

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Dunbartonshire Council to establish a new school to support Additional Support Needs at former Riverside Early Learning and Childcare centre.

December 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of West Dunbartonshire Council's proposal for the establishment of a new school to support additional support needs at the former Riverside Early Learning and Childcare Centre. The new school will be part of a shared campus with St Martin's Primary School. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the existing primary school; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 25 October 2022 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;
- visits to the site of St Martin's Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees; and
- engagement with the Archbishop of Glasgow's representative

2. Consultation process

2.1 West Dunbartonshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The consultation ran from Monday 3 October until Friday 11 November 2022. A public meeting took place on Tuesday 25 October 2022 in St Martin's Primary School. Twelve members of the public attended plus three members of staff from St Martin's Primary School. Members of public were encouraged to respond to the consultation through the online survey, by phone or in

writing. Seven written responses were received with six stating they are in favour of the proposal. There is general support for the proposal across all groups of stakeholders.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council believes that the proposal will provide a range of educational benefits for young people with additional support needs from across the authority. The re-development of the building will provide modern educational facilities to support the delivery of the curriculum. They also believe that the new building, which will be fully accessible, will support the complex needs of the young people attending. HM Inspectors agree that the new facility will enhance the current provision for children and young people with additional support needs across West Dunbartonshire. The shared campus will ensure that the building that is currently empty, is put to good use. It will provide 36 places for young people to be educated closer to their local community, reducing the need for travel elsewhere.

3.2 Almost all stakeholders who spoke with HM Inspectors or responded in writing are supportive of the proposals. They recognise that it will enhance the current provision in West Dunbartonshire. Parents of children with additional support needs, who may become pupils in the coming years, are supportive of the new development. They are keen that there is the option for their children to be educated locally. Staff and children from St Martin's Primary School also welcome the development. They recognise the educational benefits of working collaboratively and sharing resources. However, several stakeholders told us that they would like early sight of the proposed plans for the new building. This should help to alleviate some of the anxiety about how the two schools will share facilities. A few stakeholders expressed some reservations in terms of safety regarding car parking and access at the school at busy times.

3.3 The Archdiocese of Glasgow responded in writing to the proposal and a meeting took place with the Archbishop's representative in West Dunbartonshire. The Archdiocese welcomes the fact that the co-location of the two schools will be in accordance with the Catholic Church's protocols for co-located establishments. Given that the young people moving into the new building will be of secondary age, the Archdiocese felt that care should be taken to ensure that there are separate entrances to the two schools. They further noted that any connecting doors between the schools should ensure the safety of children and young people at all times and that shared use of facilities be appropriately timetabled.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has the potential to bring clear educational benefits for young people with additional support needs attending the new school. A shared campus will create joint learning opportunities for both the new school and the existing primary school. In order to alleviate any concerns that stakeholders may have about the layout of the building, the council should share proposed plans as soon as is practicable. Should the proposal go ahead, the council should ensure that all stakeholders are kept fully up to date with developments.

**HM Inspectors
December 2022**