

# Consultation with Children and Young People

## Gader Catchment Area 2014

As part of the work of school reorganization, there was a period of statutory consultation in the Gader Catchment Area from 10 October to 24 November 2014. The Council is required to consult the children and young people of the area on the proposal to establish a multi-site community Welsh medium all-through catchment area school for pupils aged 3-16.

Appropriate documents were prepared for Key Stage 2 children and the Secondary School Council, and a facilitator was put in place to complete the work of discussing the option with children and young people (*A session was also held with the Foundation Phase at Ysgol Brithdir following a request from the school*).

Each session took half an hour to an hour to complete. It included explaining the proposal and asking questions that required them to have a discussion, the answers were noted. They also had an opportunity to complete separate sheets, which meant they were able to give personal answers.

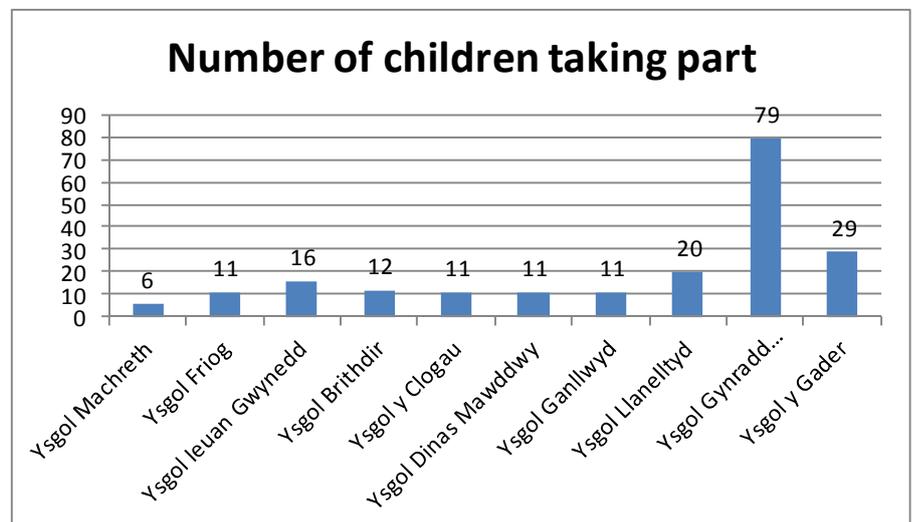
10 associated schools and 206 children and young people took part.

The consultation session timetable is shown below, along with a list of relevant schools and the number that responded.

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Wednesday</b><br><b>5 November 2014</b> | <b>9.30am</b><br><b>Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy</b>     | <b>11.00am</b>                          | <b>1.30pm</b><br><b>Ysgol Clogau</b>     |
| <b>Thursday</b><br><b>6 November 2014</b>  | <b>9.30am</b><br><b>Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd</b>     | <b>11.00am</b>                          | <b>1.30pm</b><br><b>Ysgol Brithdir</b>   |
| <b>Thursday</b><br><b>13 November 2014</b> | <b>9.30am</b><br><b>Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau</b> | <b>11.00am</b><br><b>Ysgol Ganllwyd</b> | <b>1.30pm</b><br><b>Ysgol Llanelltyd</b> |
| <b>Thursday</b><br><b>18 November</b>      | <b>9.30am</b>                                   | <b>11.00am</b><br><b>Ysgol Machreth</b> | <b>1.30pm</b><br><b>Ysgol Brithdir</b>   |
| <b>Friday</b><br><b>21 November</b>        | <b>9.30am</b><br><b>Ysgol Uwchradd Y Gader</b>  | <b>11.00am</b><br><b>Ysgol Friog</b>    | <b>1.30pm</b>                            |

### Schools:

1. Ysgol Machreth
2. Ysgol Friog
3. Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd
4. Ysgol Brithdir
5. Ysgol Clogau
6. Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy
7. Ysgol Ganllwyd
8. Ysgol Llanelltyd
9. Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau
10. Ysgol Uwchradd y Gader



As part of the introduction for the consultation work, the facilitator asked the children questions during a discussion, in order to create a relationship and to find out how they felt in general.

### **What is the purpose of changing schools?**

**A general question to find out whether the children understood what the Council intended doing**

- **Trying to get everyone in the same place**
- **Too many schools everywhere**
- **Expanding this school to get more children**
- **Closing schools and moving children to other schools**
- **Improving the education**
- **Not having too many buildings around**
- **To stop spending so much money**
- **Too many children in one school**
- **Moving because the other school is too far**
- **Fewer small schools**
- **More space**
- **Improving a building**

### **Why does Gwynedd Council want children's opinions?**

**The facilitator was keen to find out whether the children understood the consultation process and why it needed to be done.**

- **To get our opinion**
- **Make sure the children understand the idea**
- **The views of parents, carers, teachers and friends**

### **Here are some of the questions raised during these discussions:**

- **Why does a good school have to close?**
- **Why close a school with a lot of children?**
- **Why close small ones and open large ones?**
- **Why move a school that's full to a school with fewer?**
- **How do we know the children are happy to move?**
- **Why not Rhydymain to Brithdir?**

## Here are the answers to the specific questions the children were asked

*NOTE – Children and young people’s comments are quoted directly from the documents produced during the consultation.*

| Question 1 – How do you feel about this? |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| School                                   |  |  |  |
| Ysgol Machreth                           | 3   | 2   | 1   |
| Ysgol Friog                              | 4   | 5   | 2   |
| Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd                      | 8   | 5   | 2   |
| Ysgol Brithdir                           | 0   | 0   | 12  |
| Ysgol y Clogau                           | 1   | 6   | 5   |
| Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy                      | 4   | 0   | 7   |
| Ysgol Ganllwyd                           | 1   | 2   | 9   |
| Ysgol Llanelltyd                         | 11  | 3   | 6   |
| Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau                  | 40  | 1   | 38  |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>72</b>   | <b>24</b>   | <b>82</b>   |

| Question 2 – What worries you about this? |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will work affect us (builders)?</li> <li>• Why bring down the canteen?</li> <li>• If the schools close, will the other schools have more staff?</li> <li>• Will we get a new car park?</li> <li>• If more children came to this school, would there be many bullies? I would think other friends would come, and bullies?</li> <li>• How many children would be in each class? My mother said that one teacher can only teach 30 children at a time</li> <li>• I feel happy, sad and all right about this because the sad part is that some children would lose friends some children are bullies and they are the ones looking silly. I’m happy about this because the big new site will be better with lots of friends</li> <li>• I don’t think the teachers will be happy because they’ll lose their jobs</li> </ul> |
| <b>Ysgol Llanelltyd</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I wouldn’t know where I’m going. I don’t like changes</li> <li>• Where will we go when the school is in the middle of this change?</li> <li>• How much time will it take to make all the changes?</li> <li>• Because I wouldn’t like having other people who were in the other school. I like the school as it is, and I’m not sure I’d like the changes to the school</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Ysgol Brithdir</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do you want to close schools down?</li> <li>• Why not Rhydymain to Brithdir?</li> </ul>   |

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
|                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do we have to move?</li> <li>• I don't want to move why have you chosen Rhydymain to stay open?</li> <li>• It would take a very long time to get to Rhydymain from my house</li> <li>• Teachers losing jobs</li> <li>• Rhydymain is far from everywhere, leave Brithdir alone</li> <li>• You're spoiling the community</li> <li>• It'll be expensive and there are better things to do than close good schools</li> <li>• We don't want another school, I don't like this idea</li> </ul> |
| <b>Ysgol Clogau</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children being bullied</li> <li>• I don't want this school to close</li> <li>• The school is going to change into something different</li> <li>• Teachers at the other school will be nasty</li> <li>• Losing our friends</li> <li>• History of my family here</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing will be the same, neither friends nor teachers. Because I know how it feels because I've moved house and school</li> <li>• Too many children in the new school</li> <li>• Losing friends</li> <li>• If the school is too big because of too many children, too many taxis</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Ysgol Ganllwyd</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People being mean to you</li> <li>• Not used to new children</li> <li>• Taking a long time to get used to a new school</li> <li>• I don't want to move school because I can't see friends</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why are they changing school</li> <li>• Teachers going to another school</li> <li>• I don't want new teachers</li> <li>• What school uniform will we be wearing?</li> <li>• Who will the teachers be?</li> <li>• How many children will be in the classes?</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Ysgol Friog</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think it's a good thing because children can have new friends and not just that there will be more people to raise money for this school</li> <li>• I'm happy for children to come to the school because I want more friends because there aren't many children here</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Ysgol Machreth</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sad because of having to go far</li> <li>• Sad because this school is a very happy school</li> <li>• Happy because of getting new friends</li> </ul>  |

**Question 3 – What are you looking forward to most?**

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A canteen attached to the school</li><li>• More Praise</li><li>• New instruments</li><li>• New roof</li><li>• More teachers so we don't have to break classes up</li><li>• More space, I've had enough of running over the same place time after time</li><li>• Parking site</li><li>• Maybe having infants attached to our school</li><li>• Getting new curtains</li><li>• Bigger class</li><li>• Making the hall more posh</li><li>• I want more children in the school to be able to play with them</li><li>• Nice and kind teachers</li><li>• I would like it if there were somewhere to relax</li></ul> |
| <b>Ysgol Llanelltyd</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Language teachers</li><li>• Toilet for the girls and the boys</li><li>• Better internet</li><li>• I would like to have an extension and have a sports building</li></ul>   |
| <b>Ysgol Brithdir</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep the school open</li><li>• Nothing happening, don't move anyone</li><li>• Stay open, leave it alone make a school near our school</li><li>• Stay here, make another school in Brithdir</li><li>• Rhydymain to move to Brithdir</li></ul>   |
| <b>Ysgol Clogau</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Friends to come with me</li><li>• Teachers at the school in Clogau in the new school</li></ul>   |
| <b>Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Site for cars</li><li>• New doors</li><li>• New whiteboard</li></ul>   |
| <b>Ysgol Ganllwyd</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New friends</li><li>• New things in the school</li><li>• My old teacher</li><li>• New bell</li></ul>   |
| <b>Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Everyone kind</li><li>• Keeping hens</li><li>• A table each</li></ul>  |

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|-----------------------|--|
|                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That we get easy work</li> <li>• Having bike lessons</li> </ul>           |
| <b>Ysgol Friog</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More pet animals</li> <li>• More clubs</li> </ul>                         |
| <b>Ysgol Machreth</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large whiteboard</li> <li>• Rugby goals</li> <li>• New library</li> </ul> |

#### Question 4 – What are the most important things for you in school?

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|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The yard and canteen</li> <li>• I like the teachers very, very, very much</li> <li>• Thank you for the library</li> <li>• Thank you for work</li> <li>• I like playtime, I like P.E. lessons</li> <li>• I have excellent and very good friends</li> <li>• I like this school because of getting golden time. And I like the fruit shop, and I like doing work and double writing</li> <li>• I like the food at lunchtime</li> </ul> |
| <b>Ysgol Llanelltyd</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I like science</li> <li>• I like the setup at the school</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Ysgol Brithdir</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent teachers</li> <li>• Good friends, good Education</li> <li>• The yard at lunchtime</li> <li>• Everyone is friends</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Ysgol Clogau</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mathematics work</li> <li>• School trips</li> <li>• The garden at the back</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School trip</li> <li>• Classes</li> <li>• Sports</li> <li>• Art</li> <li>• Good location</li> <li>• New doors</li> <li>• Activities in English and Welsh</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Ysgol Ganllwyd</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work – sort of</li> <li>• I like teachers</li> </ul>  |

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|                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not many children, more attention, not a lot of nasty children</li> <li>• Size of the school</li> </ul>                             |
| <b>Ysgol Ieuan Gwynedd</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone is good friends</li> <li>• Kind teachers</li> <li>• Like it if nothing changed</li> <li>• Reading time</li> </ul>          |
| <b>Ysgol Friog</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I like pet animals</li> <li>• Going on the train race</li> <li>• My teacher</li> <li>• The work and clubs are convenient</li> </ul> |
| <b>Ysgol Machreth</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welsh</li> <li>• Christmas show</li> <li>• Friends</li> <li>• Football</li> <li>• Thanksgiving</li> <li>• Urdd</li> </ul>           |

### **Ysgol Uwchradd y Gader**

The facilitator had a brief conversation with the members of the School Council to explain the proposal and then the young people completed the questionnaire by themselves. 29 members of the School Council completed the questionnaire.

#### **Question 1 – How do you feel about what’s being offered?**

- I think a few people that speak English as a first language would find it difficult to speak Welsh all the time. It’s quite a good idea with the schools, bringing them from ten to six in the catchment area.
- One head will never be able to manage by themselves
- I think it’s all right as it is, primary school and secondary school. And some children don’t want a Welsh language school
- I understand the idea and its purpose but unfortunately I can’t see this being very successful ultimately, mainly because of money.
- This would only improve schools with money and jobs.
- It can help the schools economically but it’s disappointing to see how many schools are closing.
- I’m not at all happy that all the small schools have to close, it’s a long way for small children to travel from one school to the other. But I’m happy that Ysgol y Gader and Ysgol Dinas Mawddwy are remaining. If you’re going to have one head choose someone who knows what they’re doing.
- I think it’s a good idea because there’s a lot of schools in this area to run, so if we get rid of a few and join them together then it will be less cost, so more money can go to the other schools to have better education.
- I think it’s a good idea re-organising the catchment area. The schools can have more

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|   | <p>finances for better education. Although some parents might be against it for example issues with the travel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything wrong with the system that's being used? How will children go from their homes to the school when no one's able to take them? Maybe the council will create a bus that takes the children to a school. A bus without strangers on it and only used by schools. Will teachers lose jobs or will the idea create new jobs?</li> <li>• Something needs to be done about all the empty places in primary schools. If the plan is to go ahead I hope it'll mean that better resources are available for teachers, especially primary teachers.</li> <li>• There have been more children in Ysgol Brithdir than in Friog, Rhydymain and possibly Llanelltyd. In my opinion, Brithdir School must be kept open. Buy the field next door and create an extension. I agree with keeping Llanelltyd, Cynradd Dolgellau being kept open.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Question 2 – Is there anything that worries you about the proposal?</b></p>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having to speak Welsh as a first language in school, I'd rather it stay bilingual</li> <li>• One thing that worries me about the proposal is that small rural schools are being closed. That is, I've come from a very small school that had only 19 pupils there when I left, and there are 13 now, and I feel I've had a good primary education, but also we felt very close like a family to some extent and I believe it would be a disappointment for other children to lose this.</li> <li>• Having come from a small rural school I feel the children won't have the same opportunities. Everyone got the same fair treatment and the same opportunities because there were fewer teachers, and so the teachers did their best with every pupil – not the majority. In the primary school they made sure everyone reached their full potential, but with bigger schools and only 1 head teacher on the whole lot, they can forget about some pupils. You don't get the same close feeling in a large school as you would get in a small school. Very often small schools are the heart of the community.</li> <li>• Having one head for 6 schools, it would be difficult to talk to the head because of having to move from school to school throughout the week.</li> <li>• I hope this does not change Ysgol y Gader into a Welsh medium school as well. As I am foreign, Welsh is not my first language and half of the pupils are English. I do agree with strengthening the Welsh language but I'd like to see Ysgol y Gader opening as a bi-lingual.</li> <li>• What will happen to the buildings of the schools that close?</li> <li>• The effect of having one head managing the massive school worries me because if that person makes one mistake the whole area will suffer, in the old system the other schools would be able to carry on without being affected.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Question 3 – Is there anything you like or look forward to about this proposal?</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I look forward to seeing more money being spent.</li> <li>• Better education because of more teachers</li> <li>• The schools can work with each other and the children could use the other schools to take part in activities or to learn like the primary schools using the Ysgol y Gader websites and the gym as well. The children might be able to move better from the primary schools to the secondary school if they feel they're working with the secondary school.</li> <li>• A new building and better technology.</li> <li>• It will be nice to see the school in a better condition and looking better. It would also</li> </ul>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>be nice when the students have better resources to improve their education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm looking forward to a new school but don't think it's the right idea.</li> <li>• This will give better education standards for children, but these changes won't affect me. It'll offer experiences to the children</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Question 4 – In general, what are the important things for you in a school?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be more help available.</li> <li>• Education!</li> <li>• The most important thing is the children's education and getting a good education.</li> <li>• In general the most important thing for me in a school is to get the best standard of education, feeling happy in school, and finally, having memorable experiences e.g. skiing trip – since it helps to mature a child.</li> <li>• Trying to learn and receiving a good education in a healthy environment that encourages children to express ourselves. Encourage them to try new things and get good experience of the world to work hard.</li> <li>• Teachers who know what to do.</li> <li>• Good teachers helping all the time. No problem with going for lunch. Playing rugby or football at break time and lunchtime.</li> <li>• Being with friends</li> <li>• The best possible education. People having the same opportunities. Homely atmosphere. A feeling of belonging to somewhere you're proud of. Getting thoroughly prepared for the future.</li> <li>• In a school you need good education and proper teachers not just stand in ones all the time. A school also needs healthy food and drink.</li> <li>• To have a good, not too easy but challenging enough education in the school, to enjoy yourself and learn new things.</li> <li>• I believe that giving every child attention and treating them fairly is a very important thing. I also believe that creating a comfortable environment to work in is an important thing because as a result children are likely to work better. I also believe that allowing children to express an opinion is important in school because the children then feel the school is run as they would wish and that any obvious weaknesses could be raised by the children.</li> </ul> |

What became obvious in the consultation process was that children were content to adapt to a new situation although they were concerned about bullying, losing friends and teachers, but generally the feedback was very positive in most of the schools.

Main points of the consultation:

| Primary   | Secondary   |
|---|---|
| How the new arrangements would ensure that everyone was treated fairly. | The school's language                                       |
| Children worried about bullying   | Having competent Teachers and Head to run the establishment |
| Children worried about the language of the school                       | Standard of the education                                   |
| Children not wanting to lose friends                                    |   |
| Transport   |   |