



**Wrexham County Borough Council**

**Post Consultation Document**

**Proposal to increase the capacity at St. Mary's Church in Wales Voluntary Aided School Brymbo**

**St. Mary's, Brymbo**

**Ael-y-Bryn**

**Brymbo, Wrexham**

**LL11 5DA**

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## **Introduction**

Wrexham County Borough Council has recently completed a period of public consultation in relation to the proposal to increase the pupil capacity at St. Mary's Church in Wales Voluntary Aided School in Brymbo from 154 to 210 with the potential to increase further to 315 if required as a result of future housing developments and subject to planning permission.

The public consultation period began on 23 October 2023 and ended on 12 January 2024.

The consultation has been carried out in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 which requires the School Organisation Code 2018 to be adhered to and gives guidance to relevant bodies (Local Authorities, Governing Bodies).

This document will set out the steps taken during the formal consultation period, refer to findings obtained during the consultation and aim to answer queries that have been put to the Local Authority.

## **Publication of Consultation**

The consultation began with the bilingual publication of the Consultation Document on 23 October 2023 on the Council's website. Links to the documents were emailed to the full list of consultees. The detail below sets out the list of recipients, as guided by the School Organisation Code (2018), who received a copy of, or were directed to the Consultation Document during the consultation period. The consultation period was originally due to finish on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, however it was extended by another 6 weeks until 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024, to allow further consideration of the Welsh Language Impact Assessment following feedback during the initial public consultation.

## **List of Consultees**

A range of individuals were asked for their views about the proposal including:

- Elected Members of Wrexham County Borough Council
- The Church in Wales and Catholic Dioceses
- Other Local Authorities: Flintshire County Council, Shropshire County Council, Denbighshire County Council, Powys County Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council
- The Governing Body of St Mary's CIW VA School, Brymbo
- All Wrexham Primary and Secondary School Governing Bodies

- All Wrexham Primary and Secondary Schools, including Welsh medium schools, English medium schools, Faith schools and Special schools.
- Parents/Carers (and prospective parents/carers) of St Mary's CIW VA School, Brymbo
- Staff members of St Mary's CIW VA School, Brymbo
- Brymbo Community Council
- The Welsh in Education Forum, including Menter Iaith Fflint a Wrecsam, RhAG and Mudiad Meithrin
- Welsh Ministers and Senedd Members: Lesley Griffiths MS, Ken Skates MS, Llyr Gruffydd MS, Mark Isherwood MS, Carolyn Thomas MS, Sam Rowlands MS
- Local Members of Parliament: Sarah Atherton MP, Simon Baynes MP
- Estyn and GwE
- Trade unions representing teachers and staff at St Mary's CIW VA School, Brymbo
- Wrexham Council's School Transport Department
- The Police and Crime Commissioner
- Local Communities First Partnerships
- Local Independent Nursery Providers, Playgroups, Childminders and Flying Start Providers
- The Children and Young People's Partnership
- The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership

The above list is not exhaustive and the consultation was open to all who wished to take part.

In undertaking the consultation, we used a range of methods to engage with people. We collected both quantitative and qualitative data. Consultees were invited to respond to the consultation by completing an online survey, by completing a hard copy consultation form provided or by emailing or writing to the Education & Early Intervention Department. Responses could be submitted electronically or in hard copy paper format.

The consultation document was available in languages other than Welsh or English upon request. It was also available in accessible formats such as large print, Braille, BSL DVD and audio-CD upon request.

### **Communications Campaign**

The consultation was widely promoted throughout the consultation period using a variety of methods which included:

- A 'Your Voice' banner on the WCBC website
- QR codes provided to access the survey
- Information circulated via WCBC's social media platforms
- Information circulated via Wrexham Council News blog
- Information circulated via WCBC's Involvement Bulletin
- A local area poster campaign
- Distribution of Consultation Booklets
- Awareness raising by the school (e.g. Newsletter for parents, parents evening, social media platforms)
- The School Bulletin

### Consultation Sessions

As part of the public consultation process, nine face-to-face engagement sessions were held by Education Officers at St. Mary's Brymbo School and in the community. Stakeholders including parents were invited to attend the sessions. All attendees were provided with information and asked to provide feedback to the consultation. We explained that there were several ways in which this communication could be made. The consultation document included a hard copy proforma which could be completed and returned to the address indicated and links to the survey. Contact could also be made via email or letter. The sessions were well attended by parents, carers, staff, governors, local Members, members of the community, Brymbo Community Council, Brymbo Heritage Trust and children and young people. Over 100 booklets were handed out.

### Timetable of Drop-In Sessions

Date	Time	Type of Session	Venue
Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2023	2:00pm-4:00pm	Drop-In Session (Half Term)	Brymbo Enterprise Centre Conference Room
Tuesday 7th November 2023	8:45am-9:30am	Drop-In Session (Morning)	St Mary's School, Brymbo Forest School Site (on yard)
Friday 10th November 2023	2:30pm-3:30pm	Drop-In Session (Afternoon)	St Mary's School, Brymbo Forest School Site (on yard)

Tuesday 14th November 2023	3:15pm-6:00pm	Drop-In Session (Evening)	St Mary's School, Brymbo Parents Evening School Hall
Wednesday 15th November 2023	3:15pm-6:00pm	Drop-In Session (Evening)	St Mary's School, Brymbo Parents Evening School Hall
Wednesday 15th November 2023	9:30am-11:00am	School Council Session	St Mary's School, Brymbo Meeting Room
Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2023	3.30pm-4.30pm	Staff Session	St Mary's School, Brymbo Staff Meeting Room
Thursday 23rd November 2023	2:30pm-3:30pm	Drop-In Session (Afternoon)	St Mary's School, Brymbo Forest School Site (on yard)
Friday 24th November 2023	8:45am-9:30am	Drop-In Session (Morning)	St Mary's School, Brymbo Forest School Site (on yard)
Monday 6th November 2023	12 noon 7pm	Virtual Sessions (Morning and Evening)	Online Email link available

## Consultation Feedback

During the public consultation period Wrexham County Borough Council received the following responses:

Format of Response	Number of Responses Received
Online Responses (Adult Survey)	113
Online Responses (Children and Young People Survey)	27
St. Mary's Brymbo School Council	8

Emails from groups	4
Hard copy profromas	0
<b>Total Responses Received</b>	<b>152</b>

### Quantitative Analysis - Online Survey Responses from Adults

In response to the question 'Do you support the proposal to increase the capacity of St. Mary's Brymbo from 154 to 210 with the potential to increase to 315 if required from September 2025?' 71 out of 113 respondents to the adult survey (**63%**) supported the proposal and 42 out of 113 respondents to the adult survey (**37%**) did not support the proposal.

### Qualitative Analysis- Online Survey Responses from Adults

We also asked people to provide comments if they wished to do so. Feedback from responses to the online survey and emails/letters received has been analysed. The following **17 themes** have been identified:

Theme	Frequency
1. Increased capacity at the school is needed due to housing developments in the area	20
2. Existing school facilities are not fit for purpose / lack of outdoor space	14
3. Concern about impact on Welsh medium education / Welsh language	10
4. Criticism of consultation methodology / process	7
5. The proposal will have a positive impact on the children and their learning	7



6. Traffic / parking / safety concerns at the current school site	6
7. Concern about budget pressures / extra funding needed for the school if capacity is increased	6
8. There is spare capacity in other nearby schools	6
9. It's important for children to be able to attend a school near to where they live	6
10. Concern at delays / how long the new school building is taking	6
11. Concern about staff redundancies / ensure there are enough teaching staff	5
12. Impact on the community / consider community needs	5
13. Concern about impact on Ysgol Tanyfron	4
14. Proposal will have a negative impact on the children and their learning	3
15. 210 / 315 is still not big enough / want a 420 school	3
16. Importance of Worship and Church Schools	2
17. Important to consider the environment / ecological aspects when building the new school	2

In addition to the themes above, one comment stated that pupils with additional learning needs should be taken into account when building the new school and one comment related to the school hosting wrap around care / a day nursery.

Comments from the top ten themes are outlined below:

### **Theme 1 - Increased capacity at the school is needed due to housing developments in the area.**

You told us:

*“It will be needed to educate the children who will be living in the many new houses being built.”*

*“More school places needed in brymbo due to the housing developments but the current school has very little space to expand on its current site.”*

*“With the increase in housing in the area increasing the capacity is the only way forward.”*

### **Theme 2 - Existing school facilities are not fit for purpose / lack of outdoor space.**

You told us:

*“The current school is too small to meet the communities needs, its going to be sad seeing the old school go but can see why they need a new building.”*

*“I support the new school as the old school is too small there is no school field unless the children cross a busy main road.”*

*“The present school building is on a difficult site, is dated with minimal scope for improvement.”*

*“I support this as Brymbo school is currently not big enough and the school has limited outdoor space.”*

### **Theme 3 - Concern about impact on Welsh medium education / Welsh language.**

You told us:

*“ Mae'n bryder byddai cynyddu'r capasiti yn cael effaith ar y niferoedd yn mynychu ysgolion Cymraeg y dalgylch.”*  
*“There is a concern that increasing the capacity would impact the numbers attending Welsh medium schools in the area.”*

“Fe all cynyddu'r capasiti yma gael effaith ar y nifer sydd yn dewis addysg Gymraeg. Yn hytrach na chynyddu'r capasiti yma dylai'r ALL gyfeirio rhieni at ysgolion cyfrwng Cymraeg a hyrwyddo addysg Gymraeg yn y Sir.”

*“Increasing the capacity could have an impact on the numbers choosing Welsh medium education. Rather than increasing the capacity, the LA should refer parents to Welsh medium schools and promote Welsh education in the County.”*

“Does ddim darpariaeth Cymraeg yn yr ardal ac mae hwn yn dangos nad ydych wedi ystyried eich polis au megis y Safonau'r Gymraeg a'ch Cynllun strategol Cymraeg mewn addysg.”

*“There is no Welsh language provision in the area and this shows that you have not given consideration to your policies such as the Welsh Language Standards and your Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.”*

#### **Theme 4 – Criticism of consultation methodology / process.**

You told us:

*“I do not feel you have taken account in your data the families that take there children to school outside of Brymbo. Also brymbo is still developing, which has been delayed like the school and brymbo is set to get bigger and I'm not convinced the number of places is correct. I'd like to see an even higher capacity.”*

*“The proposal does not explain this reduced ambition, either by reference to population changes, birth rate forecasts or other relevant demographic information. I cannot directly see from the consultation document why this reduction in scale is being proposed.”*

*“Insufficient attention has been given to the effect of the proposal on standards of leadership and management and the opportunities that expanding the school can present.”*

#### **Theme 5 - The proposal will have a positive impact on the children and their learning.**

You told us:

*“The children of Brymbo deserve an education which is fit for purpose in the C21 - a new building would allow them to start realising that ambition.”*

*“It is a school with a great and enthusiastic team of staff ready for a new and fit for purpose school to deliver the best education for our village children.”*

*“I believe the new school will provide all children with the opportunity to receive a credible education.”*

### **Theme 6 - Traffic / parking / safety concerns at the current school site.**

You told us:

*“Parking is horrendous.”*

*“Not enough space and parking is terrible”*

*“The promised purpose built facilities are needed as the road can be developed to manage the traffic flow also.”*

### **Theme 7 - Concern about budget pressures / extra funding needed for the school if capacity is increased.**

You told us:

*“I support the increase on the basis that extra funding will be allocated to the school and also that the extra headcount will be factored into the much needed new school due to be built.”*

*“I’m all for expanding the amount of children in village schools, but more children means more teachers or assistants, would the education department be able to fund the extra teachers.”*

*“I support the proposal, providing that the new school is able to accommodate all those children, with adequate teaching staff to ensure that staff have the time to teach each child.”*

### **Theme 8 - There is spare capacity in other nearby schools.**

You told us:

*“Other schools in area already have lots of spare places.”*

*“No need to expand capacity when there are school places available in nearby schools.”*

*“The school is under number currently and there are many other local schools with capacity for any future increases.”*

### **Theme 9 – It’s important for children to be able to attend a school near to where they live.**

You told us:

*“For me, the most important thing is making sure that children have access to local schools that don't require them to take long journeys. Children need to be able to go to school where they live.”*

*“I’m looking to start a family in the near future and want to ensure there are enough spaces for my children to go to school in our area.”*

*“We really want our children to be able to go to school in local community but due to current capacity and growing number of new builds in the area, we’re concerned that may not be possible so we’ve been considering moving away. The increased capacity would be great and is much needed.”*

### **Theme 10 - Concern at delays / how long the new school building is taking.**

You told us:

*“A new school was promised in Brymbo when we moved to the new estate almost 17 years ago. This has never happened.”*

*“I moved here in 2010 we were promised that a new school would be built to facilitate children from both Tanyfron and Brymbo. And that this would be on the old steel works site.”*

*“A new school was promised to be built over 10 years ago, which was the basis for many house sales on the new estate and has still not been started. The council should deliver on their promise.”*

### **Quantitative Analysis - Online Survey – Responses from Children and Young People**

In response to the question ‘How do you feel about our idea to make St. Mary’s school in Brymbo bigger for more pupils?’ 17 out of 27 (**65%**) children and young people supported the proposal and 4 out of 27 (**15%**) children and young people did not support the proposal. 5 out of 27 (**19%**) children and young people said they didn’t know how they felt.

### **Online Survey – Comments from Children and Young People**

- A nurse if people are hurt. A park if people want to play. If you are sad go in the zen den to chill.
- good ideas
- how big will the school be
- I am moving to the new school
- I think it will be good
- I want to stay in this school
- I will be able to spend time with my baby brother before i go to high school
- idk but i know that it would be nice!!
- Increasing capacity will only benefit the area now new houses are being built. A new school will attract more pupils so will need an increased capacity
- is cool
- it is gooddddd
- mack a football
- more spheros/technoligy and molding clay
- What happened to the proposal of a bigger school being built on the old steelworks site and to merge with Tanyfron school? The square footage of current Brymbo school is not big enough to accommodate more children
- What impact will this have on the current pupils at the school. Will it mean increased funding and increased staff to ensure pupils are given the same opportunities as currently available?

- yes i would i think we should have a doge ball area and a PE area a bigger yard and smaller football pitch >:) revenge to the footballers who mean
- yes!

### School Council

A bilingual children’s version of the Consultation Document was published on Wrexham Council’s website alongside the full Consultation Document. A bilingual children’s online survey was also made available.

During the consultation Local Authority Officers met with the School Council to discuss the proposals.

Date	Type of Session	Venue	No. of Consultees
15 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	School Council	St Mary’s School, Brymbo	8 children

During the School Council meeting, the children were asked if they had seen copies of the children’s consultation document and Officers explained what the consultation was about. The children were encouraged to ask any questions and share ideas that they may have.

### Feedback from St. Mary’s Brymbo School Council – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023

In response to the question ‘Do you understand our idea to make St. Mary’s school in Brymbo bigger for more pupils?’ 5 out of 8 pupils (**63%**) on the School Council said they did understand and 3 out of 8 pupils (**37%**) on the School Council said they were not sure if they understand.

In response to the question ‘How do you feel about our idea to make St. Mary’s school in Brymbo bigger for more pupils?’ 7 out of 8 pupils (**88%**) on the School Council said they liked the idea and 1 out of 8 pupils (**12%**) on the School Council said they were not sure if they liked the idea.

### Comments from the School Council

- What will happen to this school?
- Is there going to be traffic lights?
- What would happen to this school? Would it be equal friendly? Is there going to be traffic lights? Is it going to be safe
- I will be in year 8. My little brother \*name\* will be in the school
- I will still be in this school – I will love a football pitch
- Excited about new people coming to a new school and think of my baby brother
- Is it be safe?
- I feel happy seeing new people \*name\*
- Concerned what will happen to this building – I like it want my younger siblings to see where I went to school
- Better outside space needed
- Happy to have more friends to learn more about them and their life
- Think you should be able to go to the school by your house not in town

In addition to asking whether people supported or did not support the proposal, we asked questions about how fair people thought the proposal was. Not all respondents chose to answer the ‘treating everybody fairly’ section in the survey.

**Treating Everybody Fairly - 69** respondents chose to answer this question.

Do you think this proposal could disadvantage or make things unfair for any groups of people or individuals?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Yes	24	34.78%
No	34	49.28%
Not sure/don't know	11	15.94%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>

**29** respondents chose to answer the free text question ‘If you think this proposal could disadvantage or make things unfair for any groups of people or individuals, which groups or individuals do you think may be disadvantaged and why?’ The following groups of people were identified in these **29** responses:



- Welsh medium schools – due to the proposal being focused on an English medium school.
- Ysgol Tanyfron / other English medium schools in the area – due to possible mergers.
- The community – due to increased traffic, parking issues, access to transport.
- Pupils with additional learning needs – due to disability and mobility.
- School staff – due to potential redundancy / budget pressures.

**27** respondents chose to answer the free text question ‘Do you think there is any potential in the way we deliver this proposal to make things fairer for the groups or individuals you have identified?’ Some examples of the suggestions put forward in these **27** responses were:

- Provide better transport and parking facilities.
- Promote Welsh language and Welsh education in the Brymbo area.
- Offer Welsh medium education in the new school.
- Increase capacity at the school to 420 and include wrap around childcare facilities.

### **Welsh Language**

We also asked people for their ideas to promote the use of the Welsh language and ensure it is treated no less favourably than the English language in the delivery of the proposal. Not all respondents chose to answer the Welsh Language section in the survey. **31** respondents chose to answer the free text question ‘Do you have any ideas as to how we can promote the use of Welsh language and ensure it is treated no less favourably than the English language in the delivery of this proposal? Some examples of the suggestions put forward in these **31** responses were:

- Encourage parents to choose Welsh medium education / build a new Welsh medium school in Brymbo.
- Welsh language provision needs to be developed before offering more English medium places.
- Welsh teaching is already strong at the school and in local schools.
- Utilise the empty spaces that are in the Welsh schools.
- Ensure bilingual signage with Welsh wording first.

## Carbon

We asked people whether they thought the proposal would have any long lasting positive or negative impacts on reducing carbon in our environment. Not all respondents chose to answer the carbon section in the survey. **69** respondents chose to answer this question.

Do you think this proposal will have any long lasting positive or negative impacts on reducing carbon in our environment?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Long lasting positive impact	24	38.10%
Long lasting negative impact	11	17.46%
Both long lasting positive and negative impacts	8	12.70%
No impact	6	9.52%
Don't know/not sure	14	22.22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>

**16** respondents chose to answer the free text question 'If you have identified any long lasting negative impacts, please describe these below, along with any ideas to reduce them.' Some examples of the suggestions put forward in these **16** responses were:

- Reduce impact on carbon footprint by encouraging walking and cycling to school.
- Consider the environmental impacts of the school and energy saving initiatives.
- Use existing capacity in local schools which are already heating and lighting their premises.
- Concern regarding the amount of families accessing childcare and schools outside the local area.

## Equality Monitoring Data – 'About You'

We asked a number of equality monitoring questions in the survey under the heading 'About You'. Not all respondents chose to answer the 'about you' section of the survey. Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age

- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief – including lack of belief
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

In addition, the socio-economic duty requires Local Authorities in Wales when taking strategic decisions, to have due regard to the need to reduce the inequalities outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

**Age - 47** respondents chose to answer this question.

What is your age?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Under 11	0	0%
11-15 years	0	0%
16-24 years	3	6.38%
25-34 years	6	12.77%
35-44 years	16	34.04%
45-54 years	8	17.02%
55-64 years	8	17.02%
65-74 years	5	10.64%
75 and above	0	0%
Prefer not to say	1	2.13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Sex – 48** respondents chose to answer this question.

What is your gender?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Male	13	27.08%
Female	35	72.92%
Other	0	0%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Gender Reassignment – 48** respondents chose to answer this question.

Has your gender identity changed from that assigned at birth?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Yes	2	4.17%
No	46	95.83%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Race – National Identify – 48** respondents chose to answer this question.

How would you describe your national identity?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Welsh	30	62.50%
English	4	8.33%
Scottish	1	2.08%

Northern Irish	0	0%
British	13	27.08%
Other	0	0%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Race – Ethnicity – 49** respondents chose to answer this question

What is your ethnic group?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
White (Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish or British)	49	100%
Irish	0	0%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0%
Roma	0	0%
Any other White background	0	0%
Asian – Indian	0	0%
Asian – Pakistani	0	0%
Asian – Bangladeshi	0	0%
Asian – Chinese	0	0%
Asian - any other Asian background	0	0%
Black – Caribbean	0	0%
Black – African	0	0%
Black - any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background	0	0%
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	0	0%
Mixed - White and Black African	0	0%
Mixed - White and Asian	0	0%

Any other Mixed or multiple ethnic background	0	0%
Arab	0	0%
Any other ethnicity	0	0%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Disability – 48** respondents chose to answer this question.

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Yes, limited a lot	1	2.08%
Yes, limited a little	5	10.42%
No	42	87.50%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Pregnancy and Maternity – 48** respondents chose to answer this question.

Are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant, or taken maternity leave in the last year?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Yes	2	4.17%
No	45	93.75%
Prefer not to say	1	2.08%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Sexual Orientation - 48** respondents chose to answer this question.

Which of the following best describes how you think of yourself?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Heterosexual or straight	46	95.83%
Gay man	0	0%
Gay woman/Lesbian	0	0%
Bisexual	1	2.08%
Other	1	2.08%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Religion or Belief (including lack of belief) - 48** respondents chose to answer this question.

What is your religion or belief?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
No religion	18	37.50%
Christian (all denominations)	27	56.25%
Muslim	0	0%
Buddhist	0	0%
Hindu	0	0%
Jewish	0	0%
Sikh	0	0%
Atheist	1	2.08%
Other	2	4.17%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Marriage and Civil Partnership – 48** respondents chose to answer this question.

Are you married or in a civil partnership?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Yes	31	64.58%
No	16	33.33%
I am a young person aged under 18	0	0%
I am a widow/widower	0	0%
Prefer not to say	1	2.08%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Socio-Economic Deprivation – Means Tested Benefits – 48** respondents chose to answer this question.

Do you or your household receive any means tested benefits (For example: Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Job Seekers Allowance, Tax Credits, Carers Allowance, Council Tax Reduction Scheme)?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Yes	8	16.67%
No	38	79.17%
Prefer not to say	2	4.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Socio-Economic Deprivation – Disability Benefits – 47** respondents chose to answer this question.



Do you or anyone living in your household receive disability benefits (For example: Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Armed Forces Independence Payment, Constant Attendance Allowance, War Pension Mobility Supplement)?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Yes	6	12.77%
No	39	82.98%
Prefer not to say	2	4.26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Electoral Ward – 47** respondents chose to answer this question.

Electoral Ward	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Acrefair North	0	0%
Acton and Maesydre	3	6.38%
Bangor-is-y-Coed	0	0%
Borras Park	1	2.13%
Bronington and Hanmer	0	0%
Brymbo	23	48.94%
Bryn Cefn	1	2.13%
Brynffynnon	0	0%
Cartrefle	0	0%
Cefn East	0	0%
Cefn West	0	0%
Ceiriog Valley	0	0%
Chirk North	0	0%
Chirk South	0	0%

Coedpoeth	4	8.51%
Erddig	0	0%
Esclusham	1	2.13%
Garden Village	0	0%
Gresford East/West	0	0%
Grosvenor	0	0%
Gwenfro	0	0%
Gwersyllt East	1	2.13%
Gwersyllt North	0	0%
Gwersyllt South	0	0%
Gwersyllt West	0	0%
Hermitage	0	0%
Holt	0	0%
Little Acton	0	0%
Llangollen Rural	0	0%
Llay	1	2.13%
Marchwiell	0	0%
Marford and Hoseley	0	0%
Minera	0	0%
New Broughton	2	4.26%
Offa	0	0%
Overton and Maelor South	0	0%
Pant and Johnstown	0	0%
Pen-y-cae	0	0%
Pen-y-cae and Ruabon South	0	0%
Ponciau	0	0%
Queensway	0	0%
Rhos	2	4.26%

Rhosnesni	0	0%
Rossett	0	0%
Ruabon	1	2.13%
Smithfield	0	0%
Stansty	0	0%
Whitegate	0	0%
Wynnstay	0	0%
I do not live in Wrexham	4	8.51%
Prefer not to say	3	6.38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Language – 49** respondents chose to answer this question.

What is your preferred language?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
English	38	77.55%
Welsh	10	20.41%
Other	0	0%
Prefer not to say	1	2.04%
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Survey Quality Monitoring Questions

At the end of the survey, we asked three questions about people's experiences of completing the survey. Not all people chose to answer the survey quality monitoring questions.

In response to the question 'How easy did you find this survey to complete?' **59** respondents chose to answer.

How easy did you find this survey to complete?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Very easy	32	54.24%
Quite easy	25	42.37%
Quite difficult	0	0%
Very difficult	0	0%
Don't know/Not sure	2	3.39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

In response to the question 'In your view did we ask the right questions about the subject of this survey?' **60** respondents chose to answer.

In your view did we ask the right questions about the subject of this survey?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Yes	44	73.33%
No	6	10%
Not sure	10	16.67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

In response to the question 'When we asked a question was it clear what we were asking?' **57** respondents chose to answer.

When we asked a question was it clear what we were asking?	Number of Respondents (who answered this question)	Percentage of Respondents (who answered this question)
Yes	53	92.98%
No	2	3.51%
Not sure	2	3.51%

Total	57	100%
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### **Feedback from Groups / Emails**

Feedback received from Groups via emails and/or letters can be found in the Members Library. Feedback and themes from the emails / letters have been included in the findings.

### **ESTYN Feedback**

Estyn response to the proposal from Wrexham County Borough Council to increase the pupil capacity at St. Mary's Church in Wales Voluntary Aided School in Brymbo from 154 to 210 with the potential to increase further to 315 if required as a result of future housing developments.

### **This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales**

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn.

However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore, as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information, such as Welsh Government data and the views of the Regional Consortium that provides school improvement services to the schools in the proposal.

### **Summary/Conclusion**

The proposer has provided useful information which explains the rationale behind this proposal. The options have been given consideration as follows:-

- adapting/extending the existing building and continuing to educate pupils on the site
- relocating to a new site and increasing the school's capacity from 154 to 210, with the potential to increase further to 315, if necessary, as a result of future housing developments

The proposer is of the opinion that the building at the current site is unsuitable for an extension and, as a result, only proposes the second option. Estyn is of the opinion that the proposal is likely to maintain or improve the current standards in terms of education, provision, and leadership and management.

## **ESTYN Feedback**

### **Description and benefits**

The rationale for this proposal is sound and appropriate attention has been given to the considerations. The evidence is based on valid facts and considerations and the proposer has provided a clear timetable for the statutory procedures and the implementation of the proposal. On the whole, the proposer states the expected advantages and disadvantages of the proposal clearly in comparison with the status quo. They have given detailed consideration to the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives and clear and valid reasons have been given for disregarding these options. They do not believe that the current building provides suitable accommodation for delivering the new curriculum. Lack of space and the current location present challenges in terms of delivering important aspects of the curriculum. For example, the school uses a playing field that is situated a kilometre away from the building, which pupils must access by crossing a busy road.

The proposal will ensure better opportunities to deliver the Curriculum for Wales in full across the age range. The new building is expected to have a positive effect on the well-being of pupils by providing modern and fit-for-purpose accommodation and including innovative features that will contribute to carbon-free operation.

The proposal has given clear consideration to any impact of the changes on the travel arrangements for learners. Adding to the capacity of St Mary's Church in Wales Voluntary Aided School on a new site would mean that more children would have the opportunity to secure a place at a faith school closer to their home address. In turn, this would have a positive effect on transport. Some pupils and parents may have to travel a little further to access the new school site if they live very close to the current site. Any additional traffic caused by the increase in capacity will be mitigated by providing better parking facilities at the new site. This would be linked to new road infrastructure and mapping new walking routes to encourage sustainable travel. A reduction in traffic around the current site is predicted once the school relocates. No additional transport costs are anticipated for the council as there will be no need to transport pupils to the next nearest faith school.

The proposer has given suitable consideration to the effect of the new school on school capacity and the effect on surplus places. With the additional capacity, a gradual increase in the number of pupils at the school is expected from September 2025 onwards. It is expected that pressure on the capacity of oversubscribed local schools will decrease. The proposal does not give sufficient consideration to how risks to other schools in the area that will be affected will be managed. An increase in faith nursery provision is expected, in line with the new admission numbers.

### **ESTYN Feedback**

The proposer has given suitable consideration to the financial costs for the school. The revenue budget is estimated over time, paying attention to the fact that pupils who are already in other primary schools in Wrexham county would not attract additional costs as the money is already in the system. The proposal does not consider the impact on the budgets of other schools in the area, bearing in mind that pupil numbers in five out of six are expected to fall over time.

Also, no consideration is given to how the new school will face the challenges of coping with an annual increase in numbers in September (over a period of time), with the budget for the financial year having already been set based on the numbers in January that year. The proposer expects significant energy efficiency savings from moving to the new school as a result of the reduction in energy use, but they do not elaborate further.

The proposal does not refer to how the governing body of the voluntary aided school will be able to shoulder its financial responsibilities for repairs and capital work. There is no clarity in terms of how the proposed arrangements for the tenure of the land would provide sufficient assurance that the school will retain the site.

The local authority has provided a Welsh Language Impact Assessment as part of the proposal. As the reorganisation of English-medium provision is the basis of the proposal, no significant impact is expected on Welsh-medium provision.

The local authority has provided a Community Impact Assessment as part of this proposal.

### **Educational aspects of the proposal**

The proposer has given some consideration to the effect of the proposal on the quality of outcomes, provision, and leadership and management. They are of the opinion that the proposal addresses challenges within the area which have the potential to affect the sustainability of high-quality provision in the future.

It is anticipated that this proposal will build on the current standards, with the intention of strengthening and improving educational provision. The new and larger space will facilitate more engagement between pupils, enjoyment in their learning and will have a positive effect on their well-being.

The proposer states that input from the school and the Diocese into the design of the new site will improve the school's ability to deliver a modern curriculum across the age range. The vision is to provide a school that has a clear connection with the natural world, for example by providing appropriate habitats on the site that will enable pupils to learn first-hand about aspects such as climate change and loss of biodiversity.

## **ESTYN Feedback**

Appropriate consideration is given to the effect on pupils with additional learning needs. No long-term negative effects are anticipated as the pupils who attend the resourced provision unit and the current school provision move to the new building. The improved resources are expected to facilitate an increase in the quality of teaching and learning. The proposal has not outlined any transition arrangements for these pupils.

The proposal is unlikely to expand or have a negative effect on Welsh-medium provision as the affected school is an English-medium faith provision. Appropriate consideration has been given to the effect on groups of vulnerable pupils and ensuring equality. There are no concerns that the scheme will have any effect in terms of these aspects.

It is recognised that it will be necessary to appoint additional staff at the school as the increase in the admission number in the nursery and reception class filters through the school over time. The gradual increase in the admission number provides plenty of time for the school to review how it provides the structure of its classes and to recruit staff as necessary.

No adverse effect is anticipated in terms of pupils' well-being and attitudes to learning. The council has ensured that there will be as little disruption as possible to learners. No temporary measures will be needed, for example the relocation of classes during the construction period, as the new school would be developed on a new site.

Insufficient attention has been given to the effect of the proposal on standards of leadership and management and the opportunities that expanding the school can present. Estyn's report from October 2018 shows that the school received five 'Adequate and needs improvement' grades against the five inspection areas of the Inspection Framework. Following Estyn's monitoring visit in March 2020, it was judged that the school had made good progress in relation to the recommendations given and it was therefore removed from the list of schools that require Estyn monitoring. The proposal includes links to the inspection reports of other schools in the area that are affected by the proposed changes.

## **Welsh Language Impact Assessment**

Following feedback through the public consultation and discussions with the Welsh Language Commissioner, elements of the Welsh Language Impact Assessment were reviewed and the consultation period was extended by a further 6 weeks. Officers from across the Council attended a seminar held by the Welsh Language Commissioner's office in relation to consultations and Welsh language impact assessments and a meeting was held corporately with colleagues from the Welsh Language Commissioners Office.

A number of Officers worked collaboratively to review and consider the impacts of the proposal on Welsh education and Welsh



language, including Officers from the Access & School Places Team, the Council's Welsh Language Strategic Officer, Wrexham's Welsh Immersion Service and Senior Education Officers with expertise in Welsh medium education.

The revised Welsh Language Impact Assessment includes a number of negative impacts and the mitigations in place which aim to reduce these impacts on various factors that could affect the Welsh language and Welsh culture. We have stated that we recognise there is more work to be undertaken as part of our drive to actively promote Welsh medium education, address shortfalls in our Welsh medium ALN provision and to upskill staff competency. We are confident that our work on these WESP objectives will minimise and mitigate any potential impacts from the proposal as we continue to promote and raise the profile of Welsh medium education. The Welsh Language Impact Assessment was available to view / download from the [St. Mary's Brymbo consultation webpage](#). Hard copies were made available on request. We continue to work towards developing more robust impact assessments and aim to involve key experts at an earlier stage to gather their thoughts, ideas and insights in relation to potential impacts of proposals relating to school organisation.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Frequently asked questions were captured during the public consultation. A designated 'Frequently Asked Questions' section with responses was uploaded to the [St. Mary's Brymbo consultation webpage](#) on the Council's website.

### **Overall Summary of Findings**

#### **In support of the proposal:**

**71 (63%)** out of 113 responses to the adult survey were in support of the proposal.

**17 (65%)** out of 27 responses to the children and young people survey were in support of the proposal.

**7 (88%)** out of 8 responses from the School Council were in support of the proposal.

#### **Not in support of the proposal:**

**42 (37%)** out of 113 responses to the adult survey did not support the proposal.

**4 (15%)** out of 27 responses to the children and young people survey did not support the proposal.

**0 (0%)** out of 8 responses from the School Council did not support the proposal.

### **Unsure**

**5 (19%)** out of 27 children and young people said they didn't know how they felt.

**1 (12%)** out of 8 of the School Council said they were not sure if they liked the idea.

### **Group Responses**

3 out of 4 of the group responses were in support of the proposal and 1 group response was not in favour of the proposal.

The main **positive** points in support of the proposal were:

- Increased capacity at the school is needed due to housing developments in the area.
- Existing school facilities are not fit for purpose / lack of outdoor space.
- The proposal will have a positive impact on the children and their learning.
- Traffic / parking / safety concerns at the current school site.

The main **areas of concern** were:

- Concern about impact on Welsh medium education / Welsh language.
- Criticism of consultation methodology / process.
- Concern about budget pressures / extra funding needed for the school if capacity is increased.
- There is spare capacity in other nearby schools.

Consultation responses indicated that a higher proportion of respondents supported the proposal compared with those who did not support the proposal.

### **Conclusion**

If a decision is taken not to proceed with the current proposal it is likely that, given the potential increase in demand for pupil places arising from the proposed housing developments, temporary accommodation may need to be provided on current sites which is at

best a short-term solution. The Local Authority believes that despite concerns raised the proposal to increase the capacity at St. Mary's Church in Wales School, Brymbo is the most effective use of resources available.

### **Executive Board Decision**

Wrexham County Borough Council Executive Board will meet on **9 April 2024** to discuss the consultation in relation to the proposal to increase the pupil capacity at St. Mary's Brymbo. The Executive Board will be asked for approval to continue to the Statutory Notice stage in determining the increase in pupil capacity at St. Mary's Brymbo. This consists of a 28 day formal Objection Period whereby any objections to the proposal must be made in writing. Following this the Local Authority will return to the Executive Board to determine the final decision.

**We would like to thank everyone who responded to the consultation and to those who helped us to arrange and promote engagement with the community and the school.**