



alternative to children with specific needs who would thrive in a smaller environment but still in mainstream education is nothing short of a disgrace (and please let's remember that this is all of our money not yours to spend as you like and with no concern for the wishes of those that you are supposed to represent).

I was further alarmed when this issue was brought up at a consultation meeting and Jackie Walley seemed to have no answer to this problem. Clearly the fact that different children thrive in different environments definitely has not been considered by the people who have decided that every school in Denbighshire needs to be of similar size. I'm surprised that it is acceptable or even legal for DCC to show such a blatant disregard for those children who may have specific needs and may require an alternative.

I do not know where this notion that all secondary schools needing to have a minimum of 600 pupils comes from, when and why was this "policy" brought in? It certainly doesn't seem to be mentioned in any Welsh Assembly policies and I very much doubt that there is a shred of evidence that having every single school of that size or above is of any benefit to the children of Denbighshire. You have asked us to provide evidence in order to try to save our school but do you have to provide evidence when you make up these policies? If so I think we would love to see the evidence that this 600+ pupil policy is beneficial to the educational needs of the children of this county!

As a last point, I would like to say that the amount of money that has been spent on regenerating Rhyl in recent years is commendable. However, it is beginning to feel a little like Rhyl is now getting funding and regeneration at the expense of other towns and villages in the county. It just is not fair that yet another school is going to be built in the Rhyl area when Denbigh is going to be losing one of only two secondary schools and whilst many other children from the other side of the county are having to travel outside the county to receive a faith based education. You will be spending vast amounts of money to effectively lessen the options in Denbighshire rather than broaden them and I would be surprised if the people of Denbighshire would be happy to see their public servants spend their money in this way.

Kind regards, Redaction

Redaction

In the response to the questionnaire I would include some evidence as to why I chose St Brigid's and why we would want St Brigid's to continue in Denbigh, in something close to its current form. Jackie Walley stated at the consultation meeting that the responses should be evidence based and I have tried to provide as much evidence as possible but due to the short time period of consultation, and the lack of evidence available to me as a parent, I have found it difficult to ensure this response is evidence based. I would request that Denbighshire makes all data at their disposal available to all parties to ensure a full, open and informed consultation.

I chose St Brigid's for my son for a variety of reasons and would like to provide some evidence for this. The main factors in choosing a school for me are:

Religious nature of the school

Ethos

Small school size

Quality of education

Transition arrangements

Transition Arrangements

As you are aware St Brigid's 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.cfm?mediaid=34251&langtoken=eng](http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/utilities/action/act_download.cfm?mediaid=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 and especially for a child, like mine, who has additional needs. 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" by 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.

#### Quality of Education

Although St Brigid's is selective and so comparison between St Brigid's and BEJ can be questioned, the effects of selection are stripped out when looking at value added attainment. St Brigid's had a value added score of 9.17 in 2010 (the latest data publically available) and BEJ's value added score was -1.09. Both of which are better than DCC average of -6.96. (ref: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/20\\_05\\_11\\_brand\\_new\\_welsh\\_table.pdf](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/20_05_11_brand_new_welsh_table.pdf))

Academic attainment is crucial when choosing a school, St Brigid's attains above national and Welsh averages. Due to the "banding" system this is not reflected in the Welsh system of ranking schools. It has been stated that St Brigid's and BEJ are similar schools because they are in similar bands. Evidence for attainment at Key Stage 4 shows that 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. Although an increase from 18% to 39% is a substantial achievement compared with St Brigid's drop of 3%, one has to look at the actual attainment and there is no comparison between the 2 schools.

It is important to me that my son is sent to a school which provides a quality education and allows him to achieve his full potential, whatever that might be.

### Ethos and Religion

This is the hardest part to evidence as it is not tangible. St Brigid's school has a unique atmosphere and ethos. Much of this is due to the location, the size of the school, the 3-19 element and the long history of the school that has led to this point. The wonderful ethos was one of the main reasons that I chose the school for my son and I have no doubt that if the school was moved to a new site with a different structure that everything that currently makes the school unique would be lost. I find it incredible that the one school in Denbighshire that offers something different could be merged to become just another large school, just like every other in the county and feel alarmed that there would no longer be any real choice in terms of types of school in the area. I chose a Catholic Education for my son as he is a Catholic and that is important to me. I am prepared to travel to the right school for my son and I would happily travel to the best school but I will not be sending him to a mixed faith school based outside Denbigh and so I can confirm that he will definitely not be going to the new school.

I have met a number of past-pupils from St Brigid's and what is clear from them is the standard of education they received. These are values that are not easily measured but at the end of their school life, in times where moral values, manners and a sense of community are hard to find, St Brigid's repeatedly turns 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.

### School Size

Parents have a right to choose their school. I have chosen a smaller school for my son as due to his additional needs the size of school benefits his needs and allows him to feel more part of the school community. There are a number of children in Denbighshire with ADHD and ASD and there are numerous educational studies into the benefits of smaller schools for children with these conditions. Behavioural issues and bullying, which all schools suffer from, are easier to manage in a smaller school where all children are known to staff. The need for additional learning mentors is reduced and this must have a financial benefit to the council. Redaction

Redaction edaction

Redaction Redaction

There are 8 secondary schools in Denbighshire and with the exception of St Brigid's and BEJ all have circa 1000 pupils and in my opinion this stops children feeling part of a school family. There are many financial arguments for larger schools but attainment has to be paramount and St Brigid's and BEJ both have excellent attainment based on value added. I have been told by Chris Ruane MP, that the Price Waterhouse report commissioned by DCC, which I have been unable to access, shows that the 2 secondary schools which have had the least spent on them are St Brigid's and BEJ which completely discredits the financial savings argument. St Brigid's provides excellent value for money.

### General Issues

There is a need within Denbighshire to remove surplus places and I can understand the need for this. St Brigid's is over subscribed and has a waiting list for places. I feel lucky and honoured to have got my son into St Brigid's school, he is not part of the selection process, and would not pass an entrance exam, even one like St Brigid's which just has a requirement for level 4, but in accordance with the admissions policy and Christian nature of the school, St Brigid's accepts that children with additional needs have special consideration in admission.

I am disappointed by the nature of this consultation on a number of points. Firstly on 2 occasions Rita Price has informed **Redaction** a group of parents, that "whatever you do, the new school will happen and will be as close to Rhyl as possible." It is not a true consultation if decisions have already been made and I find it disappointing that a key partner in the process is so dismissive of the process. Secondly at the consultation meeting on January 10th Jackie Walley stated, in response to a question from **Redaction** **Redaction** regarding the possibility of an extension of the consultation process that, "we can extend it, there's no problem us extending it and we can do that." I know a large proportion of parents presented a reasonable request for extension and this request was rejected, limiting the opportunity to provide an effective response.

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 Program 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 Brigid's 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. 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 Brigid's is viable as it produces excellent results, and BEJ has been improving – so educationally they are clearly viable. I understand that there are surplus places at BEJ and so these might need to be addressed, but St Brigid's is over subscribed as a strong management structure across the whole school and is sustainable on current projections.

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. **Redaction** development in ICT do not require a new building just appropriate funding. 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 Brigid's and Blessed Edwards to understand what analysis has been done to test if and how these schools could meet the requirements. I would request details as to how the other secondary schools in Denbigh have been funded to

achieve these levels of technology, as it seems to me that Denbighshire consistently underfund St Brigid's and BEJ.

I have a question regarding the location of Rhyl, I always thought that Rhyl was in North Denbighshire so why is this school for Rhyl AND North Denbighshire, surely it is for Rhyl, Denbigh and surrounding areas or North Denbighshire. Is Rhyl more important than the rest of Denbighshire. I have spoken to a number of councillors in the South of the county who are concerned that their residents have to leave Denbighshire for Faith education.

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.

I look forward to a full and thorough response to the issues raised in this document and am awaiting the consultation period for parents and children with additional needs as I am sure you are aware of the legal requirement to consult further with this group.

Response to Q8 of the questionnaire.

We have tried to provide as much evidence as possible, but due as we have very little time to prepare our responses as a result of the delay in the urgency of the consultation being relayed to parents at St Brigid's. In addition to this there is a distinct lack of evidence available to us as parents. As such, we are concerned that not all parties have all data at their disposal, this therefore begs the question as to whether the consultation can be seen as fully informed and transparent for all parties.

The main factors in choosing a school for me are:

- Ethos inclusive of the holistic care of each individual child.
- Current size
- Quality of education
- Religious nature of the school
- Transition arrangements

St Brigid's is a 3-19 school.

The 3-19 model is a progressive model in education that has shown to have many benefits.

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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.



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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>)

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Academic attainment is crucial when choosing a school, St Brigid's attains above national and Welsh averages. Due to the "banding" system this is not reflected in the Welsh system of ranking schools. It has been stated that St Brigid's and BEJ are similar schools because they are in similar bands. Evidence for attainment at Key Stage 4 shows that 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. Although an increase from 18% to 39% is a substantial achievement compared with St Brigid's drop of 3%, one has to look at the actual attainment and there is no comparison between the 2 schools.

It is of paramount importance, over and above anything that our daughters' attend a school that provides them with a quality education and allows them to achieve their full potential.

The ethos of St Brigids is difficult to provide evidence for. It is unique and rarely replicated anywhere else.

If the school was merged and /or move to a new site where the structure would change, gives rise to concerns that there would be a certain loss of the ethos as we know it.

This would mean that the "new" school would become just another struggling school where all pupils are more of statistic than an individual, unique human being. Thereby leaving parents with no choice of schools for their children as the model throughout would be replicated in all schools in the area. We are more than prepared to travel to the best school for our daughters ( we currently travel a minimum of 80 miles a day, more when other activities are happening ) and would continue to travel to the best school. However, our girls will NOT be attending a new mixed faith school.

I have met a number of past-pupils from St Brigid's and what is clear from them is the standard of education they received. **Redaction**

**Redaction**

**Redaction**

This speaks volumes. The values attained by past pupils such as, e4xceptionally moral values, manners and a sense of community are hard to find, St Brigids repeatedly turns out exceptionally high achievers who are grounded, polite, driven and respectful to all. These are qualities which cannot be ignored and we feel would be lost should the school close.

There clearly are many financial arguments for larger schools and in the current climate and running our own business, we are acutely aware of the need to save where possible and be austere at every turn. However, quality has to imperative. We are aware from Chris Ruane MP, that the Price Waterhouse report commissioned by DCC, clearly shows that the 2 secondary schools which have had the least spent on them are St Brigid's and BEJ which completely discredits the financial savings argument. St Brigid's provides excellent value for money.

Again we are aware that St Brigid's is over subscribed and has a waiting list for places. We feel exceptionally lucky and proud that our girls attend St Brigid's school.

We are very disappointed by the nature of this consultation. We have been told on two separate occasions by Rita Price "whatever you do, the new school will happen and

**Redaction**

will be as close to Rhyl as possible.” It is not a true consultation if decisions have already been made and we are concerned that key members appear to be so blasé about the process. Also, Jackie Whalley stated, that, “we can extend it, there’s no problem us extending it and we can do that.” Why then are we being told that there is no chance of an extension ?

We would respectfully request that parents are given sight of the publication that details the financial and business case with respect to the costing / funding of the proposed new school and the current costing / funding of existing schools. Surely any form of consultation could not be considered to be fair without this information. We assume that this analysis is already in existence and it would only be fair for all parties to share this knowledge. If this analysis has yet to be done then surely this process cannot proceed further without such fundamental information ?

Redaction

Redaction

Redaction

## St Brigid's Past & Present

Redaction

### A Special Place To Be

Redaction

As a present pupil of St Brigid's School, I was asked to submit an article for our new website about the present day St Brigid's and how it has evolved over the years.

I have been a pupil here since the age of three and I am now in Year 8. From the moment I stepped foot onto the premises, I knew that this was more than just a place to learn. It has become my second home in many ways and the people of this community have become my extended family. The whole approach to students here at St Brigid's is that of a holistic nature and not just academic. This is demonstrated from the moment you arrive when you see our mission statement: "TO INSPIRE AND BE INSPIRED, THROUGH LOVE, FAITH, TRUTH, RESPECT, AND EXCELLENCE". This mantra has become a way of life for all pupils from nursery upwards. I feel the love and support generated through all aspects / departments of the school is a rare gift. Having spoken to a number of pupils who are educated at different schools across the UK it is very clear just how rare the ethos at St Brigid's is. I not only feel lucky, I feel honoured, proud and protective.

With advances in technology and the growth of social networking sites (when used appropriately) such as Twitter and Facebook, a number of past pupils who spent some time at St Brigid's during the eighties and nineties requested a reunion here. This gave me the perfect opportunity to discover how the school was at that time, how it has changed and how these past pupils felt about their time here. I was keen to ascertain whether they too felt as strongly as I do about my school.

I interviewed two past pupils from St Brigid's Convent (as it was then) about their views on the school, how it has changed and their own personal experiences. Redaction who went on to Cardiff University, went on to carve out a career in Redaction. At present, she is taking time out to devote herself to her young family. In addition to looking after her family, she recently became the Head Governor of small, local primary school.

Redaction was known to her friends as Redaction and is currently a croupier in the largest casino in Los Angeles. Redaction having spent time fulfilling a lifetime ambition to travel, will shortly be taking her chosen path of Environmental Law. Later, I will be sharing some of their experiences and thoughts on the school. But first, a little history...

St Brigid's Convent was established in 1939; by the Congregation of St Brigid. The school was run as a convent for girls. The Mother Superior was Mother Dee, who was eventually superseded by Sister Elizabeth Kelly. Sister Liz has become synonymous as the strength and backbone of St Brigid's, and although she is now retired as Head Teacher of St Brigid's, she still plays a crucial role in the everyday life of the school community. According to Redaction, Sister Liz knew every pupil as an individual and I know this to still be true today. From what Redaction have said, she has not changed at all. As a Brigidine Sister she is still the very heart-warming and inspirational person she was then and remains the very soul of St Brigid's.

Redaction feel that there have only been a few significant changes since the time they left. These changes include: the school is no longer a convent, the only nun present is Sister Liz and that the number of pupils has increased. Although this is the case, the total number of pupils from age 3 to 19 remains at only 524.

The other major change that has only occurred during my last couple of years here is that we now educate boys. This is still limited but growing each year.

Redaction had a tour of the school and noticed that some of the old dormitories have now been converted into classrooms and they noted that Panto week is now just three nights and not the full week as it used to be.

The skirt of the uniform has changed. It used to be all bottle green. However, it is now, red, green and white tartan. Reda pointed out that the shirts, although unchanged in style, have altered in material as, when you wore the old shirts they were quite itchy around the neck, and you used to end up with sore red patches! Now, we also have school scarves, which were not around when the ladies were at school. There are some traditions upon leaving the school that have not changed, however, – many friends signed both your tie and shirt and as you can see from the photograph below, past pupils have kept these items with fondness.

Redaction stated that they wore their uniform with pride and respect. They were never judged by their peers and all were treated the same. Redaction say they miss many things about St Brigid's, their friends, the stories, the innocence, even the driveway and scenery of the grounds – but these are all remembered with great fondness and love.

It seems to me that although there have been some changes over the years, the overall ethos and sense of pride and community remain here at St Brigid's. As we all evolve so too must the world around us. We need to stay abreast of changes and advances in technology but the refreshing aspect about St Brigid's is that the love, security and sense of family does not appear to have been eroded. I feel that this is largely down to the careful decisions made by staff and Governors when choosing teachers and indeed pupils for St Brigid's. As Redaction Reda said: "You can always spot a St B's girl!"

One threat that appeared to be evident in the past and is still prevalent today is that of closure. It appears that as a result of St Brigid's not conforming to the "norm" and trying to maintain our crucial independence that makes us what we are, there are some people who feel we should follow the crowd. This too was the case when Redaction Redaction were pupils.

As the years have passed, this threat of closure / merger keeps rearing its ugly head. But, the strength and fighting spirit of staff, governors and parents alike keep it firmly at bay. We feel proud and blessed to be part of this history and if I could wave a magic wand I would love to guarantee (and I know I speak on behalf of Redaction Redaction too) the school's survival long into the future, so that I can see my children and my grandchildren experience the joy, love and benefits of this unique establishment we know as St Brigid's.

Redaction

Copy of email sent to modernising education  
@denbighshire.gov.uk

on 22/01/13

### **Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire Consultation.**

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 29<sup>th</sup> 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.

We 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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.
- Whilst 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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



**Q8 Please detail any other details you may wish to raise**

ST Brigids School is an outstanding school with an excellent record of achievement. The school is small, has a friendly atmosphere, where every child is known by name. This is a place where children thrive and are taught more than the curriculum entails. The Catholic ethos of the school teaches children to be kind to one another, to have respect and behave appropriately. The children are able to learn about other countries and cultures via the children who board at the school, who are from all over the world. The school takes children from all faith backgrounds which makes it accessible to all faith domains.

The curriculum has the option of dance and astronomy which in my opinion should be available in each and every school. The dance option keeps children motivated and fit and benefits those who have a passion/interest or who wish to pursue a career in performing arts. The majority of children are interested in space and planets and the option to study this can only satisfy their curiosity and imaginations.

The school's location is beautiful, a real jewel in the crown of Denbigh. The pupils wear smart uniforms which can be bought large to last a number of years or second hand. The cost of this eventually works out as the same price of any other uniform, making it an affordable option for all parents despite their income. The uniforms are smart and reflect the outstanding performance of the school. If children look smart surely they will think smart, the results speak for themselves. **Therefore St. Brigids is a school that both staff, parents and pupils are proud of, and do not wish for this amazing school to change.**

**If this was a failing school then there would be a case for change. Why change what already works.**

**There is no need for a large faith school, no parent wants this. Why do we need it?**  
St. Brigids already takes children from all faith domains.

**St. Brigids does not need to be amalgamated** with Blessed Edward Jones. Both schools seem to work well independently. **So why change what already works.**

I believe the money would be better spent modernising the existing buildings at both schools.

St. Brigids would benefit from a safe crossing outside the school before an accident actually happens and the modernisation of buildings on its existing site, improving a school that already works. The rest should stay exactly the same, there is no reason to change it.

**Nobody Wants A Large Faith School. It Is Insane to change A school That Is Outstanding In Every Way.**

**Please Do Not Close Or Amalgamate Our School.  
It Is Wonderful Just the Way It Is!**



## 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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."*

21<sup>st</sup> 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

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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.

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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 eldest daughter, these factors have produced, not only fantastic academic results, (10A\* & 2A at GCSE) 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.

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## **Joint Faith Based Provision for North Denbighshire – Consultation Response**

St Brigid's School, Denbigh, has a very high reputation amongst parents, not only those from Denbighshire but also from neighbouring counties. This is demonstrated by the widespread catchment area for pupils currently attending this school. It is testament to the high regard that parents and pupils have for the school that they are prepared to travel so far and to pay for private travel provision in order to attend St Brigid's school. This is not only because of the excellent exam results achieved by the pupils but also because of the environment in which that education is delivered. I do not refer to the state of the buildings, but more importantly the respect for each other and self-discipline amongst pupils and staff which allow that learning to take place.

I can only report on my own considerations when choosing St Brigid's for our daughters and what we have subsequently experienced. During the three years I commuted to Wales from Cumbria, whilst our eldest daughter finished her education in England, we had the time to review Estyn reports and the educational attainment of various schools in North Wales. These reports give the reader very little understanding of the ethos and culture of the various schools, which was evident when we visited some of these "Grade 1" schools. Our decision was based upon less tangible qualities such as:

### **Ethos and Religion**

The ethos at St Brigid's is different to many other schools. It is very welcoming and supportive. Staff and pupils at the school made time for our enquiries about the school and listened to our concerns about moving in to the area and to a new school.

As Catholics we wanted our daughters to go to a Catholic school and to be surrounded by references to the faith at school. This connection is embodied in the physical presence of the chapel and in the person of Sr. Liz. It is difficult to know what to attribute the ethos to, whether it is the Catholic faith, the school's long history, the size and age range of the school or the beautiful location. Whatever it is the pupils that attend are generally polite, confident and caring. Our youngest daughter is not particularly academic but she gains much satisfaction from acting and performing in the school productions. It will be impossible to replicate this nurturing environment on a different site and I worry that a generic "faith school" will dilute the religious references and teaching.

### **3 – 19 Age Range**

Having moved our youngest daughter at the age of eight to a new country, home and school we did not want her education disrupted again by moving to a different secondary school. The fact that she could go to the same school as her sister, in the 6<sup>th</sup> form, along with the supportive atmosphere of the school made the transition less traumatic and she soon settled in and thrives at St Brigid's. I will leave the academic research into the advantages of 3 - 19 education for others to convey.

### **School Size**

In my opinion this is very important not only for young children but also for older pupils. It is so easy to be overlooked in the crowd and even able students can be lost in the exam grade sausage machine. Our middle daughter is academic but was about to embark on a selection of 'A' levels which would not have enabled her to get into a top university. Fortunately when she came to St Brigid's she was noticed, guided onto other subjects, supported and encouraged by a number of teachers to apply to the University of Cambridge. One of the Governors gave up her own time to coach and practice interview techniques with our daughter and another Governor even lent her the train fare to go to the open day at REDACTION. It is rare to find such personal interest and family like support from people connected with a school. Our daughter is now happy in her second year studying REDACTION at REDACTION Cambridge.

## **The Future**

Despite what I have said about size I would like to see many more children benefit from St Brigid's pastoral and education care. As you are aware there is a considerable waiting list for the school, which is limited by the currently physical size of the buildings. If the proposed capital funding could be used to increase the size of the school on its current site it could keep at its heart the old building. This could be similar to the design for Ysgol Glan Clwyd. This would maintain investment in the Denbigh area rather than, as usually happens, pouring more money into the Rhyl area. It could build on the faith provision which is already an integral part of St. Brigid's, develop the already successful brand and to allow it to be available to far wider cohort of potential pupils.

By moving the location it would break the historical connection and destroy the ethos which makes St Brigid's so successful at developing rounded, mature, well-mannered and aspirational young people.

**REDACTION**

**28/01/2013**

Question 8, any other issues we wish to raise;

The case for change provided by Denbighshire County Council (DCC) is at best misleading and certainly not backed by recent research based evidence available. We find your questionnaire biased in favour of your point of view and do not feel that there were adequate questions to allow parents to fully express how they feel about your proposals.

You asked us to rate what we think is the most and least important elements when choosing a school for our children. We found this question difficult to complete as the distance of a school from our home is not an issue. We were willing to travel to which ever school we felt was appropriate for our children's Education. The question about transport was also not relevant as we have never claimed for our children's transport costs nor able to apply for it! 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 our true opinion-- that it's not the distance that matters but the school itself hence our answer.

There is nowhere on your questionnaire to allow parents who would prefer a Catholic school as opposed to a Faith school to express their choice. We wanted our children to attend a catholic ethos based school; St Brigid's has the ethos but without any direct control or FUNDING from the Catholic Church, and it runs extremely well financially with dedicated governors' (hounded at times by DCC education dept) ,the GCSE results are the best in DCC and in the top 20 schools in WALES. Our school is ignored by the diocese of Wrexham, and Rita Price at the meeting with parents, staff and governors alike clearly showed her opinion of our school for all to see.

There is no option for parents to express their preference for a 3-19 yr school. St Brigid's is unique ,it is a 3-19 yrs school, much evidence based research on transition from primary to secondary school is available with regard to the success of this type of school, 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 schools by Optima Learning in



2011

([http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/utilities/action/act\\_download.cfm?mediaid=34251&langtoken=eng](http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/utilities/action/act_download.cfm?mediaid=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 and we 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 " Robot 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>).

We would also request that the period of the consultation be extended from the current expiry date of 29th January 2013 to at least 31st March 2013, given that a large part of the period originally allowed for consultation ran across the Christmas period when parents have extensive commitments for their children's Christmas, dealing with work issues prior to holidays and in celebrating the Christmas period with children, friends and relatives and official departments are closed and on minimum staffing from mid Dec 2012 till 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2013. 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 and officials. At the council meeting where the proposal was approved, the extension possibilities were discussed and the council committee agreed and accepted that they would be sympathetic to an extension for these reasons.

With regard to school size, 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, 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 Edward and St Brigid's fail his 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 our requirement for a transparency of financial analysis we 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 Brigid's is viable as it produces excellent results, and Blessed Edwards has been improving – so educationally they are clearly viable.

The indisputable success of pupils' at St Brigid's is astounding considering that the per capita funding is the lowest in Wales according to Welsh Government (WG) data. These results are achieved by pupils studying in some sub standard mobile classrooms but it makes no difference. The success of this school is testament to the dedication of staff in their attention to the needs of each and every pupil. This ability to care is aided greatly by the manageable numbers on the school roll. The school is also strongly supported by parents, through the governors and the School Association. The ethos of the school is taken very seriously by staff pupils and parents alike. The school fosters a caring environment, where education is about the whole individual, every pupil is taken on their own merits. Yes an entrance exam is sat for year seven pupils but it is to assess if each pupil has reached the target of the key stage set out by WG that every pupil by the age of 11 yrs old should have reached. There is no such thing as "average" in St Brigid's school, the pupils are able to strive in an environment that allows them to be individuals whilst functioning as an integral part of the St Brigid's family. This is a priceless asset in the full rounded education of each pupil and the results speak for themselves, this model should be rolled out over Wales, not merged and destroyed.

And Finally we ask that DCC is open and honest with all parents, with regard to their plans for blessed Edward Jones school and our school . -we cannot believe that you have gone to the WG asked for £28 million to improve and meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century education but in a meeting with parents ( apart from Rita Price) you all clearly stated you had no plan, were open to suggestions! ...when in fact you clearly do, you have earmarked sites, you must have done financial assessments of costing re building ,transport etc, you must have had meetings with the dioceses of St Asaph and Wrexham and discussed their input ,you must have had meetings with WG but no information is available to parents!!!! -we have a suggestion;keep the two schools in Denbighshire that are small enough to know every pupil and meet their educational needs ,give St Brigid's extra funding to expand and improve facilities and roll it out across the county ,the education of the children of this county will most certainly improve.

Regards

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