

Consultation Report

Proposal to Reconfigure Nursery Provision in Ammanford Town



sirgar.llyw.cymru
carmarthenshire.gov.wales

Cyngor Sir Gâr
Carmarthenshire
County Council



Contents

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Background	3
3. The Consultation Process	4
4. The Proposals	4
5. Analysis of Responses Received	5
6. Consultation Responses / Observations	7
7. Estyn’s Consultation Observation Response	39
8. Consultation with the pupils	42
9. Analysis of Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RhAG) Letter Submission	44
10. Conclusion	46
11. Recommendation	47
12. Next Steps	48

1. Executive Summary

This statutory consultation received a total of 121 responses. The overall balance of sentiment was strongly weighted towards opposition to the discontinuation of Ammanford Nursery School, with a number of respondents expressing concerns about the potential loss of a dedicated early years setting, the impact on working families, and the effect on community cohesion and Welsh language opportunities.

Nevertheless, a smaller proportion of responses expressed support or partial support for the proposals, particularly the extension of age ranges at alternative schools. Positive themes included the potential for greater flexibility in early years provision, improved continuity for children moving into primary education, and the opportunity to align local provision with broader county or national policies. Some respondents also noted possible financial efficiencies and the chance to modernise or streamline services.

2. Background

The proposal to reconfigure nursery provision in Ammanford has been prepared in response to the Council's Cabinet decision to remove Carmarthenshire's Rising 4s Policy, whereby children were historically eligible to enter full time primary education at the start of the school term in which they turned four years of age.

Currently, a small number of children in the Ammanford area receive their non statutory early years education at Ammanford Nursery School, which is the only maintained nursery school in the county. Children are admitted to the 3 to 5 age range school in the term following their third birthday, and are currently able to attend full time, although this is due to change to part time provision only from January 2026. All other nursery provision in maintained schools throughout Carmarthenshire is on a part time basis.

This report summarises the feedback gathered during the formal consultation on proposals to reconfigure nursery provision in Ammanford, held between 4 September and 16 October 2025. In accordance with the School Organisation Code (2018), all comments submitted during this period have been documented and are presented within this report.

3. The Consultation Process

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

The consultation document was published on the 4th of September 2025. The consultation document was distributed electronically to prescribed consultees and published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website. Hard copies of the consultation document were available upon request. The consultation document outlined the proposals being considered, the rationale for the proposals and the details of the consultation exercise. The consultation document also incorporated an individual response form. Consultees were advised of the availability of an online version to complete and where to send written letters or email responses.

Consultation with pupils of the three schools took place in dedicated sessions undertaken with a cross section of pupils from each school.

4. The Proposals

On the 4 September 2025 Carmarthenshire County Council published proposals to reconfigure nursery provision in Ammanford town by:

1. Discontinuing Ammanford Nursery School (**Proposal 1**)

Whilst also,

2. extending the age range at Ysgol Bro Banw from 4-11 to 3-11 (**Proposal 2**)
3. extending the age range at Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman from 4-11 to 3-11 (**Proposal 3**)

to accommodate pupils from Ammanford nursery school.

5. Analysis of Responses Received

The formal consultation period commenced on 4 September 2025 and closed on 16 October 2025 with a total of 121 responses received and are outlined in the table below:

Responses Received			
Online Survey	E-mail	Letter	Total
119	1	1	121*

* Total not including Estyn or Pupil Consultation observations

Key themes raised across all responses included:

- The educational and social benefits of a dedicated nursery setting for three- and four year olds.
- Concerns about childcare affordability, staffing, class sizes, and the suitability of alternative sites.
- The importance of early Welsh language exposure and fears of reduced opportunities if provision changes.
- Practical issues such as the transition process, community impact, and the need for clear communication about the rationale for change.

Overall Summary

Consultation Questions – <i>Online Survey</i>	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
Please let us know do you support: Proposal 1 – Discontinuing Ammanford Nursery School	12	6	101
Please let us know do you support: Proposal 2 – Extending the age range at Ysgol Bro Banw from 4-11 to 3-11	34	42	43
Please let us know do you support: Proposal 3 – Extending the age range at Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman from 4-11 to 3-11	29	46	44

Do you have any comments regarding Proposal 1 that you would like us to consider?	1	43	75
Do you have any comments regarding Proposal 2 that you would like us to consider?	12	95	12
Do you have any comments regarding Proposal 3 that you would like us to consider?	10	86	23

Total respondents categorised by school association

Ammanford Nursery	49
Ysgol Bro Banw	15
Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman	20
Another school	11
No association	21
No response	3

Respondent Category

Parent / carer or guardian	75	Member of the community	27
Prospective parent / carer or guardian	7	Community Council	1
Governor	2	Other:	3
Staff	3	Left Blank	1

6. Consultation Responses / Observations

6.1 Do you have any comments regarding Proposal 1 that you would like us to consider?

Proposal 1 - Discontinuing Ammanford Nursery School

Do you support the proposal?

Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
12	6	101

Supportive Comments

Theme: Equity of Access to Childcare Provision:

The respondent supports discontinuing Ammanford Nursery School on the grounds of fairness, stating that it is inequitable for Ammanford residents to receive free childcare when this is not available to families elsewhere in the county. The respondent suggests that, if the nursery remains open, charges should be introduced to ensure consistency and equity across the county.

Local Authority response

The LA recognises the importance of fairness and consistency in the provision of early years education and childcare across Carmarthenshire.

We acknowledge the respondent's concern regarding fairness and consistency in early years provision across Carmarthenshire. Historically, Ammanford Nursery has provided full time education for 3 year olds, which differs from other maintained school based nursery provision in the county. However, following the Council's decision to remove the Rising 4s Policy, from January 2026 all maintained nursery provision, including Ammanford, will be offered on a part-time basis only, ensuring equity across Carmarthenshire schools.

Introducing charges for nursery education in a maintained setting would not align with Welsh Government policy, which requires local authorities to provide a minimum of 10 hours of funded early years education for 3 year olds. Charging could create barriers for families and conflict with statutory duties.

The proposal to discontinue Ammanford Nursery and extend the age range at Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman to 3–11 will standardise provision across

the county, ensuring all families have access to part-time early years education on the same basis without introducing fees.

The LA is committed to providing high quality, accessible early years provision which aims to increase opportunities for children to access Welsh medium education from an early age and to ensure equity of access across the county.

Concerns / Disagreement

Theme: Loss of a Valued Community Asset:

Many respondents describe Ammanford Nursery School as a long standing, specialist, and unique setting that is central to the community. They highlight its history, reputation, and the role it plays in bringing together families and supporting local businesses.

Local Authority response

The LA acknowledges that Ammanford Nursery is a unique setting within Carmarthenshire being the only maintained nursery school in the county and its long-standing role in early years education have contributed to its reputation and specialist status over the years.

However, the rationale for change is linked to the removal of the Rising 4s Policy and the need for equity of provision across Carmarthenshire. The proposals aim to standardise nursery provision by extending the age range at Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman to 3–11, aligning them with other primary schools in the county. This would ensure continuity of education within a single school setting, provide access to a wider pool of staff and resources, and support Welsh language development from an earlier age.

The Council recognises the importance of community impact and has completed a Community Impact Assessment. It notes that while Ammanford Nursery currently offers a breakfast club and after school provision, these services will continue to be available at the alternative schools. Both Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman are within walking distance of the current site, which helps maintain local connections and minimise disruption for families.

In summary, while the proposals acknowledge the historic and community value of Ammanford Nursery, they seek to balance this with the need for consistent, sustainable provision and improved continuity for learners. Transitional support for families and staff is planned to mitigate the impact of change.

Theme: Negative Impact on Children’s Early Education and Development:

Respondents emphasise that the nursery provides a nurturing, high quality, and developmentally appropriate environment for young children. Concerns are raised that closure would remove a vital foundation for children’s learning, confidence, and social skills, particularly for those who may struggle in larger or less specialised settings.

Local Authority response

The LA recognises the high quality, nurturing environment provided by Ammanford Nursery and its role in supporting children’s early development.

The Council’s position is that the proposed alternative provision at Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman will maintain, and in some respects enhance, these qualities. Both schools have strong Estyn reports (2024) and are rated “No Follow Up,” indicating high standards of teaching, care, and wellbeing. They offer inclusive environments, robust safeguarding, and effective strategies for early identification of learning needs. The proposals aim to provide continuity of education within a single school setting, reducing transition disruption and enabling access to a wider pool of staff expertise and resources.

Concerns about larger settings are acknowledged. To mitigate this, the Council plans a gradual and supported transition for three year olds, starting with part-time provision and progressing to full school days. Both schools have nurturing environments and strong pastoral systems, which Estyn noted as a strength, ensuring that pupils feel safe and develop confidence and social skills.

In summary, while the closure of Ammanford Nursery represents a significant change, the Council anticipates that the alternative provision will deliver an equivalent or improved standard of care and education, with additional benefits such as continuity, access to specialist support, and alignment with national priorities for early years education. The LA believes that transferring the provision to Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman will provide as good or better provision for early years education.

Theme: Adverse Effects on Working Families and Childcare Affordability:

Several statements note that the nursery offers essential full time provision that enables parents to work. Closure is seen as likely to create financial hardship for families, increase childcare costs, and reduce access to affordable, reliable care.

Local Authority response

The LA acknowledges that Ammanford Nursery has historically provided full time nursery education, which is unique in Carmarthenshire compared to other school based nursery provision that operates on a part-time basis.

From January 2026, the nursery was already scheduled to move to part-time provision in line with the removal of the Rising 4s Policy. The Council's proposals aim to standardise early years education across the county by offering part-time nursery provision at Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman. While this change may reduce access to full time education, the Council anticipates that wrap around care will be provided by private and voluntary childcare providers in the area. The proposal explicitly notes that this shift creates opportunities for local providers to expand their services, helping to meet demand for extended hours and supporting the local economy.

The Council recognises the potential financial impact on families and has committed to consulting openly with private providers to ensure that sufficient wrap around care options are available. Additionally, working parents of eligible 3–4 year olds can access up to 30 hours of funded combined childcare and education through the Welsh Government's Childcare Offer, which will help mitigate costs for many families.

Theme: Loss of Specialist Staff and Quality of Provision:

The expertise and dedication of the nursery's staff are frequently praised. Respondents fear that closure would result in the loss of skilled practitioners and a decline in the quality of early years education.

Local Authority response

The LA acknowledges and values the expertise and commitment of Ammanford Nursery's staff and recognises the value they bring to early years education.

The Council's proposals do not seek to diminish the quality of early years education but to maintain and enhance it through integration into Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman. Both schools have recently been inspected and rated "No Follow Up," demonstrating strong leadership, inclusive environments, and robust systems for supporting pupils' wellbeing and learning. These schools offer access to a wider pool of staff expertise, collaborative professional development opportunities, and specialist resources, which can strengthen the quality of provision for nursery aged children.

To address concerns about staff retention, the Council has committed to providing full support during the transition period and notes that there may be opportunities for employment within the alternative schools. This approach aims to retain skilled practitioners within the local education system, ensuring continuity of care and learning for children.

In summary, while the closure of Ammanford Nursery represents a significant change, the Council anticipates that the expertise of staff will continue to benefit pupils through

redeployment opportunities and that the quality of early years education will be sustained and strengthened within larger, well resourced schools.

Theme: Wider Community and Economic Impact:

Some comments highlight the broader consequences for the town, including potential job losses, reduced footfall for local businesses, and a diminished sense of community identity and spirit.

Local Authority response

The LA recognise that the closure of Ammanford Nursery could have wider implications for the local community beyond education. Respondents' comments about job losses and reduced footfall for local businesses reflect the school's role as a long standing community hub.

The Council has considered these impacts through a Community Impact Assessment. While the nursery building will no longer operate as a standalone school, it will continue to be used for nursery provision under Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman, ensuring that the site remains active and accessible. Both alternative schools, Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman are located within walking distance of the current nursery, helping to maintain community links and minimise disruption to local businesses. Additionally, these schools already offer comparable services such as breakfast and after school clubs, which will continue to support families and reduce the risk of losing essential childcare options.

The Council acknowledges concerns about community identity and spirit. To address this, transitional support will be provided for families and staff, and engagement activities will be planned to strengthen relationships with the alternative schools. The proposal also creates opportunities for local childcare providers to expand wrap around care, which could help offset economic impacts and sustain local employment.

In summary, while the closure of Ammanford Nursery represents a significant change, the Council aims to mitigate broader community impacts by retaining the building for educational use, maintaining local services, and supporting economic resilience through collaboration with private providers.

Theme: Concerns about Alternative Provision and Capacity:

Respondents question whether other local schools could accommodate the displaced children, citing issues such as class sizes, lack of space, and the risk of children being placed in less suitable environments.

Local Authority response

The LA will ensure that any alternative provision is sufficient in capacity, quality, and suitability to meet the needs of all children affected. The School Organisation Code requires that alternative provision must be at least equivalent to that currently available, and that transition arrangements are in place to minimise disruption. The children will be transferred to either Ysgol Bro Banw or Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman depending on parental choice. There will be sufficient capacity in both schools to accommodate the children displaced.

Theme: Perceived Lack of Transparency and Consultation:

Several statements express dissatisfaction with the consultation process, suggesting that information has not been fully shared and that the rationale for closure is unclear or financially driven.

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to clear, transparent, and meaningful consultation, as required by the School Organisation Code.

The consultation document provided clarity on both the process and the rationale behind the proposals:

- 1. Transparency of Information**

The consultation process followed the Welsh Government's *School Organisation Code (2018)* and included a detailed timeline, stakeholder list, and multiple ways for consultees to respond. The document clearly stated that the consultation period ran from 4 September to 16 October 2025, and that all responses will be summarised in a Consultation Report published at least two weeks before any statutory notice is issued. It also explains the subsequent objection and determination stages, ensuring that stakeholders understand how decisions will be made.

- 2. Rationale for Closure**

The proposal is not financially driven but stems from the Council's decision to remove the *Rising 4s Policy* in March 2024. This change means children will

start full time school the term after their fourth birthday, creating a need to review nursery provision for consistency across Carmarthenshire. Ammanford Nursery is currently the only standalone nursery school in the county, and its full time model differs from all other school based nursery provision. The proposed changes aim to standardise provision, improve continuity of education, and align with national priorities such as the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and Curriculum for Wales.

3. Financial Context

While the document notes that a revenue saving of approximately £180k will result from moving to part-time provision, this is presented as a consequence rather than the primary driver. The main objectives are educational equity, sustainability, and improved transition for learners.

In summary, the consultation process is designed to be open and inclusive, and the rationale for closure is based on policy changes and educational priorities rather than purely financial considerations.

All proposals, supporting evidence, and impact assessments will be made available to stakeholders, and all feedback will be conscientiously considered before any decision is made.

6.2 Do you have any comments regarding Proposal 2 that you would like us to consider?

Proposal 2 – Extending the age range at Ysgol Bro Banw from 4-11 to 3-11

Do you support the proposal?

Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
34	42	43

Supportive Comments

Theme: Support for Age Extension to 3 Years

Respondents generally agree that lowering the starting age to 3 is beneficial, giving children an earlier start in education and routine.

Local Authority response

The LA welcomes the support for extending the age range at Ysgol Bro Banw. This proposal aims to deliver those benefits by offering part-time early years provision within Ysgol Bro Banw, ensuring continuity of education from nursery through to Year 6. Research and Estyn findings highlight that early access to structured learning environments supports the development of foundational skills, confidence, and social interaction, which are essential for lifelong learning.

The proposal also addresses gaps in provision created by the closure of Ammanford Nursery and aligns Ysgol Bro Banw with other 3–11 schools across Carmarthenshire. Benefits include:

- Early identification of learning needs and timely interventions.
- Improved transition from nursery to primary education, reducing disruption for pupils.
- Opportunities for linguistic development, particularly in Welsh, supporting the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the ambition to increase Welsh speakers by 2050.
- Access to a nurturing environment with strong pastoral systems and a bespoke, stimulating curriculum, as noted in the school's recent Estyn inspection.

Theme: Improved Access to Childcare for Working Parents

Several comments highlight that extending the age range would help working families by providing accessible, school based childcare and reducing reliance on costly private provision.

Local Authority response

The LA appreciates the recognition that extending the age range at Ysgol Bro Banw will benefit working families. This proposal ensures that children can access part-time early years education within a school setting from the term following their third birthday, providing a structured, nurturing environment and reducing the need for families to seek alternative arrangements.

While the provision will be part-time in line with national policy, the Council acknowledges the importance of wrap around care for working parents. The proposal creates opportunities for local childcare providers to expand services, and families will continue to benefit from the Welsh Government's Childcare Offer, which provides up to 30 hours of funded combined childcare and education for eligible 3–4 year olds.

This approach supports affordability and flexibility for parents while maintaining high quality early years education.

In addition, integrating nursery provision within Ysgol Bro Banw will strengthen continuity of education, improve transition for pupils, and align with Carmarthenshire's commitment to equity across all 3–11 schools.

Theme: Preference for Full-Day Provision and Language Streams

Positive feedback includes requests for full day sessions and the continuation of both Welsh and English language streams to maintain choice for parents.

Local Authority response

Children who have turned three are eligible for a minimum of 10 hours per week of non-statutory approved education provision delivered on a part-time sessional basis, either in one of the county's 42 primary schools which are designated as age 3-11 schools and where this provision is maintained by the Council, or a minimum of 10 hours education in approved non maintained settings such as day nurseries or Cylchoedd Meithrin.

Theme: Cost and Financial Relief for Families

Some respondents note that the extension would be better than paying high daily childcare fees, making education more affordable.

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to making early years education more affordable and accessible for all families. Extending the age range at Ysgol Bro Banw is intended to reduce financial barriers and support families in accessing high quality provision.

Theme: Conditional Support Linked to Nursery Closure

A few statements indicate that if Ammanford Nursery closes, extending Bro Banw's age range is seen as a necessary alternative.

Local Authority response

The LA acknowledges that support for extending Ysgol Bro Banw's age range to 3–11 as an essential step should Ammanford Nursery close. The Council agrees that this proposal is a key part of ensuring continuity of early years education in the Ammanford area. By introducing part-time nursery provision at Ysgol Bro Banw, the proposal addresses the gap created by the closure of Ammanford Nursery and aligns the school with other 3–11 primary schools across Carmarthenshire.

Concerns / Disagreement

Theme: Inadequate Facilities for Younger Children

Concerns that Ysgol Bro Banw is not purpose built for 3 year olds, with unsuitable spaces (e.g., portacabins) and lack of play-based learning environments.

Local Authority response

The LA recognises the importance of age appropriate, high quality learning environments for early years education. The LA will undertake a full assessment of the suitability of existing and proposed facilities and will work with the school to make necessary adaptations or investments to ensure that the needs of 3 year olds are met in line with statutory requirements and best practice.

Theme: Overcrowding and Capacity Issues

Respondents highlight that the school is already large and adding younger children would lead to overcrowding, reduced space, and logistical challenges such as parking.

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to ensuring that all schools have sufficient capacity and resources to accommodate pupils safely and comfortably. The LA has reviewed projected pupil numbers, available space, and site management and is satisfied that overcrowding will be avoided and that the learning environment remains conducive to high quality education. Regarding logistical concerns such as parking, the schools are located within close proximity to the current nursery site, and the proposal anticipates minimal impact on travel patterns. Most families already walk to these schools, and no additional transport costs or significant changes to traffic flow are expected.

Theme: Staffing and Resource Constraints

Comments indicate that the school is already stretched with teaching staff and funding. Adding another year group could exacerbate workload and stress for staff.

Local Authority response

The LA recognises the importance of adequate staffing and resources to maintain educational standards. Any proposal to extend the age range will be accompanied by a review of staffing levels, training needs, and funding allocations to ensure that the school is effectively supported and staffed.

Theme: Impact on Quality of Education

Fears that larger class sizes and amalgamation of classes will deteriorate the quality of education and individual attention for pupils.

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to maintaining and improving the quality of education for all pupils. Class sizes, groupings, and teaching arrangements will be carefully planned to ensure that all children receive appropriate support and individual attention. Dedicated spaces within the infant site have been identified for nursery use, and these will be adapted to meet early years requirements. This approach ensures that nursery pupils will have their own learning environment, separate from older year groups.

Theme: Developmental Concerns for Younger Children

Statements suggest that younger children may find the environment overwhelming and that teachers may lack specialist training for early years, potentially causing developmental delays.

Local Authority response

The LA acknowledges the unique developmental needs of 3 year olds and the importance of specialist early years pedagogy. The LA and school will ensure that staff receive relevant professional development and that transition arrangements are in place to support younger children as they join the school. The transition will be gradual and supported, starting with part-time provision to help children settle into the school environment without feeling overwhelmed. Both Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman have strong pastoral systems and nurturing environments, which Estyn identified as a key strength during a recent inspection, ensuring pupils feel safe and develop confidence and social skills. It should also be noted that 3-year old education

is not statutory, and it is the right and duty of parents to decide whether accept the provision for their children.

Theme: Preference for Dedicated Nursery Provision

Some respondents believe that maintaining a separate nursery setting is essential for safeguarding quality and reducing pressure on primary school resources.

Local Authority response

The LA recognises the value placed on dedicated nursery provision and will consider this feedback as part of the statutory consultation process. We will ensure that the chosen model of provision meets the needs of children, families, and the wider community, and maintains high standards of early years education. In summary, while the structure may change, the Council anticipates that quality will be safeguarded and enhanced through integrated provision, additional funding, and strong leadership.

Theme: Language Category of Ysgol Bro Banw

The respondent requested that a clear message is conveyed that Ysgol Bro Banw will continue to provide education through the medium of Welsh and English.

Local Authority response

As stated in the consultation document, Ysgol Bro Banw is classified as a category 3.1 language school (3=Welsh/1=English), this designation will remain unchanged.

6.3 Do you have any comments regarding Proposal 3 that you would like us to consider?

Proposal 3 - extending the age range at Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman from 4-11 to 3-11

Do you support the proposal?

Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
29	46	44

Supportive Comments

Theme: General Support for the Proposal:

Several respondents express clear support for extending the age range, stating they “fully support” or “strongly agree” with the proposal and believe it will benefit children and parents in the Ammanford area.

Local Authority response

The LA welcomes the support for extending the age range and acknowledges that many respondents believe this change will benefit children and parents in the Ammanford area. The proposal aligns with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), which prioritises early access to education and supports the development of strong foundations for learning and wellbeing from the earliest years, and the Cabinet Vision of improving the availability of early years education and childcare settings across the county, particularly in rural areas; with a particular focus on providing and strengthening Welsh medium childcare in all areas.

Theme: Practical Benefits for Families:

Some comments highlight that extending the age range would be preferable to paying high childcare costs and would provide a solution for families who need access to early years education.

Local Authority response

The LA recognises that extending the age range can help families by providing affordable and accessible early years education.

Theme: Welsh Language Feasibility:

One respondent notes that there are fewer first language Welsh children, suggesting that extending the age range is achievable and could support Welsh language provision.

Local Authority response

The LA notes the feedback regarding the number of first language Welsh children and the feasibility of extending the age range to support Welsh language provision. The WESP sets out clear targets for increasing Welsh medium opportunities and the LA will continue to monitor demand and ensure that provision is responsive to the needs of the community.

Theme: Preference for Continuity of Nursery Provision:

While supporting the proposal, some respondents indicate a preference for keeping the nursery open or having Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman take over as the preschool nursery if Ammanford Nursery cannot continue.

Local Authority response

While some respondents support the proposal, there is a preference among some for maintaining the existing nursery or for Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman to take over as the preschool nursery if Ammanford Nursery cannot continue. It should be noted that 3 year old nursery education is planned to be provided in Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman and Ysgol Bro Banw and it will be a matter for parental choice to decide which nursery provision children will attend.

Theme: Conditional Support Based on Demand:

A few statements suggest that the proposal should proceed only if there is sufficient demand, and that it should not be used solely as a reason to close the nursery.

Local Authority response

The LA acknowledges that some support is conditional on sufficient demand for the extended provision, and that the proposal should not be used solely as a reason to close the nursery. We anticipate that there will be sufficient demand for provision in 3-11 schools if the nursery is discontinued.

Theme: Potential Benefits for Children's Development:

Respondents believe that extending the age range would benefit children's learning and development, giving them a better start and supporting parents.

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to ensuring that all children have the best possible start in life. Extending the age range is intended to support children's learning and development, in line with the WESP's focus on early immersion, language development, and school readiness.

Concerns / Disagreement

Theme: Insufficient Space and Overcrowding:

Many respondents express concern that Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman is already at or over capacity, with inadequate classroom space, overcrowded classes, and unsuitable facilities (e.g., conservatories, cabins). They fear that adding younger children will worsen these issues and negatively affect both new and existing pupils.

Local Authority response

The LA recognises concerns about space and potential overcrowding at Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman. The LA will undertake a thorough assessment of current and projected pupil numbers, classroom space, and facilities, and will ensure that any changes do not compromise the safety, comfort, or quality of the learning environment. Additional capacity is being provided in Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman to accommodate children in the nursery class.

Theme: Staffing and Resource Constraints:

There is a recurring theme that the school is struggling to afford sufficient staff and resources for its current pupil numbers. Respondents worry that extending the age range will stretch staff further, reduce the quality of education, and lead to amalgamation of classes.

Local Authority response

The LA acknowledges the importance of adequate staffing and resources to maintain educational standards. Any extension of the age range will be accompanied by a review of staffing levels, funding, and training needs to ensure that the school is fully supported. There will be sufficient and suitably qualified staff in the school to deliver this.

Theme: Quality and Suitability of Provision for Young Children:

Several comments highlight concerns that the school environment is not appropriate for 3 year olds, who may feel overwhelmed or anxious in a large, busy setting. Some respondents question whether schoolteachers are qualified to care for this age group and warn of potential developmental delays.

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to ensuring that provision for 3 year olds is developmentally appropriate, nurturing, and delivered by suitably qualified staff. The LA and school will ensure that staff receive relevant professional development and that the environment is adapted as needed to support younger children. It should also be noted that 3 year old nursery education is non-statutory and it is right and duty of parents to decide if they feel provision is suitable for their own children.

Theme: Impact on Other Schools and Community:

Respondents note that extending the age range at Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman could have knock on effects on other local schools, potentially leaving them under subscribed and causing upset for families not planning to attend this school after nursery age.

Local Authority response

The LA will consider the potential impact of extending the age range at Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman on other local schools and the wider community. The LA will work to ensure that changes do not disadvantage other schools or families in the area. It is anticipated that other schools may gain pupil numbers, because Ammanford Nursery has historically attracted pupils from other schools' catchment areas due to the full time provision. Many of these children have tended to leave the nursery when they reach full time age and attend other schools. With only part-time available, we would expect these children to remain in their own catchments.

Theme: Lack of Transparency and Consultation:

Some statements criticise the consultation process, suggesting that information about space, funding, and implementation has not been fully shared or is unclear.

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to clear, transparent, and meaningful consultation, as required by the School Organisation Code.

The consultation document provided clarity on both the process and the rationale behind the proposals:

4. Transparency of Information

The consultation process followed the Welsh Government's *School*

Organisation Code (2018) and included a detailed timeline, stakeholder list, and multiple ways for consultees to respond. The document clearly stated that the consultation period ran from 4 September to 16 October 2025, and that all responses will be summarised in a Consultation Report published at least two weeks before any statutory notice is issued. It also explains the subsequent objection and determination stages, ensuring that stakeholders understand how decisions will be made.

5. **Rationale for Closure**

The proposal is not financially driven but stems from the Council's decision to remove the *Rising 4s Policy* in March 2024. This change means children will start full time school the term after their fourth birthday, creating a need to review nursery provision for consistency across Carmarthenshire. Ammanford Nursery is currently the only standalone nursery school in the county, and its full-time model differs from all other school based nursery provision. The proposed changes aim to standardise provision, improve continuity of education, and align with national priorities such as the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and Curriculum for Wales.

6. **Financial Context**

While the document notes that a revenue saving of approximately £180k will result from moving to part-time provision, this is presented as a consequence rather than the primary driver. The main objectives are educational equity, sustainability, and improved transition for learners.

In summary, the consultation process is designed to be open and inclusive, and the rationale for closure is based on policy changes and educational priorities rather than purely financial considerations.

All proposals, supporting evidence, and impact assessments will be made available to stakeholders, and all feedback will be conscientiously considered before any decision is made.

Theme: Concerns about Change and Loss of Existing Provision:

There is a strong sentiment that the current system works well and should not be changed. Respondents fear that increasing the age range will deteriorate the quality of education and lead to the loss of a valued nursery provision.

Local Authority response

The LA recognises the value placed on the current system and the concerns about losing a valued nursery provision. The LA will ensure that any transition is managed carefully and that the quality of early years provision is maintained. We believe that

the quality of provision in the 3-11 schools will be as good or better. All feedback will be conscientiously considered as part of the statutory process, and the Local Authority remains committed to making decisions in the best interests of children, families, and the wider community.

Theme: General Opposition and Uncertainty:

Several responses simply state “No” or “Why change something that isn’t broken!”, reflecting general opposition or uncertainty about the proposal.

Local Authority response

The LA acknowledges that some respondents are opposed to the proposal or uncertain about its benefits. All feedback will be conscientiously considered as part of the statutory process, and the LA will ensure that any decision is made in the best interests of children, families, and the wider community.

6.4 Are there any other options that you think the Local Authority should be considering for the Ammanford town area?

Themes from alternative options identified below:

Theme: Preservation of Ammanford Nursery School

- Strong opposition to closure: “Keep the nursery school open”, “Leave things as they are”.
- Emphasis on its role in child development and community: “Sector leading”, “Prepares children for primary”, “Specialist school with only two others in Wales”.
- Concern about impact on parents and working families: “Parents rely on this childcare”, “Closure would force parents out of work”.

Local Authority response

The LA recognises the strong views expressed by respondents who wish to keep Ammanford Nursery open and maintain the current arrangements. The Council recognises the school’s long standing role in the community, its reputation as a specialist setting, and its contribution to child development and family support.

The rationale for the proposal is not to diminish quality but to ensure equity and sustainability across Carmarthenshire following the removal of the Rising 4s Policy. The proposal aims to standardise early years education by extending the age range

at Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman to 3–11, aligning them with other primary schools in the county and improving continuity of education.

The LA's vision is to ensure that all catchment areas have access to high quality nursery education, and that any changes are made to improve educational outcomes and sustainability.

Theme: Funding and Affordability

- Requests for alternative funding solutions: “Ask for an affordable payment for full time education”, “Apply to Welsh Government for funding”.
- Criticism of cost cutting measures: “Why fix something that isn't broken?”, “Find cost cutting exercises elsewhere”.

Local Authority response

The LA acknowledges suggestions from respondents to explore alternative funding solutions, while these ideas reflect a strong desire to retain the current model, the Council must operate within statutory and policy frameworks. Early years education for 3 year olds is a non statutory provision, and Welsh Government guidance requires that this is delivered on a part-time basis. The removal of the Rising 4s Policy means that full time nursery education is no longer consistent with national policy and therefore cannot be maintained through local charging or additional grants.

The rationale for the proposal is not driven by cost cutting but by the need to ensure equity and sustainability across Carmarthenshire. Ammanford Nursery is currently the only standalone nursery school in the county, operating differently from all other school based provision and providing a service which is not available anywhere else in the county. Aligning Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman with other 3–11 schools will provide continuity of education, improve transition for pupils, and support Welsh language development in line with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and Curriculum for Wales.

While the proposal will result in a revenue saving of approximately £180k due to the move from full time to part-time provision, this is a consequence rather than the primary driver. The main objectives remain educational consistency, improved learner experience, and compliance with national policy.

In summary, the Council appreciates the concerns raised and the commitment to maintaining high quality provision. However, the proposed changes are necessary to align with statutory requirements and deliver a sustainable, equitable model for early years education across the county.

Theme: Full-Time Nursery Provision for 3-Year-Olds

- Calls to maintain or extend full-time provision: “Bring back full time from 3”, “Allow full-time education to 3-year-olds”.
- Argument that flexibility benefits working parents: “Parents should have the option to opt out”.

Local Authority response

The LA acknowledges the requests to maintain or extend full time nursery provision and the argument that flexibility benefits working parents. Historically, Ammanford Nursery has provided full time education for 3 year olds, which is unique in Carmarthenshire. However, following the removal of the Rising 4s Policy, Welsh Government guidance requires that early years education for 3 year olds is delivered on a part-time basis. From January 2026, all maintained nursery provision in Carmarthenshire will operate part-time, and full time education for 3 year olds cannot be reinstated under current statutory arrangements.

The Council recognises the importance of flexibility for working families. While school based nursery provision will be part-time, parents will continue to benefit from the Welsh Government’s Childcare Offer, which provides up to 30 hours of funded combined childcare and education for eligible 3–4 year olds. In addition, the proposal creates opportunities for local childcare providers to expand wrap around care, helping to meet demand for extended hours and supporting working parents.

In summary, while full time nursery education cannot be maintained under national policy, the Council is committed to supporting families through part-time provision in school settings, funded childcare schemes, and collaboration with local providers to ensure flexible, affordable options.

Theme: Infrastructure and School Development

- Support for building a new school: “Creating a new school”, “Building the proposed super school”.
- Concerns about current facilities: “Bro Banw spread across multiple sites”, “Relocating Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman”.

Local Authority response

We recognise concerns about Ysgol Bro Banw operating across multiple sites and the challenges this may present. The proposal addresses this by allocating dedicated spaces for nursery provision within the infant site, ensuring that younger pupils have appropriate environments for play based learning.

Regarding relocating Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman, the proposal does not involve moving the school but rather utilising the existing Ammanford Nursery building to provide additional space for nursery classes. This approach ensures continuity for families, minimises disruption, and makes efficient use of existing resources.

This approach is consistent with the Council's commitment to sustainability, equity, and efficient resource management.

Theme: Transport and Parking

Issues with traffic and parking: "Traffic in that area is horrific", "Introduce annual parents' pickup car parking sticker".

Local Authority response

The schools involved in the proposal are located within close proximity to the current Ammanford Nursery site, and therefore the Council anticipates minimal impact on travel patterns and journey times. Most families already walk to these schools, and no additional transport costs or significant changes to traffic flow are expected.

We do not expect the proposal to lead to any additional pressures on local infrastructure as the total number of pupils will be no more than at present.

Theme: Multi-Purpose Use of Buildings

Ideas for dual use: "Community Hub", "Food Bank during summer holidays".

Local Authority response

The LA is encouraged to consider the potential for schools to serve as community hubs, offering a range of services such as childcare, adult learning, and social activities. This approach is supported by both the School Organisation Code and the WESP as a way to maximise the value of public assets and support community resilience. It will be a decision for the governing body of each school.

Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman, will utilise the existing Ammanford Nursery building to provide additional space for nursery classes. This approach ensures continuity for families, minimises disruption, and makes efficient use of existing resources.

Theme: Equality and Access

Calls for consistency across the county: “Other areas have far more going on”, “Extend age in all primary schools”.

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to ensuring equity of access to high quality education for all children, regardless of background or location. The WESP sets out targets to increase Welsh medium provision and ensure that all families have a choice of language and setting. The School Organisation Code requires equality impact assessments for all proposals. We continuously review primary school provision across the county and creating other 3-11 schools in areas where there is a gap in provision of nursery education. In other areas where the demand for education is met by private providers, schools will remain as 4-11.

6.5a In your opinion, what positive or adverse effects would this proposal have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

Theme: Welsh-medium provision and continuity

Requests for Welsh language teaching to be maintained or expanded, including bilingual and Welsh only nursery options.

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to increasing Welsh medium provision and ensuring linguistic continuity from nursery through to secondary education. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) sets out clear targets to expand Welsh medium places and maintain bilingual pathways, working with partners such as Mudiad Meithrin and private providers to ensure access in all areas. All proposals are assessed for their impact on Welsh language provision and compliance with the WESP.

Theme: Early immersion and language development

Emphasis on the importance of early exposure to Welsh for children's language skills and confidence.

Local Authority response

Carmarthenshire's WESP prioritises immersion education in the early years, recognising that early contact with Welsh supports fluency and confidence. The LA will continue to promote and develop Welsh medium early years provision, ensuring that children have opportunities for immersion from age 3, in line with national policy and curriculum requirements. This provision will continue under the direction of the 3-11 schools.

Theme: Impact of nursery closure on Welsh language

Concerns that removing the nursery would reduce opportunities for Welsh language use and immersion.

Local Authority response

The proposed closure of Ysgol Feithrin Rhydaman would not negatively impact Welsh language provision in the area. Pupils would continue to have full access to high-quality Welsh-medium early years education at Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman and Ysgol Bro Banw.

Both schools are well-established providers of Welsh-medium education and are equipped to support pupils in developing their Welsh language skills from the earliest stages. Importantly, learners would benefit from receiving their education within the same establishment from nursery through to the end of the primary phase. This continuity supports the progressive development of skills across the curriculum and promotes greater fluency and confidence in the Welsh language.

The transfer of nursery provision to these settings would ensure that the Welsh language continues to thrive in the community, while also offering pupils a consistent and supportive educational environment.

Theme: Risk of language divide

Fear that changes could create separation between English and Welsh-speaking children.

Local Authority response

The LA recognises the importance of inclusive, bilingual environments and will work to avoid any unintended division between language groups. Ammanford Nursery has always operated a dual stream system. Proposals have been developed to support integration and equal treatment of Welsh and English, in line with statutory duties to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English across both 3-11 schools.

Theme: Quality and capacity considerations

Issues around class sizes, staffing, and maintaining quality Welsh language provision in larger settings.

Local Authority response

Quality of provision is a key consideration in all organisational changes. The LA will ensure that any changes to class sizes or staffing are managed to maintain high standards of Welsh medium education, with appropriate resources and support for staff development. Proposals have been assessed for their impact on educational standards and the ability to deliver the full curriculum in Welsh.

Theme: Government Welsh language targets

References to national goals (e.g., one million Welsh speakers by 2050) and how proposals may hinder progress.

Local Authority response

Carmarthenshire's WESP aligns with Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy, aiming to significantly increase the number of Welsh speakers. All organisational proposals are evaluated for their contribution to these targets, and the LA will continue to invest in Welsh medium education to support national ambitions. This will be fundamentally supported by both 3-11 schools.

Theme: Role of current nursery environment

Recognition that the existing nursery setting supports Welsh language through small class sizes and focused provision.

Local Authority response

The LA values the contribution of small, focused nursery settings to Welsh language development. Where changes are proposed, efforts will be made to replicate the benefits of small group immersion and individual support within new or alternative

provision in the 3-11 schools, ensuring continuity of high quality Welsh medium experiences.

Theme: Minimal or no perceived impact

Some respondents indicated no effect or little difference regarding Welsh language opportunities.

Local Authority response

All proposals are subject to thorough impact assessment, including consideration of stakeholder feedback. Where minimal impact is identified, the LA will continue to monitor outcomes to ensure that Welsh language opportunities are maintained and enhanced wherever possible.

6.5b How do you think the proposal could be formulated or revised so that it would have positive or more positive effects on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

Theme: Maintain current nursery provision

Calls to keep Ammanford Nursery open and unchanged, with repeated emphasis on “do not close” and “if it’s not broken, don’t fix it”.

Local Authority response

The LA acknowledges the strength of feeling expressed by respondents who wish to keep Ammanford Nursery open. We recognise the school’s long standing role in the community and its reputation as a setting. However, the proposals are driven by the need to ensure equity and sustainability across Carmarthenshire following the removal of the Rising 4s Policy. Our aim is not to diminish quality but to standardise provision, improve continuity of education, and maintain strong Welsh language opportunities. Transitional support will be provided to minimise disruption for families and staff, and we remain committed to delivering high quality early years education in the Ammanford area.

The LA will ensure that any changes are in the best interests of learners and the community, and that the rationale for the proposals moving forward and feedback is clearly communicated and justified to Cabinet.

Theme: Welsh medium focus

Suggestions to make the nursery fully Welsh medium or strengthen Welsh language provision (e.g., “Retain full time and convert the Nursery School to Welsh only”, “Provide solely Welsh medium nursery”, “Should be the first language”).

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to increasing Welsh medium provision in line with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and national targets. Proposals will be developed to ensure that Welsh medium and bilingual pathways are available and accessible through the 3-11 schools, and that the language category of provision reflects local demand and supports the goal of increasing the number of Welsh speakers. The children will be transferred to either Ysgol Bro Banw or Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman depending on parental choice.

Theme: Early immersion and continuity

Requests to ensure children access Welsh language earlier and maintain continuity through the education stages (e.g., “Get soaked In the Welsh sooner”, “It could be implemented to ensure positive impacts of children accessing the language earlier...”).

Local Authority response

Carmarthenshire’s WESP prioritises early immersion in Welsh, recognising its importance for language development and continuity. To achieve this, the proposals to extend the age range at Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman to 3–11 are designed to provide Welsh medium opportunities from the earliest stages of education at either school. This approach ensures that children can begin their linguistic journey at age three and continue seamlessly through primary education without disruption.

Theme: Preserve small setting benefits

Recognition that the nursery’s small size supports one-to-one interaction and Welsh language development, which could be lost in larger schools.

Local Authority response

Should the proposals proceed, the Local Authority will work with both schools to ensure that any new arrangements maintain appropriate staffing ratios, providing targeted Welsh language support, and ensuring that nursery classes have dedicated spaces designed for play based learning. Our aim is to preserve the nurturing environment and strong linguistic foundations that parents and carers have highlighted as important.

Theme: Community and parental choice

Concerns about limiting options for parents and the need to maintain flexibility in school choice (e.g., “Maintain options – will this limit people's choice...”).

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to providing a range of options for parents, including both Welsh medium and English medium.

The Local Authority recognises the importance of maintaining parental choice and flexibility in early years education. The proposals to extend the age range at Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman are designed to increase options for families, not reduce them. Parents will continue to have access to both Welsh medium and English medium and the changes will ensure that nursery provision remains available within walking distance of the current site. Our aim is to provide equitable, high quality provision across Carmarthenshire while preserving choice and supporting the diverse needs of families.

6.5c How do you think the proposal could be formulated or revised so that it would not have adverse effects or have less adverse effects on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?**Theme: Maintain current nursery provision**

Many responses call for keeping Ammanford Nursery open and unchanged, with repeated statements such as “Do not close the nursery!”, “Keep things as they are”, “Keep Ammanford nursery as it is”, and “Don’t close the nursery school”.

Local Authority response

The Local Authority acknowledges the strength of feeling expressed by respondents who wish to keep Ammanford Nursery open. We recognise the school’s long standing role in the community and its reputation as a setting. However, the proposals are driven by the need to ensure equity and sustainability across Carmarthenshire following the removal of the Rising 4s Policy. Our aim is not to diminish quality but to standardise provision, improve continuity of education, and maintain strong Welsh language opportunities. Transitional support will be provided to minimise disruption for

families and staff, and we remain committed to delivering high quality early years education in the Ammanford area.

Theme: Recognition of bilingual and cultural value

Several comments highlight the nursery's role in promoting Welsh language, culture, and history, and its bilingual environment (e.g., "Ammanford Nursery is bilingual and all pupils interact through the medium of English and Welsh", "The nursery is heavily involved with the development of Welsh culture, history and language").

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to promoting the Welsh language and culture, as set out in the WESP. The value of bilingual and culturally rich environments is recognised, and any proposals will be developed to ensure that opportunities for Welsh language use and cultural engagement are maintained or enhanced. The impact on Welsh language and culture is a key consideration in all decision making. We believe that the transfer of children into Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman and Ysgol Bro Banw will enhance Welsh medium provision.

Theme: Alternative suggestions or mitigation

Some suggest specific actions, such as "Make enough room for the demand in YGR", or "By not going ahead".

Local Authority response

The LA has considered all reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures as part of the statutory process. This includes reviewing capacity in receiving schools, ensuring sufficient Welsh medium places, and considering whether proposals can be revised to address concerns. All alternatives and mitigation options have been assessed for their impact on Welsh language opportunities and educational outcomes. Capacity will be added to Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman as part of this proposal.

Theme: Concerns about English-medium pathways

One response notes, "Children go to English streams", indicating a concern about the balance between Welsh and English medium provision.

Local Authority response

The Local Authority is committed to providing both Welsh medium and English medium pathways in line with parental choice and local demand. Proposals have been assessed to ensure that they do not disadvantage either language group and that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than English, as required by the School Organisation Code and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). Our aim is to maintain strong Welsh language opportunities while preserving flexibility for families.

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

Theme: Strong opposition to closure of the nursery

Many responses urge not to close Ammanford Nursery, emphasising its value to the community, children, and families.

Local Authority response

The LA acknowledges the significant support for maintaining Ammanford Nursery and recognises its valued role in the community.

We appreciate the emphasis placed on its contribution to children's learning, family support, and community cohesion. However, the proposals are driven by the need to ensure equity and sustainability across Carmarthenshire following the removal of the Rising 4s Policy. Our aim is not to diminish quality but to standardise provision, improve continuity of education, and maintain strong Welsh language opportunities. Transitional support will be provided to minimise disruption for families and staff, and we remain committed to delivering high quality early years education in the Ammanford area.

Theme: Importance of small, community-based early years provision

Comments highlight the benefits of a small, dedicated nursery setting for children's learning, confidence, and wellbeing, as well as the close relationships built between staff, children, and parents.

Local Authority response

The LA recognises the comments regarding the perceived advantages of small, community based early years settings in supporting children's development and fostering strong relationships. Our aim is to ensure that children continue to experience a nurturing environment that promotes confidence, wellbeing, and high quality learning at both Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman.

Theme: Concerns about impact on working families and childcare

Several responses mention the need for affordable, accessible, and flexible childcare, and the challenges that changes to nursery provision or hours would create for working parents and carers.

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to supporting working families by ensuring that early years provision is accessible, affordable, and flexible. Proposals will be assessed for their impact on childcare availability and affordability, and the LA will work with partners to minimise disruption and support families' needs.

Theme: Welsh-medium and cultural provision

Some respondents call for strengthening or maintaining Welsh medium provision, including suggestions to make the nursery fully Welsh medium and concerns about the impact on the Welsh language and culture in Ammanford.

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to promoting and expanding Welsh medium provision in line with the WESP and national targets. All proposals are developed to ensure that opportunities for Welsh language use and cultural engagement are maintained or enhanced. This proposal would ensure that nursery/three year olds will be able to receive their education through the medium of Welsh at both Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman and the Welsh stream at Ysgol Bro Banw.

Theme: Transparency and clarity of the proposal

Requests for clearer communication about the reasons for the proposal, its purpose, and its potential impacts. Some express anxiety or frustration about the process and lack of information.

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to clear, transparent, and meaningful consultation, as required by the School Organisation Code.

The consultation document provided clarity on both the process and the rationale behind the proposals:

7. Transparency of Information

The consultation process followed the Welsh Government's *School Organisation Code (2018)* and included a detailed timeline, stakeholder list, and multiple ways for consultees to respond. The document clearly stated that the consultation period ran from 4 September to 16 October 2025, and that all responses will be summarised in a Consultation Report published at least two weeks before any statutory notice is issued. It also explains the subsequent objection and determination stages, ensuring that stakeholders understand how decisions will be made.

8. Rationale for Closure

The proposal is not financially driven but stems from the Council's decision to remove the *Rising 4s Policy* in March 2024. This change means children will start full time school the term after their fourth birthday, creating a need to review nursery provision for consistency across Carmarthenshire. Ammanford Nursery is currently the only standalone nursery school in the county, and its full time model differs from all other school based nursery provision. The proposed changes aim to standardise provision, improve continuity of education, and align with national priorities such as the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and Curriculum for Wales.

9. Financial Context

While the document notes that a revenue saving of approximately £180k will result from moving to part-time provision, this is presented as a consequence rather than the primary driver. The main objectives are educational equity, sustainability, and improved transition for learners.

In summary, the consultation process is designed to be open and inclusive, and the rationale for closure is based on policy changes and educational priorities rather than purely financial considerations.

Theme: Alternative suggestions and mitigation

Suggestions include fundraising events, extending Bro Banw's age range, or revising the proposal to better meet community needs.

Local Authority response

The LA considered all reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures as part of the statutory process. This included reviewing capacity in receiving schools, ensuring sufficient Welsh medium places, and considering whether proposals can be revised to address concerns.

Theme: Concerns about larger schools and class sizes

Worries that moving children to larger primary schools could overwhelm young children, increase class sizes, and reduce the quality of care and education.

Local Authority response

The LA understands the concerns about moving younger children into larger primary schools and the potential impact on class sizes and quality of care. We are committed to ensuring that any changes do not compromise children's wellbeing or educational standards. Dedicated nursery spaces will be provided within the alternative schools, and staffing ratios will be maintained to meet early years requirements. Class sizes and groupings will be carefully planned to ensure individual attention and a nurturing environment.

Theme: Recognition of the nursery's track record and reputation

Statements that Ammanford Nursery has a long history of success, is highly valued, and provides an excellent start for children.

Local Authority response

The LA values the contribution of Ammanford Nursery to early years education and recognises its positive reputation and long standing role in the community. We appreciate the emphasis placed on its success and the excellent start it provides for children. However, the proposals are driven by the need to ensure equity and sustainability across Carmarthenshire following the removal of the Rising 4s Policy. Our aim is not to diminish quality but to standardise provision, improve continuity of education, and maintain strong Welsh language opportunities. Transitional support will be provided to minimise disruption for families and staff, and we remain committed to delivering high quality early years education in the Ammanford area.

Theme: Financial considerations

Some comments reference funding issues, cost saving motives, or propose introducing charges if the nursery remains open.

Local Authority response

Introducing charges for nursery education in a maintained setting would not align with Welsh Government policy, which requires local authorities to provide a minimum of 10

hours of funded early years education for 3 year olds. Charging could create barriers for families and conflict with statutory duties.

Theme: Perceived lack of support for the proposal

Several responses state that there is little or no community support for the proposed changes.

Local Authority response

The LA is committed to meaningful consultation and will conscientiously consider all feedback received. The level of community support or opposition will be a key factor in decision making, and the LA will ensure that the views of all stakeholders are taken into account in line with statutory requirements.

7. Estyn's Consultation Observation Response

Estyn's response to a consultation on proposals to reconfigure nursery provision in Ammanford town from September 2026

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

Estyn is of the opinion that this proposal is likely to maintain the standard of educational provision and pupils' standards in the area.

Description and benefits

The local authority appears to have presented a clear rationale for change in line with the Council's Cabinet decision to remove Carmarthenshire's Rising 4s Policy in March

2024. This has provided an opportunity to review nursery provision in the area and to achieve a consistent approach across the county.

The local authority has identified the main benefits and disadvantages for the proposal successfully. The benefits identify the gradual and supported transition for 3-year-olds entering school, the potential for employment at alternative schools, the standardisation of nursery provision in Ammanford town area in line with other schools for pupils aged 3 to 11 in Carmarthenshire and more opportunities for private childcare providers who offer 'wrap around' care. The authority acknowledges the disadvantages of the proposal, such as the change for staff and pupils and families relying on full-time provision for working or caring purposes having to make alternative arrangements. In addition, the loss of the small school ethos with pupils having to adjust to a larger school environment. The authority has identified appropriate steps to address potential risks.

The local authority has considered alternative options but has discounted these as they did not align with the Council's recent Cabinet decision to remove Carmarthenshire's Rising 4s Policy and equity of provision throughout Carmarthenshire's schools which cater for pupils aged 3 to 11. In addition, Ammanford Nursery is the only stand-alone nursery school in Carmarthenshire providing full time education.

The local authority gives due consideration on the effect the proposal will have on transport, noting that as the provision of early years education is for pupils under compulsory school age, free transport would not be available for pupils, therefore the proposal does not have any associated transport costs.

The authority has provided a Welsh language impact assessment on the extent to which the proposal would support the targets in the approved Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). It states that the proposal would offer Welsh medium nursery education for three-year-olds at both Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman and Ysgol Bro Banw and would strengthen the transition between Welsh-medium nursery provision and primary education in the Ammanford town area. There will be no reduction in Welsh language provision.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The local authority considers the effect of the proposal on the quality of education thoughtfully and comments on the school's most recent Estyn inspection report and its performance. The local authority states that Ammanford Nursery received a very positive report in all areas and that the school received three recommendations. The authority believes that the likely impact of the proposal to discontinue Ammanford Nursery and transfer pupils with their peers to a primary school for 3- to 11-year-old pupils, would enable pupils to have greater access to a wider range of experiences.

The authority believes that there is no potential impact on the development of pupils' skills as the provision for skill development is good in all schools. It is noted in all inspection reports that most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, those with additional learning needs and those who have English as an additional language, make strong progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding from

their starting points. The Council's view is that Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman would provide education for pupils which is of at least equivalent quality or better than that provided at Ammanford Nursery. Therefore, should the proposal proceed, it is not anticipated that it would have a negative impact on standards and progress overall.

In terms of teaching and learning experiences the local authority states that there is no potential negative impact as the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum across Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman is very effective. Teachers across the schools' plan in detail and provide a range of rich learning experiences that engage and stimulate pupils' interest. Should the proposal proceed, the authority suggests it would ensure a greater pool of staff to share expertise to enhance the curriculum design provision. In addition, the local authority states that the proposal would facilitate a consistent uninterrupted education, therefore, minimising the potential for disruption during transition from nursery to primary.

The proposal outlines that Ammanford Nursery does not have permanent leadership. There is an acting headteacher on site for three days per week following the retirement of the previous headteacher. Financial restraint does not allow the school to recruit a full-time non-teaching headteacher. Should proposals proceed it would ensure that all pupils have a permanent full time headteacher on site. It is not anticipated that the implementation of the proposal, if adopted, would have negative impact on the development of national priorities or professional learning opportunities for staff. Effective monitoring processes ensure that leaders, staff and members of the governing body are all involved in evaluating the school's work and supporting staff to identify personal professional learning needs alongside the school's priorities for improvement across all schools. If adopted, the authority states that the proposal will lead to an increase in pupil numbers across three sites rather than across the current four sites. It is proposed that this will have a positive effect on the efficient use of resources to contribute to a sustainable future for Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman.

Local Authority response to Estyn's observations

The LA welcomes the response from Estyn's response to a consultation on proposals to reconfigure nursery provision in Ammanford town from September 2026 and appreciates the considered evaluation of the educational aspects of the proposal.

Recognition of Educational Standards and Rationale

We note Estyn's view that the proposal is likely to maintain the standard of educational provision and pupils' standards in the area. The LA is committed to ensuring that any changes to nursery provision are underpinned by a clear rationale, as outlined in the consultation document and in line with the Council's Cabinet decision to remove the Rising 4s Policy. We are pleased that Estyn recognises the clarity of the rationale and the alignment with the aim of achieving consistency and equity across Carmarthenshire's schools.

Consideration of Benefits, Disadvantages, and Mitigation

We acknowledge Estyn's summary that the LA has identified both the benefits and disadvantages of the proposal, including the supported transition for 3 year olds, employment opportunities, standardisation of provision, and the potential for increased wraparound care. The LA is committed to supporting families and staff through any transition and will continue to monitor and address any risks or disadvantages identified, including the impact on those who rely on full time provision and the change from a small school ethos.

Welsh Language and Curriculum

We welcome Estyn's recognition that the proposal will not reduce Welsh language provision and that it supports the targets in the approved WESP. The LA remains committed to strengthening Welsh medium nursery education and ensuring smooth transitions between nursery and primary education in the Ammanford area.

Quality of Education and Leadership

The LA notes Estyn's reference to the positive inspection outcomes for Ammanford Nursery and the assurance that Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman will provide education of at least equivalent quality. We are committed to maintaining high standards, effective curriculum delivery, and strong leadership across all settings. The proposal's aim to ensure permanent, full time headteacher leadership for all pupils is a key part of our strategy for sustainable improvement.

Efficient Use of Resources and Sustainability

We acknowledge Estyn's comments regarding the efficient use of resources and the potential for a more sustainable future for local schools. The LA will continue to ensure that resources are used effectively to support high quality provision and positive outcomes for all children.

Ongoing Engagement

The LA values the input of Estyn and all stakeholders in this process. We remain committed to transparent communication, careful planning, and ongoing evaluation to ensure that any changes deliver the best possible outcomes for children, families, and the wider community.

8. Consultation with the pupils

School - Ysgol Feithrin Rhydaman

Date: 15/10/25

Interviewed: 8 pupils (Cross section ages 3 and 4)

Pupil Feedback:

Pupils expressed that they would miss playing with friends, outdoor and indoor play, gardening, creative activities, and the unique spaces and routines of their current school. The consultation was adapted to be age appropriate, focusing on what children would miss most if the school closed.

LA Response:

The LA thanks the children and staff at Ysgol Feithrin Rhydaman for sharing their thoughts and feelings. We recognise how important friendships, play, and familiar routines are for young children, and how much pupils value the unique environment and activities at their school. Should any changes take place, the schools will work closely with families and staff to ensure that children continue to have opportunities for play, creativity, and outdoor learning, and that transitions are as smooth and supportive as possible. The wellbeing of every child will remain a priority, and we will strive to maintain the nurturing and enjoyable experiences that pupils have described.

School - Ysgol Bro Banw

Date: 15/10/25

Interviewed: 14 pupils (Cross section years 2-6)

Ysgol Bro Banw Pupil Feedback:

Pupils were generally positive about welcoming younger children, seeing opportunities for new friendships, learning, and supporting others. They also raised concerns about possible overcrowding, limited space, noise, and the need for more staff and resources. Some pupils worried about the impact on school routines, assemblies, and facilities, as well as practical issues like parking and school trips.

LA Response:

The LA appreciates the thoughtful and constructive feedback from the Bro Banw school council and pupils. We are encouraged by the willingness to welcome younger children and the recognition of the benefits of a larger, more inclusive school community. At the same time, we take seriously the concerns about space, resources, and the impact on daily routines. The schools will ensure that any changes are carefully planned, with appropriate investment in classrooms, staffing, and facilities to support all pupils. We will work with the school to address practical challenges such as parking and to maintain the positive, caring environment that pupils value. The views of pupils will continue to inform our planning and decision making.

School - Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman

Date: 10/10/25

Interviewed: 12 pupils (Cross section years 3-6)

Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman Pupil Feedback:

Pupils were mostly positive about the idea of welcoming younger children, highlighting benefits such as earlier learning, easier transitions, more friends, and convenience for families. They also expressed pride in their Welsh language and cultural activities. Concerns were raised about limited space, the potential loss of valued facilities (like the hall), and the need for additional classrooms. Pupils suggested creative solutions, such as using other buildings or outdoor areas, and emphasised their willingness to help new children settle in.

LA Response:

The LA is grateful to the pupils and staff at YGG Rhydaman for their detailed and thoughtful responses. We are pleased to see the enthusiasm for welcoming new pupils and the pride in the school's Welsh language and cultural life. The LA acknowledges concerns about space and facilities and will work with the school to explore solutions that minimise disruption and preserve valued activities. We are committed to ensuring that any changes support the continued growth of Welsh medium education and maintain the positive, inclusive ethos described by pupils. The creative ideas and willingness to support new children are greatly appreciated and will be considered as part of our planning.

9. Analysis of Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RhAG) Letter Submission

Supportive Comments

Theme: Addressing Gaps in Early Years Provision

- The proposals tackle gaps in early years Welsh medium provision in several catchment areas.

Theme: Expanding Early Welsh Immersion

- The proposals will expand opportunities for early immersion in Welsh, supporting linguistic development and continuity.

Theme: Smooth Transition for Young Children

- The plans are expected to facilitate a smooth transition for 3 year olds into the school environment, strengthening relationships between families and schools.

Theme: School Sustainability

- Positive impact on school viability by reducing surplus places and increasing pupil numbers.

Theme: Community and Language Promotion

- The proposals support community engagement and the wider strategic aims of Cymraeg 2050 and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

Local Authority response

The Local Authority welcomes RhAG's strong support for the proposals to extend early years Welsh-medium provision and strengthen linguistic continuity. These themes align with statutory guidance and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, which prioritise early immersion, community engagement, and school sustainability. The positive feedback will be considered as part of the statutory decision making process.

Concerns / Disagreement

Theme: Staffing and Language Competence

- The need for clear plans on permanent staffing, including Welsh language competence, to ensure high standards of immersion.

Theme: Full Welsh Immersion

- Provision should offer full Welsh immersion, not just bilingual sessions, to maximise linguistic outcomes.

Theme: Parental Engagement

- Action plans should be included to engage parents, especially non Welsh speakers, and promote the benefits of Welsh medium education.

Theme: Safeguarding the Non-Maintained Welsh Sector

- The proposals should not undermine private and voluntary Welsh medium nursery providers; collaboration and monitoring are recommended.

Theme: Transition Risks

- Risks of children transferring to English medium streams or schools if immersion is not robust or clearly communicated.

Theme: Monitoring and Targets

- The need for measurable targets for language progress and systems to monitor the proportion of provision delivered in Welsh.

Theme: Community Initiatives

- Continued support for community initiatives promoting Welsh outside the classroom (e.g., Urdd clubs, parent language lessons, Mentrau Iaith).

Local Authority response

We as a LA recognise the importance of the use of Welsh beyond the classroom. We will, through the council's Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and by working with our partners, continue to maximise opportunities for all Carmarthenshire pupils and our communities to use Welsh in all aspects of everyday life.

Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman and Ysgol Bro Banw provide a plethora of activities and events through the medium of Welsh which will enrich the experiences of children and their families.

10. Conclusion

Following a comprehensive review of all consultation feedback, the Local Authority confirms that its original assessment remains robust and unchanged. We sincerely thank all stakeholders for their thoughtful contributions during the formal consultation period, which have been carefully considered as part of this process.

The proposals to discontinue Ammanford Nursery School and extend the age range at Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman to 3–11 are considered the most appropriate way forward. This conclusion is based on:

- **Educational Equity:** The changes are necessary to comply with the removal of the Rising 4s Policy and to standardise nursery provision across Carmarthenshire.
- **Quality of Education:** The Local Authority believes that Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman can provide nursery education of at least equivalent quality, with benefits such as continuity of education, access to a wider pool of staff, and strong Welsh language provision.
- **Welsh Language Commitment:** The proposals support the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and will maintain or enhance Welsh medium opportunities.

- **Community and Practical Considerations:** While acknowledging concerns about the loss of a dedicated nursery setting, the Local Authority plans transitional support and measures to mitigate impacts on families and the community.

In short, the Local Authority recommends proceeding with the proposals, as they are seen as equitable, sustainable, and aligned with national priorities for early years education.

11. Recommendation

Following careful consideration of all consultation responses and a detailed assessment of the proposals, the Local Authority recommends discontinuing Ammanford Nursery and proceeding with the change to extend the school's age range from 4–11 to 3–11 without amendment. This recommendation reflects the clear benefits identified during the consultation, including greater parental choice, improved continuity of education from nursery through primary, enhanced sustainability of local provision, and positive impacts on equality of opportunity and Welsh language development.

Following careful consideration and a comprehensive review of all consultation feedback and supporting evidence, the Local Authority recommends proceeding with the proposals as outlined in the consultation document.

This recommendation is made because the proposals are considered the most appropriate way forward to achieve:

- **Educational Equity:** Aligning nursery provision across Carmarthenshire following the removal of the Rising 4s Policy.
- **Quality of Education:** Ensuring continuity of learning within a single school setting, access to a wider pool of staff expertise, and strong Welsh language provision.
- **Welsh Language Commitment:** Supporting the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and maintaining or enhancing opportunities for early immersion in Welsh.
- **Community and Practical Considerations:** Minimising disruption through transitional support and retaining local access to nursery provision within walking distance of the current site.
- **Sustainability:** Creating a consistent, efficient model for early years education that meets national priorities and supports long term viability.

The Local Authority acknowledges the concerns raised during consultation and will implement measures to mitigate impacts on families, staff, and the wider community. These include transitional support, capacity planning, and collaboration with childcare providers to ensure wrap around care options remain available.

12. Next Steps

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

The Consultation Report will be published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website at least 2 weeks prior to the publication of a Statutory Notice should they decide to proceed.