrangements should the school close. It indicates that pupils would transfer to alternative schools within reasonable travelling distance and that estimated journey times would remain within statutory limits. The proposal also states that transport would be provided where pupils are eligible, in line with the local authority's home-to-school transport policy. Overall, the information provided appears to give due consideration to learner travel arrangements, the accessibility of provision and the financial implications for the local authority.

The proposal states that from 2021 to 2025 the level of surplus places at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim has been between 43% and 44%. The low pupil numbers at the school have contributed to budgetary pressures resulting in the school being in deficit for the last few years (2024/25 deficit of £27,704). Further details demonstrate that the school's budget share per pupil during 2025/26 is £6,363. This is £880 higher than the Carmarthenshire County Council primary school average for the

same period. The proposals would appear to be a feasible way of addressing surplus places and supporting a more efficient use of public funds.

However, there are currently a high level of surplus pupil places at Ysgol Hafodwenog (51%) and a current forecasted deficit budget of £33,337. Whilst the proposal notes that should pupils move to Ysgol Hafodwenog, this would assist the deficit budget, there appears to be no contingency should only a small number of pupils from Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim choose to attend. Although in an informal partnership with another school, the information provided suggests uncertainty as to the future sustainability and viability of Ysgol Hafodwenog.

The documentation indicates that Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim's school building is rated as Grade C for suitability. In contrast, Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog are both rated Grade B, indicating that their buildings are in a stronger position to support curriculum delivery. This seems to be a relevant factor for consideration in relation to the proposal.

Carmarthenshire County Council has provided both a Welsh language impact assessment and a community impact assessment as part of this proposal.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The council appears to consider appropriately the impact of the proposal on the quality and standards of education, including pupil standards and wellbeing, teaching and learning, care, support and guidance, and leadership and management. The proposal also refers to the most recent Estyn inspection outcomes for the schools affected. The proposal suggests that, following Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim's placement into Estyn's formal category or special measures in 2024, the alternative schools may provide a more stable educational environment for pupils. However, whilst the proposal notes that Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim has now been removed from special measures, it does not provide detail of the progress the school has made toward each of the recommendations noted in the inspection report.

One concern highlighted in the proposal relates to leadership stability at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, which currently does not have a permanent headteacher. In contrast, the alternative schools appear to currently have more secure leadership arrangements, which may provide a more sustainable basis for improving outcomes for learners. This appears to be a reasonable consideration within the context of the proposal although future more permanent arrangements for Ysgol Hafodwenog are not noted.

The documentation outlines the likely impact of the changes on the delivery of the full curriculum across all primary phases. It suggests that pupils would have access to a broader range of learning experiences in the alternative schools. The proposal also considers the impact of the proposals on vulnerable pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. It notes that support would be provided through

additional staff, transition planning and external agency involvement, and refers to pupils with additional learning needs in relation to travel arrangements and transition.

The document acknowledges that school reorganisation may lead to disruption and uncertainty for learners, staff and the communities involved. It notes the importance of clear communication during the consultation process in helping to manage this. The proposal also refers to transition arrangements intended to support pupils from Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim should the proposals be implemented.

APPENDIX B – COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Subject: The proposed closure of Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and transfer pupils to Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog.

This Community Impact Assessment has been updated following the statutory consultation period conducted between January and March 2026. It reflects issues and evidence raised by consultees, including parents, community members, pupils and other stakeholders, in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code (Wales) 2018.

1. Information on the proportion of pupils from the catchment area that attend the school;

The table below highlights the proportion of pupils from the catchment area attending the school, the proportion of pupils from outside of the catchment area attending the school, the proportion of pupils from the catchment area attending other schools and what schools they attend.

Year	Pupil numbers	In Catchment	Out of Catchment	In Catchment at Other schools*
PLASC 2026	32	25	7	22*
Other Schools				
*Bancyfelin, Brynsaron, Griffith Jones, Hafodwenog, Johnstown, Model				

2. After-school clubs and extra-curricular activities provided by the school:

The school offers an Arts and Crafts Club every Tuesday, giving pupils the opportunity to develop their creativity and enjoy working collaboratively on a range of projects. The school currently doesn't provide breakfast club.

3. Any other facilities or services the school accommodates or services the school provides:

The school welcomes the Cylch Ti a Fi group to the school every Thursday morning that offers a welcoming and inclusive space for babies, toddlers, and their families to come together.

4. Other use by the community of the school building

Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim is not used regularly by the wider community, as the Youth Hall in the village provides a dedicated venue which supports a wide variety of local activities.

5. Other links between the school and the community

The school are proud of their strong local connections with the community that are embedded across its daily practice and curriculum design.

The school perform twice a year for the local elderly residents, both in care homes and at community events. They welcome monthly visits from the local vicar to lead collective worship and classroom visits. The school visits the village church, allowing the children to explore cultural heritage. They do fundraising activities for the village park which are planned and led by the pupils. They host the Christmas and Summer fetes in the Youth Hall as well as performing annual Christmas shows in the Church Hall. The school have 'Clean-Up' walks around the village to promote care for the environment and do fundraising for many local, regional and national charities. Local residents come into the school to share about their interests, businesses etc.

6. If accommodation, facilities or services are provided by a school, where would they be provided in the event of closure?

The school welcomes the Cylch Ti a Fi group to the school every Thursday morning that offers a welcoming and inclusive space for babies, toddlers, and their families to come together. If the proposals were to proceed and implemented, the Cylch Ti a Fi group could relocate to the Youth Hall in the village.

In relation to the future of the school building, should the proposals be implemented and Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim become surplus to the Local Authority's educational requirements, it is the Council's general approach to first consider whether the site is required for any other internal corporate purpose. Where no such requirement is

identified, it may, in certain circumstances, be appropriate to explore the potential for ongoing community use of the building. This could include use by voluntary or charitable organisations or social enterprises, such as the Cylch Ti a Fi, subject to there being a clear and evidenced local need.

7. Whether other facilities available in the immediate local or wider community will or could be enhanced in the event of a school closure (e.g. improvements to village halls, playgrounds, provision of holiday play schemes);

There are no plans to improve or enhance other facilities within the immediate local or wider community as part of the current proposal.

8. Information about the facilities and services provided at any alternative school;

Ysgol Griffith Jones is a primary school for pupils aged 3-11. The school benefits from having modern facilities and resources. The nursery provides high-quality early years education for children under five.

The school hall, along with both a fixed and mobile stage, supports creative expression through drama is ideal for hosting social events. Spacious playing fields allow children to enjoy a wide range of sporting activities. The large, well-equipped gym offers space for gymnastics, movement, netball, basketball, dance, athletics and badminton. In September 2022, a new library was opened to support and enhance pupils' reading development.

Ysgol Griffith Jones has a Breakfast Club, which operates every morning from 8:05am until 8:40am in the school hall.

Clwb yr Enfys runs the after-school club from 3:00pm to 5:55pm, Monday to Friday. For a fee of £10 per session, children are offered a health snack and access to a variety of indoor and outdoor activities, depending on the weather.

In addition to Clwb yr Enfys, the school offers a range of After School Activity Clubs during the Autumn Term. These include sports club; art club; folk dancing; ICT club; French club; cooking club; science club and drama club. Dragon Sport Club also offer a range of sports during the term, including netball; football; rugby; cricket and athletics.

Ysgol Hafodwenog takes pride in its active participation in the Urdd Eisteddfod, competing annually in both group and individual competitions. This year, pupils achieved notable success at the Urdd National Eisteddfod in Margam Park, earning three prizes for the clog dancing, the unison party for schools with up to 50 pupils, and the folk-dance party for schools with up to 100 pupils. In addition, the clog dance group won third prize at the Pontypridd National Eisteddfod. The school also competes regularly in Urdd sports competitions, showcasing pupils' enthusiasm and talent beyond the classroom.

Academic and cultural achievements include winning one of the top prizes in the Welsh Heritage Initiative competition for a Victorian History project based on the Trelech area and being among the first schools in the county to receive the Gold Language Charter award in Summer 2023. Pupils benefit from a rich musical education, with violin lessons offered to Years 3–6 through the County Music Service and harp lessons available to all pupils through an external tutor. Environmental awareness is also celebrated, with the school proudly achieving its seventh Eco Schools Platinum Award—an exceptional accomplishment for a small school.

The school promotes pupil voice and leadership through its active school council, '*Hafod Hwylus*'. This group organises charitable activities, influences school policies, and regularly presents its ideas and progress to the Governors. A wide range of clubs enriches school life, including a daily Breakfast Club, '*Clwb Clociso*' during the spring term, and '*Clwb Hwyl*'—an after-school care club operating on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:45pm to 5:30pm.

Community involvement is at the heart of the school's ethos. Seasonal community lunches bring pupils and local residents together, often followed by performances or shared activities such as games. Volunteers from the community play an invaluable role by reading with pupils, supporting musical and dance groups, and even helping develop outdoor learning areas—such as a sensory garden created in partnership with *Adam yn yr Ardd* and new planting beds maintained by parents. Produce grown at the school is sold to parents and community members. Volunteers and parents also assist with sports coaching in activities including rounders, netball, rugby, and cricket.

Hafod Hwylus organises regular community events such as the Macmillan Coffee Afternoon, the School Eisteddfod, a Thanksgiving service, and litter-picking sessions

around the village. The school also provides a clothing recycling site for community use. Strong links are maintained with Capel y Graig, where pupils regularly perform at singing services and concerts, and the school participates in chapel-organised events. Collaboration with Cylch Meithrin Trelech is also strong, with joint activities including Shwmae Su'mae Day, sports sessions, and photography days. The Cylch uses the school site for various fundraising events and meets regularly for Clwb Ti a Fi sessions, even joining pupils for lunch once a month.

Aelwyd Hafodwenog meets weekly on the school premises, and the Parents and Teachers Committee is very active, hosting meetings and organising community events such as a Rounders evening that brings together local young farmers clubs, chapels, and community groups. Parents also hold an annual maintenance day to help tidy the school grounds. Canon Ann Howells visits twice a term to lead services with the pupils, and the school regularly contributes to local initiatives such as the '*Hwb Cynnes Trelech*', where pupils engage villagers through games and performances.

The school site is designated as a suitable and accessible meeting point for the community in the event of an emergency.

9. Distance and travelling time involved in attending an alternative school of the same language category;

The proposal is to close Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and transfer pupils to Ysgol Griffith Jones which is approximately 3.1 miles or Ysgol Hafodwenog which is approximately 6.8 miles from Meidrim. Travel time from Ysgol Griffith Jones is approximately 7 minutes with travel time from Ysgol Hafodwenog being approximately 12 minutes. These are estimated times and actual times may vary depending on traffic volumes and other factors such as driving conditions and road works.

10. How parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported;

The proposal is to close Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and transfer pupils to Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog. Should the Council proceed with the statutory process and eventual implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process.

If parents choose to send their children to an alternative school other than Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog, they will need to follow the School Admissions policy and process which can be found on the Carmarthenshire Council website.

11. Impact on health and wellbeing e.g. if pupils would be less able to walk or cycle to school;

As a result of the proposed school closure, pupils would be less able to walk or cycle to the receiving school due to increased distance and road safety concerns. This may reduce opportunities for daily physical activity, which could have a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of some pupils. However, the receiving schools offer a wide range of sports clubs as detailed above, which would help to mitigate some of the potential impacts by providing regular opportunities for physical activity during and outside of school hours. The Local Authority will consider where possible whether an agreed designated pick-up point could be agreed for those pupils eligible for transport, to enable pupils who currently walk to school to continue to walk part of their school journey should the proposal proceed.

12. Any wider implications e.g. impact on public transport provisions, wider community safety issues

There are no anticipated impacts on public transportation services. School transport policy requires that free transportation be provided for any child living more than two miles from the nearest appropriate school, therefore, transportation will be provided to those who are eligible.

The possible closure of the school building could also result in the loss of a designated safe space for community emergencies, such as a shelter or meeting point. However, it is currently unclear whether the school is actively used for this purpose.

13. Additional considerations for rural schools

The School Organisation Code includes a number of additional considerations that are likely to be relevant when carrying out a community impact assessment for a rural school closure. As Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim is identified as a rural school, these factors are considered below.

- **Whether closure would encourage families with school-age children to leave the community or discourage young families from moving to the community;**

Should the proposal proceed, it would leave Meidrim with no local school and as a result the village may become less attractive to families with young children, potentially accelerating demographic decline and aging the population. As families potentially seek easier access to services and education, property turnover may rise, but demand for housing from young families may decline.

- **What impact closure might have on other services provided locally, for instance if the school is the only remaining public building in a community;**

The school welcomes the Cylch Ti a Fi group to the school every Thursday morning that offers a welcoming and inclusive space for babies, toddlers, and their families to come together. If the proposals were to proceed and implemented, the Cylch Ti a Fi group would be required to relocate.

- **Whether, or not, the school is a real hub of community life, used for other purposes – such as public meetings, local events, fetes, surgeries, and other get togethers – which would either cease or be diminished by being required to move elsewhere;**

The school building is not used regularly by the wider community, as the Youth Hall in the village provides a dedicated venue which supports a wide variety of local activities.

- **Whether or not the loss of the school, and potentially families, will have a detrimental effect on the wider economy of the community;**

If the proposal were to proceed, the closure may have wider consequences for the economic stability of the local community, which will be further evaluated once the requested information on community use is received from the school. Rural schools often act as key social and economic hubs, and their closure can lead to population decline, decreased demand for housing, and reduced customer traffic for nearby businesses. This could, in turn, impact the sustainability of other local services and amenities.

- **How parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported (e.g. how pupils; particularly any less advantaged pupils) will be helped to participate in after school activities);**

If the proposal were to proceed and the Council moves forward with the statutory process and ultimately implements the preferred option, appropriate assistance will be offered to pupils and their parents throughout the transition.

- **The overall effect of closure on the local community (including the loss of school-based facilities which are used by the local community.**

If the proposal were to proceed and the school was to close, there could be an impact on the Cylch Ti a Fi, which may need to relocate. As the school building isn't used regularly, as they are currently using the Youth Hall in the village, the overall effect of closure on the local community will be minimal as they already use alternative venues.

The Local Authority recognises that, particularly in rural communities, the loss of a school can have social, cultural and emotional impacts that extend beyond education alone. These potential impacts have been weighed carefully against the school's long-term educational viability, financial sustainability and ability to deliver the full expectations of the Curriculum for Wales. While the impacts on the community are acknowledged as significant, the Authority has concluded that they are outweighed by the challenges facing the school's sustainability and the need to secure resilient, high-quality provision for learners over the longer term.

14. Issues raised during the consultation period

During the consultation period, a wide range of views were expressed in relation to the proposal to discontinue Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim. A significant proportion of responses raised concerns about the potential impact on the local community. The school was widely regarded as a central community asset, serving not only as a place of education but also as a focal point for village life and an anchor for local families. Stakeholders emphasised that its closure could undermine the sustainability of the rural community, contributing to population decline and reducing the area's attractiveness for young families. In addition, the school's role in supporting community cohesion and its broader social value were highlighted as key considerations.

A further prominent issue related to the potential impact on the Welsh language. As a Welsh-medium school, Ysgol Meidrim was seen as integral to maintaining and promoting Welsh within the locality. Respondents expressed concerns that closure could weaken the use of the language locally and have a detrimental effect on the linguistic and cultural character of the area, particularly within a rural context where schools often play a central role in sustaining Welsh-speaking communities.

Concerns were also raised regarding the extent to which the “presumption against closure” of rural schools had been applied. Some respondents felt that the proposal had been advanced without sufficient exploration of alternative options and that closure had not been clearly demonstrated as a last resort, as required by national policy. In this context, the governing body’s counter-proposal to develop the school as a community hub attracted attention, with calls for more meaningful engagement and collaboration with the local authority to explore sustainable alternatives during the consultation process.

Additional concerns related to educational provision and pupil wellbeing. Responses noted that the school was perceived to be improving and provided a supportive environment, including for pupils with additional learning needs. There were also concerns regarding the potential impact of closure on pupils, including increased travel distances, disruption to education, and the implications of any transition occurring during an academic year. Financial aspects of the proposal were similarly questioned, with some stakeholders highlighting that the projected savings were relatively modest when balanced against increased transport costs and the potential loss of wider community value.

Alongside these concerns, a number of responses expressed support for the proposal, primarily referencing the need to ensure long-term sustainability and the efficient use of resources. Supportive comments recognised the challenges associated with low and declining pupil numbers, high levels of surplus capacity, and the financial pressures linked to maintaining provision in small schools. It was acknowledged that such factors can impact on the ability to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum and may limit opportunities available to learners.

Some respondents also supported the strategic rationale for reviewing school provision, noting the importance of directing resources effectively across the wider

education system. From this perspective, the proposal was seen as part of a wider approach to ensuring that education is delivered in sustainable settings and that public funding is used efficiently to benefit the greatest number of pupils. In addition, potential benefits for pupils attending larger schools were identified, including access to a wider peer group, increased extracurricular opportunities, and a broader range of teaching expertise and facilities.

Overall, the consultation responses reflected a balance of views. While there was strong emphasis on the school's importance to the community, the Welsh language, and rural sustainability, there was also recognition among some respondents of the financial, demographic, and strategic challenges facing the school and the wider education system.

15. Conclusion

The consultation confirmed that Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim is highly valued within the local community, particularly for its role in supporting community cohesion, sustaining the Welsh language, and contributing to the overall social fabric of the area. Concerns were raised about the potential negative impacts of closure on the village's long-term sustainability, pupil wellbeing, and continued access to local education.

However, responses also recognised the challenges facing the school, including declining pupil numbers, surplus capacity, and financial pressures. It is considered that suitable alternative provision exists within a reasonable distance and that appropriate transition support can mitigate impacts on pupils. On balance, while acknowledging the potential adverse effects on the community, these have been weighed against the need to ensure sustainable, high-quality educational provision for future learners, and the proposal is considered a proportionate response to these challenges.

In line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 and the Council's long term duties, the Local Authority has considered the social impacts anticipated as a result of the proposal against the need for sustainable, high quality education provision.

APPENDIX C – WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. Introduction and Purpose

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA) considers the likely effects of the proposal to close Ysgol Meidrim with the transfer of pupils to Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on the principle of treating Welsh no less favourably than English. The assessment has been prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government School Organisation Code (Wales), the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, Carmarthenshire County Council's Welsh Language Standards Compliance Framework, and guidance issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

2. Methodology and Evidence Base

The assessment is informed by the statutory consultation documentation relating to the proposal to close Ysgol Meidrim; Estyn inspection reports for Ysgol Meidrim Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog; Census 2021 Welsh language data for Carmarthenshire and the Meidrim, St Clears and Trelech area; Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022–2032; and relevant Welsh Government policy including Cymraeg 2050 and the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.

The assessment provides more detailed consideration of Ysgol Griffith Jones due to its mixed Category 3 (Primarily Welsh) and Category 2 (Dual Language) language pathways from Year 3 onwards, whereas Ysgol Hafodwenog offers consistent Category 3 (Primarily Welsh) provision throughout.

3. Context: Ysgol Meidrim, Ysgol Griffith Jones, Ysgol Hafodwenog and the Proposal

Ysgol Meidrim is a Category 3 (Primarily Welsh) 4–11 community primary school serving a rural Carmarthenshire community. Ysgol Hafodwenog is also a 4–11 Category 3 (Primarily Welsh) school, providing Welsh-medium education within a wider rural catchment.

Ysgol Griffith Jones is a 3–11 primary school that delivers Category 3 (Primarily Welsh) provision throughout the Foundation Learning phase (Nursery to Year 2), with Welsh as the principal language of teaching and learning. From Year 3 onwards, the school

offers a choice of language pathways, enabling pupils either to continue in Category 3 (Primarily Welsh) provision or to follow a Category 2 (Dual Language) pathway.

The proposal is for the closure of Ysgol Meidrim, with pupils transferring to Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog, thereby maintaining access to Welsh-medium provision and ensuring pupils are educated within sustainable Welsh-language learning environments.

4. Welsh Language Impact Assessment (Table 1)

This section assesses the proposal against the Welsh Language Standards (No.1 Regulations 2015), specifically the Policy-making Standards (Standards 88–93), Service Delivery Standards (Standards 1–83), and Operational Standards (Standards 127–135).

Impact Criteria	Description	Status of the impact	Potential Mitigation Measures to enhance positive impact	Final impact (following mitigation)
Informal use of Welsh at the school (greetings, signage, routines, general communication)	Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim and Ysgol Hafodwenog are both Category 3 Welsh-medium schools, where Welsh is the main language of daily communication. The transfer of pupils would place learners in larger Welsh-speaking peer groups with established routines that support the informal and social use of Welsh throughout the school day. Ysgol Griffith Jones also provides Category 3 (Primarily Welsh) provision within the Foundation Learning phase (Nursery to Year 2), ensuring that	Negative	Clear communication with Parents/Guardians. Share and promote bilingual material explaining the benefits of Welsh-medium education, including cognitive, cultural, and career advantages. Share success stories.	Neutral

	<p>Welsh is the principal language of communication for younger learners. From Year 3 onwards, pupils at Ysgol Griffith Jones may follow either a Category 3 (Primarily Welsh) or Category 2 (Dual Language) pathway, enabling continued access to Welsh-medium provision.</p> <p>Category 3 (Primarily Welsh) is defined as Welsh as the school's main language of internal communication. Communication with parents and carers is in either English, Welsh or bilingually as needed. This is a school with a strong Welsh language ethos at its core, supporting and enabling learners' Welsh language use in all social contexts in and outside of school.</p> <p>In a Welsh immersion setting all learners are taught fully in Welsh, with English being used on occasion to ensure understanding during early immersion.</p> <p>From aged 7 onwards at least 80% of learner's school activities (both curricular</p>		<p>Actively promote the benefits of the Category 3 (Primarily Welsh) pathway to parents and guardians through clear communication, transition events, and information sessions.</p> <p>Clarify the difference between Welsh-medium and bilingual provision to avoid confusion.</p> <p>Develop further enrichment activities (e.g. drama, sport, coding) through the medium of Welsh to reinforce usage beyond the classroom.</p> <p>Provide targeted linguistic support and immersion opportunities to build parental and learner confidence in choosing and</p>	
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	<p>and extra-curricular) will be in Welsh.</p> <p>The proposal would maintain the availability of Welsh language provision.</p> <p>Category 2 (Dual Language) provision is defined as an approach where both Welsh and English are used for internal communication within the school and in communication with parents and carers. There is a clear and shared understanding that maintaining a strong Welsh-language ethos is essential and supports positive attitudes towards the use of Welsh across the school community.</p> <p>Learners in schools within this category are expected to develop the ability to speak, read, write, and listen in both Welsh and English, in line with their age and ability. Welsh-language skills are further strengthened through an increasing range of curricular and extra-curricular learning opportunities delivered through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>With appropriate support, learners following a Category 2 (Dual Language) pathway may progress</p>		<p>sustaining Welsh-medium education.</p> <p>Regularly review take-up trends and language provision through leadership and governing body oversight, with the ability to adjust arrangements if Welsh-medium access is being diluted.</p> <p>Strengthen staff professional learning to ensure consistent, high-quality Welsh-medium pedagogy across both pathways.</p> <p>Work closely with the local authority to align language provision with Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) priorities and long-term progression routes</p>	
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	<p>to a Category 3 Welsh-medium secondary school. A minimum of 50% of learners' school activities will be delivered through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>The Siarter Iaith supports children and young people to use Welsh in all aspects of their lives and aims to increase the social use of Welsh and is part of WESP Outcome 5. Ysgol Meidrim has achieved the Siarter Iaith Bronze Award and Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog have achieved the Gold Award.</p> <p>This proposal may strengthen opportunities for pupils to use the Welsh language formally and informally with a wider range of peers.</p> <p>There is a potential risk that some families may choose the Category 2 (Dual Language) pathway at Ysgol Griffith Jones, which could result in a reduction in the level of Welsh-medium provision accessed by some pupils.</p>		to Welsh-medium secondary education.	
<p>Current Welsh language standards and provision</p>	<p>Ysgol Meidrim</p> <p>Ysgol Meidrim's most recent Estyn inspection report stated that "Many of the youngest pupils</p>	Neutral	Structured transition and induction planning to support continuity in	Positive

	<p>acquire the Welsh language beneficially and strive to speak it and enjoy their learning. Leaders have allocated funds appropriately to employ additional staff to support pupils to develop their confidence and fluency in Welsh appropriately. This is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' oracy skills. Many pupils' reading skills develop appropriately as they move through the school. The youngest pupils begin to use a range of phonic strategies to read familiar and unfamiliar words and to find the meaning of text. By Year 6, a majority develop their reading skills suitably. Year 1 and 2 pupils write a series of simple sentences which include capital letters and clear punctuation appropriately. They are given opportunities to write a relevant variety of texts with their peers. However, as a result of a lack of purposeful planning, pupils' early writing skills are not developed coherently. At the top of the school, when pupils are given an opportunity to write independently, they write in an interesting manner and use purposeful punctuation. However, they are not given regular</p>		<p>Welsh-medium learning, including shared baseline information on pupils' Welsh language development, oracy confidence, and literacy skills between Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog.</p> <p>Targeted pastoral and language support during the initial transition period to ensure pupils feel confident using Welsh socially and academically, particularly in a larger peer group and mixed-ability setting.</p> <p>Consistent Welsh-medium pedagogy and language expectations across the school,</p>	
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	<p>opportunities to write at length in a variety of genres.”</p> <p>Nearly all pupils develop positive attitudes towards learning and take pride in their work. Nearly all pupils develop their literacy skills appropriately according to their age and ability. Almost all pupils speak about and read their written work effectively. A few have a tendency to switch to English when discussing their work. Scrutiny of literacy work shows that specific writing processes are in place in Years 3 to 6, and that teaching steps follow a logical sequence to raise standards in both Welsh and English, for example, model texts, purpose features, boxing up, and MPLL. Opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum are limited.</p> <p>Ysgol Griffith Jones</p> <p>The latest Estyn inspection report for Ysgol Griffith Jones states that “The school’s provision to develop pupils’ Welsh and knowledge of their heritage is effective. As a result, most pupils know what it means to be Welsh and speak Welsh completely naturally and</p>	<p>reinforced through clear routines, modelling of high-quality spoken Welsh and explicit expectations for Welsh use in lessons and informal contexts.</p> <p>Focused monitoring of Welsh language progression, to identify any gaps early and ensure pupils make secure progress in oracy, reading and writing through the medium of Welsh following transfer.</p> <p>Access to a broader curriculum experience enabled by larger cohort sizes, allowing more purposeful opportunities for extended writing, group discussion, collaborative learning, and</p>	
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	<p>with pride. They have a sound understanding of Welsh culture.</p> <p>Most pupils develop their oral skills effectively in a good range of activities. In the foundation phase, they discuss their work confidently and respect each other's contributions. Many are keen to develop their ideas successfully from nursery age. A good example of this is the way in which they choose a sound to represent the characters in the story of 'Alun yr Arth.' As pupils move through the school, many have the skills to discuss various topics maturely as they argue for and against having a famous fast-food restaurant in the village. They develop to become skilful bilingual learners. At the beginning of the foundation phase, many pupils develop a useful understanding of letters and sounds. By the end of the phase, nearly all pupils have positive attitudes towards reading. In key stage 2, most pupils read fluently and with accuracy in Welsh and English. They discuss the content of books purposefully and show a preference for different types of books. By Year 6, many write confidently in a range</p>		<p>application of Welsh language skills across areas of learning.</p> <p>Ongoing professional learning for staff, where required, to support consistent delivery of Welsh-medium provision, effective differentiation, and high expectations for language development across all ability ranges.</p> <p>Enhanced opportunities for Welsh language enrichment, including participation in Urdd activities, cultural events, and extracurricular provision, to reinforce language use beyond formal lessons and raise</p>	
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	<p>of contexts and produce purposeful work. In the Category 2 stream, “A very few pupils in the English stream read Welsh novels very skilfully and discuss them confidently in Welsh. However, many pupils’ Welsh reading skills in the English stream are less developed. They explain the text simply and pronounce words correctly when reading aloud.”</p> <p>Ysgol Hafodwenog</p> <p>The latest Estyn inspection report for Ysgol Hafodwenog states that pupils “express themselves with increasing accuracy and confidence in Welsh and English. However, a minority use vocabulary that is relevant to a particular subject, and there is a tendency for many pupils to use English words when communicating in Welsh. Most pupils’ reading skills are developing suitably for their age and ability. The youngest pupils recognise letters and sounds and are beginning to build words confidently. By the end of the foundation phase, most develop to become purposeful readers and read accurately and fluently. Throughout key stage 2, most</p>		<p>pupils’ confidence and fluency.</p> <p>Clear bilingual engagement with parents and guardians, including information on how Welsh-medium provision is delivered and how families can support Welsh language development at home, reinforcing confidence and understanding.</p>	
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pupils develop as moderate readers in Welsh and English. Many use their reading skills confidently to organise information from various sources.

Most pupils' early writing skills are developing purposefully. By the end of the foundation phase, many develop their writing skills appropriately in a limited range of different genres. They extend their sentences by using basic conjunctions and use capital letters and full stops correctly. However, over-use of worksheets limits the ability of a majority of pupils to write at length and achieve as well as they could. Many pupils in key stage 2 make appropriate progress in their writing skills in Welsh and English. By Year 6, a majority write successfully in a few genres, for example as they write a script of the story of the wedding of Nant Gwrtheyrn. They punctuate suitably and their spelling in both languages is developing purposefully. However, pupils do not use their independent extended writing skills often enough in other areas of the curriculum. The standard of

	presentation of pupils' work also varies too much across the school.			
After-school and enrichment opportunities (Welsh-medium/bilingual)	<p>Ysgol Meidrim</p> <p>Ysgol Meidrim currently provides limited Welsh-medium enrichment opportunities beyond the formal curriculum. The school offers a weekly Arts and Crafts Club, held on Tuesdays, which gives pupils opportunities to develop creativity and collaborate on a range of practical projects.</p> <p>This provision supports informal social interaction through Welsh; however, the overall enrichment offer is restricted in scope.</p> <p>The school does not operate a breakfast club, nor does it provide a broader programme of after-school or childcare provision.</p> <p>Ysgol Griffith Jones</p> <p>Ysgol Griffith Jones provides a programme of after-school and enrichment activities designed to support pupils' wider development and promote the use of Welsh in informal and social contexts.</p> <p>Extra-curricular provision includes a range of clubs such as Clwb Canu Cŵl (Cool Singing Club), Eco Club, Health Club, and a Digital Club, each offering structured opportunities for pupils</p>	Positive	Active promotion and supported access to Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog's existing Welsh-medium after-school and enrichment provision, including Urdd cultural and sporting activities, music tuition, and childcare clubs, to encourage participation by pupils transferring from Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim.	Positive

	<p>to use Welsh beyond formal lessons.</p> <p>The school choir meets regularly to rehearse Welsh-language songs in preparation for competitions and concerts, fostering musical development, confidence, and cultural pride. Pupils also receive dance and recitation training as part of their preparation for the Urdd Eisteddfod, supporting engagement with Welsh cultural traditions and national events.</p> <p>These activities contribute positively to pupils' linguistic confidence and provide meaningful opportunities to use Welsh socially across year groups.</p> <p>Ysgol Hafodwenog</p> <p>Ysgol Hafodwenog offers a broader range of Welsh-medium and bilingual activities, including a daily breakfast club, after-school care, Welsh-language cultural and sporting activities through the Urdd, music tuition, and opportunities for pupil leadership.</p> <p>The transfer of pupils from Ysgol Meidrim to Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog has the potential to increase access to a</p>	<p>enrichment activities is sustained following transition.</p> <p>Clear bilingual communication with parents and guardians outlining available after-school and enrichment opportunities, helping families to understand the benefits of participation and to support engagement beyond the school day.</p> <p>Use of enrichment activities as authentic language contexts, reinforcing Welsh language use informally through sport, music, performance, and social interaction, thereby strengthening pupils' confidence,</p>	
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	<p>wider range of Welsh-medium enrichment opportunities, enabling pupils to use Welsh more frequently in informal and social settings beyond the classroom. This expanded provision may support increased linguistic confidence, positive attitudes towards the Welsh language, and stronger engagement with Welsh cultural life.</p>		<p>fluency, and positive attitudes towards Welsh.</p> <p>Ongoing partnership working with the Urdd and local Welsh-language organisations, ensuring continued access to cultural, sporting, and social opportunities through the medium of Welsh.</p>	
<p>Community opportunities (support for parents/carers and wider community)</p>	<p>The proposed change would have a predominantly neutral impact on community opportunities for parents, guardians and the wider community by providing access to Ysgol Griffith Jones' or Ysgol Hafodwenog's well-established and wide-ranging programme of community engagement, volunteering, early-years partnerships and Welsh-medium cultural and social activities, thereby increasing opportunities to use Welsh beyond the classroom and strengthening community cohesion.</p>	<p>Negative</p>	<p>Sustaining links with the Meidrim community where practicable through partnership working.</p> <p>Explore opportunities for alternative community venues within the locality to host Welsh-medium community activities previously delivered at Ysgol Meidrim, ensuring</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

	<p>There is, however, a potential negative impact in relation to the relocation of some community-based activities previously hosted within the Meidrim community, which could affect informal engagement opportunities for some families.</p> <p>Community opportunities currently provided by schools:</p> <p>Ysgol Meidrim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school hosts a Cylch Ti a Fi (Parent & Toddler Group) every Thursday morning, providing a warm and inclusive space for babies, toddlers, and their families to come together and connect. • While the school itself is not regularly used by the wider community, the Youth Hall in the village serves as a dedicated venue that supports a broad range of local activities. • The school takes pride in its strong local connections, which are deeply embedded in its daily practices and curriculum design. • Pupils perform twice a year for elderly residents in the community, both in local care 		<p>continuity of provision.</p> <p>Planned transition and engagement activities to introduce pupils, parents and guardians from the Meidrim community to Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog's established community events, groups and partnerships, supporting confidence and continuity of engagement through Welsh.</p> <p>Continuation of early-years community support, including facilitating onward participation in the Cylch Meithrin Trelech and the school-based <i>Ti a Fi</i> provision, ensuring support</p>	
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	<p>homes and at community events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school welcomes monthly visits from the local vicar, who leads collective worship and engages with pupils through classroom visits. Children also visit the village church to explore and appreciate their cultural heritage. • Pupils take the lead in planning and delivering fundraising activities for the village park, developing their sense of responsibility and community spirit. • The school hosts both Christmas and Summer fetes in the Youth Hall and performs its annual Christmas shows in the Church Hall, strengthening ties with the wider community. • Regular 'Clean-Up' walks around the village help promote environmental awareness, alongside fundraising efforts for a range of local, regional, and national charities. • Local residents are invited into the school to share their interests, experiences, and businesses, enriching pupils' 		<p>for families with younger children is maintained.</p> <p>Clear bilingual communication with parents and carers outlining community activities, volunteering opportunities, and events available through the school, enabling families to engage meaningfully with Welsh-medium community provision.</p> <p>Encouragement of community participation and volunteering, supporting parents and guardians to contribute to school-based and wider community activities, strengthening Welsh language use in social, cultural, and</p>	
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	<p>understanding of the community around them.</p> <p>Ysgol Griffith Jones</p> <p>The school site is used by Urdd Gobaith Cymru, who hire the gymnasium to run a Welsh-medium gymnastics club, promoting physical activity through the Welsh language.</p> <p>The Urdd also delivers sports clubs during school holidays, providing pupils with continued access to active, Welsh-language experiences beyond term time.</p> <p>In addition, the local Young Farmers' Club (Aelwyd) uses the school hall to host concerts and games evenings, strengthening links between the school and the wider rural community.</p> <p>Ysgol Hafodwenog</p> <p>The school maintains strong and active links with the local community through a wide range of initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal Community Lunches are held where members of the community are invited to dine with pupils. These events are often followed by performances of Eisteddfod items, board games, and other activities. 		<p>inter-generational contexts.</p> <p>Sustaining links with faith, cultural and voluntary organisations, where practicable, to ensure continuity of Welsh-medium cultural, charitable and heritage activities that support community cohesion.</p> <p>Work with the local authority, Menter Iaith and community groups to retain and develop Welsh-language activities as a priority in the Meidrim area.</p> <p>Engage proactively with Menter Iaith and the community to identify demand and co-design Welsh-medium activities, helping to sustain local</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Volunteers from the community, both Welsh and non-Welsh speakers, support pupils with reading. Others assist with music and dance preparation for school and Urdd Eisteddfod competitions, including Cerdd Dant and accompaniment. One volunteer developed a sensory garden during summer 2025 with “Adam in the Garden” while parents have created new planting beds. The school sells vegetables to parents and the wider community. • Sporting Support is provided by volunteers and parents who help teach sports such as rounders, netball, rugby, and cricket. • The Hafod Hwylus School Council organises regular community events including Macmillan Coffee Afternoons, the School Eisteddfod, Harvest Thanksgiving, and village litter-picking sessions. A clothing recycling point is also available at the school entrance for community use. • The school works closely with Capel y Graig, the village chapel, using the site for services and hymn-singing 		<p>language use despite potential reduced access to the school building.</p>	
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gatherings, and participating in chapel-organised events.

- There is a strong partnership with Cylch Meithrin Trelech, with nursery pupils joining in activities such as 'Shwmae Su'mae Day' and sports sessions led by Sports Ambassadors. They are also invited to professional photo sessions and school sports days. The Cylch uses the school site for fundraising events like the Christmas Fair, "Cawl a Chân," tractor runs, and committee meetings. They also run a weekly "Ti a Fi" club and join the school for lunch monthly.
- Aelwyd Hafodwenog, a youth group, meets weekly at the school every Thursday evening.
- An active and successful Parents and Teachers Committee use the school for meetings and events. Activities include collaborative evenings such as rounders nights with Young Farmers Clubs from Pen-y-bont and Capel Iwan, local chapels, and village hall committees. Parents also organise an annual maintenance day to tidy the school grounds.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local Canon leads services with pupils twice each term. • Pupils have participated in Trelech's Warm Hub community activities, engaging residents through educational games and performances. • Emergency Meeting Point - The school site is designated and available as a community meeting point in the event of an emergency. <p>The closure of Ysgol Meidrim may lead to a reduction in community access to the school building, potentially limiting opportunities for community activities and events delivered through the medium of Welsh that currently support local language use and social cohesion.</p>			
<p>Support for Welsh cultural participation (Urdd, Mentrau Iaith, eisteddfodau, heritage)</p>	<p>The proposed change would have a positive impact on support for Welsh cultural participation by enabling pupils transferring from Ysgol Meidrim to access Ysgol Griffith Jones' or Ysgol Hafodwenog's well-established involvement in Urdd cultural and sporting activities, eisteddfodau, Welsh heritage projects, and wider Welsh-language events. This broader and more sustained</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Supported induction into Welsh cultural activities, ensuring pupils transferring from Ysgol Meidrim are actively introduced to Urdd, eisteddfodau, music, dance, and heritage opportunities at</p>	<p>Positive</p>

	<p>participation is likely to strengthen pupils' confidence, engagement, and sense of Welsh identity through regular opportunities to use Welsh in cultural and social contexts beyond the classroom, although careful transition support will be important to ensure pupils engage fully with these opportunities following the change.</p>	<p>Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog, with staff and peer support to build confidence and engagement.</p> <p>Active encouragement and inclusive participation, ensuring that all pupils are encouraged to take part in Welsh-language cultural activities regardless of prior experience, ability, or confidence, in line with expectations around equity and inclusion.</p> <p>Continuation and strengthening of partnerships with Welsh-language organisations such as the Urdd and local cultural networks, to provide regular and</p>	
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		<p>meaningful opportunities for participation through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Use of cultural activities as authentic language contexts, reinforcing Welsh language use through performance, competition, celebration and shared cultural experiences beyond the classroom.</p> <p>Clear bilingual communication with parents and guardians, outlining available cultural opportunities and the value of participation, to support sustained engagement and reinforce Welsh language use within families and</p>	
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			the wider community.	
Alignment with WESP and Welsh Government School Organisation Code	<p>The proposal aligns with Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) by maintaining access to Welsh-medium (Category 3) provision and supporting the sustainability and quality of Welsh-medium education within a viable school setting.</p> <p>However, there is a potential risk that some families may choose the Category 2 (Dual Language) pathway from Year 3 at Ysgol Griffith Jones, which could result in a reduction in the level of Welsh-medium provision accessed by some pupils and may have a negative impact on the achievement of WESP Outcome 3, particularly in supporting pupils to continue along a Welsh-medium education pathway.</p> <p>It is consistent with the Welsh Government School Organisation Code, which requires local authorities to consider the impact of proposals on the Welsh language and to secure effective, efficient, and sustainable</p>	Negative	<p>Clear communication with Parents/Guardians.</p> <p>Share and promote bilingual material explaining the benefits of Welsh-medium education, including cognitive, cultural, and career advantages.</p> <p>Share success stories.</p> <p>Actively promote the benefits of the Category 3 (Primarily Welsh) pathway to parents and guardians through clear communication, transition events, and information sessions.</p> <p>Clarify the difference between Welsh-medium and</p>	Neutral

	<p>provision. The proposal retains access to Welsh-medium education locally while supporting improved educational outcomes and opportunities to use Welsh formally and informally, with no adverse effect on the Authority's ability to meet its WESP objectives.</p>	<p>bilingual provision to avoid confusion.</p> <p>Develop further enrichment activities (e.g. drama, sport, coding) through the medium of Welsh to reinforce usage beyond the classroom.</p> <p>Provide targeted linguistic support and immersion opportunities to build parental and learner confidence in choosing and sustaining Welsh-medium education.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring through WESP reporting arrangements, ensuring that the impact of the proposal on Welsh-medium provision, pupil progression, and opportunities to</p>	
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		<p>use Welsh is reviewed regularly at Local Authority level.</p> <p>Use of school self-evaluation and improvement planning at Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog to monitor Welsh language standards and informal language use, in line with expectations and WESP priorities.</p> <p>Clear bilingual communication and engagement, ensuring parents, guardians and pupils are informed and supported throughout implementation, reinforcing confidence in Welsh-medium provision and parental choice.</p>	
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<p>Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English</p> <p>This requirement aligns directly with the Service Delivery Standards (Standards 1–83), which require that all public-facing services and communications are available in Welsh and English to an equal standard.</p>	<p>The proposal would have a neutral impact on the requirement to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English, as it maintains Welsh-medium (Category 3) provision and ensures continued compliance with the Welsh Language Standards (Service Delivery Standards 1–83). All public-facing services, consultation materials and communications relating to the proposal are, and will continue to be, provided in Welsh and English to an equal standard, with responses available in the language of choice. The proposal does not reduce access to Welsh-language services or visibility of Welsh and therefore does not disadvantage the Welsh language when compared with English.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Continued compliance with the Welsh Language Standards (Service Delivery Standards 1–83), ensuring that all public-facing services, consultation materials, correspondence, and information relating to the proposal are provided in Welsh and English to an equal standard.</p> <p>Clear bilingual communication throughout the statutory process, including consultation, decision-making and implementation stages, with individuals able to communicate and receive responses</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
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		<p>in their language of choice.</p> <p>Consistent visibility of Welsh within the receiving school, ensuring that Welsh continues to be the primary language of communication, signage, engagement, and daily school life, reinforcing its equal status with English.</p> <p>Monitoring of service delivery practices, to ensure that no aspect of communication, engagement or provision gives preference to English over Welsh, in line with the Authority's Welsh Language Standards compliance arrangements.</p>	
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			<p>Accessible and inclusive engagement, ensuring that parents, carers, pupils, and community members can participate fully in consultation and school activities through Welsh, supporting confidence and normalisation of Welsh language use.</p>	
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5. Welsh Language Standards (Table 2)

This assessment considers the impact of the proposal against the Welsh Language Standards (No.1 Regulations 2015), including the Policy-making Standards (88–93), Service Delivery Standards (1–83), and Operational Standards (127–135).

Requirement	Does the proposal impact these Standards?	What evidence has been used to support this view?	Positive/Negative impacts
<p>Opportunities for people to use the Welsh language</p>	<p>Yes – positive impact.</p> <p>The proposal is assessed as having a positive impact on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language. While Welsh-medium (Category 3) provision is</p>	<p>Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim consultation document, which sets out the proposal to transfer pupils to Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog, confirming that Welsh-medium (Category 3) provision will be retained and</p>	<p>Positive impacts:</p> <p>The proposal increases opportunities for pupils to use Welsh through access to a larger Welsh-speaking</p>

	<p>retained, the transfer to Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog would place pupils within a larger and more sustainable Welsh-language environment, increasing day-to-day opportunities to use Welsh both formally in learning and informally through social interaction, enrichment activities, and community engagement. The broader range of Welsh-medium extracurricular, cultural, and community-based opportunities available at the receiving school further strengthens opportunities for pupils and families to use Welsh in meaningful, real-life contexts, aligning with the intent of the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015.</p>	<p>that pupils can continue to receive education through the medium of Welsh in a sustainable school environment.</p> <p>Welsh Language Impact Assessment, which identifies that the receiving school offers a broader range of Welsh-medium informal, extracurricular, cultural, and community-based opportunities than currently available at Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim.</p> <p>Estyn inspection evidence for both schools, indicating that Welsh is used as the principal language of teaching and communication and that pupils develop Welsh language skills within a Welsh-medium setting, with greater opportunities for peer interaction and progression in a larger school context.</p> <p>Information on after-school, cultural and community provision at Ysgol Griffith Jones and Ysgol Hafodwenog, including regular participation in Urdd</p>	<p>peer group and a broader range of Welsh-medium curricular, extracurricular, cultural and community activities at Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog.</p> <p>Increased participation in Urdd activities, enrichment provision and community engagement provides more frequent and authentic contexts for using Welsh informally and socially beyond the classroom, supporting confidence, fluency, and positive language attitudes.</p> <p>Negative impacts:</p> <p>There is a potential risk that some families may choose</p>
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		<p>cultural and sporting activities, Welsh heritage initiatives, music provision, and community engagement, all of which provide additional opportunities to use Welsh beyond the classroom.</p> <p>Carmarthenshire County Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022–2032, which emphasises the importance of sustaining Welsh-medium provision and increasing opportunities for learners to use Welsh in both formal and informal contexts.</p>	<p>the Category 2 (Dual Language) pathway at Ysgol Griffith Jones, which could result in a reduction in the level of Welsh-medium provision accessed by some pupils.</p> <p>Any potential short-term challenges associated with transitioning to a new school environment can be mitigated through planned induction, pastoral support, and clear communication, ensuring continuity of Welsh language use and progression.</p>
<p>Treating Welsh no less favourably than English</p>	<p>Yes – neutral impact.</p> <p>The proposal engages the Welsh Language Standards but does not disadvantage the Welsh language when compared with English.</p>	<p>The statutory consultation documentation for Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, which confirms bilingual provision of consultation materials and engagement throughout the process.</p>	<p>Positive impacts:</p> <p>The proposal safeguards linguistic equality by maintaining Welsh-medium education and</p>

	<p>Welsh-medium (Category 3) provision is maintained, and all public-facing services and communications relating to the proposal continue to be available in Welsh and English to an equal standard, in accordance with the Service Delivery Standards (1–83).</p>	<p>The Welsh Language Impact Assessment, which identifies continued compliance with the Welsh Language Standards and the maintenance of Welsh-medium education.</p> <p>Local Authority Welsh Language Standards compliance arrangements, ensuring public-facing communications, correspondence and responses are provided in the language of choice.</p> <p>School language categorisation information, confirming that the receiving schools operate as either a Category 3 Welsh-medium school or has a Category 3 Welsh-medium stream where Welsh is the main language of teaching, learning and communication.</p>	<p>ensuring full compliance with the Service Delivery Standards, reinforcing the equal status, visibility, and availability of Welsh alongside English in all public-facing services and communications.</p> <p>Negative impacts:</p> <p>There is a potential risk that some families may choose the Category 2 (Dual Language) pathway at Ysgol Griffith Jones, which could result in a reduction in the level of Welsh-medium provision accessed by some pupils.</p> <p>The proposal does not reduce access to Welsh-language services or opportunities, nor does it accord preferential</p>
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			treatment to English over Welsh.
<p>Policy Making Standards – due regard to the Welsh language</p>	<p>Yes – positive impact.</p> <p>The proposal directly engages the Policy Making Standards (Standards 88–93) as it requires explicit consideration of the effects on the Welsh language.</p> <p>A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been undertaken at the proposal stage, demonstrating due regard to the Welsh language by identifying potential impacts, assessing opportunities to enhance Welsh language use, and identifying mitigation measures where appropriate.</p>	<p>The statutory consultation document for Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, which includes an explicit assessment of the impact of the proposal on Welsh-medium education and the Welsh language.</p> <p>The Welsh Language Impact Assessment, which systematically evaluates impacts on Welsh language use, provision, and community engagement.</p> <p>Welsh language categorisation information confirming that both the closing and receiving schools operate as Category 3 Welsh-medium schools.</p> <p>Alignment with Carmarthenshire’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022–2032, which provides the strategic framework informing the proposal.</p> <p>Compliance with the Welsh Government School Organisation Code (Wales),</p>	<p>Positive impacts:</p> <p>The proposal demonstrates due regard to the Welsh language by embedding Welsh language considerations throughout policy development, consultation, and decision-making processes.</p> <p>It safeguards Welsh-medium provision, identifies opportunities to enhance informal and social use of Welsh, and aligns with local and national Welsh language policy objectives.</p> <p>Negative impacts:</p> <p>No negative impacts have been identified in relation to the</p>

		<p>which requires local authorities to give due regard to the Welsh language when developing school organisation proposals.</p>	<p>Policy Making Standards.</p> <p>The consideration of Welsh language impacts at an early stage mitigates the risk of unintended adverse effects and supports compliance with statutory requirements.</p>
<p>Service Delivery Standards – public-facing services in Welsh</p>	<p>Yes – neutral impact.</p> <p>The proposal engages the Service Delivery Standards (Standards 1–83) but does not disadvantage the Welsh language in comparison with English.</p> <p>All public-facing services, communications and engagement activities relating to the proposal will continue to be provided in Welsh and English to an equal standard.</p>	<p>The statutory consultation document for Ysgol Gynradd Meidrim, which confirms that consultation materials and engagement are provided bilingually and that individuals may communicate and receive responses in their language of choice.</p> <p>The Welsh Language Impact Assessment, which confirms continued compliance with the Welsh Language Standards and bilingual service delivery arrangements.</p> <p>Carmarthenshire County Council’s Welsh Language Standards compliance framework, which ensures</p>	<p>Positive impacts:</p> <p>The proposal maintains full compliance with the Service Delivery Standards, ensuring the continued availability, visibility, and equal treatment of Welsh in all public-facing services and communications, reinforcing Welsh as a normal and accessible language for engagement.</p> <p>Negative impacts:</p> <p>No negative impacts have been identified. The proposal does</p>

		<p>that all public-facing services, correspondence, and information are available in Welsh and English to an equal standard.</p> <p>School language categorisation information, confirming that the receiving school operates as a Category 3 Welsh-medium school where Welsh is the primary language of communication.</p>	<p>not reduce access to Welsh-language services, information, or engagement opportunities, nor does it favour English over Welsh.</p>
<p>Operational Standards – internal use of Welsh by staff</p>	<p>Yes – neutral impact.</p> <p>The proposal engages the Operational Standards (Standards 127–135) and is not expected to have an adverse effect on the internal use of Welsh by staff.</p> <p>The receiving school, Ysgol Hafodwenog, operates as a Category 3 Welsh-medium school where Welsh is the primary language of professional communication, supporting compliance with the Operational Standards and offering scope to strengthen</p>	<p>School language categorisation and operational practice, confirming that Ysgol Griffith Jones has a Category 3 stream and Ysgol Hafodwenog is a Category 3 Welsh-medium school where Welsh is the main language of teaching, learning and internal communication.</p> <p>The Welsh Language Impact Assessment, which identifies continued Welsh-medium operation and internal use of Welsh within the receiving schools.</p> <p>Local Authority workforce and Welsh language</p>	<p>Positive impacts:</p> <p>Staff will work within a Welsh-medium environment that normalises and reinforces the internal use of Welsh across professional communication, collaboration, and school life, with access to wider peer support and established Welsh-language practices.</p> <p>Negative impacts:</p> <p>No significant negative impacts</p>

	day-to-day internal use of Welsh.	compliance arrangements, which support staff to use Welsh in internal communications and access Welsh language development where required.	have been identified. Any short-term adjustment associated with staffing or transition can be mitigated through existing support arrangements and ongoing professional development.
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6. Community Linguistic Context

Census 2021 data show a decline in Welsh language ability across Carmarthenshire, including among children and young people in some rural communities. Schools providing Welsh-medium education therefore play a critical role in supporting language transmission and regular use. The proposal maintains Welsh-medium educational provision within the area and supports the resilience of the Welsh language locally.

Linguistic Profile of Meidrim, Trelech and surrounding areas.

Meidrim and Trelech are situated within a predominantly rural part of Carmarthenshire, alongside the wider St Clears area, which has experienced a decline in Welsh language ability in recent years, reflecting broader county-wide trends identified in Census 2021 data. While rural areas generally retain higher levels of Welsh language use than urban centres, reductions in the proportion of Welsh speakers, particularly among children and young people, present increasing challenges for sustaining intergenerational language transmission.

Although the Meidrim, Trelech, and St Clears areas continue to demonstrate cultural and linguistic strengths, Welsh language use within homes and community settings cannot be assumed consistently across all families. Demographic change, population mobility, and wider social factors have increased pressure on Welsh as a community

language, reinforcing the importance of schools as key environments for language acquisition, confidence, and regular use. In rural communities such as these, schools play a vital role not only in education but also in contributing to opportunities for Welsh language visibility and use within both the school environment and the wider community.

In this context, Ysgol Griffith Jones, serving the St Clears area, plays a key role in supporting Welsh language provision. The school provides Category 3 (Primarily Welsh) provision during the Foundation Learning phase, ensuring early immersion in Welsh, and from Year 3 onwards offers both Category 3 and Category 2 (Dual Language) pathways. This structure supports inclusion and maintains Welsh as a strong language of learning and communication. However, the linguistic context of the wider catchment means that continued emphasis on Welsh-medium experiences is essential to sustain confidence and progression for learners.

Meidrim has traditionally been a strong Welsh-speaking rural community, with relatively high levels of Welsh language use compared to wider county averages. However, recent demographic change and a reduction in the proportion of Welsh-speaking children reflect broader rural trends, meaning that sustained Welsh-medium educational provision remains essential to support language transmission and daily use among younger generations.

Trelech similarly reflects a rural linguistic profile where Welsh continues to be visible and used within community and cultural life. While levels of Welsh language ability remain comparatively strong, especially among older residents, there is evidence of gradual decline among children and young people, increasing the importance of schools as stable environments for Welsh language learning and confidence.

St Clears presents a more mixed linguistic profile, influenced by its role as a small town serving a wider rural hinterland and by higher levels of population mobility. Welsh is present within the community but is used less consistently in daily life than in surrounding rural villages, making schools such as Ysgol Griffith Jones particularly important in providing structured Welsh-medium experiences and supporting progression along Welsh-medium education pathways.

Welsh-medium schools across the Meidrim, Trelech, and St Clears communities therefore have a critical function in sustaining Welsh as a living language. Providing

stable, high-quality Welsh-medium education within viable school settings supports pupils to develop confidence and fluency in Welsh, regardless of home language background. Access to wider peer groups, enrichment activities, and community engagement opportunities further strengthens the likelihood that Welsh is used beyond formal lessons and embedded in everyday social and cultural life.

Analysis of Census 2021 data across Carmarthenshire highlights variation in Welsh language ability between communities, with rural areas such as Meidrim and Trelech generally recording higher proportions of Welsh speakers than more urbanised locations, including parts of the St Clears area. However, these communities are not immune to linguistic vulnerability, particularly where population numbers are small and community capacity is limited. This emphasises the need for sustainable, well-planned educational provision that can consistently support Welsh language development and use across generations.

Taken together, this evidence demonstrates that the linguistic environment across Meidrim, Trelech, and the St Clears area requires continued and proactive support to maintain and strengthen opportunities to use Welsh. The proposal therefore has a key role in reinforcing Welsh as a living language through education, supporting families, and contributing to the long-term resilience of Welsh within rural Carmarthenshire, in line with the objectives of Carmarthenshire’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the national ambition of Cymraeg 2050.

7. Risks and Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
<p>There is a potential risk that some families may choose the Category 2 (Dual Language) pathway at Ysgol Griffith Jones, which could result in a reduction in the level of Welsh-medium provision accessed by some pupils, particularly over time if uptake of the dual-language pathway increases.</p>	<p>Maintain a strong whole-school Welsh language ethos, ensuring Welsh is used consistently in assemblies, informal interactions, signage, and social activities across all pathways.</p> <p>Ensure that the Category 2 (Dual Language) pathway delivers a minimum of 50% Welsh-medium provision, with clear expectations set</p>

	<p>through curriculum planning and timetabling.</p> <p>Actively promote the benefits of the Category 3 (Primarily Welsh) pathway to parents and guardians through transition arrangements, information sessions, and regular communication.</p> <p>Provide targeted linguistic support and confidence-building interventions for learners and families to encourage continued engagement with Welsh-medium learning.</p> <p>Expand Welsh-medium extra-curricular and enrichment activities that are accessible to all pupils, regardless of pathway choice.</p> <p>Regularly monitor uptake trends and the balance of language provision, with oversight from school leadership, governors, and the local authority, enabling timely review if Welsh-medium access is being diluted.</p> <p>Align language pathway implementation with Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) priorities, particularly those supporting progression to Welsh-medium secondary education.</p>
<p>Short-term reduction in informal use of Welsh among pupils during transition</p>	<p>Planned transition arrangements, including induction visits and peer support, to help pupils build confidence</p>

	using Welsh in a new social environment. Clear expectations for Welsh language use embedded in daily routines and supported through pastoral care.
Disruption to pupils' confidence in using Welsh socially	Continued emphasis on Welsh as the main language of communication at the receiving school, with staff modelling high-quality Welsh and encouraging inclusive participation in classroom and social activities.
Loss of some locally based Welsh-medium community activities previously centred around Ysgol Meidrim	Engagement with Menter Iaith, local community venues and groups where practicable, alongside clear communication to support families in continuing community activities through alternative local provision and wider school-based opportunities.
Reduced visibility of Welsh within the Meidrim community following school closure	Reinforcement that Welsh-medium (Category 3) education is being retained locally, with pupils accessing a sustainable Welsh-medium school that supports Welsh language use in education, enrichment, and community engagement. Increased links with the Menter Iaith, Urdd and other local providers.
Variable engagement of parents/carers in Welsh-medium community and school activities	Clear, accessible bilingual communication outlining opportunities for parental and community

	engagement, volunteering and participation through Welsh-medium events and partnerships at the receiving school.
Uneven participation in Welsh-medium after-school, cultural or enrichment activities	Supported induction into after-school clubs, Urdd activities, cultural events, and enrichment provision, with encouragement from staff and peers to ensure activities are inclusive and accessible to all pupils
Perception that school closure could weaken Welsh-language transmission in the local area	Transparent communication explaining how Welsh-medium provision, cultural participation, and opportunities to use Welsh will be maintained and enhanced.
Potential pressure on staff to support Welsh language continuity during transition	Use of transition planning processes, professional collaboration between schools and access to Local Authority support where required, alongside ongoing monitoring of Welsh language progression.
Reduced opportunities for inter-generational Welsh language use within the Meidrim community	Encourage continued engagement with Meidrim community events, faith-based activities and local initiatives that provide inter-generational Welsh language opportunities, alongside promoting participation in wider community events linked to the receiving school.

Loss of informal Welsh language contact points linked to the physical school building	Support continued use of local community venues and shared spaces for Welsh-medium activities where appropriate, reducing reliance on the former school site alone.
Risk that Welsh language use becomes concentrated within the school setting rather than the wider community	<p>Strengthen links between the receiving school and community organisations, early-years provision and cultural groups to extend Welsh language use beyond the school environment.</p> <p>Increased links with the Menter Iaith, Urdd and other local providers.</p>

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Mitigation actions identified in this WLIA will be monitored through established Local Authority and school improvement processes and consultation feedback, with adjustments made where necessary to maximise positive impact on the Welsh language.

Ongoing monitoring will ensure continued compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, including the Policy-making Standards (88–93), Service Delivery Standards (1–83) and Operational Standards (127–135), as required of the local authority.

9. Continuous Improvement Mechanisms

This proposal demonstrates clear due regard to the Welsh Government’s School Organisation Code and the Welsh Language Standards, and the local authority will monitor Welsh-language outcomes throughout design, construction, and operation, reviewing evidence annually and refining actions so that Welsh is consistently promoted and treated no less favourably than English.

10. Conclusion and Summary

The proposal to close Ysgol Meidrim, with pupils transferring to either Ysgol Griffith Jones or Ysgol Hafodwenog, has been carefully assessed in terms of its potential

impact on the Welsh language. Overall, access to Welsh-medium education will be maintained, with opportunities to support and further strengthen the use of Welsh through effective mitigation measures. However, it is recognised that there is a potential risk that some families may opt for the Category 2 (Dual Language) pathway at Ysgol Griffith Jones, which could lead to a reduction in the extent of Welsh-medium provision accessed by some pupils from Year 3 onwards.

This risk can be mitigated through strong leadership, clear and consistent promotion of Welsh-medium pathways, and ongoing monitoring of language provision and pupil progression. In addition, the receiving schools offer larger peer groups and a wider range of curricular and extracurricular opportunities, which have the potential to enhance the use of Welsh in both formal and informal settings.

Subject to these measures, the proposal aligns with Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and the national ambitions of Cymraeg 2050, by safeguarding access to Welsh-medium education and supporting the continued development and everyday use of Welsh among children and young people. Overall, opportunities to use Welsh are expected to be maintained or enhanced, with robust safeguards in place to minimise any potential dilution of Welsh-medium uptake.

This WLIA will be reviewed at key stages of the statutory process, including following consultation and prior to determination, to ensure that any emerging issues or feedback are fully considered.