

Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-660
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/00156/16
William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

9 February 2016

Dear William

Thank you for your letter dated 17 January regarding the petition from Save Powys Schools which received its first reading on 8 December, enclosing additional information for comment.

I have noted the information you provided regarding the closure of Beguildy Church in Wales Primary School and '*The Additional Pressures on Funding for Education Provision Faced by Sparsely populated Rural Areas*' and thank you for supplying this.

With regard to the closure of primary schools and its impact on the local community; it is for Local Authorities to develop proposals in the light of local needs and circumstances. Local people have the opportunity to give their views during consultation and objection periods. Opposing views must be taken account of before decisions are made.

Local Authorities are best placed to plan school places, and should keep their school estate under review to ensure that it is providing efficiently and effectively for all learners. In so doing Local Authorities must comply with the School Organisation Code and must consider a range of factors before proposing change. Of prime importance is the impact of proposals on quality and standards in education.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The revenue funding we provide to Local Authorities each year is distributed according to relative need, using a formula which takes account of a wealth of information on the demographic, physical, economic and social characteristics of Authorities. The Local Government distribution formula is kept under a continual programme of review and improvement which is overseen by the Finance Sub Group of the Partnership Council for Wales. This is done in detailed consultation with Local Government through the Distribution Sub Group, whose members include officials from a number of Authorities from across Wales and the WLGA. It also includes independent experts, who ensure there is no evidence of bias either in favour of, or against, the interests of any individual Local Authority.

Parents have the right to express a preference for a place for their child at any school and if there are places available they should normally be admitted. There has long been a relatively low level of pupil movement in both directions between Local Authorities situated on either side of the Wales/England border arising from the exercise of parental preference, and it is reasonable to expect this to continue in the future. The Welsh Government is not aware of any research that has been undertaken in this area and we do not collect or hold the necessary data that would facilitate this form of analysis.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Huw Lewis'.

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