

Proposal to change the age range of Laugharne VC School from a 4-11 school to a 3-11 school from September 2026 Consultation Report



Executive Summary

A total of 16 responses were received. The overall balance of sentiment was strongly positive, with the majority of respondents supporting the proposal and very few expressing opposition. The main themes raised included strong support for an earlier school start age to retain children within the local catchment, the perceived benefits of increased local childcare and early years provision (including Flying Start), and positive impacts on Welsh language learning through earlier immersion and access to Welsh-speaking staff. A small number of respondents raised concerns about school readiness for children aged three. All feedback will be considered in the next stages of planning and implementation.

The Consultation Period

The consultation was held between 04/09/2025 and 16/10/2025.

Responses Received		
Online Survey	E-mail	Total
16	0	16

Responses

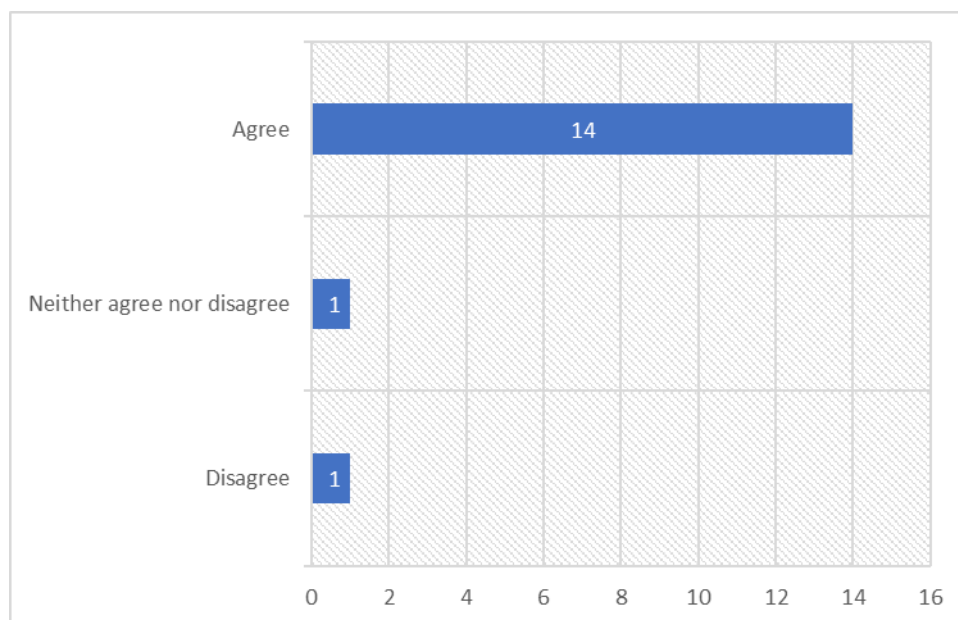
Overall Summary

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
Do you support the proposal?	14	1	1
Do you have any comments regarding this proposal that you would like us to consider?	7	8	1
Are there any other options that you think the Council should be considering for Laugharne VC School?	2	0	14
a. 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?	6	10	0
b. 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?	1	15	0
c. 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?	0	16	0

Online Survey

A total of 16 online survey responses were received for the statutory consultation.

1) Do you support the proposal?



All of the comments given by respondents *in agreement* with **Do you have any comments regarding this proposal that you would like us to consider?** is noted below:

- “Childcare options in & around Laugharne are poor - the monopoly is dechrau disglair in st clears. It would better to have more options.”
- “Many local parents/carers are actively choosing childcare and a school which accepts children from 3 to suit their needs. With numbers at an all time low, Laugharne school cannot afford for this to be happening. Allowing children to start school from 3 would give many parents/carers the option of keeping their children in their local school rather than outside the catchment area.”
- “Flying start facility would also benefit the local area as I believe Little Wonders in Llanmiloe had Flying Start places available as many in the local area do qualify for this supportive provision.”
- “My daughter wasn’t able to start until age 4 and with the lack of childcare options in the area, this meant I was unable to go back to work until much later than I’d planned.”
- “I support this proposal as a parent of a 1 year old, as there is no longer any local childcare or early education provision in the area. However as my older children attend llanmiloe school I'd prefer my youngest to be able to start in

llanmiloe at 3 not have to put him into Laugharne until he's old enough to attend llanmiloe.”

- “The Diocese of St Davids fully supports the proposal.”
- “I think it will be very positive for the school and the community.”

All of the comments given by respondents ***in disagreement*** (disagree) with **Do you have any comments regarding this proposal that you would like us to consider?** is noted below:

- “Children too young to be in school”

Themes ***in agreement*** (agree) with **Do you have any comments regarding this proposal that you would like us to consider?** identified below:

- Earlier start at age 3 would help retain children in the local catchment.
- Perceived benefits from increased local childcare/early years provision (e.g., Flying Start-type support).
- General view that the proposal would be positive for the school and wider community.

Governing Body and LA response to themes ***in agreement*** (agree) with **Do you have any comments regarding this proposal that you would like us to consider?** below:

- **Earlier start at age 3 keeps children in local school/catchment.**

We recognise the benefit parents see in enabling local part-time nursery education from age 3. Consistent with the Council's approach following removal of the Rising 4s policy, we will consider changing the age range to 3–11 where there is a local gap in statutory part-time provision, assessing staffing, space and affordability. Any age-range change would follow the regulated-alteration pathway and the Code's tests, with a typical 9–12 month statutory timescale.

- **Perceived benefits from increased local childcare/early years provision (e.g., Flying Start-type support).**

We will coordinate with local non-maintained partners and Flying Start to ensure that education and wrap-around childcare complement, rather than duplicate, each other. Flying Start eligibility is postcode-based and targeted; where criteria are met, we will align school-based nursery plans with Flying Start capacity, quality assurance and premises requirements, while continuing to support non-maintained settings that provide the statutory 10–12.5 hours and wrap-around care.

- **General view that the proposal would be positive for the school and wider community.**

We will set out a balanced case that considers educational benefits, catchment demand and community impacts alongside finance (including funding for part-time nursery learners at 50% of the primary age-weighted value) and transport. This ensures compliance with the Code's factors and supports sustainable provision that meets local need without undermining successful existing early-years arrangements.

Themes ***in disagreement*** (disagree) with **Do you have any comments regarding this proposal that you would like us to consider?** identified below:

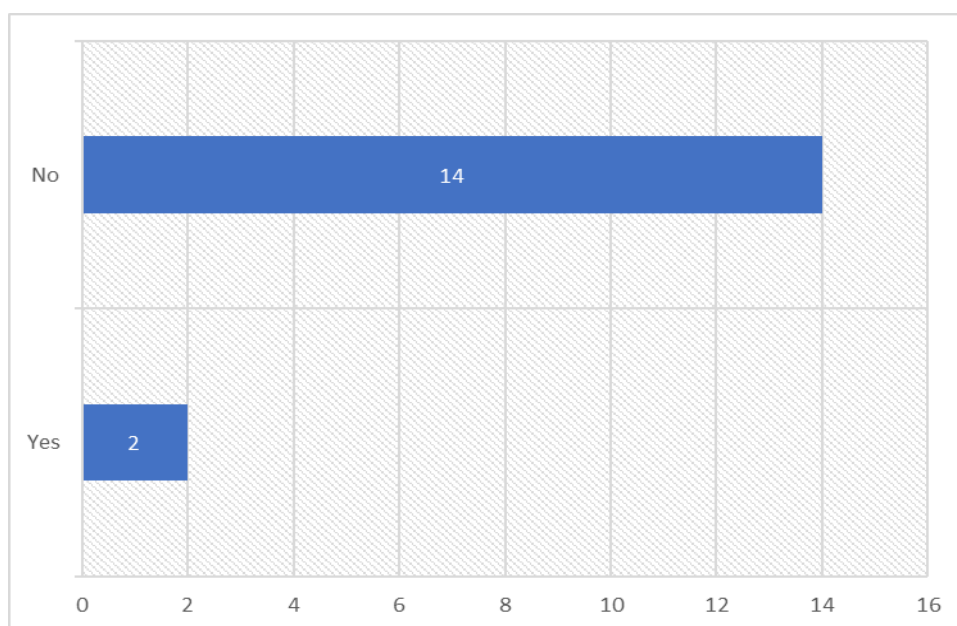
- Concern that age 3 is too young for school.

Governing Body and LA response to themes ***in disagreement*** (disagree) with **Do you have any comments regarding this proposal that you would like us to consider?** identified below:

- **Concern that age 3 is too young for school.**

The proposal relates to part-time nursery education (10 or 12.5 hours) for three-year-olds, not full-time schooling. Delivery is through developmentally appropriate early-years pedagogy, staffing ratios and environments, either in 3–11 schools or approved non-maintained settings. Since removal of Rising 4s, no three-year-olds enter full-time school; the LA will ensure any provision is phased and age-appropriate, and will evidence this in the consultation documentation.

2) Are there any other options that you think the Council should be considering for Laugharne VC School?



If yes, please outline the alternative option(s)

All of the comments given by respondents *in agreement* (Yes) with **If yes, please outline the alternative option(s)** is noted below:

- “Flying Start Provision as part of the nursery as referred to in previous comment - I think this would be of interest and benefit to many prospective parents in the area.”
- Turning the current 'soft federation' with Llanmiloe into a formal federation and making both schools 3-11

All of the comments given by respondents *in disagreement* (No) with **If yes, please outline the alternative option(s)** is noted below:

- None

Themes *in agreement* (Yes) with **If yes, please outline the alternative option(s)** identified below:

- Integrating Flying Start provision with the nursery is viewed as beneficial and likely to attract interest from prospective parents.
- Formalise the federation with Llanmiloe and align both schools to 3–11 provision.

Governing Body and LA response to themes *in agreement* (Yes) with **If yes, please outline the alternative option(s)** below:

Integrating Flying Start provision with the nursery is viewed as beneficial and likely to attract interest from prospective parents.

- We will explore the feasibility of co-locating or integrating Flying Start provision where postcode eligibility and demand justify it. This includes confirming eligibility areas, space, staffing and quality-assurance steps (CIW registration, umbrella-body QA, LA advisory monitoring) and ensuring alignment with the Childcare Offer and non-maintained partners to avoid displacement effects. Any integration would be developed within existing policy and funding frameworks.

Formalise the federation with Llanmiloe and align both schools to 3–11 provision.

- Federation is a recognised option under the School Organisation Code and can strengthen leadership capacity and sustainability. If governing bodies wish to explore formal federation, the LA would support them to assess governance, staffing and curriculum implications. Any move to align both schools to 3–11 would require a regulated alteration (change of age range) with full statutory consultation; this would be considered alongside the strategic recommendations that identify Laugharne as a priority case for 3–11 where local 3-year-old provision is limited. However, the current regulations under the

School Organisation code do not permit a formal federation between a community school and a voluntary school. As such, this key difference between Llanmiloe and Laugharne schools does not make this a viable option at the present time.

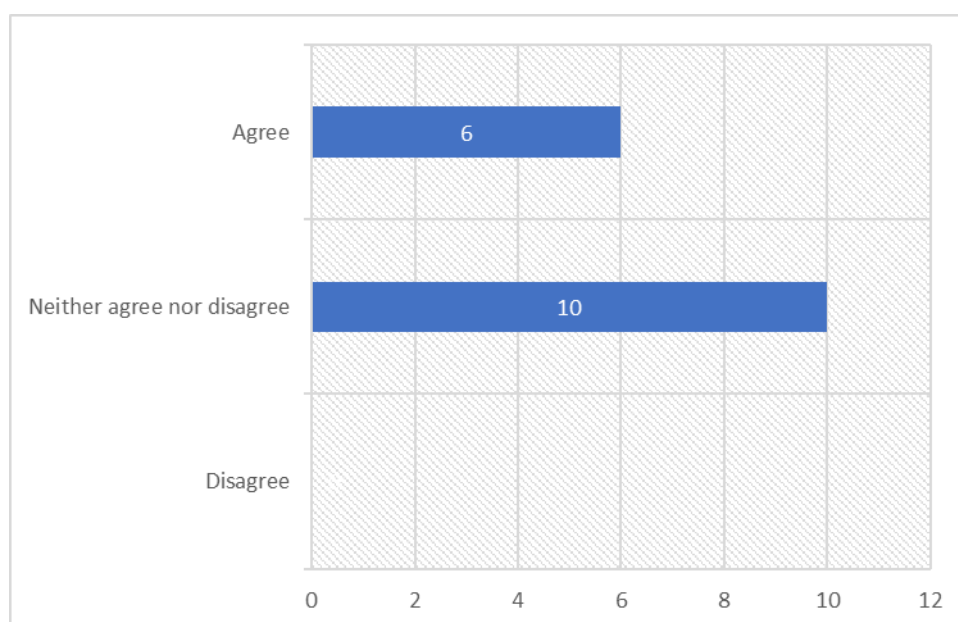
Themes ***in disagreement*** (No) with **If yes, please outline the alternative option(s)** identified below:

- None

Governing Body and LA response to themes ***in disagreement*** (No) with **If yes, please outline the alternative option(s)** below:

- N/A

3) a. 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?



All of the comments given by respondents ***in agreement*** (agree) with **3) a.** is noted below:

- “Positive”
- “Classes would promote the Welsh language as much as they always have. Children could start this from a younger age and be immersed in a second language.”

- “Laugharne school has several staff members who are Welsh speakers - this proposal would help to support welsh language at an earlier opportunity for children attending.”
- “It would be positive as it was give more children the chance to learn Welsh earlier”
- “Hopefully we can teach welsh from a younger age”
- “It would be positive. There would be more opportunities for the use of the Welsh language.”

All of the comments given by respondents ***in disagreement*** (disagree) with **3) a.** is noted below:

- None

Themes ***in agreement*** (agree) with **3) a.** identified below:

- Earlier exposure/immersion in Welsh from a younger age.
- Availability of Welsh-speaking staff supports positive language outcomes.

Governing Body and LA response to themes ***in agreement*** (agree) with **3) a.** below:

- **Earlier exposure/immersion in Welsh from a younger age.**

This aligns with the Council’s WESP strategy to expand early immersion from age 3, strengthen linguistic progression and increase the proportion of nursery and Reception learners accessing Welsh-medium/bilingual experiences. Implementation will focus on staff capacity, materials and transition so that earlier exposure leads to secure outcomes by the end of Key Stage 2.

- **Availability of Welsh-speaking staff supports positive language outcomes.**

We will plan workforce development in line with WESP Outcome 7 (skills audits, CPD, sabbaticals and targeted support) so that schools can staff early-years Welsh-medium/bilingual delivery confidently. This includes school-to-school support and collaboration with national partners to develop pedagogy and resources for early immersion.

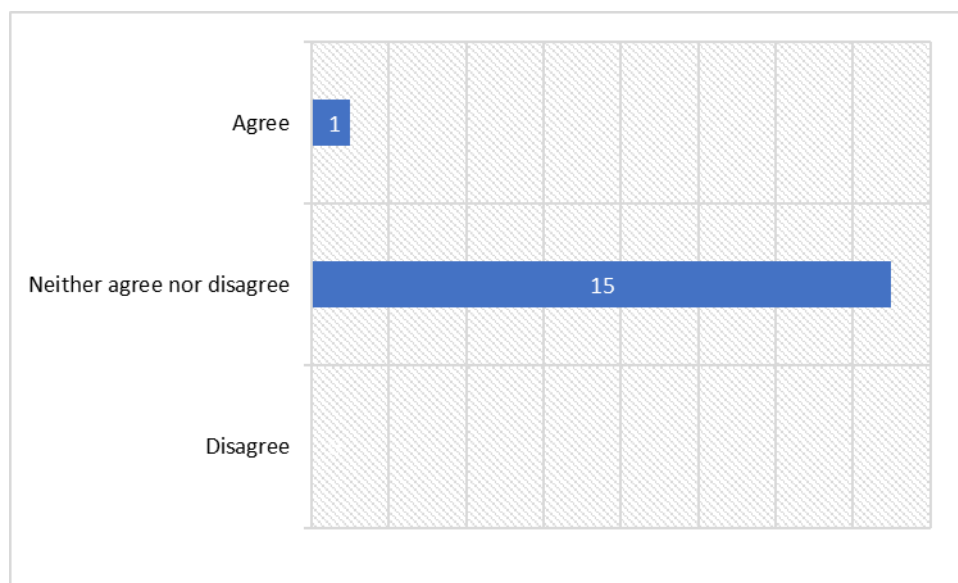
Themes ***in disagreement*** (disagree) with **3) a.** identified below:

- None

Governing Body and LA response to themes ***in disagreement*** (disagree) with **3) a.** below:

- N/A

3) b. 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?



All of the comments given by respondents *in agreement* (agree) with **3) b.** is noted below:

- “Children could start to learn Welsh at an earlier age.”

All of the comments given by respondents *in disagreement* (disagree) **3) b.** is noted below:

- None

Themes *in agreement* (agree) with **3) b.** identified below:

- Earlier start is suggested as a practical way to enhance Welsh-language outcomes (more time for exposure and learning from a younger age).

Governing Body and LA response to themes *in agreement* (agree) with **3) b.** below:

- **Earlier start is suggested as a practical way to enhance Welsh-language outcomes (more time for exposure and learning from a younger age).**

We will consider earlier access to part-time nursery education (where demand and capacity exist) as one lever to strengthen Welsh-language acquisition,

ensuring alignment with the WESP's early-years aims and the curriculum for Wales. Any resulting age-range changes would proceed through the School Organisation Code with an accompanying Welsh-language impact assessment.

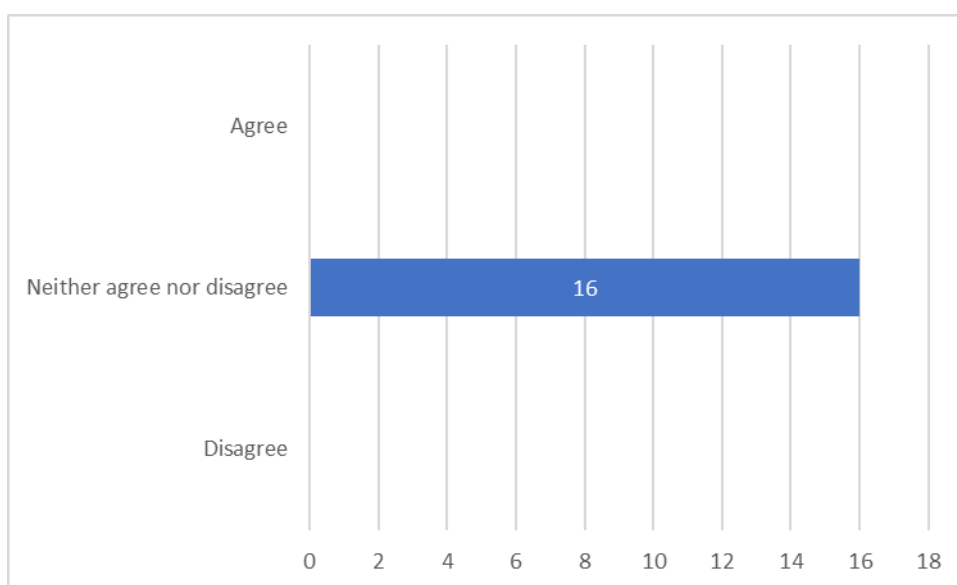
Themes ***in disagreement*** (disagree) with **3) b.** identified below:

- None

LA response to themes ***in disagreement*** (disagree) with **3) b.** below:

- N/A

3) c. 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?



All of the comments given by respondents ***in agreement*** (agree) with **3) c.** is noted below:

- None

All of the comments given by respondents ***in disagreement*** (disagree) with **3) c.** is noted below:

- None

Themes ***in agreement*** (agree) with **3) c.** identified below:

- None

Governing Body and LA response to themes ***in agreement*** (agree) with **3) c.** below:

- N/A

Themes ***in disagreement*** (disagree) with **3) c.** identified below:

- None

Governing Body and LA response to themes ***in disagreement*** (disagree) with **3) c.** below:

- N/A

Pupil Survey: See Appendix 1

Consultation with 7 Year 6 School Council members on the proposal to change the school's age range to 3–11.

Positive Themes

- 1. Better opportunities to learn at a younger age**
 - *“Better opportunities to learn at a younger age”*
- 2. Good for parents who work to bring children to school sooner**
 - *“Good for parents who work to bring children to school sooner”*
- 3. Good for older pupils to make friends with and look after younger children**
 - *“Good for older pupils to make friends with and look after younger children”*
- 4. Extra pupils will grow the school, ‘important that the school does not die’**
 - *“Extra pupils will grow the school, ‘important that the school does not die’”*
- 5. General positive sentiment about the school**
 - *“Caring school”*
 - *“Making memories”*
 - *“Making friends”*
 - *“Happy school”*

Governing Body and LA Response to Positive Themes

The Governing Body and Local Authority welcome the positive feedback from pupils regarding the proposal to change the age range to 3–11. The benefits identified—such as improved learning opportunities for younger children, support for working parents, and the potential for older pupils to mentor and befriend younger children—are consistent with the aims of the proposal and the Governing Body and Council’s commitment to providing high-quality early years education. The recognition that additional pupils can help sustain the school aligns with the Council’s strategic objective to maintain viable, vibrant schools in local communities. The school will ensure that the transition is managed in a way that preserves the caring and supportive ethos valued by pupils.

Negative Themes

- 1. Making the school overcrowded**
 - *“Making the school overcrowded”*
- 2. Too loud and scary for very young children**
 - *“Too loud and scary for very young children”*
- 3. Individual concern: ‘worried’ about the prospect**
 - *“1 pupil stated that they were ‘worried’.*

Governing Body and LA Response to Negative Themes

The Governing Body and Local Authority acknowledge the concerns raised about possible overcrowding and the environment being overwhelming for very young children. These issues will be carefully considered in the planning and implementation stages. The Governing Body and LA will review accommodation and staffing to ensure that the school environment remains safe, welcoming, and developmentally appropriate for all ages. Measures will be put in place to support the integration of younger children, including phased entry, appropriate class sizes, and support from staff and older pupils. The Governing Body and LA is committed to maintaining a nurturing atmosphere and will monitor the impact of the change to address any issues that arise

Estyn Response: Appendix 2

Estyn consultation response on the proposal to change Laugharne VCP School's age range to 3–11

Positive Themes

- 1. Provision for 3–11-year-olds at least equal to existing 4–11 offer**
 - *“Estyn considers that the proposal is likely to deliver provision for 3–11-year-olds at a standard at least equal to its existing 4–11 offer.”*
- 2. Clear rationale and balanced assessment of advantages/disadvantages**
 - *“The Council presents a clear rationale for this proposal, setting out the advantages of changing the age range at Laugharne VCP School from 4–11 to 3–11. ... The proposal identifies both benefits and disadvantages in a balanced way and includes measures to manage potential risks. The advantages appear to outweigh the disadvantages significantly.”*
- 3. Addressing a gap in early years provision and reducing surplus places**
 - *“The proposal may have a positive impact on the travel arrangements of those who currently travel outside of their catchment area to access early education. In addition, it suggests the proposal will help close the gap in early years provision for 3-year-olds in the Laugharne catchment. The changes are also expected to reduce the high level of surplus places at the school, currently 55% of capacity.”*
- 4. Alignment with Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and bilingual nursery**
 - *“The proposal considers the impact on Welsh-medium provision and demonstrates alignment with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). A bilingual nursery would support earlier immersion in Welsh through high-quality, play-based experiences, contributing positively to the language continuum.”*
- 5. No negative impact on pupil standards or progress anticipated**
 - *“It assumes reasonably that Laugharne VCP School would deliver provision for 3–11-year-olds at a standard at least equal to its existing 4–11 offer. Therefore, no negative impact on pupil standards or progress is anticipated.”*
- 6. Strong relationships and positive, inclusive culture**
 - *“The latest Estyn report highlights strong relationships between staff and pupils, with nearly all learners feeling happy and safe. As a result of this*

positive and inclusive culture, the consultation suggests that expanding provision is unlikely to have adverse effects on pupil wellbeing. This appears to be a reasonable statement.”

7. Improved resource efficiency and long-term sustainability

- *“An increase in pupil numbers is expected to improve resource efficiency and contribute to long-term school sustainability. This appears to be reasonable.”*

8. Careful consideration of vulnerable groups and earlier identification of needs

- *“The needs of vulnerable groups, including learners with additional learning needs (ALN) and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, appear to be carefully considered. Earlier access to education is expected to support timely identification of individual learning needs and the provision of appropriate interventions, thereby improving learner outcomes.”*

9. Sufficient space and facilities for nursery provision

- *“With the school currently operating well below capacity, there is sufficient space and staffing to introduce nursery provision. Facilities include a purpose-built classroom for 20 nursery pupils, a kitchen, quiet room, art/craft area, toilets, and a well-equipped outdoor play area suitable for both nursery and older pupils.”*

10. No private pre-school provision in Laugharne—addresses inequality of access

- *“The proposal states that there is currently no private pre-school provision in Laugharne, creating a clear gap in early years education. Families are choosing alternative settings outside of the area, largely due to availability. The council express that the proposal would help address inequality of access, particularly for low-income families and this appears to be reasonable.”*

11. Aspiration to develop wraparound care

- *“If the proposal is approved, the school aspires to develop wraparound care provision alongside early years education, offering an integrated approach to learning and care.”*

Governing Body and LA Response to Positive Themes:

The Governing Body and Local Authority welcome Estyn’s overall positive assessment of the proposal to change Laugharne VCP School’s age range to 3–11. The Governing Body and LA notes Estyn’s view that the proposal is likely to deliver provision for 3–11-year-olds at a standard at least equal to the current offer, with no anticipated negative impact on pupil standards, progress, or wellbeing. The

Governing Body and LA is committed to ensuring that the introduction of nursery provision is managed using existing facilities and staffing, and that the school's inclusive and supportive culture is maintained. The Governing Body and LA will continue to align the development of early years and Welsh-medium provision with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), and will work to ensure that the proposal addresses local gaps in provision, supports vulnerable groups, and contributes to the long-term sustainability of the school. The aspiration to develop wraparound care will be explored in partnership with families and the community.

Negative Themes

1. Potential impact on private nursery providers

- *“A notable risk is the potential impact on private nursery providers. The council commits to consulting openly with providers to assess any potential impact. The proposal notes that there are currently no private nursery providers within the school's catchment area.”*

2. No suggested plan for transition

- *“While it outlines the statutory procedure and a projected timetable, the only confirmed implementation date is September 2026, with no suggested plan for the transition.”*

Governing Body and LA Response to Negative Themes:

The Governing Body and Local Authority acknowledges the potential risk to private nursery providers and will continue to consult openly with any existing or prospective providers to assess and mitigate any negative impacts. The Governing Body and LA also recognises the need for a clear transition plan and will ensure that, if the proposal is approved, a detailed implementation plan is developed in consultation with the school, staff, parents, and other stakeholders. This plan will address transition arrangements, communication, and support for all affected families, with a focus on minimising disruption and ensuring a smooth start for new nursery pupils.

Next Steps

The Consultation Report will be considered by the school's Governing Body and the Cabinet Member for Education who will decide whether or not to approve the MEP strategy or to approve with modifications.

Appendix 1

Consultation with 7 Year 6 School Council members on the proposal to change the school's age range to 3–11.

Appendix 2