



**Proposal to discontinue Llanfair Kilgeddin
Church in Wales Voluntary Aided School.**

OBJECTION REPORT

March 2016

Monmouthshire County Council
Children and Young People Directorate

Objection Report

**Proposal to discontinue Llanfair Kilgeddin Church in Wales Voluntary Aided
Primary School on 3rd April 2016.**

Purpose

The report is published in line with the requirements under Section 49 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. This is a summary of the statutory objections – otherwise known as the ‘the Objection Report’.

Publication of the Statutory Notice

Following the formal consultation period and the publication of a consultation report, Cabinet took the decision to proceed to publish the proposal by way of a statutory notice for 28 days after the 20th January to 17th February 2016.

During the objection period 1 objection was received in relation to discontinuing Llanfair Kilgeddin Church in Wales Voluntary Aided Primary School.

The objection was in the form of an email and within which the person objecting wished for her comments submitted as part of the consultation period to be considered as objections as well. See Appendix 1.

In accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 this Objection Report is published electronically on the Council’s website at:

www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/strategicreview

To request a hard copy of this document please write to Cath Sheen,
Monmouthshire County Council, PO Box 106, Caldicot, NP26 9AN or by email
strategicreview@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1

The following table represents the additional comments made in support of the 1 objection received:

Comment	LEA Response
<p>My son filled out the pupil questionnaire and we returned to MCC as instructed on the letter and yet it was not included in the Consultation Report. Yet another indication of the flawed adoption of this process. It must be on file and so should be included in the document. Other parents had also returned the questionnaires.</p>	<p>There was only 1 pupil questionnaire received within the required timescales and this was included within the Consultation Report.</p>
<p>We were given assurances by the school Governors that the PTA would have say so on where items paid for by the PTA would be donated to in the event that the closure took place. Certain items were paid for with match funding that stipulated this.</p>	<p>This will still be the case if the proposal goes ahead, the items are currently still at the school.</p>
<p>We also were not allowed to take pictures of our children or items of their work from the school due to it still being available for further inspection by ESTYN. ESTYN never returned but we will require access to retrieve items in the event of closure rather than it all going into a skip as has previously happened with items that had been lent to the school. There are still items within the school building that were donated/lent by various parents. The PTA has photographic evidence of such items.</p>	<p>The pupils work and pictures are still at the school and parents will be able to collect it when the final decision is made.</p> <p>Until a decision is made Estyn can still decide to visit the school.</p>
<p>The whole process has been very unfairly done, by forcing the children to go elsewhere with no consultation or choice of destination has meant that we as parents have little chance of success at changing any decisions. I question whether due process has been followed and has certainly been undemocratic.</p>	<p>The Local Authority has undertaken this process on behalf of the Governing Body of the school and it has been undertaken in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.</p>

The following comments have been provided by the 1 objector during the consultation period which the objector wished to be considered as part of their objection:

Comment	LEA Response
<p>I object to the positive rating on 'Improve Access To Education and Training' That is purely a matter of opinion and in mine LKPS is a far superior educational environment. My children received an excellent quality of teaching and attainment at LKPS. They are in the top sets in King Henry VIII School including my son who was in Year 6 at LKPS in 2014/15. He is also levels ahead of other children in some subjects.</p>	<p>The schools that pupils have transferred to demonstrate good practice and have successful leadership teams, therefore it is expected that educational outcomes and provision will be enhanced as a result of this proposal.</p> <p>The Local Authority along with Welsh Government has a commitment to provide learning environments for children and young people that will enable the successful implementation of strategies for school improvement and better educational outcomes.</p> <p>Overall Estyn and the Local Authority deemed the school to be in a position where prospects for improvement were judged to be unsatisfactory.</p>
<p>With regard to the UN convention on the rights of the child, I believe that closing the school breaches the 7 core aims. Some pupils come to LKPS as a safe haven when they have been bullied at other schools and feel safe in the small environment where they flourish, not just academically.</p>	<p>Children have had access to a wider peer group at their new schools.</p> <p>Pupils have access to a broader curriculum around the healthy schools agenda and there are improved facilities at the schools the pupils have transferred to enabling for example delivery of PE and extracurricular activities on site.</p>
<p>The small school environment supports emotional wellbeing.</p>	<p>All schools promote and support high levels of emotional wellbeing.</p>
<p>These aspects are never easy to measure at an ESTYN inspection but children gain in confidence and self-worth at LKPS who would not at a large school where they are lost in the crowd.</p>	<p>The standards of achievement however are not at the levels they are expected to be at the school.</p>
<p>Cultural activities -this school does far more extra to the curriculum than other schools</p>	<p>The after school club closed in the spring term 2014.</p>

<p>including participation in Eisteddfodau with many children performing solos even at a very young age.</p>	<p>The schools that pupils have transferred to have a wide range of after school activities.</p>
<p>THE CRITICISMS OF MIXED AGE CLASSES - This happens at many schools including Usk where LKPS were sent and is of no concern as the child is taught to their ability not age. Multiple year groups in a class is still not a problem and is beneficial.</p>	<p>Many children across the authority and Wales are taught in mixed aged classes.</p> <p>Teachers are skilled in teaching children with a wide range of need within mainstream classes within the same stage.</p>
<p>SMALL AGE COHORTS-The assumption that a small school is bad is wrong- it is different but has benefits. Team sports are played with multiple ages, regardless of sex and ensures everyone gets to join in - not just the Best ones picked for the team. My daughter now year 11 in KHS amazes the class when playing football and is due to playing at LKPS in the school team- she would never have had this opportunity in a large year group as she was so shy when younger she would not have wanted to join in or have been chosen.</p>	<p>Larger schools have greater access to resources to offer a much wider range of provision to support and enhance learning opportunities.</p>
<p>QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING COULD NOT IMPROVE - The quality of teaching has been excellent. My children are way ahead of other pupils at entry to King Henry VIII school and continue to be, so to suggest the teaching is inadequate is appalling.</p>	<p>The school has received an intensive amount of support and resources from the EAS and LA in order to ensure the school could succeed is a factual records of support. Unfortunately, despite this exceptional level of support, the school was unable to demonstrate that they had made sufficient progress to secure the necessary improvements and to be able to continue without this exceptional level of support. This was confirmed by Estyn in the inspection of the school in December 2014 where prospects for improvement were judged to be unsatisfactory.</p>

	<p>Improved and enhanced facilities and curriculum delivery within the new designated schools will enable <u>all</u> children and young people to reach their full potential.</p>
<p>STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT WOULD NOT IMPROVE - Again this is a ridiculous assumption. If there were any downward trends in this last year it is hardly surprising given the trauma the pupils endured by having their very able and inspiring headteacher removed with no warning and relocation of the pupils to Usk School again with only 24hours notice</p>	<p>As above, the school has received an intensive amount of support and resources from the EAS and LA in order to ensure the school could succeed is a factual records of support. Unfortunately, despite this exceptional level of support, the school was unable to demonstrate that they had made sufficient progress to secure the necessary improvements and to be able to continue without this exceptional level of support. This was confirmed by Estyn in the inspection of the school in December 2014 where prospects for improvement were judged to be unsatisfactory. .</p>
<p>However several pupils achieved the highest mark in the SAT tests in July 2015- higher than the Usk pupils, again proving the school to be excellent. If it is so terrible, as we were told by some Local Authority Governors that we were deranged as parents to want our children there, then how come our children scored so highly against Usk Pupils- a supposedly 'better' school.</p>	<p>The Local Authority cannot compare with individual pupils however does maintain that despite exceptional levels of support being provided to the school it is still judged by Estyn as its prospects for improvement as unsatisfactory</p>
<p>Independent learning is second nature to LKPS pupils and again King Henry VIII School have commented on my own children's positive attitude to learning and just getting on with their work. Some of this no doubt a positive aspect of mixed age classes where the teacher is speaking to one age of children whilst others continue with their work.</p>	<p>Many children across the authority and Wales are taught in mixed aged classes. Teachers are skilled in teaching children with a wide range of need within mainstream classes within the same stage.</p> <p>All schools encourage children to become independent learners and to develop a positive attitude to learning.</p>

<p>THE LEADERSHIP TEAM - is attainable and was previously strongly in place so can be replaced.</p>	<p>The Governing body were unable to appoint a Headteacher</p>
<p>The ESTYN INSPECTION - I believe had the school had its ESTYN Inspection in June/July 2015 it would have had a much better report. The December inspection followed a period of extreme unrest and upset which included many of the excellent voluntary staff and community members being made to leave. The community aspect of this school was outstanding and could be recaptured.</p>	<p>The Council do not determine when Estyn inspect schools, the most recent Estyn Inspection reports have been provided for each school. Estyn will inspect all providers at least once during a six-year period starting 1 September 2014. The date of the next inspection is not linked to the date of the previous inspection. They give four weeks' written notice of inspection to all providers.</p>
<p>THE BUILDING - A modern building alone does not give a better standard of education - many of the best Independent schools are in old buildings.</p>	<p>The Local Authority along with Welsh Government have a long term vision to provide learning environments for children and young people that will enable the successful implementation of strategies for school improvement and better educational outcomes. Also a sustainable education system through better use of resources to improve efficiency and cost effectiveness of the education estate.</p> <p>Improved and enhanced facilities and curriculum delivery within the new designated schools will enable all children and young people to reach their full potential.</p>
<p>The outside toilets are not a problem. My children are not traumatised by using them. If parents were concerned by them then we would not choose to send our children to the school. The Executive Headteacher did not see them as a problem as long as the perimeter fence was intact (which it now is) from a safeguarding issue.</p>	<p>The toilets do not comply with the Welsh Government Good Practice Guide and recommendations within the document.</p>

<p>The building has plans to be upgraded -these have been approved and there were also plans drawn up for a larger development including a school hall but funding is the issue. The sale of the building plot adjacent to the school was to fund the improvements but Monmouth Diocese now just see it as a financial opportunity and have reneged on their agreement to release the money.</p>	<p>The Local Authority cannot comment on what the Monmouth Diocesan Trust choses to spend its funds on</p>
<p>SURPLUS CAPACITY- I object (despite the inadequate explanation since provided in the FAQ Document) to the calculation of percentage of surplus places. If MCC only allow 5 pupils per year group then it is 100% full at 35 pupils. To use 40 pupils in the calculation is wrong and gives a biased figure of surplus places.</p>	<p>The capacity is calculated using WG guidance. The total capacity of the school is calculated by dividing the size of each classroom by 1.86 which is the amount of space required per pupil, therefore the capacity of 40 is derived. The admission number is calculated by dividing the capacity by 7 year groups, this is 5.71, the calculation then automatically rounds this down as dictated by the WG guidance. There is not an option to round up because the physical space is not there to accommodate 6 in each year group. There is also not the option to round the capacity down to 35.</p>
<p>There were plenty of pupils wanting to come to LKPS who were not allowed by MCC. It would have been perfectly workable to have 6 in some years and 5 in others as and when required. The inflexible attitude of MCC to this aspect has contributed to the lower numbers yet again attempting to undermine the school. 6 pupils were turned away last academic year alone 2014/15).</p> <p>Also some pupils come who intend to go to private school at Junior stage so again this should</p>	<p>The School has an agreed Admission Number and capacity. This is in line with Welsh Government legislation.</p> <p>The legislation does not allow for Governing Bodies to admit over their admission number.</p> <p>The Local Authority cannot comment on the fact that 6 pupils were turned away from the school as admissions into this School are the responsibility of the Governing Body not the Local Authority. However they still have to abide by WG legislation.</p>

<p>be allowed to be factored in to the year intake numbers.</p>	<p>If parents remove their pupils from the school and places become available then they can be filled should parents with pupils in the relevant age group wish to apply for a place.</p>
<p>Many pupils come from outside the catchment area further proof of what an excellent school it is giving parents choice of education for their children.</p>	<p>This is the case with many schools, if there are places available, parents can exercise their right to parental preference.</p>
<p>Pupils do not have to undertake PE off site -There are facilities i.e. a big field. Swimming was taught to the whole school, again a fact that attracted parents to the school. One term of swimming lessons in juniors as done by other schools is not enough to teach a child to swim - Surely a core part of the curriculum. Therefore it is left to those that can afford it to have lessons outside school.</p>	<p>There is a requirement within the National Curriculum to teach pupils to swim to a certain level which all school must adhere to.</p> <p>There are no facilities available at Llanfair Kilgeddin VC School to undertake PE in poor weather when the field cannot be used and therefore pupils would need to be transported off site.</p>
<p>LKPS offered choice of a better education to those that could not afford it elsewhere and should continue to do so. Any perceived increase in cost is offset by reduced input and cost of further intervention for underachievers in larger schools and for certain pupils the cost to society of delinquency.</p>	<p>The schools that pupils have transferred to and will transfer to in the future are more sustainable both educationally and financially</p>
<p>An alternative to the standardised 210 pupil primary school should not be only in the gift of those that can afford private education</p>	<p>The schools that pupils have transferred to and will transfer to in the future are more sustainable both educationally and financially.</p>
<p>This school with a County central location that can take pupils from around the county for reasons of other schools being oversubscribed, as having small numbers to suit pupils</p>	<p>Standards at the school are not good enough, despite the school having received an intensive amount of support and resources from the EAs and LA in order to ensure the school could succeed. Unfortunately, despite this exceptional level of support, the school</p>

<p>problematic in other schools, where children can feel safe from bullying with it's more inclusive atmosphere should be seen as a jewel in the crown of the Monmouthshire educational offering.</p>	<p>was unable to demonstrate that they had made sufficient progress to secure the necessary improvements and to be able to continue without this exceptional level of support. This was confirmed by Estyn in the inspection of the school in December 2014 where prospects for improvement were judged to be unsatisfactory.</p>
<p>Parents in Monmouthshire are entitled to a choice of primary education rather than a one size fits all. Llanfair Kilgeddin Primary School is ideally situated mid county to be the overflow and alternative choice for all the surrounding schools.</p>	<p>Legislation allows for parents to express their preference for their child to be admitted to a school, it does not allow for choice.</p>
<p>The document refers to Llanfair Kilgeddin being a village. Following discussion with MCC Planning Dept. during the LDP consultation phase, Llanfair Kilgeddin was downgraded to a "Minor Village "</p>	<p>This is a matter for the Planning Department and does not impact on this process.</p>

The following Comments were also submitted by the objector whereby the LEA cannot respond.

<p>Monmouthshire County Council's (MCC) shared vision of 21st Century Schools programme States in Theme 2 that people are confident, capable and involved-very much the ethos at LKPS. My children are far more confident having been to LKPS -a small school and have adapted better than pupils from large primary schools to secondary education. I am convinced that had my daughter attended a larger primary school she would not have joined in or have become so confident</p>
<p>THE SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE- I object to the 'Promote Independence' being rated as a positive impact. Children at LKPS are always very independent, again a result of small numbers so no hiding in the crowd, and always encouraged to take responsibility at an early age.</p>
<p>I object to the ridiculous comment about reduced social interaction with children of their own age. Children develop relationships with peers of own age outside of school also and really with small groups it does not matter if someone is a year older than another. Children learn to get on with children of all ages and this increases their confidence and maturity. There is not the segregation of different ages at break time and the older children have developed a much more caring attitude to their fellow pupils.</p>

MCC aims to raise the life chances for all within the community, by closure MCC is in breach of its vision of providing an educational offer that is acceptable to all. A 210 pupil primary school is not acceptable to me.