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Committee Service
Sustainable Development and Rural Development
National Assembly

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To whom it may concern:

I am writing as evidence to the above committee, on the subject of small village / community schools in Wales.

As a grandparent living in the village of Gladestry, I have had the good fortune to observe at first hand the effect on my three grandchildren of the education they have received at Gladestry Church in Wales school, both in learning and in personal development. This has caused me to very strongly

support the retention of village schools such as this one.

It has seemed to me that the educational achievement of the pupils has been excellent. The small classes, and personal detailed attention of the teachers, benefit children so much. Every child truly is an individual in a small school setting. And, in spite of its smallness, the school nevertheless gives the children a great variety of educational experience both inside and outside the classroom.

Children from small schools do not suffer when they progress to larger secondary schools - they move on with confidence, in my experience.

This is perhaps because ^{of} the personal development of children in a small school: they benefit from the mixed-age environment, learn responsibility for younger pupils, friendship across

the narrow age band, and a relationship to the wider community of the village. Much is said these days about the vital need for the involvement of parents with their children's education - an involvement very noticeably achieved by a small school, where families and teachers can really relate to each other.

And since the committees are considering rural development and sustainable development in general, not just where education is concerned, I would like to finish by making the (extremely obvious) point that the existence of the village school is of prime importance to the sustainability of the village as a true community. Once the school goes, the village is diminished to something almost like a dormitory suburb. Sustainability is surely not only about environmental issues - though these too are served by the community school, in that transport

to larger towns (cost PLUS pollution PLUS
use of fossil fuel) is avoided - but
about preserving and enhancing villages
as real, mixed, living communities.
The school is a huge contributor to this,
I believe.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Bull