



# **Proposal to close Irfon Valley C.P. School**

## **Draft Community Impact Assessment**

**September 2023**



## Draft Community Impact Assessment – Irfon Valley C.P. School

### i) Information on the proportion of pupils from the catchment area that attend the school

The closest provider for pupils attending Irfon Valley C.P. School in September 2023 was as follows:

School	% of Pupils
Irfon Valley C.P. School	89.5%
Builth Wells C.P. School	5.3%
Ysgol Dolafon	5.3%

This suggests that 89.5% of pupils attending the school were attending their closest primary school, whilst 10.6% of pupils attending the school live closer to other primary schools.

If there were no school in Garth, the closest school for the pupils on roll in September 2023 would be as follows:

	Pupils' closest school should there be no school in Garth
Ysgol Dolafon	52.6%
Builth Wells C.P. School	36.8%
Newbridge-on-Wye C. in W. School	10.5%

The average travel distance for all pupils on roll in September 2023 at Irfon Valley C.P. School is 2.23 miles.

If there were no school in Garth, the average travel distance for all pupils attending the school in September 2023 to attend alternative provision would be 4.97 miles.

Of the pupils that attended Irfon Valley C.P. School in September 2023, the furthest travel distance to the school for those pupils for whom Irfon Valley C.P. School is the closest provider is 5.39 miles.

If there were no school in Garth, the furthest distance to these pupils' nearest alternative provision would be 6.82 miles.

### ii) After-school clubs and extra-curricular activities provided by the school

The school provides the following after-school clubs and extra-curricular activities including the following:

- Hockey club
- Breakfast club
- Limited pupil numbers/staff have made clubs like after-school club unfeasible

**iii) Any other facilities or services the school accommodates or services the school provides**

The school accommodates or provides the following other facilities or services:

- The school is the site for the 3+ setting, Rainbow Tots

**iv) Other use by the community of the school building**

The school building is used by the community to provide the following activities:

- School attends community events at Garth Village Hall
- Joint events run with Ysgol Dolafon

**v) Other links between the school and the community**

- Community events such as MacMillan Coffee Morning and school concerts

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

Should the proposal be implemented, Irfon Valley C.P. School would close, pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative school, and there would no longer be any provision in Garth.

It is acknowledged that there would be a significant impact on the community of Garth, as there would no longer continue to be provision in the village. This could result in the potential loss of community facilities associated with the school.

There is a village hall in Garth, therefore should the school no longer be available, community events and activities could be re-located.

**vii) Distance and travelling time involved in attending an alternative school of the same language category**

Should the proposal be implemented, Irfon Valley C.P. School would close, and pupils would transfer to their nearest alternative schools. For the majority of pupils, the closest alternative Powys schools would be Ysgol Dolafon, and Builth Wells C.P. School.

An analysis of pupils attending Irfon Valley C.P. School in September 2023 suggests that the furthest distance to the new school for pupils for whom Irfon Valley C.P. School is currently the closest school would be 6.8 miles.

Home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the home to school transport which is in operation at that time. Whilst free transport would be provided to eligible pupils, it is acknowledged that there could be an impact on some pupils' ability to access after school activities, and could impact on the ability of parents to take part in school events, meetings etc.

**viii) How parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported**

Should the Council proceed with the statutory process and eventually implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process, to ensure full engagement with their closest alternative schools.

**ix) Any wider implications e.g. impact on public transport provision, wider community safety issues**

- At present, very few pupils walk to school, and none use public transport.
- If the school were to close, pupils would need transport to attend their alternative schools. The average travel distance for pupils to their nearest school, should Irfon Valley close, would be 4.97 miles. This would therefore not promote walking/cycling to school as the distance is likely to be too far for most pupils.

**x) Additional considerations for rural schools**

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

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

Information from the school suggests that it is unlikely that the closure of Irfon Valley C.P. School would encourage families to leave the community as travel distances to new schools would not be significantly longer.

While it is certainly possible that the closure of the school may discourage some young families from moving to Garth, the school has also acknowledged that they are currently unable to offer significant wrap-around care through, for example, after school clubs. This may have put off some young families from moving to the area even if the school were to remain open.

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

Should Irfon Valley C.P. School close, community events and activities could continue to take place at Garth Village Hall.

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

The school is currently not used for any additional purpose other than the pre-school.

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

Information received from the school indicates that effects on the wider economy of the community are expected to be minimal.

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

As indicated in section (viii) above, should the Council proceed with the statutory process and eventually implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process, to ensure full engagement with their closest alternative schools.

It is acknowledged that there would be an impact on pupils' ability to participate in after school activities as there would be an additional travel requirement for parents in order to access school activities/events, however, few events/activities are currently on offer at Irfon Valley in any case.

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

Should Irfon Valley C.P. School close, Garth would lose a number of community events such as school concerts. The school has also noted that Irfon Valley plays an important role in Garth as a meeting place for parents within the locality.

However, there is a village hall located in Garth where community events and activities could continue to take place.

**xi) Conclusion**

Should there be no school in Garth, pupils would transfer to alternative schools. These would be larger schools, and the expectation is that an increased number of activities would be available to pupils. However, it is acknowledged that pupils would need to travel to the alternative schools, which could impact on their ability to access activities, particularly where these take place after school.

Should the proposal be implemented, there would be no school provision in the village of Garth. The information provided above indicates that there is some community use of the Irfon Valley School building, including as a meeting place for parents. There is, however, a village hall located in Garth, therefore community events and activities could continue to take place in the village.

It is also acknowledged that implementation of the proposal would result in additional travel to school for pupils for whom Garth is currently their closest school. Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the home to school transport policy, it is acknowledged that there could be an impact on some pupils' ability to access after school activities, and could impact on the ability of parents to take part in school events, meetings etc.