

# **Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Perth and Kinross Council to establish Additional Support Needs Specialist Provision at Errol Primary School with effect from August 2016.**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments contained in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Perth and Kinross Council's proposal to establish specialist provision for children with additional support needs at Errol Primary School with effect from August 2016. 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 a copy of 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. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all legislative obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

### 1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the school; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper;
- 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 February 2015 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;

- visit to the site of Errol Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## **2. Consultation Process**

2.1 Perth and Kinross Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The council proposes to establish specialist provision for children with additional support needs with effect from August 2016. Perth and Kinross Council formally consulted stakeholders between 7 January 2015 and 27 February 2015. Notices about the proposal were placed in local newspapers and on Perth and Kinross Council's website. Letters containing an electronic link to the consultation proposal document were sent directly to all relevant consultees. A public meeting was held on Thursday 5 February 2015 in Errol Primary School. A small number of written responses were received by the close of the formal consultation period. Overall, these were in favour of the proposal.

2.2 Errol Primary School has been subject to a feasibility study due to an increasing school roll. As a result, the council intends to build additional classroom space and expand the nursery provision to meet the growing needs of the pupil population. In addition, the council proposes to establish a specialist provision for pupils with complex additional support needs within the school. This would comprise of two classrooms, a nurture space, sensory room and associated ancillary areas. This report relates only to the planned expansion of Errol Primary School in regards to establishing this specialist provision, and not to the other planned developments.

## **3. Educational Aspects of Proposal**

3.1 Perth and Kinross Council's proposal to establish Additional Support Needs Specialist Provision at Errol Primary School with effect from August 2016 is of clear educational benefit. The council sets out clearly the many educational benefits of establishing this provision as part of the planned expansion of Errol Primary School. The council has identified a need to increase provision of additional support needs education based on an analysis of current and future needs. This proposal would help the council to address this pressure. In addition, pupils from the local area who have complex additional support needs presently often have to travel to schools in areas such as Perth, which is beyond their local area and can result in extended travel times. This proposal would allow Perth and Kinross Council to provide children with a specialist provision that is more local and, as a result, would potentially reduce travel times for some children. Children would attend the new provision on the basis of assessment of need, following established council procedures. They would benefit from the expertise of a range of teachers and specialist staff within a high-quality learning environment that would be designed to meet their needs within a mainstream school. Planned opportunities for working with children from the mainstream classes would further help their learning and development.

3.2 In addition to the clear benefits for the pupils who may be placed in the provision according to their individual needs, this proposal has the potential to provide further benefits for the current and future staff and pupils of Errol Primary School. Opportunities for joint working and sharing expertise would be enhanced and facilities shared. This would benefit all children and promote inclusive practices.

3.3 Almost all parents and staff, who met with HM Inspectors, were in favour of the proposal. They appreciated the council's planned investment in the expansion of Errol Primary School, and considered that, within this, a dedicated provision for children with complex needs would add another positive dimension to the school. All supported the need for a more localised approach to supporting children with complex needs. A few parents and staff sought further clarity through the consultation process about the details around the proposal. These included arrangements for entering and accessing different parts of the school for different pupil groups. Parents were also keen to ensure that children who currently attend Errol Primary School, including those who have additional support needs, would also benefit from the new provision. Should the proposal go ahead, the council has acknowledged the need for robust planning arrangements for managing and operating the new specialist provision within Errol Primary School. Children were excited at the prospect of making new friends and sharing their welcoming school ethos with others. Overall, stakeholders considered that this proposal would potentially provide rich opportunities for shared working between staff and children, and would help to promote inclusion and equal opportunities for all.

#### **4. Summary**

Perth and Kinross Council's proposal to establish Additional Support Needs Specialist Provision at Errol Primary School with effect from August 2016 is of clear educational benefit. Perth and Kinross Council has identified a present and future need to increase educational provision for children within the authority who have complex additional support needs. The establishment of such a provision at Errol Primary School will help the council to fulfil its duty to provide high-quality education for all pupils. The proposal will help to meet the needs of individual pupils in a high-quality and purpose-built learning environment which ensures that children will benefit from the support of specialist staff. It will also help to ensure that children and their families benefit from a more localised service, potentially reducing travel times for children. The proposal will complement the existing plans to extend provision at the school. Furthermore, this proposal will help promote best inclusive education practices which will extend benefits to pupils and staff within the mainstream school.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
March 2015**