

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HM Inspectors of Education addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Dunbartonshire Council to establish a new educational campus on the current St Joseph's Primary School site comprising co-located new-build replacements for Edinbarnet Primary School and St Joseph's Primary School, St Joseph's Rainbow Base, and a new Early Learning and Childcare Centre (ELCC) to replace Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCCs and to also include a community library and community space.

December 2021

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her 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 impartial consideration of West Dunbartonshire Council's proposal to establish a new educational campus on the current St Joseph's Primary School site comprising co-located new-build replacements for Edinbarnet and St Joseph's Primary Schools, St Joseph's Rainbow Base and a new ELCC to replace Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCCs and to also include a community library and community space. As part of this, from August 2025, the cessation of educational provision in the current buildings housing Edinbarnet and St Joseph's Primary Schools, St Joseph's Rainbow Base and closure of Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCCs. 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 2010 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 school and ELCC settings; any other users; 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 5 October 2021 in connection with the council's proposal;
- 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; and
- virtual visits to the site of Edinbarnet Primary School, St Joseph's Primary School, St Joseph's Rainbow Base and Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCCs, including discussion with relevant consultees.

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 West Dunbartonshire Council consulted stakeholders between the 30 September and the 17 November 2021. Public meetings took place on the 5 October 2021. Details of the public meetings and the proposals were made available at the reception area in all the schools and settings involved in this consultation. In addition, information was made available at West Dunbartonshire Council offices, Clydebank Library and on West Dunbartonshire Council's website, and a Public Notice in the Dumbarton Reporter and Clydebank Post. In total, 78 people responded to the online consultation. Of the 78 respondents, 41 were in favour of the proposal and 32 were against with five undecided. Reasons for supporting the proposal included the benefits from all children being together on one campus, having more modern facilities and ease of public transport links. The main reasons for opposing the proposal related to the change in nursery provision, traffic management and the choice of location for the new campus. A number of respondents preferred the Edinbarnet Primary School site as the best option for the new campus due to the size of its grounds and its location.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 From August 2025, West Dunbartonshire Council propose to discontinue educational provision in the current buildings housing Edinbarnet Primary School and St Joseph's Primary School, St Joseph's Rainbow Base and closure of Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCCs. They will then relocate to a new educational campus on the current St Joseph's Primary School site comprising co-located new-build replacements for Edinbarnet Primary School and St Joseph's Primary School, St Joseph's Rainbow Base and a new ELCC to replace Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCCs. The campus will also include a community library and community space. The pupils and staff of Edinbarnet Primary School, St Joseph's Primary School, St Joseph's Rainbow Base, and the children and staff of Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCC will remain in their existing buildings during the construction period on the St Joseph's existing site.

3.2 The council has set out a reasonable case in support of its proposal. There will be a number of potential educational benefits for children and staff should the proposal go ahead. The provision of a modern, purpose built campus offers an improved learning environment designed to suit the demands of a 21st century curriculum. Children will have access to enhanced internal and external sports and play facilities. External areas of the site will be designed and developed to provide safe, secure and educationally stimulating outdoor environments, to support recreation and play. They intend to include suitable areas of soft and hard landscaping incorporating seating and an all weather sports pitch. Included are plans to have areas capable of being developed by staff and pupils as part of 'grounds for learning' initiatives and other environmental education and outdoor learning opportunities. The plans include latest Information and communications technology to enhance learning. There would be a specially designed general purpose and library area to encourage independent and collaborative learning. In the case of the Rainbow Additional Support Needs Base, the proposal includes providing a range of modern and appropriate facilities for the educational, support and care needs of children with complex needs.

3.3 While Edinbarnet Primary School and St Joseph's Primary School will continue to operate as separate establishments, sharing a campus will facilitate the development of similar projects and embed collaborative working. There will also be educational benefits from the professional dialogue among staff from the two primary schools and ELCC being enriched by the fact that they share the same campus. Transition from pre-school to Primary 1 will be enhanced by the fact that the two schools will share their building with a large ELCC. The fact that the new ELCC will be

much larger than the two ELCC establishments it is replacing will afford the management team greater flexibility in the deployment of staff and the grouping of children. In addition, having children in the one large ELCC removes the need to move children at 3 years of age to alternative provision, therefore providing better continuity of learning.

3.4 Staff in the St Joseph's Primary School, Edinbarnet Primary School, Lennox ELCC and Auchnacraig ELCC who met with HM Inspectors were positive, overall, about the proposal. They can see benefits for children working in a building that is fit for purpose. They were enthusiastic about the benefits of shared working and ease of transition in learning for children. Staff all raised concerns regarding parking and traffic management for the numbers accessing the site, including the general public using the shared community facilities. They would like clarification that the design of the building will meet the needs of all children, including those with particular barriers to learning. Staff also queried how the new site will replicate the well-developed outdoor learning areas presently used to deliver Curriculum for Excellence in their current schools and settings.

3.5 Staff in both Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCC would like clarification on the leadership structure of the new ELCC and reassurance about staff job security. Edinbarnet Primary School staff accessed information about the proposal from the Local Authority website. They did not have access to information about how the proposal will affect them as staff. Parents of children at Edinbarnet Primary School and Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCC are concerned about traffic management and road safety issues at the new site. A few stakeholders are not aware of options about the proposed site location. As a result, they are unclear why St Joseph's Primary School site is West Dunbartonshire Council's preferred location and if there is an alternative. Concerns about the amount, use and governance of community space at the new site were shared with HM Inspectors.

3.6 Children from Edinbarnet Primary School and St Joseph's Primary School who met with HM Inspectors were very positive about the proposal. They shared ideas about the improvements for children's learning emphasising that they want to share learning opportunities and social spaces with children from the other primary school.

3.7 The Archdiocese of Glasgow supports the proposal in relation to the educational benefits it will bring to children of St Joseph's Primary School and the wider community. Whilst they accept the proposal for the shared campus, they ask that the council engage with them regularly during the process regarding the design of the building.

4. Summary

West Dunbartonshire Council's proposals to establish a new educational campus on the current St Joseph's Primary School site comprising co-located new-build replacements for Edinbarnet and St Joseph's Primary Schools, St Joseph's Rainbow Base and a new ELCC to replace Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCCs and to also include a community library and community space is well considered and has clear educational benefits. The council's proposal, if it goes ahead will provide children with new buildings that supports learning and teaching styles of the 21st century. For children attending the St Joseph's Rainbow Base the proposal would provide them with purpose built accommodation to better meet their needs. The larger professional community created will promote opportunities for joint professional learning and increased collaboration.

Parents from both schools and the ELCCs expressed traffic management concerns. Stakeholders in Edinbarnet Primary School, Auchnacraig and Lennox ELCC were unclear about the benefits of locating the campus of the site of St Joseph's Primary School. Staff in both ELCCs sought clarification on their future employment and on the leadership of the new larger ELCC. In taking forward the proposal, the council should continue to consult and communicate effectively with

children, parents, staff and the wider community to engage them fully in the future planning and design stages of this proposal. This includes sharing information from the options paper presented to committee about the preferred use of the St Joseph's site over Edinbarnet.

HM Inspectors
December 2021

