

## Appendix C

### **Feedback from pupils at Llangedwyn Church of Wales Primary School re: possible closure**

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2012**

**Facilitators:** Owen James and Sue Glenn.  
**Participants:** Nathan, Ben, John, Emyr, Jessie, Mary and Phoebe.  
**Observer:** Jude Robinson – School Governor

#### Context:

Owen James introduced himself and Sue Glenn to the children and explained that we wanted to hear from them about their school, answer any questions they had about the proposal and take back their comments to Cllr Hayes to help him make a decision about whether their school should close or stay open.

Sue Glenn then asked the children if they wanted to read out their notes first and afterwards do an exercise or vice versa. The children said they'd like to do an exercise first. Sue asked them to think about what they liked about their school, to choose a coloured felt tip pen and write all these things down on the flipchart provided. (See Photo's "What's Great 1 and 2" to see pictorially some of the comments made).

Below is a summary of the main comments the children made:

#### Exercise One

##### **"Llangedwyn – what's great about it?"**

- No bullying
- Teachers
- Everyone forgives each other
- Breakfast Club
- Fun work
- Team points and work
- Raising money – sponsored walk
- School Council
- Ollie the Owl
- After School Club
- Tuck Shop
- Including each other
- Friendly
- Helpful
- Safe
- Accept people for who they are
- Rewards for being good
- Bean bags
- We all have a voice
- We have an education to suit our abilities
- When you are sad there is always someone to help you

## The Children's Notes

The children then took it in turns to read out the notes they had prepared.

Nathan and Ben said the school was friendly; it was easy to make friends here and if you were sad people helped and were kind. They liked the fact that the school was small because it gave them more time to talk to their teachers. They felt safe, accepted and said they had an education that suited everyone's ability. They didn't want to go to a larger school because they were worried about being bullied and getting into fights. Some of their friends had told them this happened. They felt that Llangedwyn was inclusive, there was no bullying and if they got into trouble it was dealt with quietly by the teachers.

Jessie, Mary and Phoebe said they'd been into speak to the children in the Infants and had their comments to feed into the process. The infant children liked to pray to God, they liked their breaks and said if they were good they got to go on the scooters and bikes. They liked their teachers, colouring, painting and drawing, the computers and the bean bags. They had friends and liked games, music, the rocket project, the salmon project and enjoyed "show and tell".

Jessie, Mary and Phoebe then gave their own comments. They said they felt they had freedom to make choices about things that were important. They had an Eco and School Council. They had been allowed to work to re-design their own classroom and introduced a bean bag corner. They liked the fact that they had Ollie the Owl as a reward. They enjoyed the tuck shop which opened Monday's and Friday's and both breakfast and after school club. They enjoyed raising money for the school and had recently done a sponsored walk to raise money for a trip. They were looking forward to Youth Club restarting again on a Tuesday night.

John felt that the education he received at Llangedwyn was much better than at his previous school. He said this school was fun. Emyr agreed. They both went on to say that when they did good work they got rewards, that all pupils had a voice and that the education here suited them. They felt they were pushed (in a good way) by the teachers to do their best, the teachers were patient and encouraged them and told them not to give up. They felt supported.

They also said they had a good laugh together at school with the teachers and learning was fun and thus stuff was easy to remember. They did lots of games and activities here and loved the fact that they had a good playground and big field. They had access to PE equipment and also PCs. There were PCs and laptops too and they had an interactive whiteboard for lessons. They said the teachers joined in with them. They really liked their new reading corner with the bean bags and felt good that they had got the books and organised it all themselves. They said they were encouraged to take responsibility for their own classroom and work together as a team. They got points for this and would sometimes get free time on a Friday if they'd

achieved 15 points. John and Emyr said that RE was good with Miss Roberts and they were learning about each other. They also liked their Welsh lesson on a Thursday and said the new teacher helped them a lot and did guided reading if they needed it.

### Exercise 2

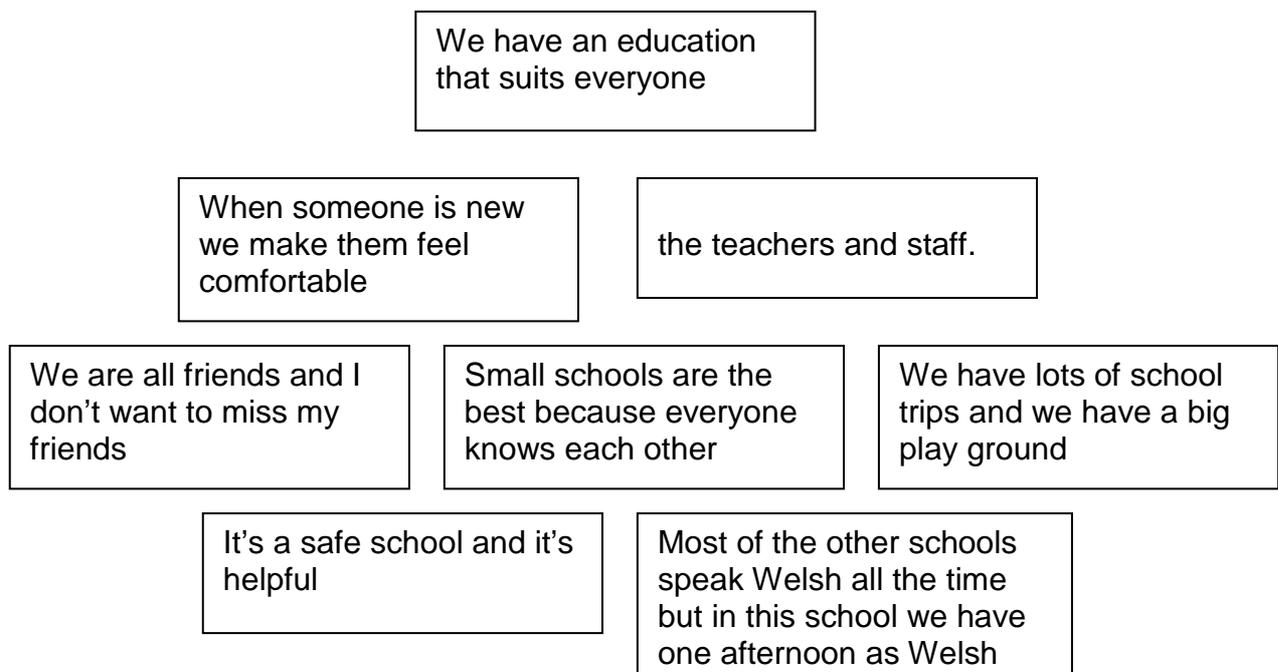
Sue Glenn then asked the children if they'd like to ask Owen their questions and then do a final exercise or vice versa. The children choose to do the exercise first so Sue gave out coloured post-it-notes and asked the children to think about what they'd say if someone asked them why their school should stay open. She asked them to write the reasons on a post-it-note. One reason per post-it-note.

After approximately 5 minutes Sue collected in all the post-it-notes and stuck them up on the wall. Each one was read out and any that were the same or similar were grouped together in discussion with the children and the governor.

Sue then stuck a flipchart up on the wall with eight pre-drawn boxes which formed a diamond type shape with one box at the top, two on the second row, three on the third row and then two on the fourth. She asked the children to consider which of their reasons would be the most important. The children then discussed and decided which order their reasons would go in and ranked them on the diamond shape.

(See Photo's "Why It Should Stay Open 1 - 3" to see pictorially the key reasons the children put forward).

In order the pupil's reasons why the school should stay open were:-



A couple of other post-it-notes remained. These were that the pupils wanted the school to stay open because the food was good, they enjoyed break time and tuck and that they all laughed a lot and told jokes and had fun.

### Questions

The pupils then asked Owen James their questions.

Jessie asked if the reason for maybe closing the school was the number of pupils. Owen explained the link between pupils and costs.

Mary asked "If the school is to close how long would it take?" One of the boys asked if it would be the day afterwards. Owen explained that there was a proper process to follow which would take quite a while and that it wouldn't be until August 2013 that the school would shut if the decision was to do so. Ben said at this point that he didn't want to lose his friends and if they had to go to other schools this would happen.

Nathan and John asked Owen about numbers of pupils needed to keep the school open and mentioned that the newspaper had reported that their school was "doomed". John also mentioned that another school with fewer pupils in it had stayed open. Owen responded by explaining about the numbers and acknowledged their points and said he would feed them back.

Jessie said she felt friendships were really important at this school and that it wasn't fair to shut their school. She said it felt good to be in this school.

John spoke about his experience at another school and said Llangedwyn was a brilliant school and that if pupils who came into the school did mean things they were taught to become good pupils instead. He said that he was going to High School soon and if the school closed it wouldn't affect him but he still cared about the school and everyone else.

Ben said that they felt like they were being punished by the proposal to close the school.

Owen acknowledged this feeling and said he would take back all their comments to Cllr Hayes and thanked all the pupils for giving their views.

Owen and Sue left shortly afterwards having spoken to the Head Teacher briefly about the next steps.

## Meeting of PCC with Children of Llangedwyn Church In Wales Primary School

21<sup>st</sup> March 2012

### Notes taken at Meeting by Jude Robinson

Present :

PCC – Owen James, Sue Glen

Children – Emyr Davies, John Roberts, Nathan Reynolds, Ben Davies, Jessie Sandell, Mary Aspinall and Phoebe Saxon

Owen and Sue introduced themselves to the children as representatives from Powys County Council.

Owen – The council are talking to all the local people about the possibility of the school closing. I'm sure you have picked up on that already. This is not an exam or for us to ask you questions. We want to listen. I'll hand over to Sue.

Sue – I see you have all got notes which we can look at in a little while. We can talk about what makes your school great. We can write on this flip chart.

*[Sue presented the children with her first Flipchart entitled "What makes your school great" and invited the children to write on the flipchart in coloured pens. Sue will take a photograph of the flipchart and add it as an Appendices to the report to Stephen Hayes.]*

Owen – Back at the council we make important decisions about schools in the area. The number of children affects schools. We are looking at Llangedwyn because of numbers of children in it. The Modernisation team have a closing date of today for comments. What we have to do is write a report to one of the counsellors, Stephen Hayes who deals with schools. He will make the decision on the school. I write the report that goes to him. It is an uncertain time for everyone but we will know quite soon. Your views are really important. This is about you. I will remind you all about this at the end and all your comments will go back to Stephen Hayes.

Sue – We can go through the notes you have made.

Ben & Nathan – Everyone is friendly here. It's easy to make friends. When people are sad, they always help. Everyone is kind and helpful to each other. When we have a small school, there's more time to talk to the teachers. We are a safe school. We are all accepted for who we are. Education suits everyone's abilities. We don't want to go to a larger school. We enjoy being with lots of ages. Friends in larger schools tell us they have lots of fights and problems. There's no bullying in the school. We include each other. When in trouble, it's dealt with quietly.

Mary – we have notes from the Infant class.

Mary, Jessie & Phoebe – The infants say they like to pray to God. They like their breaks. They like the bikes and scooters. In the last break, they can bring these out. They like the teachers. They like colouring, painting and drawing. They like the bean bags. They have computers. They have friends. They're working on the salmon project where the salmon in the tank will be let out into the river. They like music and games. They like rockets and Show & Tell.

Mary & Jessie – We have the freedom to make choices that are important to us. We have an Eco Council and a School Council. We have designed our own classroom. We have a bean bag corner. We have Ollie the Owl for being good. We have a tuck shop after school on Mondays and Fridays. We have a good Breakfast and After School Club. We raise money for our own causes.

Sue – Do many of you go to Breakfast Club?

Several children answered yes.

Mary & Jessie – We did a sponsored walk, it was really fun. We did it to raise money for our trip to Condover Hall/JCA.

John – At my last school that education was not as good and I got pulled out of the school. This education is better. It's fun.

Emyr – It's fun.

Mary – Education is fun because we do games.

Nathan & Ben – When we do very good work we get rewards. All pupils have a voice. There's a lot of education. The education suits us all. We are pushed to do our best.

Jessie – The teacher encourages us.

Nathan & Ben – Teachers support us. They don't give up on us. We laugh a lot.

Sue – You all have a sense of humour.

Nathan & Ben – Teachers make learning fun and easy to remember. Lots of games and activities. Lots of different activities. We have a good playground and a big field. It's a shared field. If we are good, we get to use the PE equipment. We have ICT equipment. We have computers and laptops in the Junior class. Infants have 3 computers. Teachers play with us. We have a reading corner with bean bags. We raise lots of money.

Jessie – We get books, two shelves arranged in alphabetical order of the author. It's all organised.

Nathan & Ben – We have team points to get golden time. At golden time we can play and have fun on the computers or use our DSs. It's 2 hours on a Friday afternoon. We take responsibility for the classroom and resources. We're good at team work. We do a lot of religious stuff.

Mary – We learn about different religions. We are on Christianity at the moment.

Jessie – We have a Welsh teacher, Miss Hughes, on Thursday and we learn Welsh with her.

Emyr – The old teacher wasn't as good. Now we understand it more.

Nathan – The new Welsh teacher started with the easy stuff first. We can remember it and we work up to the harder stuff.

*[Sue presented the children with her second Flipchart entitled "Why should your school stay open" with 8 boxes on it, and invited the children to write on post it notes in coloured pens. Sue will take a photograph of the flipchart and add it as an Appendix to the report to Stephen Hayes.]*

Sue – You have to think about the reasons why the school should stay open.

*[Sue went through the post it notes and prioritised them with the children from 1 to 8. The top one was "Education that suits everyone".]*

Owen – Do you have any questions you would like to ask us?

Jessie – Are they going to shut down the school because there's not many people in it?

Owen – If there's less children, it costs more money.

Nathan – That doesn't make sense.

Owen – If there's more children in the same space, it costs less per child. A lot of it is to do with money. Your parents probably tell you about the economy and money. It's to do with the numbers of children in the school.

Mary – If the school closed, how long would it take?

Owen – It takes a long time. It goes to another stage. Stephen Hayes makes the decision next month. There will be notices on the school. The school wouldn't close until next year.

Ben – When friends go to other schools, we will lose our best friends. When I came here, everyone asked me to be their friend.

Nathan – What's the limit of children?

Owen – When we get to 30 or 35, we need to talk to the school about staying open. We need to ask the question.

John – It said in a newspaper that Llangedwyn School is “doomed”.

Owen – There are reasons for the school to stay open. The newspapers make a big fuss.

John – The other school you have been looking at, they only have 18 children in that school and they stayed open.

Owen – Yes that’s a very good point.

Jessie – The newspaper people normally exaggerate. We make friends with people who live a long way away. If the school shuts, we won’t be able to see them anymore. Why do you have to shut the school, it’s not really fair. It feels good to be in this school, it feels comfortable and welcoming.

Owen – It is important that you said that so we can put forward your views.

Nathan – There was a school that only had 11 pupils, will that be shut now?

Owen – You might be talking about Trafnannau. It doesn’t make sense to keep it open. It’s a difficult decision.

Jessie – The man who wants to close our school, does everyone agree with him?

Owen – Stephen Hayes you mean, it is his decision, it’s only one man. The next stage if it goes to that will be to post notices on the gates. If we get an objection, then it goes to Welsh government.

Emyr – So it goes higher then?

Owen – Yes, exactly.

John – Me and my friend have been here 6 years. My sisters have been here. It has always been a brilliant school. It is better than the other schools. If we get mean people here, they are turned into good people. I don’t want the school to close.

Ben – If you close the school, we feel that although we are being as good as we can, we are being kicked out.

Owen – It is not about anything you’ve done. It comes down to the numbers of children and money. Thank you so much for all the comments and questions. You are an example to us all.