

# 21st Century Schools Consultation Document 2018

## THE PROVISION OF ENGLISH-MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN THE LLANRUMNEY AREA

### Proposed Closure of Glan Yr Afon

#### Background to the Proposals

- There are fewer pupils attending the school. Glan yr Afon currently has 141 spaces free – almost half of all spaces.
- Fewer pupils means less funding for the school. The school currently has a deficit budget of £130,000. It is extremely unlikely that this situation will change.
- The school building is in need of repair and provides poor suitability for purpose.
- Spaces are available to accommodate existing pupils across other schools in the local area.
- The quality of the education and buildings at these schools is of a higher standard.
- It is proposed that Glan Yr Afon Primary School be closed from August 2019 and that all existing pupils be reallocated to neighbouring schools.
- All parents have received detailed information regarding the proposals. They have been invited to participate in group meetings and complete a copy of the associated consultation document response form.
- It was also considered important that the consultation took into account the views of Glan Yr Afon pupils themselves.
- Cardiff Research Centre (CRC) were commissioned by Education Services to undertake engagement with pupils of Glan yr Afon. CRC designed and facilitated classroom based activities with pupils at the school. Twenty-one pupils took part in the engagement exercise ranging from year 2 to year 6.

## Methodology

| Lesson Plan   |  |
|---|--|
| Introduction  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who we are</li> <li>• Why we are at the school today</li> <li>• What the lesson will be like (group work, lots of moving around etc.)</li> <li>• Rules</li> </ul>   |
| Getting to know a little about you – a game of “Simon” says.<br><br>If the answer is ‘yes’ you need to be on your feet, if the answer is no you sit down. | <p>Simon says:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand up if you are in year...</li> <li>• Stand up if your favourite subject is ...</li> <li>• Stand up if you can play a musical instrument</li> <li>• Stand up if you have brothers or sisters/one than 1/more than 2/at Glan yr Afon</li> <li>• Stand up if you have heard rumours about the school closing?</li> <li>• Stay standing up if you have any questions or concerns about that</li> </ul>  |
| Identifying questions/fears and concerns  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils work in groups of two or three. They are all given post-its and pens</li> <li>• Pupils are asked to discuss in their small groups what they think could be a fear, a concern or a question about the school closing and moving to a different primary. The concerns could be their own but they could also be ones that they think could belong to their friends, other pupils in the school or other family members.</li> <li>• Post-it notes are then stuck onto ‘the brain’ (Drawn outline of a head/brain) at the front of the class.</li> <li>• A member of the team works on arranging these into themes.</li> <li>• Themes are fed back to the class. Pupils encouraged to elaborate on who said what and why.</li> </ul> |
| What concerns you?  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Themes are transferred onto posters and placed around the room. e.g. bullying, not being placed with my friends, not getting a place at the school I want, finding my way around?)</li> <li>• Pupils sticker anything that is a <u>concern to them personally</u>.</li> <li>• Pupils also use on one jewelled sticker to mark their No1 concern or fear about the proposed changes.</li> </ul>  |
| Can you think of anything that could make this easier/less of a worry?  | <p>Open discussion with the pupils. Prompts could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A trip to the new school?</li> <li>• A chance to meet the pupils at the school?</li> <li>• A change to meet teachers at the school?</li> <li>• More information about what will happen to us?</li> <li>• Frequent updates from the school to tell you how things are going?</li> </ul>   |
| Feedback to the class   | <p>What we have found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A/B/C are all the things that you are concerned about.</li> <li>• You have questions about D.</li> <li>• The number 1 concern for people in the class today is X.</li> <li>• You think that things could be made easier by...</li> </ul> <p>What we will do next<br/>Thank you for your time</p>   |

## Results

The pupils participating in the exercise were well informed and all had prior knowledge regarding proposals to close the school.

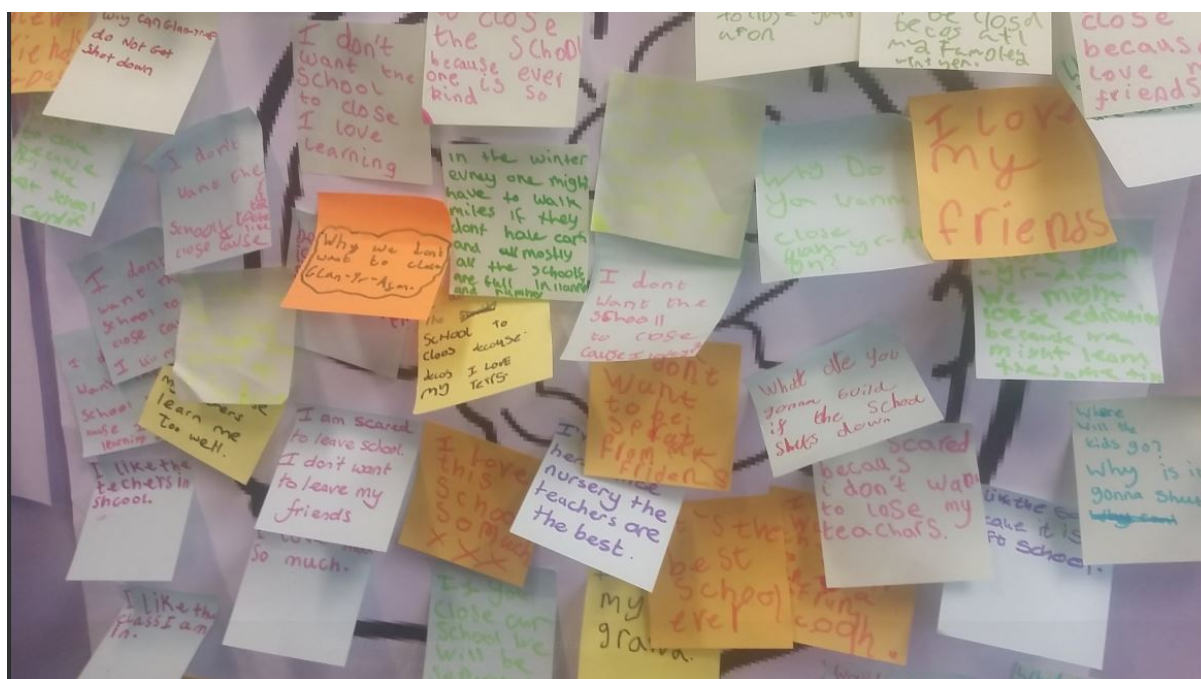
Four of the twenty-one pupils were wearing 'save our school' t-shirts.

Pupils ranged from year 2 (aged 6) to year 6 (aged 11).

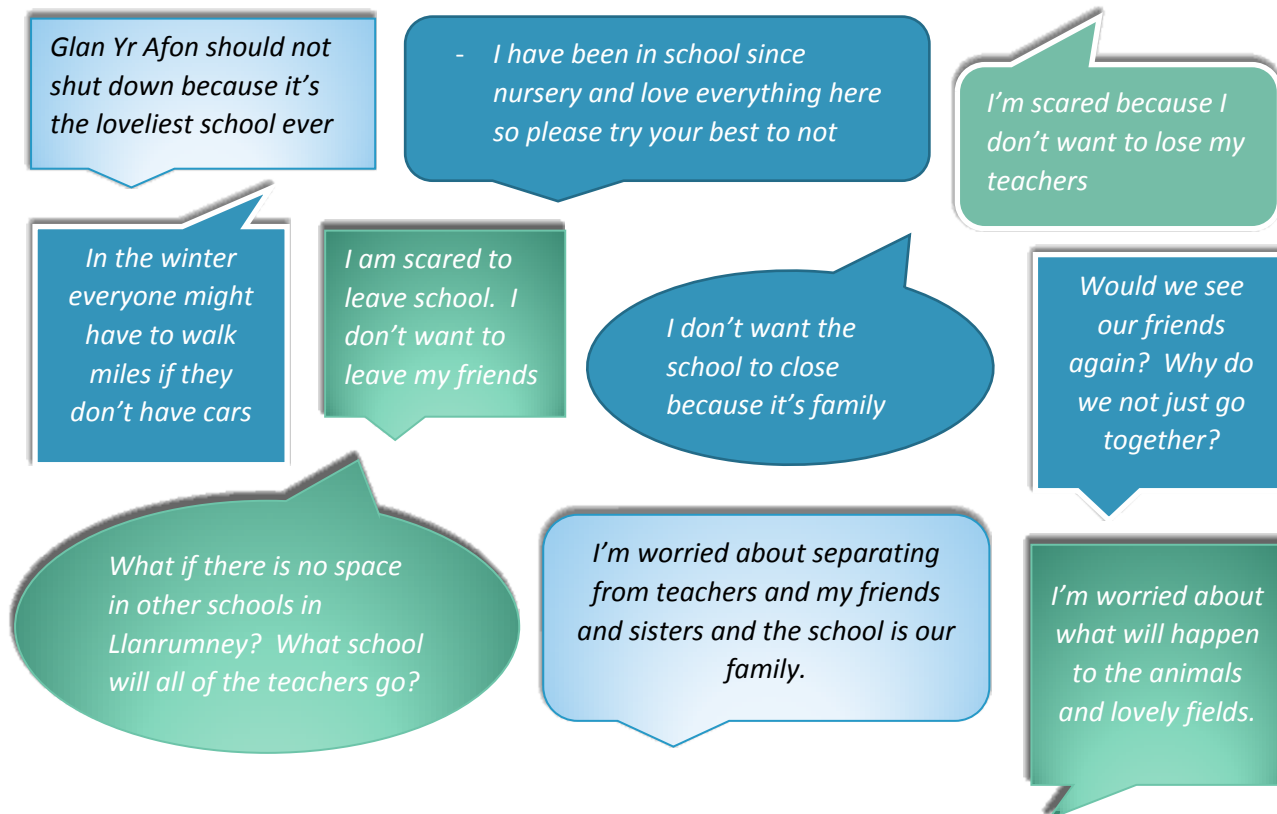
Many of the pupils also had older or younger siblings in the school.

A number of key themes were revealed though the engagement exercise (a full list of the comments is provided in appendix 1). These included:

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Love for Glan Yr Afon (15)                   | What will go on the site? (3)       |
| Don't want the school to close (14)          | Why is this happening? (3)          |
| Concerns/care for teachers (14)              | Distance to the other schools (2)   |
| Don't want to be separated from friends (12) | Phased closure needed (2)           |
| Where will we go (4)                         | Need to move twice (2)              |
| Family (3)                                   | Give more money to Glan Yr Afon (2) |



A selection of the comments made included:



The number one concern for the pupils taking part in the engagement exercise focused on changing teachers.

Pupils were worried not only from the perspective of fitting into a new classroom but were also thinking about what would happen to their existing teachers should Glan Yr Afon close.

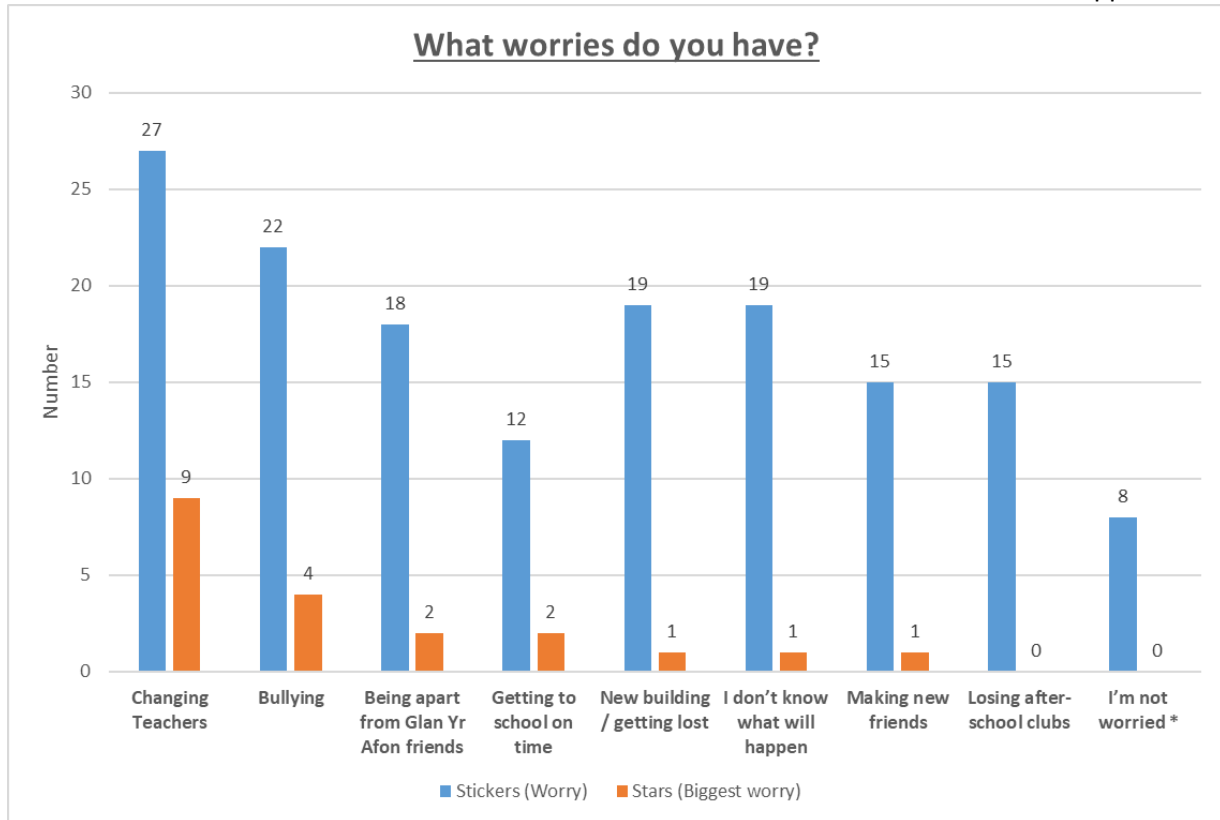
Pupils clearly expressed how much they love their current teachers and how much they would miss them should they have to move.

Whilst bullying was not raised initially as a particular concern it was scored highly as part of this follow on exercise. Similarly, making new friends, getting to know a new building and uncertainty around what will eventually happen, were all also recorded as a cause for concern by a large number of pupils.

Some pupils commented that they didn't want to have to go to St Cadoc's (one of the local schools that would take Glan Yr Afon pupils should the proposed closure go ahead) as they weren't Catholics, and so wouldn't fit in – this echoes comments made by parents in a previous public meeting.

The role of selecting primary schools to determine which secondary school pupils would ultimately attend was also raised with some pupils concerned that their future choices could be affected<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Eastern High, formed by an amalgamation of Llanrumney and Rumney High Schools in 2013, fell into special measures in December 2014, apparently prompting parents to send their children to St Cadoc's with the aim of increasing their chances of getting a place in St Illtyd's Catholic High school. Year-on-year improvements at Eastern High (coming out of special measures in 2017, and almost trebling the



\*Some of the younger year 2 pupils mistakenly read this as “I’m worried”.

Pupils also verbally expressed concern about what would happen to forest school. This was clearly an aspect of the school that the children enjoyed and gained a lot from. Pupils were concerned that this facility may not be available to them at a new school. They were also mindful as to what would happen to the trees, animals etc. of this space if there were to be future developments on the current school site.



percentage of pupils gaining 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE from 2016 to 2018) mean this school is now seen as more desirable, and parents prefer their children to go to Eastern High rather than St Illtyd's.

## **What could make things easier/less of a worry?**

- Pupils felt that an opportunity to visit any new school, to meet teachers, pupils and get some familiarity with a new setting could help to allay concerns that they may have.
- The current 'not knowing' was a source of significant concern. Pupils asked to be 'just told straight' what was happening so that they could try to get used to the idea.
- Pupils were keen to have information provided to them via an official channel, with a visit from a council officer to provide direct updates the preferred choice. It was clear that information is currently coming to pupils from a variety of sources including the school, parents and the playground. Pupils wanted to feel informed and be updated directly regarding any developments.
- Knowledge that they would be transferring with classmates and siblings would also reduce concerns significantly





## Appendix 1

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Love Glan Yr Afon   | 15 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Glan Yr Afon has school clubs and the best people in the school</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want you to close my school I love my school defos</i></li> <li>- <i>Do not close Glan Yr Afon it's the best</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want the school to close because they let me play</i></li> <li>- <i>Glan Yr Afon should not shut down because it's the loveliest school ever</i></li> <li>- <i>I love this school so much x x x</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want it to close because it's the best school in Cardiff</i></li> <li>- <i>I love school so much</i></li> <li>- <i>I like the class I am in</i></li> <li>- <i>I think Glan Yr Afon is the best school in Wales</i></li> <li>- <i>I love my play ground</i></li> <li>- <i>It's the best school ever</i></li> <li>- <i>I like the school because it is my first school</i></li> <li>- <i>Because it is the best school ever</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want the school to shut down because it's the best</i></li> </ul>  |    |
| Don't want the school to close  | 14 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>I don't want the school to close because it's family</i></li> <li>- <i>I have been in school since nursery and love everything here so please try your best to not</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want Glan Yr Afon to close because we've already achieved so much</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want the school to close because everyone is kind</i></li> <li>- <i>Why we don't want to close Glan Yr Afon</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want to close the school because everyone is so kind</i></li> <li>- <i>What can Glan Yr Afon do not get shut down</i></li> <li>- <i>Save our school</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want the school to close because I like learning</i></li> <li>- <i>Try to keep the school open</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want my school to close because I love to play</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want the school to close because I love year 2</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want the school to close I love learning</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want the school to close because [no reason given]</i></li> </ul>  |    |
| Teachers  | 14 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>I don't want Glan Yr Afon to close because I like my teachers</i></li> <li>- <i>I've been here since nursery, the teachers are the best</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want the school to close because I like the teachers</i></li> <li>- <i>We are not happy because we love Glan Yr Afon and we love the teachers</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want the teachers to work in a different school</i></li> <li>- <i>I like the teachers in the school</i></li> <li>- <i>All of my teachers are my family to me they have teach me a lot</i></li> <li>- <i>All the teachers won't have a job</i></li> <li>- <i>Kids don't want to be separated from the teachers</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want my school to close because my teachers learn me too well</i></li> <li>- <i>I'm scared because I don't want to lose my teachers</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want Glan Yr Afon to close because I love my teachers</i></li> <li>- <i>I love Glan Yr Afon because I love all of my class mates and teachers</i></li> <li>- <i>I'm worried about separating from teachers and my friends and sisters and the school is our family</i></li> </ul> |    |
| Leaving friends   | 12 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>I don't want the school to close cause I will miss my friends</i></li> <li>- <i>If I go to a new school it will make me sad and I will have no friends</i></li> <li>- <i>If you close our school we will be separated from our friends</i></li> </ul>   |    |



|   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Making new friends every day</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want my school to close because I love the children in my class</i></li> <li>- <i>We don't want to close the school down because we could get separated from friends and brothers</i></li> <li>- <i>I love my friends</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want to be separated from my friends</i></li> <li>- <i>I am scared to leave school. I don't want to leave my friends</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want the school to close because I love my friends</i></li> <li>- <i>If the school close down it's going to be sad to leave our friends and to make new ones</i></li> <li>- <i>Would we see our friends again? Why do we not just go together?</i></li> </ul> |   |
| Where will we go when the school closes?  | 4 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>What if there's not enough space in other schools?</i></li> <li>- <i>What if there is no space in other schools in Llanrumney? What school will all of the teachers go to?</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want the school to close because there's not many other schools to go to</i></li> <li>- <i>Where will the kids go? Why is it gonna shut down?</i></li> </ul>   |   |
| Family  | 3 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Most of my family came here and it will be really sad to see it get knocked down</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want Glan Yr Afon to be closed because all my family went here</i></li> <li>- <i>Glan Yr Afon is important to me and my family because all of us went there</i></li> </ul>   |   |
| What will go on the site?   | 3 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Are you going to build houses when the school is closed?</i></li> <li>- <i>If houses get put here where are all the kids in the houses gonna go?</i></li> <li>- <i>What are you gonna build if the school shuts down?</i></li> </ul>  |   |
| Why do you want to close Glan Yr Afon?  | 3 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Why do you want to close Glan Yr Afon?</i></li> <li>- <i>Why are you thinking to close Glan Yr Afon?</i></li> <li>- <i>Why do you need to close Glan Yr Afon?&gt;</i></li> </ul>  |   |
| Other schools too far away  | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>What if Glan Yr Afon children's parents don't drive and schools are too far away?</i></li> <li>- <i>In the winter everyone might have to walk miles if they don't have cars and mostly all the schools are full in Llanrumney and Rumney</i></li> </ul>   |   |
| Phased closure  | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>If you do close the school can you at least phase the school out</i></li> <li>- <i>Why can't they knock half of the school down so the kids have a school? I don't want it to shut because I have brothers contact</i></li> </ul>   |   |
| Moving schools too often  | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Kids in Year 5 will have spend years and will spend their last year in Year 6</i></li> <li>- <i>I will have to move twice in a short time</i></li> </ul>  |   |
| Give more money to Glan Yr Afon   | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Why do you give other schools a lot of money and can not give us any?</i></li> <li>- <i>Why can you give Glan Yr Afon money because you are just giving them to August 2019</i></li> </ul>  |   |
| Don't want to move schools  | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>I don't want to move school!</i></li> <li>- <i>I'm not going to a different school because I've been here for 4 years and I'll be home school if you do</i></li> </ul>  |   |
| Miscellaneous   | 7 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>I wonder what my new school will be like</i></li> <li>- <i>If you close Glan Yr Afon we might lose education because we might learn the same again</i></li> <li>- <i>I'm worried about what will happen to the animals and lovely fields</i></li> <li>- <i>Do they want to close Glan Yr Afon because Health &amp; Safety?</i></li> <li>- <i>If I move school I will have to move house an no one will look after my animals</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't want it to close because we don't want to go to St Cadocs because we're not Catholic</i></li> <li>- <i>My nan has worked here for over 20 years and I don't want her to lose her job</i></li> </ul>  |   |

