

Redaction



2nd December 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

4 years ago we strived to get our young daughter into St Brigids School as we believe that St Brigids will provide the best education for our daughter although each day this would mean we would have to endure a 50 mile round trip per day in order to get her there. We could have easily sent her to a local school in rhyl with minimal commute but we believe alot less quality education.

Our Daughter is currently in year 2 at St Brigids School, she has spent the last 4 years at the school and has developed into a well mannered, happy, confident and very intelligent young girl. The school provides a small family community where everyone knows each other, teachers, children and parents alike.

St Brigids School is an excellent school providing excellent education, the school produces well rounded, successful young adults who go on to contribute alot to our local communities.

It is with absolute shock that we have recently discovered that Denbighshire County Council wish to close St Brigids School which is by far the most successful school Denbighshire has to offer.

We find it unbelievable that you wish to close a school that has such high exam results, set in the beautiful welsh countryside and with a fantastic family ethos and turn that into a new super school with close to 900 pupils situated in Rhyl.

Rhyl already has 2 new schools being built whereas Denbigh has none what so ever.

We strongly object to St Brigids school being closed and will do everything in our power to stop this happening.

What St Brigids School needs is investment and updating within its existing site and to remain St Brigids School and continue to be the most successful school in Denbighshire.

I await a response from you on this matter.

Redaction



Redaction



5th December 2012

Dear Jackie Walley, Head of Customers and Education Support

We have two children who attend St. Brigid's School in Denbigh and I was shocked and disappointed to hear that Denbighshire County Council would even consider closing or amalgamating St. Brigid's with Blessed Edward Jones High School, Rhyl.

St. Brigid's is a fantastic school with excellent teachers and it maintains outstanding high examination results. Denbighshire County Council should be very proud of this school as we all are. As the school states "To Inspire and be Inspired" and that is exactly what the school does.

The school has a wonderful ethos and produces well mannered educated children. It has a special homely atmosphere as it is a small school, all the children know each other and all the teachers know all the children by their name as they are all individuals and are not lost in the system as they would be in a larger school containing 800 to 900 pupils.

As the Head Teacher Mrs Barlow has written on the school website:-

As the new Headteacher, I am delighted to welcome you to St. Brigid's 3-19 Catholic Day and State Boarding School website. Pupils, staff and governors are **very proud** of our school and **its values and high standards**. Parents and guardians tell us that they and their children choose St. Brigid's because **we are small enough to know each pupil's name**, and **provide a secure, family oriented environment**, but large enough to deliver a **rich and diverse curriculum**.

St. Brigid's receives the least funding and yet still produces these wonderful children and results. It does not make any sense for the school not to carry on.

I do not see why the funding can not be split between St. Brigid's and Blessed Edward Jones High School.

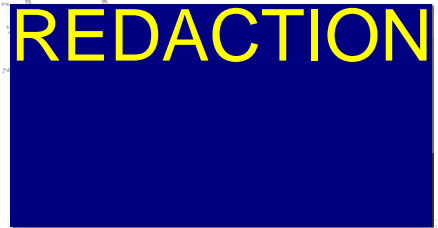
I look forward to your response and request that the consultation period is extended due to Christmas falling over this crucial time.

Redaction





Modernising Education Programme Team
Denbighshire County Council
County Hall
Wynnstay Road
Ruthin
Denbighshire
LL15 1YN



11th December 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

We are writing regarding our receipt of the Consultation Document regarding a joint faith based school provision for North Denbighshire. We would like to express our disappointment and inform you that we strongly oppose the proposals for merging St. Brigid's and Blessed Edward Jones' to form a new school elsewhere.

Redaction St. Brigid's secondary school this September. Re has a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (High Functioning) and ADHD which result in some communication difficulties. Redaction quiet classes with the help Reda learning support assistant. It was for this reason that it was agreed with the LEA to name St. Brigid's as the Secondary school of choice Redac Statement of Special Educational Needs and we have been delighted that we did. Redactio settled in extremely well and Redac happy and secure. Redaction well with Redactio class teachers and classmates and has continued Speech and Language Therapy support.

Considering this being a totally new experience of a mainstream secondary school Redactio adapted so well. Unfortunately, Redaction several schools during Redactio primary years in which Reda experienced bullying on many an occasion. This has not at all been the case at St Brigid's. The pupils are caring and have only ever Redaction kindness and consideration. They are indeed a credit to the school and their parents and families. We have no doubt each one of them will benefit the community and society as a whole. In return, Redactio learned a mutual respect of others and this is contributing Redac emotional as well Redac educational development.

Redaction had been unable to attend St. Brigid's Secondary School, we would have had no option but to homeschool Re Finding a suitable school Redactio needs over the years has proved such a challenge that we felt no choice but to homeschool Redactio period during Re primary education.

We are so grateful that this hasn't been the case with secondary school Redaction able to learn and mature in a safe, yet sociable environment. If, however, the school was to close Redaction education there, we would be faced with that option again as we know the reason Redactio progress is due to the unique nature and environment of the school.

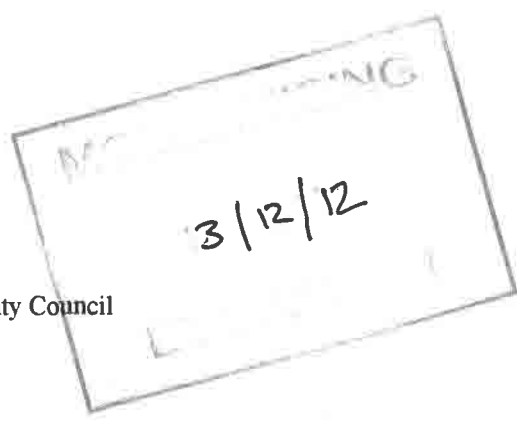
We sincerely hope this situation doesn't arise as this would be failing in giving Redactio continued excellent, supportive education Redac receiving. Red continues to surprise us with Red ability to learn and is overcoming many obstacles and we are at last now confident for Re future. Please ensure this continues and support St. Brigid's which, without doubt, has given us all a feeling of great optimism Redactio development.

We would be most grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerley

Redaction

Redaction



5th December 2012

Jackie Whalley
Denbighshire County Council
County Hall
Wynnstay Road
Ruthin
Denbighshire
LL15 1YN

Proposed merger between St Brigids 3-19 Catholic Day and State Boarding School Denbigh and Blessed Edward Jones School Rhyl

Dear Jackie,

As a parent of a child who attends St Brigids School in Denbigh I am writing to express our grave concern and shock on receiving the news of a possible faith based school merger involving St Brigids 3-19 Catholic Day and State Boarding School in Denbigh and Blessed Edward Jones School in Rhyl.

My personal view echoes the views of the vast majority of fellow parents and is undoubtedly to preserve St Brigids and Blessed Edward Jones schools as they are and not to proceed with any proposed merger. May I respectfully remind you that St Brigids 3-19 Catholic Day and State Boarding School has an enviable track record of outstanding exam results and extremely good discipline, while also receiving the least amount of funding. The sheer volume of applications for admission to St Brigids School year after year clearly speaks for itself. The general air of happiness and determination to succeed throughout the young people of this truly fantastic school never ceases to amaze me. St Brigids is undoubtedly a school Denbighshire should be very proud of and I hope you will agree that this truly unique school needs to be preserved exactly as it is.

The small size of both St Brigids and Blessed Edward Jones schools is undoubtedly one of the main reasons for the huge volumes of admission applications year on year as well as excellent results and good discipline. After being advised that a new merged school would cater for approximately 900 pupils it seems blatantly obvious that this would be an enormous downgrade in the quality of overall schooling for our children and is therefore completely unacceptable. After hearing the views of parents it is obvious that neither parents of St Brigids school pupils or Blessed Edward Jones school pupils want this merger to proceed.

After listening carefully to fellow parents views it is felt that if the current situation of these unique schools is to be tragically lost and therefore a faith based school merger between St Brigids and Blessed Edward Jones schools is completely unavoidable then I would like to put across my personal argument for any possible new school build NOT to be sited within Rhyl, but either on or near to the current St Brigids school site which I'm sure you will whole heartedly agree is a beautiful location, and which I am absolutely convinced has an extremely positive effect on the pupils and staff alike, as opposed to the environment of a town like Rhyl. Even a site in between the current two schools would surely be more favourable than Rhyl.

Another reason for expressing our extreme opposition to any possible new school to be sited within Rhyl is due to the fact that already Rhyl High School is having a vast amount of money spent on improvements while schools in Denbigh do not, therefore it simply cannot be fair for a town like Rhyl to have vast amounts of money spent on the current high school AND be the site for a brand new school build while Denbigh has nothing.

May I also add that I feel that this whole consultation process should at the very least be extended due to Christmas falling within the process and due to the fact that this proposed merger has clearly angered many parents to a shocking level.

I would be grateful if you could respond in writing to this letter and to acknowledge receipt.

Yours sincerely

Redaction [Redacted Signature]

Redaction [Redacted Name]

Annex to P23

6

Redaction

Redaction

10 December 2012

Modernising Education Programme Team
Denbighshire County Council
County Hall
Wynnstay Road
RUTHIN
LL15 1YN

Dear Sirs

ST BRIGID'S SCHOOL, DENBIGH

I write with concern regarding the future of St. Brigid's School. Both our daughters attend St. Brigid's and are currently in **Redaction**. The 'family feel' of the school is unique for such a vast range in educational years (3-18) and the transition from primary to secondary education for our eldest daughter was extremely easy, happy and carried no stress on her part.

You will note from our address that our daughter's travel a considerable way to school and we pay approximately £140.00 per month over the school year in coach fares. This is a willing expense paid for our daughter's to attend such a well-run and family orientated school where they feel they are safe and feel valued. We are pleased that the girls are extremely happy there. Should there be a merger resulting in a larger school with an increased number of pupils we would have to consider how the family atmosphere that we have valued and the school has achieved in providing could be retained. It is our initial thoughts that this will be difficult to achieve and we are left with the thoughts that there is already a large school in existence in Colwyn Bay **Redaction**

It is our strong feeling and thoughts that a school with such excellent teaching methods whilst providing attention to detail that results in pupils and teachers alike being known to all. These family orientated values are very rare these days and it seems to be a worthwhile ethos to be retained and invested in. The discipline which is instilled naturally results in very well-mannered young people who grow up to take their position in the community and provide a positive and worthwhile contribution to the locality. We feel most strongly that these attributes are worthy of investment.

We would appreciate acknowledgment of this letter.

Many thanks

Yours faithfully

Redaction

17/12/12

8.

Redaction

Jackie Whalley
Head of Modernising Education
Denbigh County Council
County Hall
Wynnstay Road
Ruthin
Denbighshire
LL15 1YN

Dear Ms Whalley

Re Future of St Brigids

I am writing regarding the proposed merger of Blessed Edward Jones and St Brigids.

I am a parent of a Year 11 student at St Brigids and would like to raise the following points. I chose St Brigids above Blessed Edward Jones because of the high standard of education offered and the fact that it is a relatively small school. Redaction is a quiet child and I feel Redacti has flourished at St Brigids and Redacti would have been 'lost in the masses' of a larger school. I also, and most importantly Reda is due to enter Year 12 in the summer of 2013, wanted a school that provided 6th Form education.

To this end I have made the choice to pay for the transport of £24.00 a week because of my preference. I HAVE DONE THAT FOR A REASON. The atmosphere and ethos of St Brigids is different to that of Blessed Edward Jones – they are totally different schools.

My main concern if the school is combined is the provision for the Primary School, 6th Form and Boarders – what will happen to them? The combination of all three makes this a very unique school with a family like atmosphere. Until that question is answered and their future secured I am opposed to any merger.

Redaction is coming to the end Reda education at St Brigids but I would be extremely sad if other children could not have the wonderful opportunity that she has had. Why would anyone want to put an end to that?

I would be grateful for your response acknowledgement of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Redaction

Redaction

MODERNISING
20 DEC 2012
EDUCATION

Redaction

Redaction

Redaction

Redaction

Redaction

Redaction

DECEMBER 10th 2012

DEAR

RE: THE FUTURE OF ST BRIGID SCHOOL

HAVING LIVED IN [Redaction] FOR OVER [Redaction] YEARS I HAVE GROWN UP WITH MANY ST. BRIGIDS GIRLS WHO HAVE BLOSSOMED INTO INTELLIGENT, WELL ROUNDED, FAMILY ORIENTATED, SUCCESSFUL ADULTS WHOSE MORAL VALUES ARE EXEMPLARY. WHEN MYSELF AND MY HUSBAND WERE DECIDING ON SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR OUR ELDEST [Redaction] WE IMMEDIATELY CONTACTED ST. BRIGIDS TO PUT [Redaction] NAME ON THE LONG WAITING LIST. THE REPUTATION OF THE SCHOOL, THE WELL DOCUMENTED EXCELLENT RESULTS, HIGH MORAL VALUES AND FAMILY ORIENTATED APPROACH TO EDUCATION ALL COMBINED TO INSTIGATE OUR DECISION. PRESTATYN HIGH SCHOOL WAS NOT AN OPTION, EVEN THOUGH WE LIVE ONLY [Redaction] AWAY FROM THIS SCHOOL.

OUR [Redaction] ATTENDED [Redaction] FROM AGE 7-11, [Redaction] WAS BULLIED CONSISTENTLY BY A GROUP OF GIRLS WHILST AT THIS SCHOOL. [Redaction] WOULD CRY EACH EVENING, NOT WANTING TO GO TO SLEEP BECAUSE IT WOULD MEAN ANOTHER DAY OF BEING VERBALLY ABUSED AND UPSET BY THESE CRUEL, VINDICTIVE CHILDREN.

WE HAD NO DOUBT IN OUR MIND THAT BEING WITHIN
AN ENVIRONMENT LIKE ST. BRIGIDS WOULD BE LIFE
CHANGING [Redaction]

WE WERE WELL AWARE THAT [Redaction] WOULD FIRST
NEED TO PASS AN ENTRANCE EXAM AND THEN BE
SELECTED TO GET A PLACE AT THE EXTREMELY
POPULAR, OVER SUBSCRIBED ST. BRIGIDS.

[Redaction] PASSED AND WAS SELECTED TO ATTEND YEAR 7
[Redaction], [Redaction] IS A COMPLETELY
DIFFERENT CHILD, [Redaction] IS SO HAPPY TO GO TO SCHOOL
EACH MORNING, [Redaction] LOVES [Redaction] SCHOOL AND IS PROUD
OF BEING A PUPIL AT ST. BRIGIDS, THE STANDARD OF
[Redaction] WORK HAS IMPROVED DRAMATICALLY AND [Redaction] FEELS
PRAISED. [Redaction] RECENTLY GOT CONFIRMED AT OUR
LOCAL CHURCH IN [Redaction] [Redaction] CHOSE TO STUDY
THE BIBLE WITH OUR MINISTER AND UNDERTAKE THIS
JOURNEY THROUGH [Redaction] OWN FREEWILL.

ST BRIGIDS HAS BEEN INSPIRATIONAL IN GIVING
[Redaction] A WONDERFUL BOTH SPIRITUAL AND
MORALISTIC MODEL TO FOLLOW.

ALTHOUGH ST. BRIGIDS IS OVER 10 MILES FROM
OUR HOME, WE CHOSE TO PAY €24.00 EACH WEEK
TO HAVE VUEL COACHES BUS [Redaction] THERE AND BACK EA
DAY, WE WOULD HAVE NO HESITATION IN PROFOUNDIN
THE VIRTUES OF THIS SCHOOL. [Redaction] IS
AMONGST CHILDREN WHO COME FROM BACKGROUNDS
SIMILAR TO [Redaction], CHILDREN WHOSE FAMILIES WANT TO
SUPPORT THEM THROUGH THE EDUCATION SYSTEM.

WE DO NOT WANT THIS TO CHANGE!

WHY CHANGE A MODEL WHICH IS ALREADY WORKING
SO EXCEPTIONALLY WELL AND HAS DONE FOR GENERATIONS

BEFORE [Redaction], PRODUCING WELL ROUNDED, GOOD CITIZENS WHO MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY. SURELY THIS COUNTRY SHOULD BE ENCOURAGING A SCHOOL THAT PROMOTES ALL THESE VALUES AND PRODUCES SUCH EXCELLENT RESULTS. LOOKING LONG TERM IT IS FINANCIALLY MORE INTELLIGENT TO PRODUCE CITIZENS WHO WILL NOT MAKE A DRAIN ON SOCIETY!

ST BRIGIDS HAS BEEN A TURNING POINT FOR [Redaction] AND OUR FAMILY AND WE WOULD LIKE TO SEND OUR YOUNGER [Redaction] THERE TOO. HOWEVER WE, I'M SURE LIKE OTHER PARENTS, WILL BE CHOOSING A DIFFERENT SCHOOL FOR OUR CHILDREN IF THIS PLANNED PROPOSAL TAKES PLACE.

WE APPRECIATE YOU TAKING THE TIME TO READ OUR MOST HEARTFELT FEELINGS ON THIS SUBJECT.

YOURS FAITHFULLY.

[Redaction]

[Redaction]

MODERNISING

20 DEC 2012

EDUCATION

Redaction

Redaction

Redaction

Redaction

Redaction

DECEMBER 11th 2012

DEAR SIR / MADAM

RE: Redaction SCHOOL

ST BRIGIDS, DENBIGH

MY Redaction HAS BEEN

ATTENDING ST BRIGIDS SCHOOL, DENBIGH SINCE SEPT 2011.

I WAS VERY PROUD TO HEAR OF Redaction ACHIEVEMENT IN
 ATTAINING A PLACE AT THIS EXTREMELY HIGHLY REGARDED
 SCHOOL, PARTICULARLY PROUD TO KNOW Redaction WOULD BE
 WEARING THE UNIFORM OF A SCHOOL WHICH HAS THE
 REPUTATION OF NURTURING POLITE, WELL MANNED CHILDREN,
 WHICH I FEEL IS SOMETHING MISSING IN TODAY'S SOCIETY.

I WAS DEEPLY SHOCKED AND SADDENED TO LEARN
 THAT ST. BRIGIDS COULD WELL BE MERGED WITH
 BUNNARD GOWARD JONES HIGH SCHOOL IN RHYL.

MY GUT INSTINCT TELLS ME THIS WOULD LOWER THE
 STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, AND SOCIALLY
 ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR, LEADING, I CAN FORESEE, TO AN
 OVERALL DOWNTURN IN MANNERS, POLITENESS AND THE
 GENERAL FEELING OF PRIDE ST. BRIGIDS CHILDREN QUITE
 OBVIOUSLY FEEL WHEN THEY WEAR THEIR UNIFORM AND
 REPRESENT THEIR VERY SPECIAL AND UNIQUE SCHOOL.

P.T.O

I HAVE SEEN SIMILAR PROPOSALS SUCH AS THIS
ONE TAKE PLACE, AND IT IS NOT FOR THE BETTER.

I URGE YOU TO LOOK VERY CAREFULLY AT
THIS PROPOSAL AND THEN EMBRACE AND CELEBRATE
THE FACT THAT ST. BRIGIDS IS BY ITS VERY
NATURE, A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL THAT DOES NOT
REQUIRE THE ADDITIONAL COMPLICATION OF TRYING
TO AMALGAMATE RHYL CHILDREN INTO THE
EQUATION.

Redaction, and Redaction MUM AND DAD
ARE EXTREMELY UPSET ABOUT THOSE PROPOSALS,
THUS I FELT COMPELLED TO WRITE THIS LETTER.

PLEASE TAKE ON BOARD THE VIEWS OF SO
MANY PEOPLE, PARENTS AND PUPILS Alike, AND
DO NOT CHANGE THE ST BRIGIDS WE KNOW AND
LOVE

YOURS FAITHFULLY

Redaction

(TAID TO Redaction)
ST BRIGIDS REDACTION

W

Redaction

Redaction

Redaction

29 December 2012

By email only

Ms J. Whalley
Modernising Education
Denbighshire Council

Dear Ms Whalley

Re: Proposed closure and merger of St Brigid's & Blessed Edward Catholic High School

We have been advised to write to you to express our strong disapproval of Denbighshire Council's proposal to close St Brigid's and merge with Blessed Edward Catholic High School in a new larger school in Rhyl.

Our granddaughter, now in year 2 at St Brigid's, has thrived in the excellent educational environment and ethos which that school has provided. We believe that this is partly due to the smaller class sizes, which was a major consideration when this school was selected. Another key factor was the opportunity to stay within the all age school environment which St Brigid's provides.

We believe that the closure of St Brigid's and its merger with another school will be seriously detrimental to the educational progress of those pupils currently attending St Brigid's.

St Brigid's deserves to continue in its present form but with additional investment coming from Denbighshire Council to bring the buildings and resources up to a standard that will ensure its future survival.

We look forward to hearing that the Council's planned proposal will be rejected and that St Brigid's will continue for many years to come.

Yours sincerely

Redaction

schools, both of which are providing a good education for their children, will result in Denbighshire moving backwards.

St Brigid's is unique in what it offers children. 3 to 19 is a special feature of St Brigid's which must be retained under any new faith education arrangements. The 3-19 model is a model that is being copied in other authorities due to its success. Many parents have discussed the "family feel" of the school and the importance of children feeling safe and secure as they are all known by name. St Brigid's has excellent discipline, children learn good manners and grow into well rounded members of the community and this is all due to the features of the school, the small family feel and these features need to be retained.

The only option I would consider is the retention of existing arrangements, and if this was not a possibility I would not send **Redact** to any school in Denbighshire and would have to look at moving him to Flintshire or Cheshire as there are no suitable schools which are able to meet **Redact** needs in Denbigh.

St Brigid's is the highest achieving school in Denbighshire, outperforming some private schools, evidence for this; based on value-added score St Brigid's produces the highest value added score within Denbighshire +9.17, compared to a county average of -6.96. Schools which achieve such standards should be valued and invested in. I know this is different when using the school banding but one but one questions a system which using a measure of progress as schools which consistently do well are always going to be penalised.

I have chosen a faith school and value the ethos of the school. Although St Brigid's is not part of the diocesan provision for catholic education I value the ethos which welcomes children from all faith groups and welcomes children regardless of background.

Have the authority considered the distance travelled and potential future status if the school was moved closer to Rhyl. There would be an increase in carbon emissions, effect on the environment and costs in regard to fuel and expense.

Taking into account that if the new school is not in Denbigh it does not concern me where the new school is in relation to travelling time as my son would not be attending I still think any investment should be in Denbigh as there is a great deal of development planned in Rhyl, including a new High school. Denbigh needs investment as well.

I look forward to hearing from you and receiving an acknowledgment of this letter and a response to the points made.

Redaction


Parent

Please note I am happy for any views in this letter to be reproduced so long as personal data is removed.

Redaction

Redaction

Redaction

Redacti

Redaction

Mr Tim Rhaglen
Modernising Education Programme Team
Denbigh County Council
County Hall
Wynnstay Road
Ruthin
Denbighshire
LL15 1YN

27th December 2012

Dear Mr Rhaglen

I am writing with regards to the proposals for St. Brigid's School in Denbigh. I have 2 daughters who attend St. Brigid's School and as a parent for the past 4 and a half years I can not praise the school enough.

We chose to send them to St. Brigid's, even though we live in Llandudno and have a newly equipped school right on our doorstep and an additional 3 high schools within our location, was due to the following facts:-

- It is a Catholic High School with an excellent religious ethos and traditional values.
- It has extremely high standards ensuring all children have discipline, respect, manners and morals.
- The exam results are high and very pleasing compared to local schools.
- Year numbers and class sizes are small in comparison to normal high schools, this only improves their learning abilities and attention from teachers.
- All children seem to behave in class and therefore there are no distractions from working.
- It has a friendly and family feel to the school, where all children (including primary) and staff know each other well. (including the cleaners and lunch staff).
- It has beautiful surroundings, which only helps with their concentration during lessons.
- It is a unique school with a wonderful and distinctive uniform.

We are a normal working family, both on minimum wage and tax credits but only want the best for our daughters. We have to pay for the expensive uniform (approx. £350.00 for each child plus PE uniform and school stationary) and travel cost each week which we get no help

for either. The bus costs us £1872.00 per year for the 2 girls and then petrol costs on top to get to the bus stop as it does not come to Llandudno is £874.00, a total of £2746.00 per year for us to send our daughters to an amazing school. We are prepared to do this for them as we have seen the difference in education and social standards of my girls compared to their old primary school friends in the area.

However, if a new combined school is built which will be similar to local schools then we will not be sending them to the new school. Especially if it is within the Rhyl area, I would not feel comfortable sending them to Rhyl.

My daughters absolutely love going to school which is rare in our area. They cope very well with the travel (approx. 45 minutes each way). They both study very hard at home to produce good results in everyday work, tests and exams. They are encouraged and motivated in school by peers and teachers. Any problems are dealt with straight away and bullying is a definitely NO. They enjoy the landscape of the school and the wildlife on school grounds.

Redaction attends the cadets attached to St. Brigids School and loves every minute of it. It has given her extra activities to do such as climbing, shooting, helicopter rides, summer camp and given her the opportunity to complete her Duke of Edinburgh Awards Bronze and Silver and a BTEC in Public Services alongside her GCSE's. Where would this excellent cadet unit go if St. Brigid's School was to close.

How can a school that gives the children such a terrific start in life with so many opportunities for them be allowed to close or to merge with another school of not such high standards. We had to wait for 2 and a half years to get our daughters into this school, we have had to scrimp and save to pay for them to be at this school and I would hate to think all this was for nothing.

The children's best interests' need to be considered with regards to a merger and a larger school would not be best for mine. **Redaction** was a slightly withdrawn child who was afraid of large groups, she is now a very confident young lady whom I am very proud of. Both my girls do gymnastics **Redaction** and parents comment on how well behaved they are for teenagers, I praise St. Brigid's School for this as I truly believe it is not because of me.

I would also like to comment on the information I have received with regards to Bishop Edwin, from what I have been told he has never set foot on St. Brigid's School grounds as he apparently does not believe us to be a faith school. Weather this is true or not, it is a concern as to why suddenly now they want us to join forces with Blessed Edward Jones. I have also been informed that most children that attend Blessed Edward Jones are not Catholic but attend the school as it appears to be of a higher standard than Rhyl high.

Surely a much better proposal would be to merge Blessed Edward Jones with Rhyl High School. The council could use Blessed Edwards Jones' site for the lower years and the Rhyl site for the GCSE and A level years. Teachers could be moved from one to the other and would have less children at each site which would enable the teachers to concentrate more on installing manners, discipline etc on the pupils. For the pupils having lower numbers on each site would be beneficial to their learning but also to their social skills (ie young year 7/8 pupils would not be able to witness the behaviours etc of the older pupils). This then would also mean that St. Brigid's School could be left alone.

Trusting the above is in order. Please acknowledge receipt of my letter.

Yours sincerely

Redaction

Redaction

10th January 2013

To:

Eryl Williams, Lead Member for Education
Karen Evans, Head of Education
Jackie Whalley, Head of Modernising Education
Rita Price, Diocese
Modernising Education Programme Team ✓

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire

As part of the consultation exercise on the above proposal, I am writing to register my views as a parent of a child at one of the affected schools.

Our daughter is a pupil at St Brigid's School in Year 9. She is currently in the process of choosing her options for her GCSE study in years 10 and 11. Her current plan is to progress to study for A levels within St Brigid's before onward transition to University.

As I am sure you can imagine, any discussions about school closures and mergers are very unsettling for the children in both St Brigid's and Blessed Edward Jones. This comes at a time for some children which is already stressful enough with much pressure being put on young people by society to achieve high levels of performance and outstanding results.

As you can see from my address at the top of this letter, we live in Redaction and we specifically chose to send our daughter to St Brigid's school for a number of reasons. This comes at extra cost to ourselves as we have to pay privately for transport to and from school. The reasons we chose St Brigid's were as follows:

- We wished for our daughter to be educated in a school which promoted good Christian values. We are catholic however we would have been happy for her to be educated in a school offering joint Anglican/catholic faith based education.
- We wished for our daughter to spend her formative years in a school which promoted and demonstrated good family values. We believe that the 3 – 19 year school model that St Brigid's offers provides this. The older children respect, help and care for the younger children's welfare. I believe the current proposal on the table is completely

under-valuing the nurturing environment the current St Brigid's model provides.

- We chose a school that specifically had a sixth form incorporated within it to prevent our daughter having to move schools upon completion of her GCSE's.
- As our daughter wishes to progress to university we chose a school with excellent academic results hoping that the peer pressure and good teaching standards would drive her forward to reach her potential, whatever that may be.
- It is very important to us that our daughter develops into a decent, morally good member of the community with good manners, consideration for others and a spiritual awareness. We believed St Brigid's would provide this for her. We did not believe that other schools we visited provided this.

Should the schools merge at all? That is the question everyone is asking. In my opinion they should not merge. The capital monies allocated to build a new school should be re-directed to update the infrastructure/buildings of the current two schools. This would be a cheaper capital option but would obviously have different revenue consequences long term.

If the schools were to merge and a new school was to be built then the question to be asked is would we send our child there?. My response would be as follows:

- The location of the school would not be an issue for us as our daughter already travels by school bus some considerable distance. However, as the Rhyl area is having significant investment already in the form of the re-build of Rhyl High School, I would think it appropriate that the school be located nearer to Denbigh. I do not think a site should be sought in St Asaph due to the current location of Ysgol Glan Clwyd and the traffic congestion within St Asaph.
- As my daughter is in year 9 it may be that by the time a new school is built my daughter may have left St Brigid's. My main worry is that she will be displaced from St Brigid's during her sixth form years. It is therefore essential that any plans to merge the schools include provision of a sixth form. It is very unfair to expect young adults to spend 5 years from years 7 – 11 with a close group of friends and then all be "thrown out" when they have completed their GCSE's and expect them to make new friends at a time when they should be focussing on their advanced level studies.
- I would hope that the new school will embrace the 3-19 model currently in use at St Brigid's. Indeed it is a model being adopted by other authorities due to its success and promotion of family values and respect.
- Although my child is not a boarder, consideration should be given to the uniqueness of St Brigid's and its boarding pupils. Again, St Brigid's is their home and they need to feel welcome and part of the future. Retention of the school on the existing site with some capital investment could achieve this.

- As St Brigid's is one of the highest achieving schools in Wales, I would expect to be re-assured that these standards will not drop if the schools merge.

In summary, I believe serious consideration should be given to retaining the unique and valuable school environment that St Brigid's provides, not only in terms of its educational teaching and high moral standards, but also in the safe and caring 'blanket' that is the very fabric of the school itself.

I would only hope that the Authority does not "throw the baby out with the bathwater" in its eagerness to save money and become more cost effective.

Any new school should have a sixth form to enable continuation of learning and relationships in the pupils' formative years.

I do hope the consultation takes into the account the views of all parties and is not solely guided by efficiencies and finance.

Yours faithfully

Redaction

Redaction



Redaction

7th January 2013

Jackie Whalley,
Head of Modernising Education,
Denbigh County Council,
County Hall,
Wynnstay Road,
Ruthin, Denbighshire.

Dear Ms Whalley,

Re: Proposed faith school provision North Denbighshire

I am very concerned at the proposed changes which would affect the education provision at St Brigid's school, Denbigh, specifically the concept of closing St Brigid's and relocating to another site in Denbighshire.

As you will be aware St Brigid's is the highest achieving school in Denbighshire, outperforming some private schools. The value added score is +9.17 compared to a county average of -6.96. Surely a school performing this well should be supported and enhanced to allow more children to benefit from its high standards of teaching?

The age 3–19 model of education is successful and should be maintained on the St Brigid's site.

If a pilot study for this type of education was needed then St Brigid's has already demonstrated the success of the model in its existing form. Why change a winning formula, jeopardising the potential of current and future pupils?

Education aside, the family based, faith ethos of the school produces pupils and school leavers with good manners, and a mature, caring attitude. As a parent and someone who volunteers in the provision of youth services I must tell you that I highly value this ethos.

I will strongly resist any proposal to close St Brigid's School which has provided a caring environment and an excellent education for my children.

Yours sincerely,

Redaction

19

Jackie Whalley
Head of Modernising Education
Denbigh County Council
County Hall
Wynnstay Road
Ruthin
Denbighshire
LL15 1YN



Redaction

9th January 2013

Dear Mr Williams

Re St Brigid's School

I am writing with regard to the forthcoming consultation over the future of the above school

Three of my grandchildren attend St Brigid's and are becoming well rounded, well behaved and well-mannered children. I believe it would be detrimental to amalgamate St Brigid's and a High School in Rhyl. Denbigh should be allowed to keep the school and perhaps even have it further developed. St Brigid's has a very good achievement record outperforming some private schools therefore deserves to carry on teaching children in a safe and secure environment

Could you please respond/acknowledge this letter and I would request that the consultation period be extended due to Christmas falling during that time

Yours sincerely

Redaction

Redaction

20

- Permission already given - via questionnaire

Modernising Education Programme Team
Denbighshire County Council,
County Hall,
Wynnstay Road,
Ruthin LL15 1YN

Redaction

RE: Faith School (St Brigid's and Blessed Edwards Jones merge)

I am writing to you to express my concern and complete objection regarding the proposed St Brigid's School and Blessed Edward Jones School merge.

I am a past pupil of St Brigid's School **Redaction** and I currently have friends and family who are currently attending the school.

I have very fond memories when I think back to the time I was in St Brigid's. To me the school was (and still is) a family; a caring environment for any child and family, a brilliant arena for learning to take place. The small classes enabled us as the pupils to build close relationships with the teachers and this made us care and want to achieve well within the class.

As a pupil I never cared that the classrooms were mostly mobile ones or the wallpaper was flaking; I did care however about the teachers who were/are passionate, the small class sizes that enabled everyone to know me and support me through the hard times and the family atmosphere and caring environment which makes up St Brigid's.

St Brigid's School has an amazing ethos that is unique and unseen within other schools, and I know this will be lost if the merger takes place.

I plan for my children to attend St Brigid's in the future. I will ensure that my children get the best education and for me to fulfil this will mean my children attending St Brigid's School. Also looking at the longer term I want other children to benefit from the education and attitudes of St Brigid's.

I urge you to reconsider and not go ahead with the merge. Instead I would like the focus to be on making the most of the wonderful building that houses St Brigid's and continue to build up the school. I know the parents/past pupils/friends of St Brigid's school would even be willing to use their own time and money to make any repairs necessary. But please remember; the state of the building does not affect the learning of the pupils. The ethos, family and caring environment outweigh any building changes needed.

I am aware that I am not the only person who objects to the merger. I am a member of the Facebook group 'Save St Brigid's School' this group currently has over 300 members who are rallying around to save this wonderful school. I have also been attending the meetings to air my views and back up the support for St Brigid's. And this is one of the things I love about St Brigid's- the rallying together, and the united front. We will not lose our precious school.

Yours faithfully,

Redaction

Modernising Education Programme
Team, Customers and Education
Support,
Denbighshire County Council,
County Hall,
Wynnstay Road,
Ruthin
LL15 1YN

Redaction

Redaction

Redaction

Dear Sir,

Consultation Paper – Case for Change
Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire

Request for Extension of time and request for further information

I am writing with regard to your consultation process for the creation of an all faith based school in the Denbighshire area, and with specific interest in the St Brigids and Blessed St Edwards schools. The objective of this letter is to elicit further information from you pertaining to the proposals in order that the consultation can be conducted transparently, fairly and effectively.

1. I would request that the period of the consultation be extended from the current expiry date of 29th January 2012 to 31st March 2012, this is mandatory given that a large part of the period originally allowed for consultation ran across the Christmas period when parents have extensive commitments preparing for their children's Christmas, dealing with work issues prior to holidays and in celebrating the Christmas period with children, friends and relatives.

The process of consultation requires the ability to ask questions, seek information, absorb responses and make further clarification or points. With half of the consultation period taken over by the preparations for and celebration of the religious holidays this leaves little time for this process to operate fairly for busy parents.

At the council meeting where the proposal were approved the extension possibilities were discussed and the council committee agreed and accepted that they would be sympathetic to an extension for these reasons.

2. In the policy documents provided the statement is made that "It is not feasible for a secondary school with fewer than 600 pupils (plus 150 in 6th Form where appropriate) to provide the facilities described in this vision". When reading the 21st Century Schools Programm vision there is no comment on school size made in this document, and no obvious reference to any other document where justification of this can be found. In "Policy 2: Models for Secondary School Organisation" there is reference to 16+ class sizes but no reference to any documents justifying the policy. Both Blessed Edwards and St Brigids fail this 600 pupil policy and as the proposals hinge partly upon this policy the Authority should provide parents with an adequate justification for the policy. Aligned to my requirement for a transparency of financial analysis (see 4 below) I would like to understand the full

justification for this policy and why a group of small schools cannot be managed effectively from a financial perspective. Clearly St Brigids is viable as it produces excellent results, and Blessed Edwards has been improving – so educationally they are clearly viable.

3. In the “Review of Provision” section of the proposals reference is made to “school buildings and facilities are inspirational learning environments that meet the needs of 21st Century Wales”. Throughout this section there is an implied view that aspects of 21st century education cannot be effectively provided in the current environments and buildings. Examples given are developments in ICT, whiteboards and wireless technology. I have to say I fail to see why this is not technically possible in existing environments. From my own professional background in IT & telecommunications I have seen many national trust and other protected old buildings more than adequately ICT enabled.

I would therefore request that the authority publish an analysis of each of the requirements and features of 21st Century education (identifying the mandatory or desirable designation of them and the source of this designation) mapped to St Brigids and Blessed Edwards to understand what analysis has been done to test if and how these schools could meet the requirements.

4. My next request is for the publication of more detailed financial and business case information regarding the costing/funding for the new school proposals and the existing costing/funding of the existing schools. There is very little financial information provided on which to assess the proposals and a consultation cannot be considered to be fair without this data.

As a minimum I would expect to see an analysis showing the current and predicted costs for each of the St. Brigids and Blessed Edwards schools showing a high level breakdown including such things as building, staff, utilities etc. set against the funding sources for each of the schools. We should then be shown the similar costing plans for the new school.

This analysis should also contain a review of the aspects of 21st Century education (referred to above) and the method and cost approximation for providing these at the existing sites. This is particularly important for all stakeholders to be able to assess the “delta” that exists in costing and funding of the current and new proposals set against educational environments.

It is my assumption that the authority has created a business case with a financial model and it seems only reasonable that this be shared with the all parties. If it has not built such a case it seems incorrect to proceed with the consultation proposal without first producing such an analysis?

5. As part of the consultation documents at School Performance and the Educational Argument for Change you have provided a comparison of the performance of Blessed Edwards and St Brigids. The Banding methodology provided seems to show that there is little between the two schools. More detailed information is required on the source data that makes up this banding calculation and in particular grading achievements of the two schools at key stages and for and for in key subjects at key levels e.g. GCE English and Maths, Science etc.
6. Next I would request that the authority should also be transparent about the plans for the sites of the existing schools in the event that a new school is built. Does the authority have plans to sell or use the current school sites and what considerations have been made in this instance? I understand the St. Brigids site can be "used" for education purposes only, and therefore if selling the site for other purposes (e.g. housing development) and using the proceeds to fund the new school directly or indirectly would be in accordance with the terms of St. Brigids site the authorities considerations in this area should be made plain, similarly for Blessed Edwards. Additionally the Authority must have sites in mind for the proposed new school, what are they?
7. St Brigids provides continuous education from pre-reception classes through to 'A' levels. What provision and considerations have the authority made with regards to the primary and 'A' level provision at St Brigids should the 11-16 pupils be housed at a different school on a different site? One of the factors in the success of St Brigids in the quality of its results and the pupils it produces is the continuity of the education. In proposing to divide this up what is the authority proposing to do with the balance of the pupils and how does the authority see its proposals compensating in the quality of education and schools community that will be lost.

I look forward to your prompt written response to my requests.

Yours Sincerely

Redaction

Redaction

Redaction

Redaction



Sunday, 13 January 2013

Dear Mr, Curran,

I cannot believe that the Council are proposing closure of St Brigids School in Denbigh.

I have spoken to nobody - parents, teachers, or pupils - that want this thing to happen. Having stripped Denbigh of virtually anything that we could be proud of, why do you now wish to remove this last vestige of community pride.

This school produces outstanding results with minimal funding. Have the people who are proposing this act of betrayal against the people of Denbigh and the pupils of this fine establishment actually spent any time at the place talking to the classroom teachers and pupils. If they had they would realise what a special place this is.

I understand that the carrot that is being hung in front of the proposed victims of this change is that it will give them "better facilities". "Better facilities" do not make a better school. There are plenty of examples of schools with excellent "facilities" that produce dire results.

St Brigid's produces breathtaking results with the facilities it already has - if it isn't broken, why are you trying to fix it?

Such is the atmosphere of care and respect at St. Brigid's that pupils who are the victims of bullying and gangs at other schools are sent there, where they are nurtured and blossom. It is worth noting that such victims invariably come to St. Brigid's from the very sort of "concrete jungle", anonymous, battery housing schools with "excellent facilities" that you are proposing to inflict on these children.

I understand that the money is already available and will be lost if not used. Purchasing something that you don't need (or even want) just because you can, is a pretty poor reason to ruin a fine establishment like St. Brigid's. It is plain that if this goes ahead that there will be many lucrative contracts awarded, shiny new jobs promised and many pockets

lined, so it is obvious that many self-serving interests will be pushing to do the dirty deed and sell these children down the river - Shame on them.

No doubt those controlling our lives will look at the empty schools at Frongoch and in Middle lane and say "what will one more derelict school in Denbigh matter", Well it matters a great deal to the people who live here and it matters a great deal more to those children who are about to have their futures ruined for political expediency.

Cui bono?

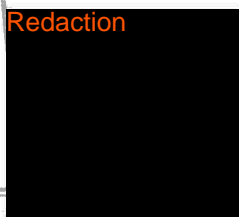
Sincerely

Redaction

P.S.

Please feel free to use this letter in reports to Council and other decision making forums.

21st January 2013



Jadzie Whalley

To whom it may concern,

I am writing as a parent of **Red** past pupils and a five year old just starting her education at St Brigids School in Denbigh.

I cannot express enough how much both myself and my eldest **Re** children have enjoyed the journey of their education through St Brigids. The school has been like a family to us. The provision of education from 3 to 19 years provides such emotional stability, enabling the children to focus fully on their education, also creating friendships that will last a lifetime.

The decision to send our children to St Brigids was not because of it being a Catholic school, it was the size, ethos and the level of education the children receive. The school produces well mannered, hard working and confident young people that are an asset to society.

My elder daughter (now **Re**) is in her last year, **Redaction** **edaction** University. The support she received in achieving the grades necessary for her course, went above and beyond the call of duty. Her tutor seeing her in lunch hours and after school hours to set and mark work, also there to offer lots of advice for which we will be forever grateful. Also more recently dropping off books at our home to help my daughter with her history degree.

My son left St Brigids at the end of the primary school as boys were not included in the senior school then. He was sent to a private school costing thousands of pounds each term, and I can honestly say the education he received was no better than that given at St Brigids.

If St Brigids were to close, then I will not be sending my daughter to the new "faith school", but will look at other options. The size of 900 plus pupils is of great concern to us. It will almost certainly not be able to capture the secure family feel of St Brigids. State of the art facilities are not a priority in a child's education as St Brigids has proven with it being the highest achieving school in Denbighshire. This school should be invested in and valued. It would be total madness if it were to be closed down.

I am asking you please to consider the option of updating the existing St Brigids site, using the money available to replace the mobile classrooms etc, keeping our school open to educate 3 to 19 year olds so children like my youngest daughter can benefit from what St Brigids has to offer.

I would be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Yours faithfully



REDACTION

27/1/13

... ISING
29 JAN 2013
... ON

To Whom it may concern,

I have 3 children attending

St Brigid's School;

Redaction

I am

saddened to discover the plans to amalgamate this outstanding school and move it. There will be massive opposition to this, make no mistake. Parents, pupils, staff, ex-pupils and any one connected to this fine institution are unanimous.

From my own point of view as you can see from my post code this is a very local school - one which we walk to every day - an important consideration to our family

The most important thing about St Brigid's to me (and there are many) is the quality of the education provided; The statistics prove this and St Brigid's with a value added score of 9.11 is well above national average

Although children passing from the Primary School to the Senior School do so automatically (therefore there is no selection process) the incoming are expected to ~~pass~~ have achieved an average level for 11 y olds. Many schools are having difficulty in getting their pupils to this level. why?

St Brigid's is a 'complete' school in that it is from age 3 to 19. Any difficulty or stress

That children suffer in transition is very slight, whereas in many other schools this can be a significant issue. Bullying at St Brigid's also seems to be non-existent.

There is a very strong argument for saying that St Brigid's could be used by Denbighshire County Council as their template for education. It is oversubscribed, for sure, and it is also underfunded yet it still produces academic results and more importantly well-rounded, confident young adults.

The location could not be bettered and I believe there is plenty of land available for expansion on the eastern boundary. However I do not subscribe to the 'one size suits all' figure of 600 pupils. DCC have done no research of their own and other councils' figures to not apply to the case in point. There is no doubt St Brigid's in its present location could accommodate more children if the facilities were upgraded but, please believe me, these children will not move to a new school amalgamated with Blessed Edward Jones and/or moved from its present site to Rhyd. St Brigid's is your 'flagship' school, build on it don't lose it.

Yours Sincerely.

REDACTION

PS please acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Redaction

MODERNISING
29 JAN 2013
EDUCATION

28.1.13

Please find enclosed a copy of the online petition that has been signed to oppose the merger of St Brigid's school. I am aware that there is also a hard copy of an petition that has been taken too.

As of the 28.1.13 at 3.00pm this petition has had 360 signatures on it. This number is still rising.

50
25
19

Please take note of the comments (and numbers). As clearly stated in the comments- parent's will not be sending their children to a 'new school' Many of the comments also state what a wonderful school St Brigid's is, as well as commenting about the financial loss to Denbigh and the small class sizes have helped many pupils succeed- and this is the reason why parents send their children to this school.

Please take this in to account when making decisions about the next stage of the consultation.

Yours sincerely

Redaction



26th January 2013

Dear Ms Whalley

We are writing to voice our concern over the changes proposed for St Brigid's School. We are more than happy with the education and overall experience our son has had at the school and discussion with other parents seems to echo our own.

No school is perfect, but the reasonably small size and particularly the fact that the school is a 3-19 school is a real advantage. A good model for other schools to follow, even, as it very much reduces problems known to be associated with transfer from primary to secondary school and allows at the very least for good communication between primary and secondary. It also allows more opportunity for older pupils to gain from working to help and set examples as good role models to the younger pupils and to act as peer mentors. Our experience shows that our son is gaining so much from being in a relatively small-sized school, where he knows most staff and he is known to them.

(58) (19) (23)

Many parents of pupils with special needs specifically send their children to St Brigid's as they feel it is easier for them to cope in a more familiar environment as they move up the school.

(17)

The results are consistently good at GCSE and A level although obviously it is more difficult to obtain results which exceed expectations where expectations are already high.

(7)

Although smart buildings and facilities such as ICT resources are desirable, they are not at the top of my list of priorities as a parent – relationships between staff, students and parents, the overall feel of the school – an atmosphere which can't necessarily be measured, but takes years of care to foster and is invaluable in helping to get the best from everyone. The high standards in the school are immediately obvious- not just in academic terms but in terms of the way students can communicate appropriately and confidently with each other and adults – these skills are highly valued by employers and are invaluable life skills for our young people.

(26)

(5)

(4) (1)

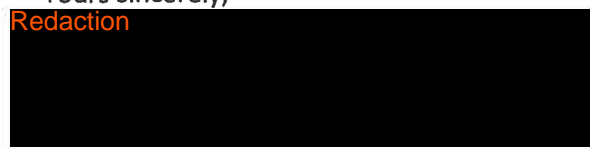
There is a danger that if we disrupt the current arrangements at St Brigid's, a very valuable resource for the community could be destroyed.

The 3-19 model is known to be desirable in educational circles and the success of the school to date has not happened by accident.

(25)

There is no guarantee that a new school amalgamating Blessed Edward Jones School in Rhyl with St Brigid's in Denbigh would produce a school which caters as well for either group of students.

Yours sincerely,



Re: Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire Consultation.

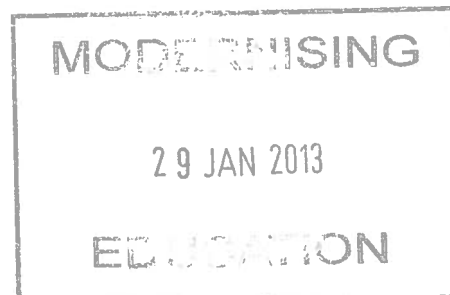
I am writing to state serious reservations around the above consultation with a view to seeking a meaningful extension of the initial consultation deadline of 29th January 2013. The grounds for this are below.

The Issue: The Case for Change document clearly states that there are two means by which parents and stakeholders can submit their views to the consultation: the public meeting of the 10/1/2013 and the form contained within the said document. During the public meeting at St. Brigid's school on 10/1/2013 an objection was raised about the leading nature of the questions on the consultation form and their limited scope in terms of the stated consultation objective of capturing stakeholder views. The point being, the form lends itself to capturing a partial view which is biased towards what Denbighshire County Council would like to capture or had thought of capturing, as opposed to what stakeholders actually think and feel. In response to this a Denbighshire County Council official said that it was a "fair criticism" and suggested that parents and stakeholders should submit their views beyond what the form prescribes as additional sheets.

I also have concerns about the quality of the consultation with regard to the information provided as its basis; namely what is being consulted on. For example some information suffered serious omissions when presented during the public meeting. An instance of this was the assertion that two merging schools were banded as 2 and the claim by the official that this was proof of their equivalence. What was omitted was that these bandings are relative measures that do not quantify absolute benchmarks of quality/performance, rather relative rates of improvement. Other rather dubious "facts" that were presented as objective truths rather than justifications from a certain perspective were glossed over with ill-defined terms such as "sustainability" and "transformational". These shortcomings have left stakeholders with a significant amount of additional work to do to formulate adequate responses to this consultation.

Objections:

- The form for the consultation lends itself to bias, this much has been acknowledged in front of a room full of stakeholders. This means all forms submitted prior to the meeting of the 10th January have not only not had the opportunity to submit supplementary views/information, but have been potentially biased by the leading/limiting nature of the form. A true reflection of stakeholder views could be prejudiced by this fact.



- While the remedy to this is the option to submit supplementary information with the form, only stakeholders who attended the meeting of 10/1/13 were told about this option. It is unclear whether this advice was repeated at other meetings and there has been no formal contact to stakeholders that this option is available to them.
- The fact that the supplementary option only emerged at the meeting of the 10th of January, effectively means that rather than the consultation running from 6/12/2012 – to 29/1/2013, at least a part of it, this new part, is running from 10/1/2013 – 29/1/2013. This is not enough time to organise a proper response to this additional need, and it falls significantly short even when measured Denbighshire County Council's normal consultation period. Coupled with the additional burden placed on stakeholders to make sense of the patchy information and claims made about "The Need for Change" and come up with an adequate response; the available time is simply not sufficient.

The Solution:

To ensure this part of the consultation is fair, is not subject to further challenge and does not prejudice either the chances of being heard, the quality of the submitted data due to the potential biases introduced by the consultation process itself or does not prejudice the ability of people to formulate adequate responses I request that:

1. The deadline of 29/1/2013 is extended to accommodate the new option of submitting supplementary information and formulate an adequate response to the information that has been put out in and around the consultation by Denbighshire County Council . This extension needs to be meaningful and in the order of weeks to accommodate the time already lost by the 10/1/2013.
2. All stakeholders are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed about this new option to submit additional information with their forms.
3. All stakeholders who have already submitted forms are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed that they can submit information which is additional to their forms.

Redaction



Re: Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire Consultation.

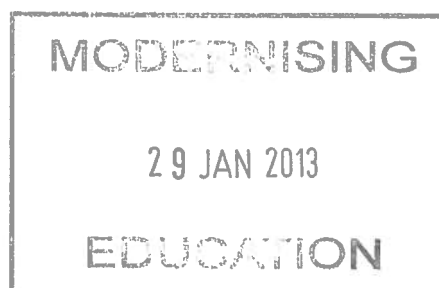
I am writing to state serious reservations around the above consultation with a view to seeking a meaningful extension of the initial consultation deadline of 29th January 2013. The grounds for this are below.

The Issue: The Case for Change document clearly states that there are two means by which parents and stakeholders can submit their views to the consultation: the public meeting of the 10/1/2013 and the form contained within the said document. During the public meeting at St. Brigid's school on 10/1/2013 an objection was raised about the leading nature of the questions on the consultation form and their limited scope in terms of the stated consultation objective of capturing stakeholder views. The point being, the form lends itself to capturing a partial view which is biased towards what Denbighshire County Council would like to capture or had thought of capturing, as opposed to what stakeholders actually think and feel. In response to this a Denbighshire County Council official said that it was a "fair criticism" and suggested that parents and stakeholders should submit their views beyond what the form prescribes as additional sheets.

I also have concerns about the quality of the consultation with regard to the information provided as its basis; namely what is being consulted on. For example some information suffered serious omissions when presented during the public meeting. An instance of this was the assertion that two merging schools were banded as 2 and the claim by the official that this was proof of their equivalence. What was omitted was that these bandings are relative measures that do not quantify absolute benchmarks of quality/performance, rather relative rates of improvement. Other rather dubious "facts" that were presented as objective truths rather than justifications from a certain perspective were glossed over with ill-defined terms such as "sustainability" and "transformational". These shortcomings have left stakeholders with a significant amount of additional work to do to formulate adequate responses to this consultation.

Objections:

- The form for the consultation lends itself to bias, this much has been acknowledged in front of a room full of stakeholders. This means all forms submitted prior to the meeting of the 10th January have not only not had the opportunity to submit supplementary views/information, but have been potentially biased by the leading/limiting nature of the form. A true reflection of stakeholder views could be prejudiced by this fact.



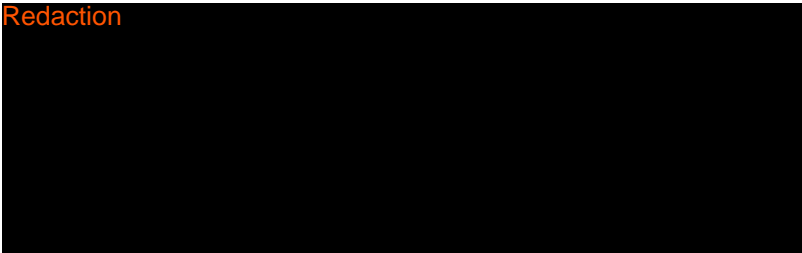
- While the remedy to this is the option to submit supplementary information with the form, only stakeholders who attended the meeting of 10/1/13 were told about this option. It is unclear whether this advice was repeated at other meetings and there has been no formal contact to stakeholders that this option is available to them.
- The fact that the supplementary option only emerged at the meeting of the 10th of January, effectively means that rather than the consultation running from 6/12/2012 – to 29/1/2013, at least a part of it, this new part, is running from 10/1/2013 – 29/1/2013. This is not enough time to organise a proper response to this additional need, and it falls significantly short even when measured Denbighshire County Council’s normal consultation period. Coupled with the additional burden placed on stakeholders to make sense of the patchy information and claims made about “The Need for Change” and come up with an adequate response; the available time is simply not sufficient.

The Solution:

To ensure this part of the consultation is fair, is not subject to further challenge and does not prejudice either the chances of being heard, the quality of the submitted data due to the potential biases introduced by the consultation process itself or does not prejudice the ability of people to formulate adequate responses I request that:

1. The deadline of 29/1/2013 is extended to accommodate the new option of submitting supplementary information and formulate an adequate response to the information that has been put out in and around the consultation by Denbighshire County Council . This extension needs to be meaningful and in the order of weeks to accommodate the time already lost by the 10/1/2013.
2. All stakeholders are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed about this new option to submit additional information with their forms.
3. All stakeholders who have already submitted forms are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed that they can submit information which is additional to their forms.

Redaction



Modernising Education Programme Team

I am writing to you with regard the questionnaire enclosed. I do not feel that there were adequate questions to allow parents to fully express how they feel about your proposals.

Q3 asked us to rate what we think is the most and least important elements when choosing a school for our children. I found this question difficult to complete as the distance of a school from my home is not an issue, I would be willing to travel to which ever school I felt was appropriate for my children. The question about transport was also not relevant as I have never claimed for my children's transport even though St Brigids is the nearest Catholic School to our home. As a family we have adjusted our lifestyle to accommodate transporting our children to the school we felt was most suited to their needs.

Most parents would like the best school for their children to be near their home but this is not possible so by answering question Q5 it could be extremely misleading and produce results that could be used to twist the parent's true opinion that it's not the distance that matters but the school itself.

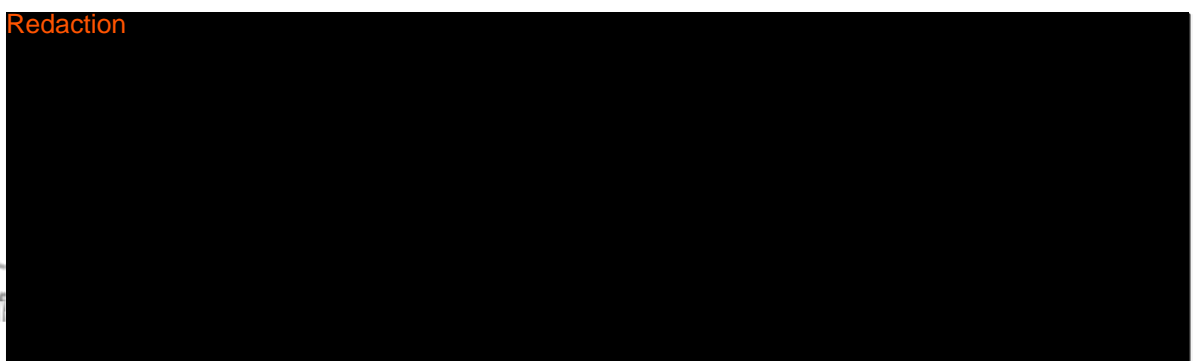
There is no where on your questionnaire to allow parents who would prefer a Catholic school as opposed to a Faith school to express there choice. I personally would like my Children to attend a Catholic School.

There is no option for parents to express there preference for a 3-19 yr school.

Your questionnaire is lacking in its ability to seek a true picture of how parents feel about the future of Faith Based Secondary Education in North Denbighshire.

I find it difficult to understand why the Catholic Diocese is willing to close two Catholic high schools and support the building of a 'Faith' school when they have an obligation to provide and support Catholic Education.

I am truly at a loss why you would even consider suggesting that St Brigid's school should close when it is the most underfunded school in the county, it has been unsupported by DCC and the Catholic Diocese, has chronically poor facilities YET it produces the most wonderful young people, who achieve excellent academic results. The behaviour of the pupils is notable and commented on by every venue the pupils' visit, the bus company that transports the children and any visitors to the school. Among the many reasons this school is so successful is the Spirit of Faith within the school, the amazing dedication and hard work from the staff and the unending support the parents give the school and its pupils. This all results in providing a safe and nourishing environment for the full development and education of our children. It would make more sense to enhance the school so that it could provide the same successful formula for more children.



29 JAN 2013

M

JUN

43/e

Redaction

23rd January 2013

Dear Sir/Madame

Re: Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire Consultation.

I am writing in response to the consultation questionnaire that has been sent out from Denbighshire County Council. I wish to submit an additional response to the questionnaire, as I feel the questionnaire is leading and does not provide an opportunity to express my views in their entirety.

When looking at where my children would be educated, my husband and I applied to St Brigid's as it is the best school in the area for our children to be educated, not only in terms of the outstanding educational results it achieves, but for the well mannered, confident and articulated young people that it delivers. The ethos of St Brigids is unique and not one I have seen in any other school in the area. The school feels secure and safe and the quality of the teaching staff cannot be questioned.

We live in Rhyl and whilst there is a good primary school close to us with excellent facilities and a good estyn report, it was the secondary school that was an issue for my husband and I. We did not want our children attending a secondary school in Rhyl. We are prepared to travel everyday to St Brigids because of the quality of educations, ethos, the small size of the school and simply because it is providing the absolute best education for our children. We would not be prepared to send our children to a new school, that is untested and will encapsulate many of the fears/ reasons we chose not to send our children to a school in Rhyl.

Questions in the consultation document relate a lot to travel and distance, again it is not distance that is an issue for me but educational results and outcomes. St Brigids is the highest achieving school in Denbighshire, even outperforming some private schools, it does not make sense that the LEA would want to close their best achieving school?

In the consultation meeting on 10th January 2013, there was talk of 'transformational', I believe St Brigids is already transformational, it is unique, in it offers a complete educational package from 3-19 yrs and the model proves that it works and it achieves. Within the 21st Century School document, it talks about flexible learning and learning outside the classroom, St Brigids already undertakes learning outside of the traditional classroom environment and utilises its space, grounds and setting. Therefore there are many examples and many more that leads to the conclusion that the school already is 'transformational'

Secondly sustainability was mentioned and an issue around 600 pupils for a secondary school to be sustainable. St Brigids has been sustained for many, many years and still achieved excellent educational outcomes and turned out well mannered and disciplined young people into the community. St Brigids is not purely a secondary school and therefore falls out of scope of the policy on 600 pupils. As St Brigids is a 3-19 school it cannot be

considered in isolation and therefore the policy on 600 pupils and surplus places does not apply to St Brigids and cannot be used as part of the argument for change.

Facilities and resources are not a priority for us, whilst it is acknowledged there are other schools with better facilities, even with a lack of resources, St Brigids still achieves. However, if Denbighshire CC were to commence an improvement plan for it's buildings, ICT and resources at St Brigids (as with Rhyl High and Glan Clwyd School) then the school would be sustainable for the future. Whilst I understand the money from the Welsh Government cannot be used for just maintenance, if a development program was looked at to reduce the mobile units and build new classrooms then this would be a 'remodel or upgrade' as specified under the 21st Century Schools.

The 21st Century Schools document clearly states that '*Schools in Wales need to be in good condition and suitable to deliver 21st Century education. In many cases, existing schools can be modernsied, repaired, refurbished, extended or partially rebuilt*'.

Within the consultation meeting on 10th January 2013, part of the issues discussed related to middle management and staff development. Surely these are issues that can be addressed internally and resolved without the need to close a high achieving school? I'm unaware of any private sector orgainsation that had issues with middle management or staff development that would close for these reasons?

I wish my views to be put forward during the consultation period and would ask for a acknowledgment to my letter and a formal response to my views.

I confirm that I am happy for my views to be published as part of this informal consultation process.

Yours sincerely

Redaction

Comments and questions relating to the Public Consultation around provision of a new faith-based school in Denbighshire

We are submitting our statement of opposition to the proposals, outlined by Denbighshire County Council and the two church dioceses, suggesting a new joint faith school in the mid to north area of Denbighshire. Our reasons and questions are stated below. As part of the expectation of public consultation, we would like to receive answers to all the questions raised, as well as acknowledgement of this letter.

Our view is that a new faith-based school is unnecessary and would adversely affect the quality and nature of the results for pupils attending St. Brigid's School, both in academic achievement and in their pastoral development.

We would suggest and support an alternative approach where there is local investment in existing faith schools, available under the scope of the Welsh (Assembly) Government 21st Century Schools (2011) documentation.

1. We would like to see St. Brigid's school remaining on its current site with its existing arrangements for providing education for 3 to 19 year olds. We believe that St Brigid's school offers a superb educational facility that would benefit from on-site investment in order to maintain this level of educational provision in the Denbigh area. Despite the statements made at the consultation events arguing that the money must be spent on a new faith school, we would argue that the scope of the 21st Century Schools project would include the upgrade and refurbishment of existing school estate.

"In order to deliver these local programmes, authorities will go on to identify a range of options for investment, whether it be for new-build schools, amalgamation, closure and replacement with new, upgrade or refurbishment."

21st Century Schools Information Document, May 2011, WAG

We would suggest that a significant portion of the £28m could be spent on upgrading St. Brigid's school to ensure the sustaining of above county average examination results and providing necessary infrastructure.

2. We would oppose the moving of a faith-based school from the Denbigh site of St. Brigid's School on the basis of increased transportation difficulties. Moving St. Brigid's to another site, outside Denbigh would increase transport times, and put a severe amount of extra pressure on the parents in terms of ensuring that two of their children, who attend St. Brigid's, could access the school on time, and be collected safely, whilst ensuring the attendance at school of two other children, one who has REDACTION and another who has a significant REDACTION REDACTION condition. In real terms, such a move of school would cause a severe inconvenience, which although cannot be tangibly evidenced, is very real for those concerned.

Received on 29 Jan 2013.
together with completed Questionnaire.

3. St. Brigid's School is excellent in its approach to its provision and delivery of support and education for those children who have additional learning needs.
4. One of the strengths of St. Brigid's lies in its smaller size, compared with other local schools within Denbighshire. The smallness of its size allows for better pastoral management of children and their needs. The ability to provide a caring approach that is based on family structure, is a blessing and much sought after by many pupils and parents alike; the waiting list for admission reflects this. We would not want this approach to be compromised in any way by enforcing a larger-school model onto St. Brigid's and its pupils.
5. County proposals for Faith School development fail to sufficiently acknowledge the significant impact of faith-based education in the 3-11 year old range. One of the successes of St. Brigid's stems from the provision of faith-based education that is provided for the entirety of a child's school career. There appear to be no clear or defined plans for the lower school of St. Brigid's by Denbighshire County Council. What would happen to the lower school element of St. Brigid's should the 11-16 model go ahead? We would not want to see the primary element of St. Brigid's lost simply because Denbigh and the dioceses want a new 11-16 school.
6. We believe that the opportunity to provide education for 3-19 years should be delivered in a through-school environment. This excellent model is being copied elsewhere in the UK as a system that offers the best transitional opportunity for pupils. It reduces school transition stress for children and allows for better continuity of study. We would want this to be available for our children and for those of other parents. Building a new faith-based school for 11-16 year olds would prohibit this approach and reduce the quality of the educational experience for our children. How can the proposals justify this loss in quality, simply in terms of financial gain?
7. We believe that it is a valuable experience to be able to continue A level study in an educational environment where you are already settled. As with the rest of the school life, St. Brigid's has proved an excellent base at which to study for A levels for our eldest daughter. We would like the 6th Form at St. Brigid's School to be retained, along with the rest of the school, at the Denbigh site.
8. There has been dialogue about producing an educational environment that is both sustainable and transformational. Neither of these words have been fully defined by either the County or by either diocese. Parents are being asked to believe statements that have no substance. It was evident at the consultation meeting with parents in St. Brigid's that it was not clear to County as to what transformational meant. According to the Collins Dictionary, transform means 'to change completely'. This is not what we would want at all for St. Brigid's school as this would infer changing everything including all its good points.

9. Can the County and the dioceses explain their understanding of the term 'sustainable' in relation to statements made at the consultation events where 'sustainable education' and 'sustainable schools' were discussed? Sustainable would infer that there should be something present initially that can be sustained. Currently there is nothing to be sustained in the plans and proposals of the County and the dioceses, whereas in St. Brigid's School there is a lot that can be sustained with the correct support and investment on its present site.
10. Is St. Brigids School uneconomic to maintain? Some dialogue pertaining to transforming faith-based education aside, there has been no discernable evidence provided by County or by a diocesan body to confirm that this is the case. In which case, it should be assumed that St. Brigid's is economic to maintain and suitable funding provided to support this view. What fact based evidence does the County or the dioceses have to determine that St. Brigids School is uneconomic to maintain?
11. Is it truly uneconomic to maintain two faith-based schools? Granted, Blessed Edward Jones school has diminishing student numbers, but St. Brigids' school has no such current situation or projected reductions in student number. Indeed there are waiting lists for admissions to St. Brigid's School. Clearly St. Brigid's is a desirable environment for schooling, despite its apparent shortcomings related to buildings, sports facilities, and maintenance (this is a fact known to all parents, prior to them placing their children in the school, and the waiting list continues to grow). It may be argued that the County position is to make short-term cuts in the name of operational savings in order to secure a large Welsh Government grant. However, it is suggested that this is the route of least effort and is less effort than submitting planning for refurbishment of institutions that are providing top echelon education. Thus, is the proposal by County and the Dioceses truly balanced and fair?
12. The 21st Century School Information Document states,
"In many cases, existing schools can be modernised, repaired, refurbished, extended, or partially rebuilt where to do so will meet the standards needed for contemporary teaching and learning."
 There has been no evidence given by Denbighshire County Council of any option appraisal looking at the validity of the above approach for St. Brigid's school (or for Blessed Edward Jones RC School). It would be argued that such options should be fully investigated and put before Governors, staff, parents and pupils before other high cost full redevelopment building projects are undertaken.
13. Can Denbighshire County Council clarify what *"the standards needed for contemporary teaching and learning"* are as stated in the 21st Century Schools Information Document? Is Denbighshire County Council inferring that St. Brigid's school does not meet such standards by its proposal? If this were the case, surely St. Brigid's would not be consistently out-performing every other school in the area with its exam results? Does this not bring into question whether the standards needed for contemporary teaching and learning, in this case, are in fact, accurate?

14. St. Brigid's school has been in existence since 1939 and is a significant community-based school where its ethos has been a source of attraction for many pupils and parents for many years. This factor appears to be ignored by both County and diocesan representatives. However, the 21st Century Schools Information Document notes that parents, in consultation, highlighted that they would want
"Accessible locations for school buildings, and that reinforce "ownership" by the community[sic]."
 This would support the view, presented by the Welsh Government in the document, that
"Much of this is down to the staff and their interaction with parents and children".
 Building a new faith-based school away from the St. Brigid's site would detrimentally affect this ethos and the resulting approach to education.

15. St. Brigid's School is one of only 32 state boarding schools in the United Kingdom. This is a prestigious position to hold and the school is a flagship for Denbigh and the county. The boarding element adds another aspect of educational support that is not replicated anywhere else in the county. It is also the foundation of another aspect of the wider pastoral and family-based approach for which the school is highly regarded. Denbighshire County Council and the two dioceses have not publically acknowledged this fact, nor have offered any acknowledgement of the extra benefits that this situation brings. This approach, and the widely acknowledged benefits, is not seen in any other Denbighshire Authority school. Therefore, there is obviously no consideration for the boarding pupils, or the effects of boarding on the school results, in the proposals. Why is this so?

16. There are plans for significant financial investment by the County in both Rhyl High School and Ysgol Glan Clwyd. Why does the consultation propose to further increase education establishments in the area of Rhyl or St. Asaph, by building a new faith school there, but does not acknowledge the equal need for supporting educational establishments in the Denbigh area?

17. St. Brigid's School delivers consistently high academic results both at GCSE and GCE A level. These, it is generally acknowledged, are some of the best results in Wales. Why is there no recognition of this fact in the County or diocesan portrayal of St. Brigid's? Why is there no acknowledgement by the County or the diocese, of St. Brigid's School being a fantastic foundation from which to continue to develop educational excellence? Why is the excellent pastoral approach that is engendered in St. Brigid's School dismissed as unsubstantiated and not admissible as tangible evidence to the success of the school? It would appear that these facts are ignored in an attempt to blur the differences between St. Brigid's School and Blessed Edward Jones School and try to portray that the schools are the same, in a mundane generic fashion.

18. From local consultation meetings, there appears to be a bitter resentment by other parties regarding the misconception that St. Brigid's School 'creams the top pupils from the catchment areas of other schools,' including Blessed Edward Jones. This is a poor, misguided judgement. Essentially, it is a vulgar criticism of the educational skills of the teaching staff at St. Brigid's, and it denies the achievement of the teaching staff and pupils in obtaining excellent academic results.

19. It should also be noted that of the number of pupils in each senior school year, less than half will have been admitted under the examination process route. Half will have moved up from the Primary/Junior school at St. Brigid's, and others will have been admitted for other reasons such as children who are Looked-After, bullied at other schools, or those who fill spaces that have been vacated in later years.
20. The 21st Century Schools Information Document states that:
 [The WG would wish to see]...*"Schools of the right size in the right places"*
 and
"Reduce surplus places in schools so that existing funding is more efficiently allocated".
 These statements call into question the approach of Denbighshire County Council to have Secondary schools of a size of at least 600 pupils. It is acknowledged that schools of the correct size are essential. However, the figure of 600 pupils may be adequate for non-faith-based schools but this does not mean that faith-based schools should be run on the same grounds or according to the same formulae. It has been stated that faith-based schools are different and have different values and aspirations from non-faith-based schools (Presentation to Parents). We assume then that a nominal size of 600+ pupils for proposed new faith school is based on the non-faith model. This is a convenient number that loosely matches the current rolls of St. Brigid's School and Blessed Edward Jones School combined. However, that will not ensure the success of the proposed school since the formula of the model is based on a non-faith based school. What evidence does the County or the dioceses have that faith-based schools need to be of such a size? We refer again to the fact that St. Brigid's is already a successful school.
21. A further aspiration of the WG is the,
"Spiritual, moral, social, cultural development of pupils".
 Denbighshire County Council and the two dioceses have not made it clear to parents or pupils what the needs of a faith-based school would be. There has been no clear determination of the needs of faith-based educational establishments, nor whether the proposed operating standards, such as school size, are suitable for the additional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Can the County and the dioceses confirm that full assessment of the differences between faith and non-faith-based schools has been investigated, and if so, provide a detailed and balanced account of the findings?
22. To conclude, we can confirm that the system of education and pastoral support at St. Brigid's School is excellent. We would report that the methods of teaching and the staff and the extremely good and we can state that, along with a lot of hard work from our **Redaction**, these factors have produced, not only fantastic academic results, **Redaction** but a well-rounded, happy, confident and thoroughly pleasant young lady. We hope for the same future educationally, emotionally, spiritually and socially for our youngest daughter and our sons. To remove St. Brigid's School from its current site would undermine this ethos; the current effect would not be replicated anywhere else in the county. Unique is special, and this deserves support rather than blind corporate interference.

Redaction

MODERNISING
30 JAN 2013
EDUCATION

Redaction

Dear Mrs. Whalley

I am writing to raise my concerns regarding the proposal to merge St Brigid's and Blessed Edward Jones and build a new large school. As your consultation questionnaire did not really ask relevant questions to understand my views on the merger. I don't mind the inconvenience and cost of traveling a distance to a school if I think what the school is providing is the best for my daughter.

St Brigid's is a small school with a family atmosphere this could not be recreated in a school of over 900 pupils. All the staff know the children not just by name but actually know them; they would be just a number in the large school you are proposing. How can staff help/discipline a child who they find upset/misbehaving if they don't even know their name never mind their circumstances? I feel my daughter who has REDACTION would not have the confidence she has if she had gone to a large school. In England, Ofsted concluded after an exhaustive survey that the quality of teaching in small schools was "generally better than in larger schools", and that their "positive ethos" and "important place in the community" meant there was "a good case" for small schools, which had a positive ethos that fostered "a family atmosphere", "good standards of behaviour" and "close links with parents and the community". St Brigid's creates confident, courteous and well rounded young adults I feel this will be impossible replicate in a school of over 900 pupils.

There are many large schools and when you see the pupils they don't seem to have the same respect and maturity as St Brigid's pupils.

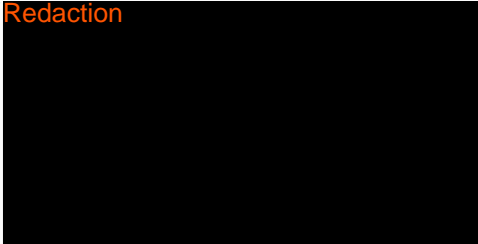
I don't understand how it is cheaper to build a new super school than update St Brigid's and Blessed Edward Jones sites and facilities. Nevertheless many parents are less concerned about the state of the buildings than how happy and confident their children are when they are at school.

Another concern is the continuity of the 3-19 provision this allows children to enjoy school and concentrate on learning without the concerns of transition at various ages, it seems ridiculous to get rid of a system that works so well.

My daughter is likely to be starting 6th Form at the time when the merger takes place so where would this leave her as your new plans do not include what will happen to these 16 – 19 yr olds.

In conclusion money should be invested in this successful model and not closing it down. If the merger goes ahead while my daughter is still attending she will not be attending your new large school.

Redaction



Denbighshire County Council
Modernising Education Team
County Hall
Ruthin

Redaction

29/1/13

Redaction

Consultation Paper – Case for Change

Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire

The Consultation process has been I believe been flawed from the start for the following reasons.

- The consultation process and the supporting documentation is highly inadequate, I refer you to the attached letter to the Chief Executive of DCC where I highlight that the consultation should have been to the whole of the public and DCC should have made available supporting evidence for the public to review in easily accessible information storage centers. Through the published consultation documents there are references, assertions, and discussion points that are not supported by evidence, and yet these items are all directed at claims that the two schools cannot continue and the only solution is a single school. I will therefore throughout this process be objecting to the usurping of the process through failure to provide an adequate consultation process.
- DCC have continually re-iterated that they have no plan, and implied that the consultation is to capture all views to produce a number of options. Implied in this is that because DCC have no existing plan, other options that might include renovating the existing schools are possible. I now refer you to relevant texts of documents and meetings which all point to DCC being disingenuous with Parents. Clearly DCC do have specific plan, they haven't come clean with us about that, and they don't intend to come out with any options other than those that meet that plan; therefore this consultation is a sham. My evidence for this is set out below.
 - a. There is no reference or factual explanation in the consultation documentation of DCC's submission to the Welsh assembly Government for 28.8m funding or to the terms of that. The only possible reference that I can find is on page 4; "Will there be money available to build a new school" In answer it says; "Potentially. Denbighshire's approved proposals for 21st century Schools Programme includes an outline sum for building a potential new faith based school. To safeguard this long term option all parties discussed this possibility in 2010 when Denbighshire made a funding application for 21st century schools to the Welsh government. Without this

being included there would be no opportunity probably in reality now until 2021 for any significant school building improvements to be made to faith secondary schools. This money is available for new schools or remodeling and reconstruction of existing schools. This money cannot be used for simply maintaining existing buildings." From this you would read that although DCC have applied for some money for a new school "this money" could be used for renovating "existing schools".

- b. As stated by Jackie Walley at the 10th January Parents Consultation meeting at St Brigids "You will have heard that there is already a plan, here we haven't got a consensus, it is really an opportunity for you to engage with us in this review as there isn't one answer Lot of people have said there is a plan already Denbighshire already know what they are doing. We don't." (From our own contemporaneous notes of the meeting).
- c. DCC's minutes of the 10th January Parents Consultation meeting at St Brigids "Although we knew that St Brigids and BEJ needed capital investment, we didn't know what for or how it would be spent. We also knew that if we didn't make a bid for funding then, it would be another 7 years before capital funds would once more become available. Therefore we put the bid in on this basis and were successful. The terms of our bid were for Secondary Faith Based Education in North Denbighshire, subject to consultation. We couldn't say what the plan was. We've got £28m to spend if we can agree and come up with a transformational plan".
- d. And in answer to my question of Ms. Walley (from our own contemporaneous notes of the meeting) when Ms. Walley was asked by Guy Wood "You could do a proposal that has transformation for 2 schools or 4 schools" she answered "Yes".

This is the actual detail of the request made in November 2011. Why was this not published?

"Faith Based Secondary Provision – Blessed Edward Jones RC and St Brigids
Estimated Cost £28.8m

The Council is committed to working with Diocesan authorities and local faith schools to develop options for a new faith based secondary school to replace the two existing schools. This project is seen as important to ensure community cohesion following the completion of the Rhyl VI project and the commencement of the Rhyl High project. Both schools fall below the minimum size for Secondary Schools within the Policy Framework and the authority considers that both schools would not be viable in the long term and that the present situation needs to be reviewed to ensure the long term sustainability of faith based provision within Denbighshire. As part of the discussions the option of a multi denomination school serving both Catholic and Anglican communities on a regional basis has been agreed. This vision is based on the joint facility serving an age range of 11-16 with the capability of offering and hosting post 16 provision as part of a wider partnership with other schools and educational institutions within Denbighshire. As neither of the existing sites of Blessed Edward Jones in Rhyl and St Brigids in Denbigh would be considered suitable for the new school

for issues in relation to location, alternative sites have been considered by the local authority and discussed with denominational stakeholders. Discussions have also taken place over the reinvestment of surplus sites to aid the funding position.

The authority has discussed with stakeholders provisional timescales for the project moving forward, including timescales for progressing the relevant statutory notices to close both schools and establish a new school, pending clarification of funding and is minded to develop a phased approach to the development of the new facility. An estimate of £28m is suggested at this stage and the costs would be reviewed during submission of the Outline Business Case should authority to proceed be approved”.

Clearly Parents are confused by the dislocation between the public statements of DCC and the evidence of the above funding request; we feel we are being railroaded into a process that has only one outcome.

- All this leads me to the understanding that the consultation is being conducted on a very narrow base. It makes the assumption that the only case is a new school and all that need be consulted is how many people might attend and where it might be. It makes the assumption that the two existing secondary schools are not fit for purpose and cannot be invested in to make them so.

What appears to be happening is this;

- Government policy dictates that parents should have a choice where they send their children,
- Various forms of information are made available for parents to make that choice.
- Parents make their choice of St Brigids or Blessed Edward Jones
- DCC then closes the schools chosen and forces parents to go to a new different school.

This hardly appears to be in line with the policy.

Some of the key assumptions that underlay the consultation document surround the things like the Curriculum, the buildings, the very high level statements of 21st Century Schools. We as parents cannot see why St Brigids and Blessed Edward Jones cannot be invested in to meet these requirements. I have to point out that the references to Whiteboards and Wi-Fi as possible obstacles to St Brigids meeting the needs a=of 21st century education are very feeble reasons and display an attitude that suggests DCC think that parents will be impressed by this. Wi-Fi can easily be installed in both schools – that’s the point of Wi-fi, and it is easily installed in historic buildings caravan parks, the houses of parliament. The limitation would be the bandwidth DCC invests in delivering to the school! WAG’s investment support and the move to 21st Century education allow for refurbishment and re-build as much as they allow for new schools. Yet no proposals are submitted on this basis. It is absolutely fundamental to this process that options for retaining the existing schools with investment to bring them to the required standards (transformation) be included in the outcome for this consultation process.

- The DCC’s policy requires a 600 minimum size for secondary education, yet DCC cannot provide a single coherent document that substantiates this policy. All we have been given is a selection of references to other studies and this does not

- amount to a clear analysis or justification of the policy. In fact it would be interesting to poll those councilors who voted for the policy and find out if anyone of them understood let alone read these various references.
- This can be easily solved in any of three ways and possibly by some combination of them all;
 - a. Firstly St Brigids can be invested in to bring its secondary pupil number to the magic 600. It will have no problems meeting the 600 places since it has 350 secondary presently and regularly has 70 oversubscribed applications per year for the KS2 entry. With some investment the balance would be easily filled. DCC's conceive that there is a plethora of disenfranchised Anglican children in North Denbighshire, plus all the non- faith parents who desire a faith based education for their children. If DCC were to advertise this as an option then it could tell how easy it would fill the school. Why hasn't it done this? Plans for this were drawn up only a few years ago and approved by the then Head of Education, now Chief executive Mohammed Mehmet.
 - b. DCC's policy of 600 minimum can be examined to identify in detail each of the reasons why the two current schools lack viability under this policy. There are a variety of reasons why the schools may not meet the underpinning logic of the viability case and I believe that some will be met and some will not. It seems to me perfectly feasible to make adjustments through investment to allow the schools to meet those aspects of the viability argument. For example St Brigids is run financially effectively, St Brigids is run effectively on educational attainment grounds, St Brigids may have some supposed issues with its building fabric, but these would easily be solved through investment, and these supposed limitations do not historically or currently have any effect upon pupil outcomes. The research base suggests that school size and improved educational attainment is not a proven case, whereas inclusiveness, behavior, community and teacher satisfaction may well be higher in smaller schools.
 - c. Thirdly St Brigids is a 3-19 school and its total pupil numbers are very close to the 600 minimum. This is a vital ingredient of its success and this model is now being used across the UK in various other schools for this reason. It is one of the reasons we selected the school for our children. When you examine the 21st century schools information and the representation of this within DCC's Modernising Education policy documents you see that a large proportion of the requirements apply to both primary, secondary and tertiary education. St Brigids is already exemplifying the benefits of this in its financial, educational and school management approach and in the outcomes for pupils both in terms of educational attainment across the curriculum and in the pupil's confidence, maturity, discipline. Therefore investment in St Brigids for the 21st century educational needs can be made and would enable it to share a large proportion of these requirements and facilities across all the educational stages and yield a higher return on outcomes against investment. This would make the investment highly viable. St Brigids model already proves this. For example St Brigids clearly through its 3-19 policy meet financially viability since its costs per pupil for primary are way below

the country average, and for secondary are less than 1% above it. Taken together the gains for primary versus the average, when allocated to secondary give it cost per pupil almost equal to the lowest cost per pupil school secondary in the county; Prestayn high see the following calculations and arguments;

The primary costs per pupil for St Brigids are £128.2k above the average (£3767 – £2838 X 138 pupils= £128.2k) but

The secondary costs for St Brigids are £31k above the secondary average, (£4296-£4206 x 352 pupils)

So if you apply the delta for primary to the secondary costs per pupil overall it's a saving of £274 per secondary pupil (128.2 / 352) which brings St Brigids secondary per pupil rate down from £4,200 to £3,926 which puts it only 2% more than Prestayn High (PHS) the largest and lowest per pupil cost secondary school in the county.

St Brigids model also benefits from the lack of any opportunity costs of associated with the negative aspects of transition from primary to secondary both concrete and abstract. As well as travel costs which stay constant as there isn't a change for moving school and for parents with consistency and where they have children in both schools. It should not be underestimated the financial and life management impact of changing schools, particularly for multiple sibling families.

As well as its efficiency, PHS may gain some benefit from size in that it can amortise costs across more pupils, but size clearly doesn't always mean lower costs - the other c1000 pupil schools are all nearly as expensive as or more expensive per pupil than St Brigids. St Brigids secondary is only 2% more expensive per pupil than YSGOL BRYNHYFRYD. YSGOL DINAS BRAN is 3% more expensive per pupil than St Brigids so having less than 1/3rd of the numbers St Brigids still manages to hold its own financially with the large schools and produce some of the best academic results in the country easily rivaling these other schools.

Source:

[http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/www/cms/live/content.nsf/lookupattachments/English~DNAP-8K5FQY/\\$File/Section%2052%20Budget%20Statement%202011-2012.xls](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/www/cms/live/content.nsf/lookupattachments/English~DNAP-8K5FQY/$File/Section%2052%20Budget%20Statement%202011-2012.xls),

- 2 Denbighshire schools face severe surplus places and DCC is clearly under a lot of pressure from WAG to reduce this to 10% or lower. I think I heard, at the council cabinet meeting in November, that WAG may introduce penalties for failure to meet the metric. Clearly Denbighshire has over-supply of places. St Brigids however is a school with year on year success in pupil rolls, academic attainment, parent and pupil satisfaction, and effective budget management. Few other schools can boast this record across all these areas, year on year. It would therefore be unethical and criminally irresponsible of the authority to solve its problems by closing its most effective and top performing school. The second point to make on this is that parental choice is a matter of government policy. St Brigids year on year is the school that parents want to get their children to attend. It is bureaucratic madness to then close the school that parents choose

the most. The fact that parents choose St Brigids over other schools is a good indication of why it should be retained. It seems unfair to close a successful school that parents choose, in order to make up for other schools that do not attract pupils. Parental choice is being undermined.

In the consultation paper DCC quote that the development of a new secondary school would "assist in answering a real need for further educational provision in the north Denbighshire area, particularly in the light of new potential residential developments. However this need could just as easily be answered for by renovating the existing schools. If DCC's demographic analysis suggests that there is a large influx of people into Denbigh looking to buy new houses and that there will be a proportion of them that require faith based schooling then why can this not be catered for in the existing schools? In other parts of the consultation DCC are fearing the surplus places they currently have and the falling attendance at Blessed Edward Jones. Therefore this argument is just as much an argument for supporting existing schools as building new ones.

We also read that "Denbighshire County Council is clearly of the view that there is a need to review the Sustainability of both schools". Whilst there may be a need to review the investment needed in both schools, something that they have been starved of for some time, I do not feel that wiping the slate clean and starting again is the answer. Business Process Re-engineering not only reduces morale, which affects both performance and trust but also fails to learn the lessons from the past. Continuous improvement is seen as progressive, supportive and ensures that all stakeholders can be a part of the process, which will inevitably support the delivery of any change needed. St Brigids can provide those valuable lessons if allowed to do so and my view is that it should be allowed to do so. The loss of the ethos and values of the school would be a loss to the local Community, Wales and the United Kingdom. This phrase sustainability has been bandied about during this process but without adequate definition. Sustainability is to do with, economics of managing the school, capacity, building maintenance, adequacy of the buildings to serve the educational needs of the school. In each of these cases St Brigids is or can be sustainable. DCC's problems are elsewhere and not in St Brigids. It is only DCC's failure to invest that gives them the ability to question some aspects of St Brigids sustainability.

Banding

DCC have quoted Banding results perhaps to indicate that the two schools are very similar and therefore could be easily merged. This is and would be a serious misuse of the banding process. The schools are in different families for a reason. The make-up of the schools are radically different as DCC themselves identify. It can make no sense to merge these two groups with any logical option that the outcome will be anything other than a reduction in the educational standards across the whole population in the new school and particularly for St Brigids. Mergers of companies are renowned for the almost total failure to yield the synergies that the business cases made. If they are successful it is when one culture is completely subsumed and replaced by the other, or where the subsidiaries operate independently within a federated corporate organization. The suggestion that DCC could make this work is wholly unrealistic when profit driven organizations find it impossible to realize the *raison d'être* of their actions. What will happen is that DCC will produce a failing

school with falling numbers as parents refuse to attend and/or experience the failure and leave. I wonder if DCC could articulate some of the details behind the merger at St Josephs with regards to the sizes, character, educational attainment and context (as used in banding terminology) in order for us to assess if the St Brigids and Blessed Edward Jones proposals are in any way similar.

Faith and Education

DCC have yet to identify how the new school will operate on a faith basis and how our children will retain the ethos that St Brigids currently achieves. All we have seen are very bland statements and no real hard evidence that they will maintain what we already experience.

DCC claim that St Joseph's merger of Anglican and catholic faiths have been positively received. I personally don't doubt that two Christian religions could operate together in a school environment, as you are aware they already do in St Brigids and Blessed Edward Jones. It's not that religious beliefs cannot positively coincide it is the evidence of educational, discipline and personal moral outcomes that concerns me. I would also be interested in DCC's view of the specific inclusion of Islamic faiths and other faiths into the school(s) as I believe that this would enhance all our children's ability to learn from each other develop a harmonious and tolerant understanding and gain readiness for operating in the real world after school. I believe it would a transformational opportunity to develop the two schools to cater for the Muslim/Islamic community, this would also benefit the satisfying of capacity requirements as I feel there is little or no specific education vehicle to cater for this religious approach.

Here are some quotations from DCC's own "Policies for Modernising Education In Denbighshire";

- *"Any alteration to school provision must be able to deliver equal or improved educational standards within the area.*
- *"Changes to school provision will only be carried out if the review process identifies that the outcome of the change would result in equal or improved educational Experience for pupils within the schools affected"*
- *"Any review would have to take into consideration the availability of sufficient places within an alternative school or site that could provide an equal or improved educational experience for pupils within the schools affected".*

In the current evidence provided to parents, as part of this consultation, DCC have made no steps towards showing that these policies will be attained. Given these are fundamental planks of the policy I would expect greater effort of the part of DCC to support parents' assessment of the potential future scenarios.

DCC have often referred to the curriculum with an implied criticism that St Brigids doesn't offer the right curriculum. In fact students have been offered wider curriculum of more vocational subjects at St Brigids but uptake/choice is low in these areas. The traditional core curriculum appears to be more than capable of producing successful students. If parental choice, academic success and well-rounded members of society are at the heart of DCC's objectives then the curriculum at St Brigids can hardly be accused of failing children. I believe that St Brigids will be offering the full curriculum from September. We will see how

many of the newer courses are popular. It seems to me that it would be possible to use the 16-19 federated partnership model to allow some of the more vocational courses to be available in nearby schools (Denbigh High) and perhaps vice versa. Investment in the school would also permit some technical subjects that DCC appear to think are needed to be available.

Financial Information.

- The budget breakdowns (current and forecast) of the two schools and the funding sources (income and expenditure) have not been published.
- The budget breakdown and analysis of the capital and operating costs and funding of the proposed new school has not been published.
- Both of these must be available because;
 - a) the consultation quotes ..."The three year expenditure plans suggest that..."
 - b) The request for funding to the WAG identifies that "An estimate of £28m is suggested at this stage and the costs would be reviewed..." if there is an estimate and there are costs to be "reviewed" they must be available for the public to review now. You can only review something that already exists.
- It is important to have available this sort of information to properly assess the differences between the two scenarios. Will the new scenario be any better than the existing one?

Regarding the Questionnaire

I am prepared to travel to the school of my choice. However simply assessing the mileage, routes will not help you to understand my selection process. I chose St Brigids not because of its distance but because of its quality. There are also geographic areas where I would not wish my children to be travelling to or through due to the risks those areas may place on my children's safety, security and their exposure to other physical, mental and moral risks that as a parent are important to me.

Currently I have no evidence to suggest that I would send my children to a school that cannot evidence the high standards of education, faith, discipline, ethos, environment and care currently experienced. Simply promising a school that is shiny and new and has a Whiteboard and Wi-Fi does not impress me at all. The size of the a school at 900+ pupils is also a mitigating factor it is getting too big for me to feel that the staff can maintain the high standards of education, faith, discipline, ethos, environment and care currently experienced. The 3-19 model is specifically of value to me as it (amongst other important factors) creates the correct community and respectful pupils at each level of education, and leads to better outcomes with children moving easily from one level to another. I wish my children to attend a school which has a high standard and reputation; this indicates to me that the families of the children at the school have a concern for their children's education. This is the case with the current school and is the unifying factor is that they have made a sincere effort to ensure their children are in the right environment.

Transformational Proposal

In short I believe that St Brigids is a model school in terms of its multi faith approach, its ethos, discipline and outstanding educational attainment. Its 3-19 model is already

transformational, so much so that many in the UK are transforming to achieve it. My proposal is the St Brigids is invested in to expend its secondary size towards 600 and its primary size to feed more children through the "continuous" education approach that builds such a strong foundation for the development of children through KS1 to KS4, and provide a solid environment for children to join at each key stage. Financially St Brigids manages its funding extremely well and the 3-19 model provides an excellent basis for sharing costs, management and facilities. DCC with the school and all the religious representatives of our society should examine plans to deliver the needs of 21st century education at St Brigids. Information I have suggests that the site can be expanded and redeveloped. I believe that the curriculum issues could be dealt with through a mixture of transformational investment and federation.

In short please do not consign our children to a painful existence in a single school when the current schools are either trying their best to improve (Blessed Edward Jones) or are already outstanding (St Brigids). A merger will be a failure for DCC and the pupils, Invest in both and you will deliver 21st Century Education, positive pupils, comply with own policies and meet the governments requirements on parental choice.

Redaction



Mohammed Mehmet
Chief Executive
Denbighshire County Council
County Hall
Wynnstay Road
Ruthin
LL15 1YN

Redaction

24th January

2013

Dear Mohammed,

Freedom of Information –Case for Change- Joint Faith Provision in North Denbighshire

As part of a consultation exercise to the public there should be transparency of information, so that the public have access to the same information that consulting body has access to – subject to any legal restrictions that limit publication of certain matters, of course.

In the consultation for the Joint Faith Based Schooling in North Denbighshire there would seem to be a limit the public's access to information. When this is combined with the shortened period for consultation it is a diminution of the democratic process.

Note that due to the Christmas and New Year period, when parents are focussed on preparing for and celebrating the religious and family holiday the effective period of consultation was from Wednesday January 2nd to January 29th – less than one month, and despite many requests for extension this has not been granted. This is another serious blow to the democratic process.

I have listed in Annex A to this letter information that is referred to specifically or implicitly in the various documents or discussions that have been published or have come to light. These and any other materially relevant information should be made easily and freely available to all the participants in the consultation process. Whilst some of this information is available on public websites it is only accessible if you know it is there. I would expect those running the consultation to collate this information into one available source and make it available to the public in a central digital repository (i.e. a website) and printed in various locations accessible by the public.

One would also expect that the communication of the consultation itself would be made to all the public equally and not just existing parents of the schools and their feeder schools, since in the consultation documents own words this is about "an educational system in place that is sustainable over the next 15-20 years".

Overall there is serious concern that the difficulties in accessing information is limiting the public's opportunity to understand and fully contribute to the very serious issue of their children's education.

Yours sincerely,

Redaction

Annex A - Required Information

- 1 All aspects of DCC's request for funding to the Welsh Government for £28m to build an all faith school (and the WAG's responses) to be made available.
 - a. The fact of this request was only made public to the parents on 10th January 2013 – that is the 5th week of a 7.5 week consultation - 2/3rd of

- the process has elapsed. It was not mentioned in the consultation document.
- b. The details of this request (terms and conditions, financial estimates, educational details etc.) haven't been made public and should be.
- 2 Policy 2 regarding minimum and maximum limits on secondary school size.
- a. Whilst a copy of the annex detailing this policy has been shared in the documents, supporting evidence and substantiation have not been provided publicly and despite requests are still not available.
- 3 Policies for Modernising Education in Denbighshire – this was provided to some people after specific request but not made available and it was buried in minutes of a council meeting somewhere in a website.
- 4 Reports on school funding are available at;
- a. [http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/www/cms/live/content.nsf/lookupattachments/English~DNAP-8K5FQY/\\$File/Section%2052%20Budget%20Statement%202011-2012.xls](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/www/cms/live/content.nsf/lookupattachments/English~DNAP-8K5FQY/$File/Section%2052%20Budget%20Statement%202011-2012.xls), these could have been made available to parents rather than some of us finding them ourselves. The details behind them require further expansion – i.e. financial and costing assumptions for their calculation
- 5 The funding submission to the WAG (as per item 1) states "As part of the discussions the option of a multi denomination school serving both Catholic and Anglican communities on a regional basis has been agreed." Minutes of relevant meetings between Anglican and Catholic Diocese together, internally and with DCC should be made available to the public.
- 6 The consultation document quotes there is "a real need for further educational provision in the north Denbighshire area, particularly in the light of new potential residential developments". What evidential documents are there to support this blanket statement?
- 7 New Curriculum Requirements are referred to in the consultation documents – what are they and how can parents and the public access them?
- 8 Learning and Skill Measure - are referred to in the consultation documents – what are they and how can parents and the public access them
- 9 21st Century School are referred to in the consultation documents – what are they and how can parents and the public access them
- 10 School Banding – I have been provided after request with access to some documents on this – they still fall way short of an explanation and do not include the detail data that comprise the St Brigids and blessed Edward Jones Banding results. This information should be made easily available.
- 11 Clear evidence of the academic achievements of the schools in GCSE's results for all subjects assessed.
- 12 Material evidence or substantiation by the DCC that their plan can "the outcome of the change would result in equal or improved educational experience for pupils within the schools affected" as required by their own Policy (Policies for

- Modernising Education in Denbighshire). Since the document referred to at 1 above is a plan to change then some work must have been done to support the DCC's own policy; please publish this.
- 13 Evidence to support the assertion contained in the consultation document that "School Improvement Officers for Denbighshire County Council are of the view that improved joint working between the two schools would lead to clear education benefits for current and future pupils".
- 14 Financial information.
- a. The budget breakdowns (current and forecast) of the two schools and the funding sources (income and expenditure).
 - b. The budget breakdown and analysis of the capital and operating costs and funding of the proposed new school.
 - c. These must be available because
 - i. the consultation quotes ... "The three year expenditure plans suggest that..."
 - ii. The request for funding to the WAG identifies that "An estimate of £28m is suggested at this stage and the costs would be reviewed..." if there is an estimate and there are costs to be "reviewed" they must be available for the public to review now.
- 15 Denbighshire Schools Funding Formula is referred to in the consultation documents – what are they and how can parents and the public access them?
- 16 21st Century Schools Programme -Welsh Government commissioned school surveys are referred to in the consultation documents – what are they and how can parents and the public access them? These result in the schools being rated "poor". Access to the documents would permit the public to understand the substantiation of this and the rating process.
- 17 The Findings of Building Bulletin 98 (BB98).
- 18 The consultation documents refer to future pupil projections, expectations of residential growth, an implied need for Anglican faith secondary education – the detailed analysis and evidence of all this should be made available.
- 19 The submission to the WAG for funding refers to;
- a. "alternative sites have been considered by the local authority and discussed with denominational stakeholders"
 - b. "...the reinvestment of surplus sites to aid the funding position".
- Full disclosure of these discussions, intentions and locations should be made available.
- 20 "This project is seen as important to ensure community cohesion following the completion of the Rhyl VI project and the commencement of the Rhyl High project." What does this mean and what are its implications – please provide details of this discussion point.
- 21 Reference is made in the consultation documents to "experiences at St Josephs and Anglican high school have been positively received". DCC should provide all such information and support these claims with proper evidence.
- 22 any information, evidence, communications, minutes correspondence including e-mails, texts and notes' or other that have reference or relation to the process and decisions already undertaken or planned to be undertaken in relation to the proposed Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire should be provided to allow a full and informed choice to be made.

Having your say on the future of faith based education

Q1 Which school are your children currently attending?

Blessed Edward Catholic High School	St Brigid's
	✓ ✓

Q2 For each of these children please write their current year group in the boxes below

Primary (St Brigid's)	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12 / 13
✓ ✓						

Q3 Using the numbers 1 to 7 please rank the following from most important to least important in terms of their influence on your choice of secondary education

Please rank them 1 to 7 where 1 is the most important and 7 is the least important. Make sure you use every number from 1 to 7 once and do not use any number more than once

Faith provision	2	Quality of school buildings	5
Another child already at the school	4	Quality of education	1
Distance from your home	7	Size of school	3
Ease of access / transport to school	6		

Q4 Would a school offering a joint Anglican / Catholic faith based education alter your choice of school?

More likely to attend	Would have no impact	Be less likely to attend	Not sure / don't know
	✓		

St. Brigid's already has both faiths at the school.

The following questions will assist in the consideration of any future location

Please confirm your home postcode

Redaction

Q5 How would the distance of any school from your home impact on your choice of school? (Please cross one box only on each distance option)?

	No Change	Change	Not sure / don't know
Less than 3 miles	✓		
3 miles to 5 miles	✓		
More than 5 miles	✓		

Note: This question is not relevant as the quality of the school that counts. My answer should not be taken to mean I would happily send my children to the proposed new school.

Q6 If you answered 'Change' in Q5 please explain why

Please see my comment above and my attached letter.

Q7 The Authority provides free transport for pupils of statutory age attending Secondary schools if the child resides over three miles from the nearest suitable school.

What is the longest journey time that you consider acceptable each way (please cross one box only)

0-9 minutes	10-19 minutes	20 – 29 minutes	30 – 44 minutes
			✓

Note: See my comment on question 5 as it applies equally to Q7

Q8 Please detail any other issues you may wish to raise

Please see my attached letter, Redaction Redaction

Redaction

Please note below whether you agree for your response to be published. With your permission, responses will be reproduced – with personal data such as names and addresses removed – in reports to the Council on the statutory consultation period.

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 we must inform you of the following. Denbighshire County Council is seeking your views to help inform the decision on this proposal. Your personal information will be used only for this purpose, and may be shared with other agencies who are involved in the consultation, however only to address any issues you raise. If you do not wish to provide personal details your views will still be considered, but we will not be able to acknowledge your response personally.

✓	Yes, the Council may publish my response after removing personal information
	No, the Council may not publish my response

Please return to Modernising Education Programme Team, Denbighshire County Council

**REDACTION**

RE: Faith School (St Brigid's and Blessed Edwards Jones merge)

Please find enclosed the consultation documents for the above merge.
Please take note of the comments in red which counteract the proposals.

As you see from our comments in red this consultation is a completely flawed.
I look forward to your response and the back tracking of the closure of St Brigid's school.

Yours faithfully,

REDACTION

Consultation Paper – Case for Change
Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire

Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Background – Case for Change
- 3 Options for Change
- 4 How changes will impact on ethos of the school
- 5 School Performance and the Educational Argument for Change
- 6 Financial Implications
- 7 Evidence – Condition of Buildings and Sites
- 8 Pupil Place Planning
- 9 Impact on 3 - 11 Education / Post 16 Provision
- 10 Next Steps

1. Introduction

The churches and the state have been partners in the provision of education for young people for well over two hundred years, and all parties in North Denbighshire are committed to continuing this partnership and to seeing the provision of education thrive. In particular, the Anglican Diocese of St Asaph and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wrexham are pleased to have had an effective and positive working relationship with Denbighshire County Council for some years in developing schools with a religious character.

The Dioceses of Wrexham and St Asaph are committed to joint action to sponsor the potential development of a new secondary school offering Catholic and Anglican education for the families who seek it in Rhyl and north Denbighshire. This provision is intended to be provided in partnership with St Brigid's Trust. With it comes the desire to offer the highest standards of education and to ensure good outcomes for all young people in Wales. We believe that this school will assist in answering a real need for further educational provision in the north Denbighshire area, particularly in the light of new potential residential developments; as well as answering demand from families in both religious traditions and others for education with a Christian religious character in north Denbighshire. It is particularly important to continue to make provision for families opting currently for Catholic education in Rhyl, and for those parents who are expressing preference for the education with a Catholic and Christian character in the present St Brigid's School, and to maintaining the character and quality of education currently provided.

Comments –

The second paragraph above indicates a commitment to offer "*Catholic and Anglican education for families who seek it in Rhyl and North Denbighshire*". The sentence reads as if the families in Rhyl come before the remaining people of North Denbighshire and would indicate that a decision has already been made by the Education Authority, with a throw away comment that the "*provision is intended to be provided in partnership with St Brigids' Trust*", its as if little thought or respect for the Trust is apparent.

The "*desire to offer the highest standards of education and to ensure good outcomes for all young people in Wales*" is another statement made. St Brigids continually provides an excellent standard of education for all of its students and the results are proven each year and can be clearly evidenced. What has not been measured is the person that leaves St Brigids at the end of their school life, in times where moral values, manners and a sense of community are hard to find, St Brigids repeatedly turn out exceptionally high achievers who are grounded, polite, driven and respectful to all. These are qualities which cannot be ignored and I feel would be lost should the school close.

The second paragraph above also indicates that the development of a new secondary school would "*assist in answering a real need for further educational provision in the north Denbighshire area, particularly in the light of new potential residential developments*". In light of the Denbighshire Local Development Plan, whilst I understand that further school positions would be needed for any potential increases in population, closing a successful school to support the application for extra funding would be immoral and unfair to all those who are associated with St Brigids.

2. Background – Case for Change

Review of Provision

Across Wales there is a clear need for changes in the way education is delivered to ensure that school buildings and facilities are inspirational learning environments that meet the needs of 21st Century Wales. It is recognised by Denbighshire County Council together with the Diocesan authorities that locally we have to change and modernise education provision in the county, as improvements in education cannot be sustained without changes to the way education is provided. We have a responsibility to ensure that our schools are sustainable and fit for purpose. Schools need to be able to provide the best possible learning experience so that children and young people in Denbighshire have the widest opportunities available to them and are able to reach their full potential.

Comments-

“Schools need to be able to provide the best possible learning experience”, St Brigids provides an excellent learning experience for all its pupils and this could be enhanced by improvements to the buildings at the school. There have been plans put forward in previous years, which were accepted by Denbighshire CC however the funding required to move forward with the project never materialised. These plans can be revised in line with the requirements of the 21st Century Schools Programme and utilize some of the funding offered by the Welsh Government which would support an increase in pupil numbers and also the way in which education is delivered. I feel that these options should be further explored.

The way that we use school buildings has changed and will continue to change. New curriculum requirements (for example the development of the 14 - 19 network which has enabled an increase in suite of qualifications available to learners under the Learning and Skill Measure) and developments in ICT (for example the use of whiteboards and wireless technology) and the potential for community use mean that our schools have to change and we need to keep pace if we are to meet the needs of modern life. The way of working with schools has also changed with an increased emphasis towards partnership working and a multi – agency approach requires schools to have additional facilities available for this way of working; conference rooms, support rooms; office space for other agencies etc.

Comments-

Improvements to school buildings and the potential for a new build on the current site at St Brigids would support the inclusion of all ICT infrastructure in line with the above requirements. It would also allow the opportunity for the school to be opened up as a Community facility with all the systems and access required to ensure full Community engagement.

In order to improve all existing school buildings so that they meet the definition of a 21st Century School we would need to invest significant capital over the coming years. The Welsh Government have made it clear that local authorities will not be able to attract capital funding unless the issue of empty places is dealt with. We are also mindful that in the current financial climate no guarantees can be made regarding revenue funding for schools. A number of schools are already suffering from budget pressures due to low pupil numbers and high levels of unfilled places, a situation that could become worse over the coming years.

Comments-

I am well aware of the current financial climate that the Public Sector face and the fact that the pressures will be with us for a number of years to come, however whilst the Welsh

Government have pledged financial support for projects such as this over the coming years, it still cannot be guaranteed. Although the Welsh Government have limited tax raising powers, the majority comes from Central Government and this is subject to change dependant on the financial climate, who is in office and which part of the electoral cycle we are in therefore, the above statement is unfair and possibly scaremongering to illicit a desired response.

Denbighshire County Council has a responsibility, working with partners, to ensure that there is an educational system in place that is sustainable over the next 15 - 20 years. We want successful thriving schools that provide the best possible learning environments and facilities for our children and young people.

In order to do this we have to review education provision across the county.

Comments-

The model of education provision at St Brigid's has proven year on year through the successful outcomes of its students. This system I believe is sustainable, with the right support for its infrastructure from Denbighshire CC, and a model which should be promoted across Wales as best practice.

Secondary Faith Based Provision in Denbighshire

The provision at both Blessed Edward Jones Catholic School and St Brigid's needs to be considered in the context of Denbighshire's Modernising Education Policy Framework and in particular the specific policy regarding "Models for Secondary School Organisation".

The policy considers that "It is not feasible for a secondary school with fewer than 600 pupils (plus 150 in 6th Form where appropriate) to provide the facilities described in the 21st Century Secondary Schools vision. Therefore the Council accepts that the minimum size for any new secondary school will be a four - form entry school providing 600 11 - 16 places. In order to ensure that all secondary schools provide the best possible learning environments for children and young people, whilst providing the widest opportunities available the authority reserves the right to review schools with fewer than 600 11 - 16 pupils or more than 1500 11 - 16 pupils. Any review of secondary school provision will take into consideration the Learning Pathways available to pupils within the area." The policy then clearly articulates that "Where a secondary school falls below 600 pupils (11 - 16) for three years in succession, the authority reserves the right to review the school."

Comments-

The above paragraph talks about the context of Denbighshire's Modernising Education Policy Framework and specifically highlights "*It is not feasible for a secondary school with fewer than 600 pupils (plus 150 in 6th Form where appropriate) to provide the facilities described in the 21st Century Secondary Schools vision. Therefore the Council accepts that the minimum size for any new secondary school will be a four - form entry school providing 600 11 - 16 places*". Are we talking about the type and standard of education delivered along with the appropriate outcomes or, are we talking about buildings with ICT?

The policy stated is also a policy devised and adopted by Denbighshire CC and within this document, fails to provide any evidence to support such a statement. I therefore request that any such evidence be provided as part of this consultation.

At present there are 8 secondary schools within Denbighshire, with 2 of the 8 schools considered to have a religious character. Both of these schools have at present below 600 pupils.

Blessed Edward Jones is a Catholic School 11 - 16 based in Rhyl. The school is comprehensive and a Voluntary Aided School within the designation of the Diocese of Wrexham. The school in January 2012 served 480 pupils against an overall capacity of 659 places, which equates to a surplus of 27% places.

Comments-

Although Blessed Edward Jones provides an overall capacity of 659 places, it is and continues to fail to attract and retain students. Is this due to the condition of the buildings or as I feel, the standard of education it delivers and the outcomes it achieves? I agree that the standards and outcomes in terms of qualifications are on the increase however, there is a long way to go before it can be compared with St Brigids.

St Brigid's is recognised as a Voluntary Aided Trust School based in Denbigh, which presently serves pupils across the age range of 3 - 19 and includes the provision for boarders. The principal activity of the School is set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Trust Body, being "the advancement of education of children between the ages of 3 and 19 by making provision for a Voluntary - aided Roman Catholic School or School for the education of Roman Catholic Children, either with or without other Christian or non - Christian children." The school as of January 2012 served 374 pupils as an 11 - 18 school against an overall capacity of 344 places, which equates to a deficit of 8.7% places.

Comments-

The capacity of St Brigids stated above has not only been met but further places have been provided, this along with the desire of many parents to send their children here only strengthens the case to provide the opportunity for expansion in the form of new buildings on the current site.

Denbighshire County Council is clearly of the view that there is a need to review the sustainability of both schools to ensure that the provision of faith based secondary education in Denbighshire is secure and can meet the changing needs of the modern curriculum.

Comments-

I agree that there is a need to review the sustainability of both schools in their current form, but do not feel that wiping the slate clean and starting again is the answer. Business Process Re-engineering not only reduces morale, which affects both performance and trust but also fails to learn the lessons from the past. Continuous improvement is seen as progressive, supportive and ensures that all stakeholders can be a part of the process, which will inevitably support the delivery of any change needed. St Brigids can provide those valuable lessons if allowed to do so and my view is that it should be allowed to do so. The loss of the ethos and values of the school would be a loss to the local Community, Wales and the United Kingdom.

The Council considers that there are significant challenges which both schools would need to address to continue to maintain existing provision in the short to medium term should no change occur. In particular the challenges surrounding leadership and management of two small secondary schools, the adequacy of existing facilities to deliver both the existing curriculum and the requirements of the changing curriculum and the financial implications

for both schools as a consequence of their current size should not be underestimated These issues could pose a significant risk for both schools to maintain their existing standards and could undermine future developments.

Comments-

St Brigids has continued to deliver the finest ethos and outstanding results in education with very little support from Denbighshire. Whilst I agree that significant challenges would need to be addressed, I don't feel that these are insurmountable should Denbighshire CC play their role and support the school in a manner ,which hasn't previously been apparent.

3. Options for Change

This initial consultation will provide the opportunity for pupils, parents, governors, staff and the local communities to put forward their views as to what the long term solution should be for faith based secondary provision in Denbighshire.

At present Blessed Edward Jones is the only formally recognised faith secondary school by the Catholic Diocese in Denbighshire. St Brigid's provides faith education in accordance with their articles of association whilst not being formally recognised by the Diocesan authority. The consultation will need to seek views from existing and potential pupils of these schools to understand the impact of any transition from a solely Catholic teaching for existing pupils.

In seeking to move forward there is a need for all parties to consider the wider demand for faith education in the area of North Denbighshire and to understand the views as to the potential impact for both the Church in Wales and Catholic Communities and their family of schools of any proposal for change.

There is also a need to fully understand potential issues around accessibility should the case for change be accepted. In particular the need to consider how provision is accessible to all families that seek a faith - based provision.

The opportunity to potentially strengthen this provision via the inclusion of the Church in Wales diocese in partnership with the Catholic Diocese and St Brigid's Trust could provide a stronger platform for the future provision.

Comments-

The options for change have not really been highlighted by Denbighshire CC in either this document, the summary consultation document or indeed the consultation event held at St Brigids on 10th January 2013. There has been indication of the need for review by a number of inappropriate comments made by members of the panel but as yet, no solid proposal or evidence which would support such a proposal.

The Summary consultation document is leading, biased and would appear to only gather data in line with the requirements of Denbighshire CC's Education Directorate. Although consultation is about seeking the views of all stakeholders, it is also about determining the best route forward which could come from viable alternatives put forward by persons other than members of Denbighshire CC's Education Directorate. These viable alternatives should be allowed to emerge and investigated further to determine their feasibility.

4. How the development of a joint faith ethos will impact on the school

The potential change to a joint Catholic / Church in Wales religious designation will mark a new school strengthened by the experience of the two traditions and of working together with a common vision. This will give breadth to the school's mission. The ethos will be

inclusive of all abilities and require the best outcomes for pupils, aiming to remove any barriers to success. The two faith groups intend to build a strong learning community with Christian values and high aspiration to serve the common good. The ethos will be collaborative and generous in its outreach.

Comments-

The above paragraph makes a number of statements but fails to provide evidence to substantiate such claims. This is not an impact statement but more of a mission statement and I request that any such statements be backed up with evidence.

5. School Performance and the Educational Argument for Change

In terms of assessing the performance and achievements of both schools basic comparisons are difficult. Factors which influence this include the gender difference between the two cohorts, school admissions policies, levels of free school meals take up and pupils with Special Education Needs.

The most recent comparator of the relative performance of both current schools would be the Banding exercise undertaken by the Welsh Government and published in December 2011. This assessment used four groups of data, namely; level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and Mathematics; capped points score; attendance and E/W and mathematics average points scores. Within each data group, relative performance is measured to take account of a selection of actual performance, progress over time and performance relative to context and cohort. This enabled all Secondary Schools to be placed in five bands according to their relative performance, Band 1 schools are those whose data show good overall performance and progress across the measures whilst Band 5 schools are those where performance and progress are weak relative to other schools.

The assessment placed St Brigid's Secondary School as a Band 2 school whilst Blessed Edward Jones Catholic School was placed as a Band 3 school.

Comments-

I would ask the question of the above paragraph with regards to using it as a comparator. I am led to believe that the banding system is based on distance travelled from a pre-assessed point, therefore if you start from a low point and improve, you move up the bands. If however your starting point is quite high, then further improvement is more difficult than if you started from a low point and this would be reflected in the banding given. If this is the case, then using the above stated bands as a comparator is misleading which would then weaken the view that Blessed Edward Jones and St Brigids are similar.

I request clarification on this point.

In respect of comparative performance for 2012 Key Stage 3 Core Subject Indicator, which demonstrates performance against the mixture of core subjects, analysis demonstrates that both schools were categorised as performing in the 1st Quartile. In this measure both schools have demonstrated an improvement in standards.

At Key Stage 4 the trends for the Core Subject Indicator demonstrate the rate of progress by Blessed Edward Jones from 18% in 2010 to 39% for 2012. During the time period there was a minor decline at St Brigid's from 75% in 2010 to 72% in 2012. However the performance for St Brigid's is still above the Denbighshire and Welsh averages.

Comment-

The paragraph above indicates the outstanding performance of St Brigid's and should be promoted. This is one of the main reasons why I chose this school for my children. The same claim cannot be made for any new school in the future

Another form of comparator is the findings of the Inspection Reports by Estyn. However the most recent inspection of both schools were undertaken using different inspection frameworks which impacts on the validity of the findings as a comparator of standards. In addition there have been changes in the leadership and management arrangements at St Brigid's since the last inspection. Inspections of schools are normally undertaken on a six yearly cycle. The last inspection of both Primary and Secondary provision for St Brigid's was undertaken in May 2010 whilst the inspection of Blessed Edward Jones was undertaken in October 2012 was published in early December. A summary of the inspection scores is detailed below whilst the full findings from the inspections can be found on the Estyn website: -

www.estyn.gov.uk

Comments-

The inspection reports by Estyn cannot be claimed as a comparator due to the fact that they were undertaken using different inspection frameworks, a statement made clear above, therefore this information and the figures below are irrelevant within the context of this consultation and should be removed.

A summary of the inspection scores is detailed below.

Key Question	St Brigid's Inspection grade - 2010
1. How well do learners achieve?	3
2. How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	3
3. How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	3
4. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3
5. How effective are leadership and strategic management?	3
6. How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	3
7. How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	3

Key

Grade 1	Good with outstanding features
Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	Good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	Many important shortcomings

Key Question	Blessed Edward Jones Inspection Judgement
1. How good are the outcomes?	Good
2. How good is provision?	Good
3. How good are leadership and management?	Good
The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

Key

Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

To enable existing standards to be maintained and more importantly to be improved the restrictions placed by the learning environment at both schools raise important concerns to be addressed. In many areas whilst the basic learning environment can deliver the traditional curriculum there are significant restrictions for both schools to deliver successfully beyond this. In particular in areas such as Arts and Technology the provision of basic facilities limit the potential for innovative and flexible delivery of the 21st Century curriculum.

School Improvement Officers for Denbighshire County Council are of the view that improved joint working between the two schools would lead to clear education benefits for current and future pupils. These include ensuring the equality of entitlement to faith provision via an inclusive agenda where pupils have equal access to a faith ethos and faith delivery.

Comments-

Joint working between the two schools can be accomplished without the need to knockdown the existing and merge on a new site. Indeed partnership working is already in place at St Brigids in the form of the Dyffryn Clwyd Consortium which offers the availability of further courses and qualifications to improve opportunity post 16. This should be further investigated and learning points highlighted and promoted.

These include: -

- The development of a common leadership and senior and middle management structure across both schools providing increased opportunities for strong leadership, staff development and progression;

Comments-

St Brigids already has a common leadership and management structure in place, which covers the 3-19 school years, in effect two schools.

- Wider opportunities for enhancing the education of the pupils, e.g. joint school projects, shared teaching and develop learning resources;

Comments-

Dyffryn Clwyd Partnership is already an example of such practice.

- Further opportunities to share resources e.g. service providers, joint staff training, themed days, and transport to different venues and events;
- Enhanced staff expertise in specialist areas to enable a broader curriculum to be delivered e.g. Teachers working together to plan, prepare and assess;
- Enhanced opportunities for monitoring teaching across the two sites and for teachers to moderate and level pupil work;
- To more effectively address the statutory requirements of the 14 - 19 Learning and Skills Measure to meet the needs of all pupils.

Comments-

All the above points can be created and sustained without the need to merge schools, disrupt the students and ultimately destroy the ethos of St Brigids.

6. Financial Implications of Change

Any changes to Blessed Edward Jones and St Brigid's will have financial implications for the schools, the diocesan authorities, Denbighshire and the Welsh Government.

Revenue Implications

Any proposals for change will have an impact on how the funding for the schools are calculated. At present funding for all schools is calculated on a formula basis which accounts for pupil numbers, floor space, special education needs of pupils and free school meal entitlement amongst others. These formula elements allow the local authority to allocate a delegated budget in the current financial year and indicative budgets for the 2 following years. Schools are then responsible for developing an expenditure plan.

For the 2011/12 financial year the total delegated budget for Blessed Edward Jones was £2.107m against a net expenditure of £2.163m. This equated to an in year deficit of £55k. For St Brigid's the total delegated budget was £1.512m against a net expenditure of £1.468m, which equated to an in year surplus of £44k. As at the end of the 2011/12 financial year the overall balances for both schools were a net deficit of £169k for Blessed Edward Jones whilst St Brigid's moved from a previous deficit position to an overall surplus of £29k.

Comments-

The net expenditure in 2011/12 for Blessed Edwards Jones was £2.163m, stated above as "*an in year deficit of £55k*", is this a deficit or an overspend? At the end of the financial year this increased to £169k. Where as St Brigids in year net expenditure of £1.468m resulted in an under spend of £44k which changed to an under spend of £29k at the end of the financial year. Under the current financial climate I would say that this is prudent financial management. Your last sentence in the above paragraph states "St Brigid's moved from a previous deficit position to an overall surplus of £29k". This statement doesn't reflect the information provided above which states an "in year surplus of £44k" and is therefore misleading. I would like you to clarify this statement and where necessary correct.

Your comments within Section 2 of this document relate to pupil numbers and that in January 2012, Blessed Edward Jones was 27% below capacity, however even when below capacity, the school still managed an overspend of £169k, whereas St Brigids were 8.7% over capacity but still managed to come in £29k under budget.

The three year expenditure plans suggest that by 2014/15, Blessed Edward Jones would have a small surplus of under £6k whilst St Brigid's surplus would increase to £43k.

In considering the above information, it is also of note that the Council has commenced consultations on a revised Denbighshire Schools Funding Formula which will have implications for both schools.

Comments-

Can you confirm that any inaccuracies above would be noted and included in any revised schools funding formula.

7. Evidence – Condition of Buildings and Sites

As part of the preparations for the 21st Century Schools Programme the Welsh Government commissioned external consultants to undertake school surveys to determine the condition of all schools in Wales. The findings for both Blessed Edward Jones and St Brigids found the schools as Category C – “Poor”.

The suitability of the respective sites can be assessed by comparing the range and size of facilities against the findings of Building Bulletin 98 (BB98), a standard which is used to assess the space requirements for secondary schools.

Overall for the St Brigid’s site it is considered that the buildings are significantly below the areas recommended in BB98. In particular it is considered that many key category areas are significantly underprovided for, including basic teaching areas and halls. At present halls are dramatically underprovided with the single hall which serves all age groups also acting as a gym and sports hall. The current Secondary provision at St Brigid’s is heavily reliant upon the use of mobile accommodation to deliver the curriculum. Approximately half of the capacity of the school is within such temporary facilities.

For Blessed Edward Jones whilst there is more than sufficient site basic teaching areas in terms of space, in contrast the halls are below the recommended area. The main sports field area is detached from the main school site at Ffordd Derwen. These playing fields are approximately half a mile away from the main school campus in Cefndy Road and this separation has an impact for the delivery of this element of the curriculum as a consequence of the time taken for pupils to access this site.

In summary this analysis indicates that neither site in their current form would be considered to meet the standard described within BB98, which forms one of the initial basis for 21st Century Schools schools.

In considering the actual sites the findings from the assessment against BB98 suggest that within their present forms neither site would be considered to be of sufficient size to cater for an increase in pupil numbers to accommodate a secondary school for pupils in the region of 900 pupils in the current foot print of both schools.

Comments-

When did the numbers of 900 pupils come into this consultation? A large proportion of evidence submitted in giving a case for change and the inference of a school merger, is based on the Denbighshire CC’s view that schools below 600 is unsustainable. Increase in pupil numbers and class sizing can have a serious effect on the learning outcomes of the students. This will affect the outcomes in terms of qualifications, standards and values. A vision that I would not support under any terms.

8. Pupil Place Planning

In considering potential options there is a need to assess both previous pupil patterns and potential future pupil numbers.

Table 1 below details the pupil numbers attending Blessed Edward Jones and St Brigids 11 -

16 and 11 - 18 provision over the last 5 years. The post 16 provision at Blessed Edward Jones was closed in September 2010 as part of the proposals developed for the establishment of the Rhyl VI facility for post 16 education in Rhyl. Therefore both the 11 - 16 and 11 - 18 age range has been used in these examples to enable comparisons to be made.

		2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Blessed Edward Jones	11-16	408	408	466	485	480
	11-18	455	463	481	0	0
St Brigids	11-16	281	284	283	281	286
	11-18	351	354	341	353	374
Total	11-16	689	692	749	766	766
Total	11-18	806	817	822	838	854

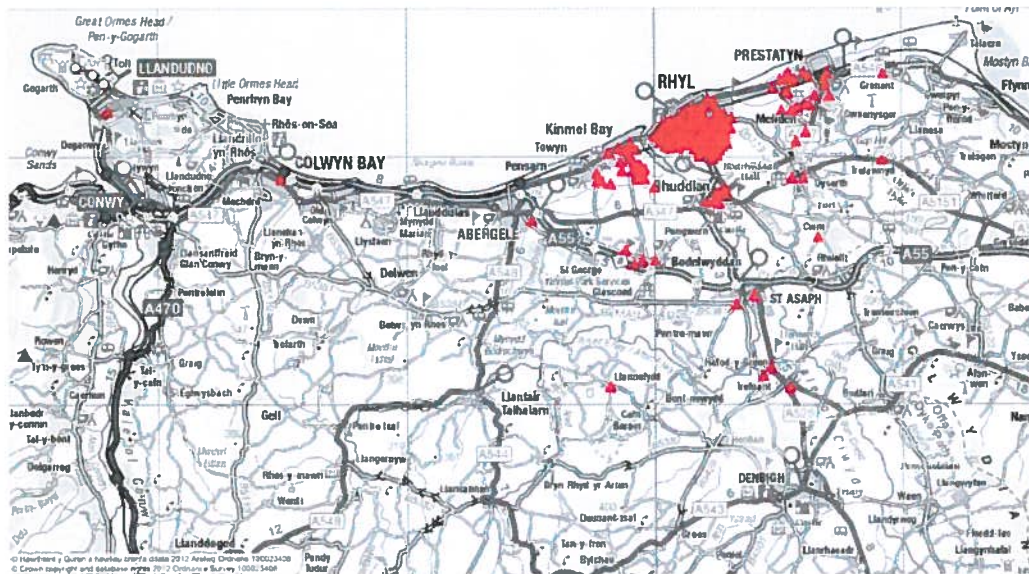
Over the last five years pupil numbers using the 11 - 16 age range as a valid comparator at both sites have increased: 17.6% increase in pupils at Blessed Edward Jones and a minor increase of 0.9% at St Brigid's. In considering pupil numbers at St Brigid's it is acknowledged that the school is presently over - capacity which limits any further growth in pupil numbers without an increase in the size of the school. Over the last 5 years there has been a 25% increase in post 16 students at St Brigid's. As part of the Denbighshire Post 16 Transformation Programme, post 16 provision for St Brigid's students is delivered as part of the wider Dyffryn Clwyd partnership which also includes Ysgol Glan Clwyd, St Asaph; Denbigh High School; and Ysgol Brynhyfryd, Ruthin together with Coleg Llandrillo and Deeside College.

The current capacity of the St Brigid's site is 344 which includes the sixth form provision. The current capacity of the Blessed Edward Jones site is 659. Based on the current capacity assessments there is a surplus of 179 places (which equates to 27%) at Blessed Edward Jones with a deficit of 30 places (which equates to 8.7%) at St Brigid's. On a regular basis St Brigid's has been oversubscribed and has regularly admitted via its admissions procedures in excess of its capacity.

The following maps provides an illustration of the home locations of current pupils for both schools. These maps demonstrate the areas presently served by Blessed Edward Jones and St Brigid's.

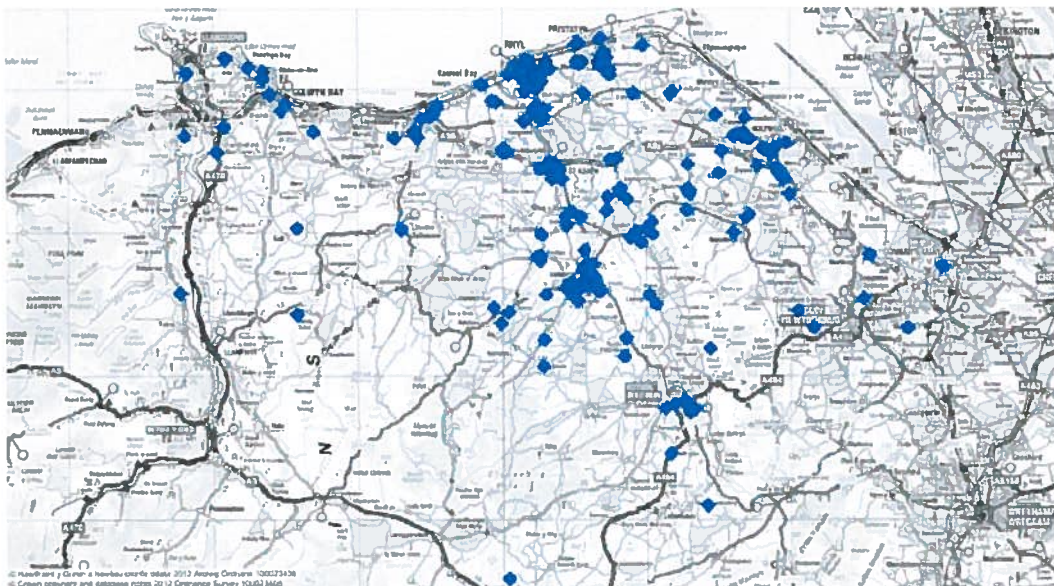
Graddfa/Scale 1: 150000
Dyddiad/Date 10/10/2012

Catchment of Blessed Edward Jones Roman Catholic School



Graddfa/Scale 1: 265000
Dyddiad/Date 10/10/2012

Catchment of St. Brigids School



In respect of future pupil projections it is currently forecast that the numbers attending the respective schools will remain consistent for St Brigid's, due to the limitations on growth as the school is already above its capacity, whilst there will be a decrease for Blessed Edward Jones. The main impact on Blessed Edward Jones at present is the reduced numbers at primary level in the main feeder school Ysgol Mair RC in Rhyl in comparison to previous years.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Blessed Edward Jones 11-16	490	486	433	395	410	394
St Brigids	371	366	362	357	353	350

Comments-

It is clear from the data provided in the maps above that the parents of children attending St Brigids come from across the County and in some cases further, what the data fails to present is the reasons for this. I travel to St Brigids to ensure that my children attend school at a place or my choosing based on the standards of education and values taught. This is my choice but it highlights my commitment to their education. An education, which should not be compromised due to other parents lack of interest. The question needs to be asked of all parents in both schools as to the reasons why they send their children to either school, I will not allow my children's education to be diminished purely because other parents simply want to take the easy option.

9. Impact on 3 - 11 Education / Post 16 Provision

The initial discussions have focussed on 11 - 16 secondary provision. At present St Brigid's is a provider for age ranges 3 – 19, including primary provision (3 - 11) and post 16 provision.

Clearly any proposal which may emerge regarding future Secondary provision will need to give due regard to any implications for primary provision and how post 16 provision for pupils wishing to receive a faith based education.

For Primary provision there is at present a small number of schools who deliver primary faith education. For Catholic provision, Ysgol Mair, presently serves the Rhyl and surrounding area. For the Church in Wales Ysgol Trefnant serves the village of Trefnant and its surrounding area.

An issue for consideration is whether any proposals for change which may emerge should include specific reference as to how Primary education should fit into any proposals.

Similarly there will be a need for discussions on how post 16 provision is delivered. The development of the 14 - 19 network which has enabled an increase in suite of qualifications available to learners under the Learning and Skill Measure, including consortium and partnership working and increase of vocational courses offered with specialist provision required has changed the way this element of education is delivered. The post 16 element of Blessed Edward Jones was closed as of September 2010 with Post 16 provision in the Rhyl area being delivered via the Rhyl and Prestatyn VI. St Brigid's post 16 provision is now delivered as part of the Dyffryn Clwyd partnership with neighbouring Schools and Colleges.

Comments-

The consultation cannot only be looked at with regards to the provision of a secondary school as St Brigids is not just a secondary school. The impact upon all provision at St Brigids needs to be taken into account and I would seek a commitment for this through this consultation.

10. Next Steps

Denbighshire's Cabinet approved this document for initial consultation on the 20th November 2012.

Initial consultation will take place on the options for the way forward.

The initial consultation period runs from 6th December 2012 to the 29th January 2013.

A consultation letter and copies of the consultation documents will be sent to both schools. Summary copies will also be sent to the parents of pupils and members of staff employed at both schools. In addition copies of the documents will be sent to the relevant feeder primary schools together with other schools which may be impacted by the proposals. Also neighbouring authorities, local Councillors, constituency MP's and AM's, local community councils and other interested stakeholders.

Comments-

The summary consultation document bears very little resemblance to this document and therefore the document should have been sent to all stakeholders. The questions contained within that document are leading and controlled which removes the ability of the stakeholder to give their honest and full view. You only appear to be gathering data, albeit in both the qualitative and quantitative forms, which I can only surmise is to support your own evidence, which you have yet to produce.

Questions 1 & 2 are irrelevant for the purpose of this consultation in that anyone with an interest in the school is a stakeholder, not just some who sends their children.

Question 3 asks stakeholders to rank statements, that Denbighshire CC, think influence parents on their choice of secondary education. Denbighshire CC need to ask parent an open question with regards to this and not direct them to the answer. One of the main reasons that I send my children to St Brigids is not on this questionnaire. I chose St Brigids due to its ethos, standards, values and educational outcomes based on both exam results and the complete, well mannered and rounded member of society it produces. The type of young adult I wish my children to become.

Question 4 asks for me to confirm my postcode. This is irrelevant as it is the outcomes as stated above.

Question 7 asks about journey times and what is acceptable, again this is directed and too narrow a question. The time of any journey is relevant not just to distance but also the mode of transport. To qualify this, a 5 mile journey on a bus with several stops will take longer than a direct journey via car. This lends me to presume that the consultation questions on travel, is aimed at getting support from the majority, which in this case reside within the Rhyl area, and possibly reduce support for St Brigids.

Staff meetings will be arranged at each school during the second week of consultation to share information and discuss the consultation.

A general meeting for parents will be arranged at each school in the week commencing 8th January to share information and discuss the consultation.

Sessions will also be held to enable the views of pupils presently attending both schools to be conveyed.

Local community councils and other stakeholder groups will be encouraged to respond to the emerging issues during the initial consultation period.

Following the end of the consultation period on the 29th January 2013 all views will be collated and considered by all parties in the decision making process including the Roman Catholic Diocesan Authority, the Church in Wales Diocesan Authority, St Brigid's Trust and

Denbighshire's Cabinet.

It is anticipated that any decision on a preferred option would be undertaken in March 2013. Dependent upon what the preferred option was at this stage further extensive consultation would occur on the preferred option.

Please return your comments no later than the
29th January 2013 to: -

Modernising Education Programme Team, Customers and Education Support,
Denbighshire County Council,
County Hall, Wynnstay Road, Ruthin LL15 1YN

You can also email: modernisingeducation@denbighshire.gov.uk

Further Comments-

I am opposed to the closure of St Brigids and the proposal of a merge with Blessed Edward Jones as I feel that the standards, ethos, values and success that St Brigids achieve is second to none. Innovation and modernization can be achieved without radical moves such as what is proposed and this will allow a successful past to be built upon.

Plans have been submitted in the past which could be revised in line with the requirements of the 21st Century Schools program and provide opportunities for more young people of Denbighshire and Wales. These options should be explored with the support of Denbighshire CC, and it must be noted that good ideas are not purely the domain of the professional advisor with Denbighshire CC.



Dear Sir or Madam,

Consultation Paper – Case for Change

Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire

Request for Extension of time and request or further information

I am writing with regard to your consultation process for the creation of an all faith based school in the Denbighshire area, and with specific interest in the St Brigids and Blessed St Edwards schools.

The objective of this letter is to elicit further information from you pertaining to the proposals in order that the consultation can be conducted transparently, fairly and effectively.

1. I would request that the period of the consultation be extended from the current expiry date of 29th January 2012 to 31st March 2012, this is mandatory given that a large part of the period originally allowed for consultation ran across the Christmas period when parents have extensive commitments preparing for their children's Christmas, dealing with work issues prior to holidays and in celebrating the Christmas period with children, friends and relatives.

The process of consultation requires the ability to ask questions, seek information, absorb responses and make further clarification or points. With half of the consultation period taken over by the preparations for and celebration of the religious holidays this leaves little time for this process to operate fairly for busy parents.

At the council meeting where the proposal were approved the extension possibilities were discussed and the council committee agreed and accepted that they would be sympathetic to an extension for these reasons.

2. In the policy documents provided the statement is made that "It is not feasible for a secondary school with fewer than 600 pupils (plus 150 in 6th Form where appropriate) to provide the facilities described in this vision". When reading the 21st Century Schools Programme vision there is no comment on school size made in this document, and no obvious reference to any other document where justification of this can be found. In "Policy 2: Models for Secondary School Organisation" there is reference to 16+ class sizes but no reference to any documents justifying the policy. Both Blessed Edwards and St Brigids fail this 600 pupil policy and as the proposals hinge partly upon this policy the Authority should provide parents with an adequate justification for the policy. Aligned to my requirement for a transparency of financial analysis (see 4 below) I would like to understand the full justification for this policy and why a group of small schools cannot be managed effectively from a financial perspective. Clearly St Brigids is viable as it produces excellent results, and Blessed Edwards has been improving – so educationally they are clearly viable.

3. In the “Review of Provision” section of the proposals reference is made to “school buildings and facilities are inspirational learning environments that meet the needs of 21st Century Wales”. Throughout this section there is an implied view that aspects of 21st century education cannot be effectively provided in the current environments and buildings. Examples given are developments in ICT, whiteboards and wireless technology. I have to say I fail to see why this is not technically possible in existing environments. From my own professional background in IT Redaction I have seen many national trust and other protected old buildings more than adequately ICT enabled.

I would therefore request that the authority publish an analysis of each of the requirements and features of 21st Century education (identifying the mandatory or desirable designation of them and the source of this designation) mapped to St Brigids and Blessed Edwards to understand what analysis has been done to test if and how these schools could meet the requirements.

4. My next request is for the publication of more detailed financial and business case information regarding the costing/funding for the new school proposals and the existing costing/funding of the existing schools. There is very little financial information provided on which to assess the proposals and a consultation cannot be considered to be fair without this data.

As a minimum I would expect to see an analysis showing the current and predicted costs for each of the St. Brigids and Blessed Edwards schools showing a high level breakdown including such things as building, staff, utilities etc. set against the funding sources for each of the schools. We should then be shown the similar costing plans for the new school.

This analysis should also contain a review of the aspects of 21st Century education (referred to above) and the method and cost approximation for providing these at the existing sites.

This is particularly important for all stakeholders to be able to assess the “delta” that exists in costing and funding of the current and new proposals set against educational environments.

It is my assumption that the authority has created a business case with a financial model and it seems only reasonable that this be shared with the all parties. If it has not built such a case it seems incorrect to proceed with the consultation proposal without first producing such an analysis?

5. As part of the consultation documents at School Performance and the Educational Argument for Change you have provided a comparison of the performance of Blessed Edwards and St Brigids. The Banding methodology provided seems to show that there is little between the two schools. More detailed information is required on the source data that makes up this banding calculation and in particular grading achievements of the two schools at key stages and for and for in key subjects at key levels e.g. GCE English and Maths, Science etc.

6. Next I would request that the authority should also be transparent about the plans for the sites of the existing schools in the event that a new school is built. Does the authority have plans to sell or use the current school sites and what considerations have been made in this instance? I understand the St. Brigids site can be “used” for education purposes only, and therefore if selling the site for other purposes (e.g. housing development) and using the proceeds to fund the new school directly or indirectly would be in accordance with the terms of St. Brigids site the authorities considerations in this area should be made plain, similarly for Blessed Edwards. Additionally the Authority must have sites in mind for the proposed new school, what are they?

7. St Brigids provides continuous education from pre-reception classes through to 'A' levels. What provision and considerations have the authority made with regards to the primary and 'A' level provision at St Brigids should the 11-16 pupils be housed at a different school on a different site? One of the factors in the success of St Brigids in the quality of its results and the pupils it produces is the continuity of the education. In proposing to divide this up what is the authority proposing to do with the balance of the pupils and how does the authority see its proposals compensating in the quality of education and schools community that will be lost.

I look forward to your prompt written response to my requests.

Yours Sincerely

Redaction



53

FAO Modernising Education Team,
Derbighshire County Council

RE: Joint Faith Based Provision In Derbighshire
Consultation - Request for Extension
OF Consultation Period.



Re: Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire Consultation.

53

I am writing to state serious reservations around the above consultation with a view to seeking a meaningful extension of the initial consultation deadline of 29th January 2013. The grounds for this are below.

The Issue: The Case for Change document clearly states that there are two means by which parents and stakeholders can submit their views to the consultation: the public meeting of the 10/1/2013 and the form contained within the said document. During the public meeting at St. Brigid's school on 10/1/2013 an objection was raised about the leading nature of the questions on the consultation form and their limited scope in terms of the stated consultation objective of capturing stakeholder views. The point being, the form lends itself to capturing a partial view which is biased towards what Denbighshire County Council would like to capture or had thought of capturing, as opposed to what stakeholders actually think and feel. In response to this a Denbighshire County Council official said that it was a "fair criticism" and suggested that parents and stakeholders should submit their views beyond what the form prescribes as additional sheets.

I also have concerns about the quality of the consultation with regard to the information provided as its basis; namely what is being consulted on. For example some information suffered serious omissions when presented during the public meeting. An instance of this was the assertion that two merging schools were banded as 2 and the claim by the official that this was proof of their equivalence. What was omitted was that these bandings are relative measures that do not quantify absolute benchmarks of quality/performance, rather relative rates of improvement. Other rather dubious "facts" that were presented as objective truths rather than justifications from a certain

53

perspective were glossed over with ill-defined terms such as “sustainability” and “transformational”. These shortcomings have left stakeholders with a significant amount of additional work to do to formulate adequate responses to this consultation.

Objections:

- The form for the consultation lends itself to bias, this much has been acknowledged in front of a room full of stakeholders. This means all forms submitted prior to the meeting of the 10th January have not only not had the opportunity to submit supplementary views/information, but have been potentially biased by the leading/limiting nature of the form. A true reflection of stakeholder views could be prejudiced by this fact.
- While the remedy to this is the option to submit supplementary information with the form, only stakeholders who attended the meeting of 10/1/13 were told about this option. It is unclear whether this advice was repeated at other meetings and there has been no formal contact to stakeholders that this option is available to them.
- The fact that the supplementary option only emerged at the meeting of the 10th of January, effectively means that rather than the consultation running from 6/12/2012 – to 29/1/2013, at least a part of it, this new part, is running from 10/1/2013 – 29/1/2013. This is not enough time to organise a proper response to this additional need, and it falls significantly short even when measured Denbighshire County Council’s normal consultation period. Coupled with the additional burden placed on stakeholders to make sense of the patchy information and claims made about “The Need for Change” and come up with an adequate response; the available time is simply not sufficient.

The Solution:

To ensure this part of the consultation is fair, is not subject to further challenge and does not prejudice either the chances of being heard, the quality of the submitted data due to the potential biases introduced by the consultation process itself or does not prejudice the ability of people to formulate adequate responses I request that:

1. The deadline of 29/1/2013 is extended to accommodate the new option of submitting supplementary information and formulate an adequate response to the information that has been put out in and around the consultation by Denbighshire County Council . This extension needs to be meaningful and in the order of weeks to accommodate the time already lost by the 10/1/2013.
2. All stakeholders are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed about this new option to submit additional information with their forms.

53

3. All stakeholders who have already submitted forms are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed that they can submit information which is additional to their forms.

Yours faithfully,

Redaction

Redaction

Redaction

19/01/2013

From :

REDACTION

18/11/2012 12:52

Dear Sir / Madam

Having seen your proposals I am stunned at the short sighted vision from Denbighshire.

St Brigid's is a successful school loved and admired by parents, pupils, staff and the wider community.

Granted the buildings are in a poor state of repair due to a lack of funding by the local authority. However despite this the school produces pupils who achieve results above their target levels, are mature and will be of benefit to society and the wider community. Please note the level of teenage pregnancies, bullying and other anti social behaviour issues that arise from pupils past and present of the school.

The school has extensive waiting lists from parents who share my hopes and aspirations for their children and a belief in the school.

In England such schools are lauded and held up as a shining example. In Denbighshire the Local Authority chooses to propose to close the school to ensure that all children have a below standard education and that they have low aspirations for their future and will ultimately be a drain on the wider society.

I am staggered that a school who takes a child from the travelling community into its Junior School and produces a young lady who has been accepted into Oxford University is considered for closure. By any measure this must surely be regarded as a success - The national press obviously considers it to be so.

With regards to the alleged 'selection' of St Brigid's pupils half of which are not selected as they automatically pass from Junior into senior school including those who are stated as special needs. The other half are expected to have achieved the average level for children age 11 - questions should be asked as to why so many of Denbighshires junior school pupils are failing to reach this standard set by the Welsh Government.

I cannot understand why St Brigid's is not seen as a model of successful education practise - 3 to 19 is an innovative model and obviously works. Therefore my view is that the plan should be to extend the number of children who have such an option available, the new school should be a larger St Brigid's and retain the St Brigid's successful brand and ethos.

It should also be noted that in my children's classes there have been a number of children admitted as a result of bullying and intimidation behaviours in other Denbighshire schools.

I would ask that Denbighshire considers my views and that of other parents and makes the only sensible choice of retaining St Brigid's.

I understand that the school is the lowest funded in Wales yet continues by your figures to balance its budget and still provide an excellent education.

I will personally strongly resist any moves to close a school which has provided an excellent education for my children, as well as a caring environment which encourages the development of the individual.

I would also state that the location is beautiful, away from pollution and provides food for the soul. It is inspiration for the holistic development of the individual.

On a wider agenda the maintenance of a boarding facility is also a great asset as it provides high quality childcare facilities, for parents who are in the armed forces, children from single parents and caring facilities when parents are sick. In an age where the Governments agenda is to encourage more territorial army members this provides a welcome safety net that if parents are called away on active service their children are cared for at home.

I have copied other parents in in order that they can see my personal comments and can add their own comments.

Parents - please send your views to Jackie Walley(proposer of the plan) and modernising education @denbighshire.gov.uk (email addresses at the top of this email) - as they are very interested in your views. Please feel free to circulate to other St Brigid's parents who may also wish to share their views and opinions.

Regards

REDACTION

57

From :

REDACTION

12/12/2012 11:03

To the local councillors, Local authority, community councils, MP's and AM's, Denbigh Free Press & the Daily Post

I am writing to you as a concerned parent and teacher at St. Brigids School in Denbigh.

I have read both the documents you have sent me as a parent and teacher and must state my huge opposition to any proposed changes.

I have taken some parts of the doc you have sent me and have expressed next to it - my specific concern.

I have also decided to write this email anonymously for fear of reprisals.

Firstly i would like to take issue with the document sent to teachers:

My first question is to ask - what is the definition of consultation? the dictionary states "to seek advice or information from; ask guidance from" as well as "to have regard for (a person's interest, convenience, etc.) in making plans".

However, my concern is that this is not a consultation. I have heard from reliable sources and fear that DCC is simply paying lip service to the 'decision' in March and that the decision has already been made.

If this is not the case, then DCC will have no issue making the decision meeting a public one, allowing the results of the consultation be published? (ie- how many are for/against the proposals)

Next i would like to take issue with the document itself:

With it comes the desire to offer the highest

standards of education and to ensure good outcomes for all young people in Wales. (page 2)

This is simply not what will happen. the merger of a good school with excellent GCSE results with a poor school - will not as you hope bring up the lower end. All that will happen is that the lower end will pull the top down. That is not good outcomes for our pupils. My Children included.

Also on page two you state:

a real need for further educational provision in the north Denbighshire area

Again you are incorrect. This is nothing but biased propoganda. Where is the need for real change when the parents, teachers, community and most importantly the students love the existing school and site as it is. This document is far too one sided and i would suggest that the person who wrote it is clearly bias.

Page 3 you state:

we have to change

the widest oppportunities available to them and are able to reach their full potential.

Why do you need to change a successful school? that simply makes no sense.

The oppportunities here a plentiful. The pupils have a vast amount of GCSE's available, many continue these with excellent oppportunities in A Level. This has clearly helped pupils reach their potential as a huge number have gone to university, including Oxbridge. This is the education they receive in a caring community school.

Where i agree on is the need to change the school buildings. Yes the mobiles here cannot last forever. However, I believe that the money it costs to hold a consultation, purchase the land and build the school could be dramatically reduced by improve our and Blessed Edward Jones existing sites.

Your incorrect and inaccurate information continues on the lower side of page 3:

The Welsh Government have made it clear that local authorities will not be able to attract capital funding unless the issue of empty places is dealt with.

This school is not empty. We infact are above the number we are said to be able to deal with. All that this consultation is doing is harming our numbers for September 2013. Parents will not bring their pupils here as they fear closure. This highlights an underlying issue that many parents will simply withdraw thier children from any future school taking them elsewhere. Perhaps thats what DCC wants. Brigids out of the way with other schools growing in capacity?

Page 4 is simply the biggest pile of propoganda and lies i have ever read.

The policy considers that "It is not feasible for a secondary school with fewer than 600 pupils (plus 150 in 6th Form where appropriate) to provide the facilities described in the 21 Century Secondary Schools vision. Therefore the Council accepts that the minimum size for any new secondary school will be a four form entry school providing 600 11-16 places Concerningly this sounds like your minds are mind up. You say it is not feasible for less than 600 pupils. Why? We are not broke. Why is there a need to fix us ?

You always mention that any new school will be for 11-16. What about the successful Primary School and Sixth form?

Any review of secondary school provision will take into consideration the Learning Pathways available to pupils within the area.

As previously discussed. There are huge amounts of pathways available. Moreover, school is not just about learning. Parents sent pupils here for the community spirit and caring environment, only a small 3 - 18 school can provide!

Blessed Edward Jones - January 2012 served 480 pupils against an overall capacity of 659 places

You have to ask why? 169 extra spaces. We however, have capacity for 344 with 374 pupils here - over by 30. Again. Please think and ask yourselves why that is.

A further problem arises from these numbers. If you add together Blessed Ed Jones numbers 480, with our 11-16 numbers, 286, it equals 766 pupils. That would mean 766 pupils in total. This will not fit your 600 pupils number and therefore, before the school is even built, you are excluding 166 pupils - hardly 21st Century inclusion? Clearly a warm welcome to some of us.

Lastly on your most horrendous page of blatant lies and propaganda is:

The Council considers that there are significant challenges which both schools would need to address to continue to maintain existing provision in the short to medium term should no change occur. In particular the challenges surrounding leadership and management of two small secondary schools, the adequacy of existing facilities to deliver both the existing curriculum and the requirements of the changing curriculum and the financial implications for both schools as a consequence of their current size should not be underestimated.

Firstly, we have a new head. She should be given a chance to work her magic here and see what she can do..otherwise, what was the point of hiring her and paying her a salary, with the costs of advertisement? Hardly making sound financial calculations?

Secondly, you say it all. "Financial Implications". So that's what this is all about...Money. Your claim it's about provision, inclusion and pathways is a lie. It's just about money. Finally, your choice of words..."consequence should not be underestimated"...sounds incredibly threatening. Once again, I asked. Is this a consultation or lip service?

Page 5:

You start by talking of Pupils, parents, governors and staff. The majority of these stakeholders, in BOTH schools are against this. Last time I checked we lived in a democracy. I sincerely hope you follow democratic law and follow the word of the people. Will all of our views really be listened to? Can we have your word on this?

Page 6:

You attempt to make some comparisons between the school to show common ground. However, here you contradict yourself:

However the most recent inspection of both schools were undertaken using different inspection frameworks which impacts on the validity of the findings as a comparator of standards.

Therefore the information you use is irrelevant? Whats more you discuss St Brigids as a school that out performs the Denbigh and Welsh averages in GCSE performance. We are well above that. Why on earth would you want to change this? Why on earth would you then try and mix us with a school that gains 39%? well below the national and Welsh average? it makes no sense.

Whats more our next Estyn inspection is not due until 2016. Why not see how that goes before making your minds up?

Page 8:

You discuss your inclusive agenda. You describe your ideas in bullet form. However, what you don't say is that all of those ideas CAN be done WITHOUT a merger. You can just improve each site - can't you?

For the 2011/12 financial year the total delegated budget for Blessed Edward Jones was £2.107m against a net expenditure of £2.163m. This equated to an in year deficit of £55k. For St Brigid's the total delegated budget was £1.512m against a net expenditure of £1.468m, which equated to an in year surplus of £44k.

Based on the above I wanted to confirm. You wish to merge a school who makes a loss, with a school that is financially prudent? Why should we be punished for balancing the books? Moreover, assuming you push for this merger, can you tell me what the proposed budget would be? 3.575 million is the two together? Or...as I believe it would be - will it be less? Again suggesting this is a financial exercise not one focused on the education & prospects of pupils.

Page 9:

The findings for both Blessed Edward Jones and St Brigids found the schools as Category C – "Poor".

We all accept the building is not perfect. But...the pupils are safe and happy here. Isn't that the point? Have you spoken to them? These are the people that really matter. I have a form in the school, of which 24 out of 28 suggested they would not go to any new school. Why build a school that pupils won't attend?

My two final points focus on the map (page 11) and your final points. On page 11 you illustrate the home locations of our pupils. This is written negatively. However, how can this be? It proves pupils come far and wide to join our family. We have an excellent reputation with great results. This is why my children come here!

Lastly I would like to state what is the balance. The balance between what the council wants versus what the staff, pupils, Parents, governors, trustees & community wants.

I hope you listen carefully to our opinions. We will not allow this to happen and will not go away quietly.

Many thanks for your time.

A VERY concerned Parent and Teacher.

From

REDACTION

17/12/2012 10:19

To whom it may concern

Firstly let me thank the Daily Post & others of you for replying and for publishing some of my comments. I look forward to a response from DCC (i also look forward to them publishing all comments from involved parties regarding any merger!).

I have also included Mr Leighton Andrews in these discussions - so he knows from the very beginning, the strength of feeling against any proposed merger. Indeed I would like to extend an invitation to him to come and visit the school and talk to the pupils - for whom DCC claims any merger is being sort for.

I have also decided to contact you following a meeting with DCC, the staff of St Brigids and the staff of Blessed Edward Jones.

The meeting was nothing by political propaganda with no 'real' 'straight' answers given.

Let me give you an example:

A colleague asked:

"You mention lots about opportunity and views. Should the students of both schools, the parents of both schools, the governors of both schools and the staff of both schools, put their views forward and reject this opportunity, will DCC still continue with plans for a merger?"

The colleague in question asked for a straight answer. What he got was "maybe".

I have mentioned it before and will again - this is proof that any consultation is simply lip service - not a decision based on fair balanced viewpoints.

I can emphasize the DCC's comments. They spoke a great deal about Views and opportunity. However, why do we need an opportunity to improve an already good school? Again, I ask the people who will make these decisions to speak to those who matter - the pupils.

Frankly, the entire discussion was nothing but superlatives - many that were contradictory. "we know St Brigids is a good school with excellent results and a close knit family feel". "However, it is not fit for purpose".

Pardon me? i thought a school's purpose was to educate - and allow children to feel safe, developing into the adults that Wales needs in the future?

One comment that was interesting was the fact that DCC is bidding for £29 million in order to help faith provision. They state this money belongs to the Welsh Government , but that this funding cannot be split to help both schools (14.5million each). Is this actually correct? can someone check? if it is correct - why?

Another word used a great deal was sustainability. We have a growing school - surely we are that! One would also argue that spening £29 million on a new school that WILL BE half

empty - is not sustainable. Do the people of Denbigh believe that this is the best way to spend £29million? I would argue they did not!

Another of DCC's buzz words were transformational. Well here is a different proposal. Transform all schools in Wales to fit our already successful model. We exist as a 3-19 school - i beleive the only one of its kind in Wales. We have above average GCSE & A Level results - does this not tell the decision makers something? We are also a school where children feel genuinely cared for. One where they feel they can be themselves free from the pressures other teenagers have placed one them - whether that is smoking, alcohol, drugs or sex. Our pupils enjoy their childhoods.

We are unique. We are sustainable. We are successful.

AND....we will not go away.

We will fight for this school. We believe in this school. We know others do too.

Thank you.

REDACTION

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

From :

REDACTION

14/01/2013 21:26

To whom it may concern

I write once again regarding the proposed merger of St Brigids and Blessed Edward Jones.

Today St. Brigids was visited by Redaction

The pupils were told that they were to speak to their form to have a representation of the pupils views on the merger.

However, the questions they were asked and the way they were asked, show this 'consultation' is as previously said, is nothing more than lip service - a decision already made - democracy indeed!

Students were not asked what they thought on a merger. They were asked what they wanted (and I quote), the new school to look like and where the new school should be.

This is not what parents and teachers were told the first stage of consultation should be about. We have been told no decisions have been made. Why are they prompting students? This is bullying at the worst kind - bullying so that they can tick a box - disgusting.

It is clear that DCC and telling parents one thing. Teachers another. Parents a whole different story and governors another.

How can we trust you?

I urge you to stay clear and open and honest. Only then can we really see what is happening.

once again I have included the local MP's, AMs and press in the hope they can help stop a terrible decision to close a successful school.

When will DCC learn?

the truth will always out.

Yours

Against the Merger

From :

REDACTION

16/01/2013 13:42

Thank you James for your reply

i will review the content in detail later as i am at work today.

the link

<http://mgintranet/Data/County%20Council/20090120/Agenda/cl200109pt1E.pdf>

doesn't seem to work and i note the url refers to an intranet - would i be able to access an intranet?

At the Parents meeting on 10th January i met with the Director of Education and Jackie Whalley for a short chat afterwards

They both offered to meet with me F2F (and/or with a small group of parents) for further detailed discussion. My emphasis is on understanding facts and details. I would be very grateful if you would put me in direct contact with them to arrange this. My mobile number is given below.

Further the slides that were shown at the event last week would be very useful to have as I try to prepare my views for your consultation. i would also like to see a copy of the proposals (and the terms of it) that were put to the WA for the 28.8m faith school and the response and the terms of the "grant"., or whatever it might be called at this stage.

It was stated at the meeting that there was no definition of "transformation" - i must admit i find it rather amazing to find that such a large amount of taxpayers money can be riding on proposals that have to be transformational and yet those submitting the proposals and those judging on it have no terms of reference in writing to turn to to adjudicate on its merits. Please provide whatever detailed information and guidance you or the WA have in this area. There were similar comments on 21st century education made to me afterwards and your letter below on first read doesn't seem to answer the question i asked - what does 21st century education mean - What is the detailed list of its content and what do current schools need to do to comply. The statement made to me last week was that I would need to be taken to a school to comprehend this, why isnt it written down and why cant parents see this?

Reference was made at the school meeting to a curriculum of 30 subjects that a 21st century school needs to provide - what are the subjects, how does a child achieve a grade (eg exams/coursework etc) which ones of these count toward the statistics of % of 5 GCSE passes? Please provide the information by return email.

I appreciate that you do not want to commit to an extension now. you perhaps feel we may be using delaying tactics - this possibility was even referred to by the presenters last week. It seems to me that as new information was presented to us last Thursday - the slide content, the information on the 28.8m investment from the WA etc- we need to be able to assess this information in detail, seek clarification and then provide our considered views. This is not possible or fair in 15 days. Waiting until the last day of the consultation for DCC to sit in judgement on the merits of an extension suggest to me that DCC and the faith leadership are railroading through the consultation period without allowing parents to see detailed information, properly assess it, critique it, and use it in our response to the consultation.

I once again urge that you extend the period of the consultation in order to allow parents proper access to the same information that you and the Faith leadership have, so we can properly provide our views, having had time to consider the facts.

best regards and looking forward to meeting Jackie et al

REDACTION

REDACTION

63

From :

REDACTION

18/01/2013 16:40

Re: Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire Consultation.

I am writing to state serious reservations around the above consultation with a view to seeking a meaningful extension of the initial consultation deadline of 29th January 2013. The grounds for this are below.

The Issue: The Case for Change document clearly states that there are two means by which parents and stakeholders can submit their views to the consultation: the public meeting of the 10/1/2013 and the form contained within the said document. During the public meeting at St. Brigid's school on 10/1/2013 an objection was raised about the leading nature of the questions on the consultation form and their limited scope in terms of the stated consultation objective of capturing stakeholder views. The point being, the form lends itself to capturing a partial view which is biased towards what Denbighshire County Council would like to capture or had thought of capturing, as opposed to what stakeholders actually think and feel. In response to this a Denbighshire County Council official said that it was a "fair criticism" and suggested that parents and stakeholders should submit their views beyond what the form prescribes as additional sheets.

I also have concerns about the quality of the consultation with regard to the information provided as its basis; namely what is being consulted on. For example some information suffered serious omissions when presented during the public meeting. An instance of this was the assertion that two merging schools were banded as 2 and the claim by the official that this was proof of their equivalence. What was omitted was that these bandings are relative measures that do not quantify absolute benchmarks of quality/performance, rather relative rates of improvement. Other rather dubious "facts" that were presented as objective truths rather than justifications from a certain perspective were glossed over with ill-defined terms such as "sustainability" and "transformational". These shortcomings have left stakeholders with a significant amount of additional work to do to formulate adequate responses to this consultation.

Objections:

- The form for the consultation lends itself to bias, this much has been acknowledged in front of a room full of stakeholders. This means all forms submitted prior to the meeting of the 10th January have not only not had the opportunity to submit supplementary views/information, but have been potentially biased by the leading/limiting nature of the form. A true reflection of stakeholder views could be prejudiced by this fact.

- While the remedy to this is the option to submit supplementary information with the form, only stakeholders who attended the meeting of 10/12/13 were told about this option. It is unclear whether this advice was repeated at other meetings and there has been no formal contact to stakeholders that this option is available to them.

. The fact that the supplementary option only emerged at the meeting of the 10th of January, effectively means that rather than the consultation running from 6/12/2012 – to 29/1/2013, at least a part of it, this new part, is running from 10/1/2013 – 29/1/2013. This is not enough time to organise a proper response to this additional need, and it falls significantly short even when measured Denbighshire County Council's normal consultation period. Coupled with the additional burden placed on stakeholders to make sense of the patchy information and claims made about "The Need for Change" and come up with an adequate response; the available time is simply not sufficient.

The Solution: to ensure this part of the consultation is fair, is not subject to further challenge and does not prejudice either the chances of being heard, the quality of the submitted data due to the potential biases introduced by the consultation process itself or does not prejudice the ability of people to formulate adequate responses I request that:

1. The deadline of 29/1/2013 is extended to accommodate the new option of submitting supplementary information and formulate an adequate response to the information that has been put out in and around the consultation by Denbighshire County Council . This extension needs to be meaningful and in the order of weeks to accommodate the time already lost by the 10/1/2013.
2. All stakeholders are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed about this new option to submit additional information with their forms.
3. All stakeholders who have already submitted forms are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed that they can submit information which is additional to their forms.

Regards

REDACTION
Parent of child at St Brigid's

REDACTION
[Redacted text block containing multiple lines of obscured content]

REDACTION

REDACTION

REDACTION

From:
REDACTION
23/01/2013 12:35

Dear Sir / Madam,
I am writing to state serious reservations around the above consultation with a view to seeking a meaningful extension of the initial consultation deadline of 29th January 2013. The grounds for this are below.

The Issue: The Case for Change document clearly states that there are two means by which parents and stakeholders can submit their views to the consultation: the public meeting of the 10/1/2013 and the form contained within the said document. During the public meeting at St. Brigid's school on 10/1/2013 an objection was raised about the leading nature of the questions on the consultation form and their limited scope in terms of the stated consultation objective of capturing stakeholder views. The point being, the form lends itself to capturing a partial view which is biased towards what Denbighshire County Council would like to capture or had thought of capturing, as opposed to what stakeholders actually think and feel. In response to this a Denbighshire County Council official said that it was a "fair criticism" and suggested that parents and stakeholders should submit their views beyond what the form prescribes as additional sheets.

I also have concerns about the quality of the consultation with regard to the information provided as its basis; namely what is being consulted on. For example some information suffered serious omissions when presented during the public meeting. An instance of this was the assertion that two merging schools were banded as 2 and the claim by the official that this was proof of their equivalence. What was omitted was that these bandings are relative measures that do not quantify absolute benchmarks of quality/performance, rather relative rates of improvement. Other rather dubious "facts" that were presented as objective truths rather than justifications from a certain perspective were glossed over with ill-defined terms such as "sustainability" and "transformational". These shortcomings have left

stakeholders with a significant amount of additional work to do to formulate adequate responses to this consultation.

Objections:

·The form for the consultation lends itself to bias, this much has been acknowledged in front of a room full of stakeholders. This means all forms submitted prior to the meeting of the 10th January have not only not had the opportunity to submit supplementary views/information, but have been potentially biased by the leading/limiting nature of the form. A true reflection of stakeholder views could be prejudiced by this fact.

·While the remedy to this is the option to submit supplementary information with the form, only stakeholders who attended the meeting of 10/1/13 were told about this option. It is unclear whether this advice was repeated at other meetings and there has been no formal contact to stakeholders that this option is available to them.

·The fact that the supplementary option only emerged at the meeting of the 10th of January, effectively means that rather than the consultation running from 6/12/2012 – to 29/1/2013, at least a part of it, this new part, is running from 10/1/2013 – 29/1/2013. This is not enough time to organise a proper response to this additional need, and it falls significantly short even when measured Denbighshire County Council's normal consultation period. Coupled with the additional burden placed on stakeholders to make sense of the patchy information and claims made about "The Need for Change" and come up with an adequate response; the available time is simply not sufficient.

The Solution:

To ensure this part of the consultation is fair, is not subject to further challenge and does not prejudice either the chances of being heard, the quality of the submitted data due to the potential biases introduced by the consultation process itself or does not prejudice the ability of people to formulate adequate responses I request that:

1.The deadline of 29/1/2013 is extended to accommodate the new option of submitting supplementary information and formulate an adequate response to the information that has been put out in and around the consultation by Denbighshire County Council . This extension needs to be meaningful and in the order of weeks to accommodate the time already lost by the 10/1/2013.

2.All stakeholders are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed about this new option to submit additional information with their forms.

3.All stakeholders who have already submitted forms are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed that they can submit information which is additional to their forms.

Regards

REDACTION

88

From :

REDACTION

23/01/2013 12:50

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to state serious reservations around the above consultation with a view to seeking a meaningful extension of the initial consultation deadline of 29th January 2013. The grounds for this are below.

The Issue: The Case for Change document clearly states that there are two means by which parents and stakeholders can submit their views to the consultation: the public meeting of the 10/1/2013 and the form contained within the said document. During the public meeting at

St. Brigid's school on 10/1/2013 an objection was raised about the leading nature of the questions on the consultation form and their limited scope in terms of the stated consultation objective of capturing stakeholder views. The point being, the form lends itself to capturing a partial view which is biased towards what Denbighshire County Council would like to capture or had thought of capturing, as opposed to what stakeholders actually think and feel. In response to this a Denbighshire County Council official said that it was a "fair criticism" and suggested that parents and stakeholders should submit their views beyond what the form prescribes as additional sheets.

I also have concerns about the quality of the consultation with regard to the information provided as its basis; namely what is being consulted on. For example some information suffered serious omissions when presented during the public meeting. An instance of this was the assertion that two merging schools were banded as 2 and the claim by the official that this was proof of their equivalence. What was omitted was that these bandings are relative measures that do not quantify absolute benchmarks of quality/performance, rather relative rates of improvement. Other rather dubious "facts" that were presented as objective truths rather than justifications from a certain perspective were glossed over with ill-defined terms such as "sustainability" and "transformational". These shortcomings have left stakeholders with a significant amount of additional work to do to formulate adequate responses to this consultation.

Objections:

·The form for the consultation lends itself to bias, this much has been acknowledged in front of a room full of stakeholders. This means all forms submitted prior to the meeting of the 10th January have not only not had the opportunity to submit supplementary views/information, but have been potentially biased by the leading/limiting nature of the form. A true reflection of stakeholder views could be prejudiced by this fact.

·While the remedy to this is the option to submit supplementary information with the form, only stakeholders who attended the meeting of 10/1/13 were told about this option. It is unclear whether this advice was repeated at other meetings and there has been no formal contact to stakeholders that this option is available to them.

·The fact that the supplementary option only emerged at the meeting of the 10th of January, effectively means that rather than the consultation running from 6/12/2012 – to 29/1/2013, at least a part of it, this new part, is running from 10/1/2013 – 29/1/2013. This is not enough time to organise a proper response to this additional need, and it falls significantly short even when measured Denbighshire County Council's normal consultation period. Coupled with the additional burden placed on stakeholders to make sense of the patchy information and claims made about "The Need for Change" and come up with an adequate response; the available time is simply not sufficient.

The Solution:

To ensure this part of the consultation is fair, is not subject to further challenge and does not prejudice either the chances of being heard, the quality of the submitted data due to the potential biases introduced by the consultation process itself or does not prejudice the ability of people to formulate adequate responses I request that:

1.The deadline of 29/1/2013 is extended to accommodate the new option of submitting supplementary information and formulate an adequate response to the information that has been put out in and around the consultation by Denbighshire County Council . This extension needs to be meaningful and in the order of weeks to accommodate the time already lost by the 10/1/2013.

2.All stakeholders are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed about this new option to submit additional information with their forms.

3.All stakeholders who have already submitted forms are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed that they can submit information which is additional to their forms.

Please acknowledge receipt of my email.

Regards

REDACTION

From :

REDACTION
23/01/2013 20:36

REDACTION
REDACTION
REDACTION
REDACTION ,
REDACTION
REDACTION
23rd January 2013

Dear Sir/Madame

Re: Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire Consultation.

I am writing to state serious reservations around the above consultation with a view to seeking a meaningful extension of the initial consultation deadline of 29th January 2013. The grounds for this are below.

The Issue:

The Case for Change document clearly states that there are two means by which parents and stakeholders can submit their views to the consultation: the public meeting of the 10/1/2013 and the form contained within the said document. During the public meeting at St. Brigid's school on 10/1/2013, my husband raised an objection about the leading nature of the questions within the consultation form and their limited scope in terms of the stated consultation objective of capturing stakeholder views. The point being, the form lends itself to capturing a partial view which is biased towards what I feel, Denbighshire County Council would like to capture or had thought of capturing, as opposed to what stakeholders actually think and feel. In any consultation, it has to be viewed as meaningful by all its stakeholders and the opportunity to be heard, and indeed listened to, is a must. In response to this a Denbighshire County Council official said that it was a "fair criticism" and suggested that parents and stakeholders should submit their views beyond what the form prescribes as additional sheets.

I also have concerns about the quality of the consultation with regard to the information provided as its basis; namely what is being consulted on. It is not fully clear as to what Denbighshire County Council is consulting on, is it purely about the need for change or a specific option, which would invoke that change? For example some information suffered serious omissions when presented during the public meeting. An instance of this was the assertion that two merging schools were banded as 2 and the claim by the official that this was proof of their equivalence. What was omitted was that these bandings are relative measures that do not quantify absolute benchmarks of quality/performance, rather relative rates of improvement. Other rather dubious "facts" that were presented as objective truths rather than justifications from a certain perspective were glossed over with ill-defined terms such as "sustainability" and "transformational". These shortcomings have left stakeholders with a significant amount of additional work to do to formulate adequate responses to this consultation.

Objections:

- The form for the consultation lends itself to bias, this much has been acknowledged in front of a room full of stakeholders. This means all forms submitted prior to the meeting of the 10th January have not only not had the opportunity to submit supplementary views/information, but have been potentially biased by the leading/limiting nature of the form. A true reflection of stakeholder views could be prejudiced by this fact.

- While the remedy to this is the option to submit supplementary information with the form, only stakeholders who attended the meeting of 10/1/13 were told about this option. It is unclear whether this advice was repeated at other meetings and there has been no formal contact to stakeholders that this option is available to them.

- The fact that the supplementary option only emerged at the meeting of the 10th of January, effectively means that rather than the consultation running from 6/12/2012 – to 29/1/2013, at least a part of it, this new part, is running from 10/1/2013 – 29/1/2013. This is not enough time to organise an informed response to this additional need, and it falls significantly short even when measured against Denbighshire County Council’s normal consultation period. Coupled with the additional burden placed on stakeholders to make sense of the patchy information and claims made about “The Need for Change” and come up with an adequate response; the available time is simply not sufficient.

The Solution:

To ensure this part of the consultation is fair, is not subject to further challenge and does not prejudice either the chances of being heard, the quality of the submitted data due to the potential biases introduced by the consultation process itself or does not prejudice the ability of people to formulate adequate responses I request that:

1. The deadline of 29/1/2013 is extended to accommodate the new option of submitting supplementary information and formulate an adequate response to the information that has been put out in and around the consultation by Denbighshire County Council . This extension needs to be meaningful and in the order of weeks to accommodate the time already lost by the 10/1/2013.
2. All stakeholders are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed about this new option to submit additional information with their forms.
3. All stakeholders who have already submitted forms are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed that they can submit information which is additional to their forms.

In addition, I would ask that information is supplied on the actual process and timescales for consultation, I understand there are different stages but this has not been supplied.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter and a response to my questions.

Yours Sincerely

REDACTION

From :

REDACTION

23/01/2013 20:48

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to state my serious reservations around the above consultation with a view to seeking a meaningful extension of the initial consultation deadline of 29th January 2013. The grounds for this are below.

The Issue:

The Case for Change document clearly states that there are two means by which parents and stakeholders can submit their views to the consultation: the public meeting of the 10/1/2013 and the form contained within the said document. During the public meeting at St. Brigid's school on 10/1/2013 an objection was raised about the leading nature of the questions on the consultation form and their limited scope in terms of the stated consultation objective of capturing stakeholder views. The point being, the form lends itself to capturing a partial view which is biased towards what Denbighshire County Council would like to capture or had thought of capturing, as opposed to what stakeholders actually think and feel. In response to this a Denbighshire County Council official said that it was a "fair criticism" and suggested that parents and stakeholders should submit their views beyond what the form prescribes as additional sheets.

I also have concerns about the quality of the consultation with regard to the information provided as its basis; namely what is being consulted on. For example some information suffered serious omissions when presented during the public meeting. An instance of this was the assertion that two merging schools were banded as 2 and the claim by the official that this was proof of their equivalence. What was omitted was that these bandings are relative measures that do not quantify absolute benchmarks of quality/performance, rather relative rates of improvement. Other rather dubious "facts" that were presented as objective truths rather than justifications from a certain perspective were glossed over with ill-defined terms such as "sustainability" and "transformational". These shortcomings have left stakeholders with a significant amount of additional work to do to formulate adequate responses to this consultation.

Objections:

·The form for the consultation lends itself to bias, this much has been acknowledged in front of a room full of stakeholders. This means all forms submitted prior to the meeting of the 10th January have not only not had the opportunity to submit supplementary views/information, but have been potentially biased by the leading/limiting nature of the form. A true reflection of stakeholder views could be prejudiced by this fact.

·While the remedy to this is the option to submit supplementary information with the form, only stakeholders who attended the meeting of 10/1/13 were told about this option. It is unclear whether this advice was repeated at other meetings and there has been no formal contact to stakeholders that this option is available to them.

·The fact that the supplementary option only emerged at the meeting of the 10th of January, effectively means that rather than the consultation running from 6/12/2012 – to 29/1/2013, at least a part of it, this new part, is running from 10/1/2013 – 29/1/2013. This is not enough time to organise a proper response to this additional need, and it falls significantly short even when measured Denbighshire County Council's normal consultation period. Coupled with the additional burden placed on stakeholders to make sense of the patchy information and claims made about "The Need for Change" and come up with an adequate response; the available time is simply not sufficient.

The Solution:

To ensure this part of the consultation is fair, is not subject to further challenge and does not prejudice either the chances of being heard, the quality of the submitted data due to the potential biases introduced by the consultation process itself or does not prejudice the ability of people to formulate adequate responses I request that:

- 1.The deadline of 29/1/2013 is extended to accommodate the new option of submitting supplementary information and formulate an adequate response to the information that has been put out in and around the consultation by Denbighshire County Council . This

extension needs to be meaningful and in the order of weeks to accommodate the time already lost by the 10/1/2013.

2.All stakeholders are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed about this new option to submit additional information with their forms.

3.All stakeholders who have already submitted forms are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed that they can submit information which is additional to their forms.

Regards,

REDACTION

96

From :

REDACTION

23/01/2013 21:33

We are writing to state serious reservations around the above consultation with a view to seeking a meaningful extension of the initial consultation deadline of 29th January 2013. The grounds for this are below.

The Issue:The Case for Change document clearly states that there are two means by which parents and stakeholders can submit their views to the consultation: the public meeting of the 10/1/2013 and the form contained within the said document. During the public meeting at St. Brigid's school on 10/1/2013 an objection was raised about the leading nature of the questions on the consultation form and their limited scope in terms of the stated consultation objective of capturing stakeholder views. The point being, the form lends itself to capturing a partial view which is biased towards what Denbighshire County Council would like to capture or had thought of capturing, as opposed to what stakeholders actually think and feel. In response to this a Denbighshire County Council official said that it was a "fair criticism" and suggested that parents and stakeholders should submit their views beyond what the form prescribes as additional sheets.

I also have concerns about the quality of the consultation with regard to the information provided as its basis; namely what is being consulted on. For example some information suffered serious omissions when presented during the public meeting. An instance of this was the assertion that two merging schools were banded as 2 and the claim by the official that this was proof of their equivalence. What was omitted was that these bandings are relative measures that do not quantify absolute benchmarks of quality/performance, rather relative rates of improvement. Other rather dubious "facts" that were presented as objective truths rather than justifications from a certain perspective were glossed over with ill-defined terms such as "sustainability" and "transformational". These shortcomings have left stakeholders with a significant amount of additional work to do to formulate adequate responses to this consultation.

Objections:

- The form for the consultation lends itself to bias, this much has been acknowledged in front of a room full of stakeholders. This means all forms submitted prior to the meeting of the 10th January have not only not had the opportunity to submit supplementary views/information, but have been potentially biased by the leading/limiting nature of the form. A true reflection of stakeholder views could be prejudiced by this fact.

· While the remedy to this is the option to submit supplementary information with the form, only stakeholders who attended the meeting of 10/1/13 were told about this option. It is unclear whether this advice was repeated at other meetings and there has been no formal contact to stakeholders that this option is available to them.

· The fact that the supplementary option only emerged at the meeting of the 10th of January, effectively means that rather than the consultation running from 6/12/2012 – to 29/1/2013, at least a part of it, this new part, is running from 10/1/2013 – 29/1/2013. This is not enough time to organise a proper response to this additional need, and it falls significantly short even when measured Denbighshire County Council’s normal consultation period. Coupled with the additional burden placed on stakeholders to make sense of the patchy information and claims made about “The Need for Change” and come up with an adequate response; the available time is simply not sufficient.

The Solution:

To ensure this part of the consultation is fair, is not subject to further challenge and does not prejudice either the chances of being heard, the quality of the submitted data due to the potential biases introduced by the consultation process itself or does not prejudice the ability of people to formulate adequate responses we request that:

1. The deadline of 29/1/2013 is extended to accommodate the new option of submitting supplementary information and formulate an adequate response to the information that has been put out in and around the consultation by Denbighshire County Council . This extension needs to be meaningful and in the order of weeks to accommodate the time already lost by the 10/1/2013.
2. All stakeholders are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed about this new option to submit additional information with their forms.
3. All stakeholders who have already submitted forms are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed that they can submit information which is additional to their forms.

Regards

REDACTION

REDACTION

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

From :

REDACTION

26/01/2013 19:32

To whom it may concern,

As a past pupil of St. Brigid's School I was horrified to learn of plans to shut the school down. I left St. Brigid's last year to go to the University of Oxford with some excellent A level results. REDACTION

REDACTION my place in Oxford could not have been achieved without the superb teaching and family environment of St. Brigid's school. REDACTION

REDACTION

REDACTION

REDACTION

The merging of St. Brigid's with another school would destroy everything that St. Brigid's has worked so hard to achieve. The small class sizes and nurturing ethos of the school is what makes it so effective as an academic institution. It would be detrimental to both schools to carry out the merge. I have seen the staff at St. Brigid's do some amazing things with the school, merging the schools would undo all their hard work. This school just isn't like any other teaching facility- theres no drugs, no bullying, all the students are so polite and well-behaved, their reputation is fantastic, I do not see why somewhere so special should be allowed to have its identity dissolved in another institution. I am informed that there are ongoing enquiries to find benefactors for the school, and I am sure that with a little time these enquiries will be successful in finding some financial support for the school.

St. Brigid's is one of the best things that this county has going for it at the minute. By merging the two schools you will not only fail to further faith education in the area, you will be actively impeding it's progress. It is honestly felt by many supporters of the school that the consultation process has been rather rushed, and just by extending the time of the consultation period you will be aiding those involved to make a well-informed and sensible decision.

Yours faithfully,

REDACTION

REDACTION

REDACTION

From :

REDACTION

27/01/2013 20:52

Dear Denbighshire County Council,

You have welcomed comments about the proposed merger of St Bridget's Denbigh and Blessed Edward Jones in Rhyl and the formation of a joint faith high school – please would

REDACTION

From :

REDACTION

28/01/2013 00:0

103

Re: Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire Consultation.

I am writing to state serious reservations around the above consultation with a view to seeking a meaningful extension of the initial consultation deadline of 29th January 2013. The grounds for this are below.

The Issue: The Case for Change document clearly states that there are two means by which parents and stakeholders can submit their views to the consultation: the public meeting of the 10/1/2013 and the form contained within the said document. During the public meeting at St. Brigid's school on 10/1/2013 an objection was raised about the leading nature of the questions on the consultation form and their limited scope in terms of the stated consultation objective of capturing stakeholder views. The point being, the form lends itself to capturing a partial view which is biased towards what Denbighshire County Council would like to capture or had thought of capturing, as opposed to what stakeholders actually think and feel. In response to this a Denbighshire County Council official said that it was a "fair criticism" and suggested that parents and stakeholders should submit their views beyond what the form prescribes as additional sheets.

I also have concerns about the quality of the consultation with regard to the information provided as its basis; namely what is being consulted on. For example some information suffered serious omissions when presented during the public meeting. An instance of this was the assertion that two merging schools were banded as 2 and the claim by the official that this was proof of their equivalence. What was omitted was that these bandings are relative measures that do not quantify absolute benchmarks of quality/performance, rather relative rates of improvement. Other rather dubious "facts" that were presented as objective truths rather than justifications from a certain perspective were glossed over with ill-defined terms such as "sustainability" and "transformational". These shortcomings have left stakeholders with a significant amount of additional work to do to formulate adequate responses to this consultation.

Objections:

- The form for the consultation lends itself to bias, this much has been acknowledged in front of a room full of stakeholders. This means all forms submitted prior to the meeting of

the 10th January have not only not had the opportunity to submit supplementary views/information, but have been potentially biased by the leading/limiting nature of the form. A true reflection of stakeholder views could be prejudiced by this fact.

· While the remedy to this is the option to submit supplementary information with the form, only stakeholders who attended the meeting of 10/12/13 were told about this option. It is unclear whether this advice was repeated at other meetings and there has been no formal contact to stakeholders that this option is available to them.

· The fact that the supplementary option only emerged at the meeting of the 10th of January, effectively means that rather than the consultation running from 6/12/2012 – to 29/1/2013, at least a part of it, this new part, is running from 10/1/2013 – 29/1/2013. This is not enough time to organise a proper response to this additional need, and it falls significantly short even when measured Denbighshire County Council's normal consultation period. Coupled with the additional burden placed on stakeholders to make sense of the patchy information and claims made about "The Need for Change" and come up with an adequate response; the available time is simply not sufficient.

The Solution: to ensure this part of the consultation is fair, is not subject to further challenge and does not prejudice either the chances of being heard, the quality of the submitted data due to the potential biases introduced by the consultation process itself or does not prejudice the ability of people to formulate adequate responses I request that:

1. The deadline of 29/1/2013 is extended to accommodate the new option of submitting supplementary information and formulate an adequate response to the information that has been put out in and around the consultation by Denbighshire County Council . This extension needs to be meaningful and in the order of weeks to accommodate the time already lost by the 10/1/2013.
2. All stakeholders are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed about this new option to submit additional information with their forms.
3. All stakeholders who have already submitted forms are contacted by Denbighshire County Council and informed that they can submit information which is additional to their forms.

Regards

REDACTION

Parent of 3 St Brigid's Pupils

REDACTION

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

REDACTION
[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

REDACTION
28/01/2013 23:16

Dear sir, as a parent of a child that goes to st bridgets in Denbigh I was informed tonight of a questionnaire that was supposed to go out to all parents in the school. As I and maybe others who have not yet received this letter and wish to take part in the questionnaire, I hear the dead line is the 28th but hope you can delay it until we all have had a chance to speak up.

Many thanks REDACTION

REDACTION
[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

REDACTION

108

From :

REDACTION

29/01/2013 09:19

To whom it may concern,

Attached is our completed questionnaire and in addition would like to raise the following issues and concerns relating to the proposal of the merge / new school.

Firstly we are very disappointed that an extension for the consultation was rejected, we feel we have been rushed to raise our concerns and time to gather and digest the information provided and respond accordingly. Hence our response so late!

We also feel the questionnaire is very leading with its questions and feel this especially on question 3 asking to rank statements that Denbighshire CC think influence parents on their choice of secondary education. Denbighshire CC need to ask parents an open question with regards to this and not direct them to the answer. One of the main reasons that we send our child to St Brigid's is not on this questionnaire. We chose St Brigid's due to its ethos, extremely high standards, values and educational outcomes based on both exam results and the complete, well mannered and rounded member of society it produces. The type of young adult we wish our child to become.

The proposal does not mention anything about what will happen to the primary school if the new school goes ahead, I attended the meeting on the 10th January at the consultation meeting and when a parent questioned this, no answer was given, it was practically ignored! What will happen with the primary school? This was a major factor why we decided to send our child to St Brigid's as it is a 3-19 school and the 3-19 model is a progressive model in education that has shown to have many benefits. Ceredigion County Council commissioned a report into the impact of 3 -19 school by Optima Learning in 2011 (http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/utilities/action/act_download.cfmmediaid=34251&langtoken=eng) the main conclusions of this report were the benefits and advantages of a 3-19 school

- a common ethos and shared values across the school
- joined up curriculum planning to increase coherence and continuity in pupils' learning
- progressive skill development and focus on building pupils' bilingual competence
- greater consistency in learning and teaching styles
- opportunities for cross-age learning and shared enrichment and community-based activities
- extended care and support for pupils with additional learning needs and in provision for other vulnerable groups
- increased access for pupils to a range of specialist accommodation, facilities and learning resources

- developing relationships and shared expertise and between primary and secondary phase staff
- joint management and implementation of common systems for recording and tracking pupils' progress
- unified governance and efficient use of financial and human resources
- strengthened links with parents and involvement of the local community

These benefits are clear and tangible and if a similar report was commissioned into St Brigid's, the same benefits would be seen.

Transition is seen as a stressful area for many children I think it is important that DCC is able to provide a school which provides a smooth, stress free transition and the 3-19 model is able to meet these needs. The evidence for finding this is found in "Negotiating the Transition from Primary to Secondary School Perceptions of Pupils, Parents and Teachers" by M. Suzanne Zeedyk, Kenny Lindsay et al, Feb 2003. This shows that, "The transition from primary to secondary school is regarded as one of the most difficult in pupils' educational careers." The article describes the results of a survey undertaken in the UK, in which the views of primary pupils, secondary pupils, parents and teachers were ascertained in regard to the transition process. "Results showed that bullying was a major concern for all groups, followed by fears of getting lost, increased workload and peer relationships, among others. The views of primary pupils and their parents were highly similar, and if the experience of transition is to be improved, it may be necessary to focus efforts on both of these groups. Teachers rarely identified children's individual abilities as making a difference to the transition process, focusing instead on institutional initiatives, an emphasis that carries the risk of creating a degree of helplessness for individual pupils." Another relevant study is also "Transition from Primary to Secondary School: Current Arrangements and Good Practice in Wales Final Report" Robert Powell, Robert Smith, Gareth Jones and Angharad Reakes, October 2006. This looked into the current practice in Wales and some of the potential effects of poor transition and how a dip in attainment can be avoided by closer links and smoother transition between Key Stage 2 and 3. How can the process of amalgamating the 2 schools meet the legal requirement that, "any new school has to be equal or better standard than the previous schools?" Ofsted commented when inspecting the Caroline Chisholm School (4-18) that the main feature of good practice was, "The school has been quick to build upon the opportunities arising from being an all-through school. Teaching and learning throughout the school have benefited from the sharing of expertise that is present in each key stage." (ref <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/134177>) At St Brigid's the all-through approach eliminates many of these anxieties and concerns ensuring children are able to achieve their full potential. Reducing anxiety

for children has to be a priority of any council.

The proposals of the new school are a far cry from what we want as parents for our child. We want to send our child to a transitional, small school which produces excellent results in Denbigh, which is what St Brigid's is. Moving the school out of Denbigh will create a great loss on the local economy in Denbigh, which is already suffering. St Brigid's is an excellent school on a beautiful, inspiring site merging it with another school to a new site will most definitely lose its strengths and unique points which is why we chose the school for our child: such as it's wonderful ethos, excellent results & values, small family friendly environment. My child feels safe and secure at St Brigid's the way it is currently, changing it to create a new large school in Rhyl will lose this very important factor. St Brigid's is unique, merging it will lose this and its pupils, because it isn't what parents want for their children's education.

We must stress that we will not be sending our child and any future children to the new proposed school due to the reasons highlighted above.

Please acknowledge upon receipt.

Regards

REDACTION

109

REDACTION

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

110

From :
REDACTION
29/01/2013 17:16

James
I noticed a couple of points that i hadn't made, Ive been trying to pull together an implementation plan for an internal project at work, at the same time as writing all this up. can you add these to the process
regards

REDACTED

Supplementary comments

1 The questionnaire does not allow the opportunity to state if you would send you children to the new school or not. I would like it to be known that I would not be confident to send our children to the new school and should be discounted from any pupil roll count you may be compiling.

2 The aspect of the impact on Denbigh should also be taken into account. It has already lost some important local facilities. The businesses in Denbigh will be hard hit by the removal of St Brigids and the consequent drop in revenues arising from the parents who shop there, after and before children collection, kids parties and because Denbigh becomes a centre of gravity. I have started to use Denbigh shops and services much more frequently since our children started attending St Brigids.

3 During the Parent consultation meeting on 10th January Ms Walley stated that along with the 28.8m request to WAG DCC had also requested "Ysgol Glan Clwyd had a huge issue they did not have enough capacity so we needed to put mobiles in". It seems to me illogical that a) St Brigids can be condemned for the mobile classrooms it uses set against the 21st Century requirements, b) WAG can only fund 21st Century transformational requests c) Ysgol Glan Clwyd can be provided with Mobile classrooms from the same fund.

The three statements do not hang together.
regards

REDACTION

[REDACTED]