

# **Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by South Ayrshire Council to relocate Ayr Grammar Primary School and establish an Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision.**

## **1. Introduction**

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 South Ayrshire's proposal to relocate Ayr Grammar Primary School from its current location at Midton Road, Ayr to the Ayr Academy building in Fort Street, Ayr and establish ELC provision at the same location by the autumn of 2019. 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.

### **1.1 HM Inspectors considered:**

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the school; 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.

### **1.2 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:**

- attendance at the public meeting held on 24 May 2016 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; and

- visits to the site of Ayr Academy and Ayr Grammar Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## **2. Consultation Process**

2.1 South Ayrshire 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*.

2.2 The consultation period ran from 3 May 2016 until 29 June 2016. A public meeting was held on 24 May 2016 and was attended by staff, elected members and 20 members of the public. An online/written response form gained 14 responses. All were in favour of establishing an ELC provision at Ayr Grammar Primary School. Support for the relocation of Ayr Grammar Primary School to the Ayr Academy building was overwhelmingly positive. The council also consulted with children, almost all of whom were in favour of the proposal.

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

3.1 South Ayrshire Council's proposal has the potential to bring educational benefit to the children, families and staff of Ayr Grammar Primary School. The current school building, rated D for suitability has a number of constraints which make aspects of learning and teaching challenging for children and staff. This includes the teaching time lost due to transporting children to offsite sports facilities in order to deliver part of the entitlement to two hours of high quality physical education (PE) for each child. The proposal has the potential to bring about modern learning and teaching facilities, accessible accommodation and increased, quality space for outdoor learning. The inclusion of an ELC provision within the school has significant potential to ease transition arrangements further and enhance the continuity of learning experience for all children at the early level within Curriculum for Excellence. It will also assist South Ayrshire Council in ensuring a sufficiency and choice of early learning provision in the local area.

3.2 Stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors and those who responded to the council survey were very much in support of the proposal. They agree with the potential educational benefits for their children as outlined by South Ayrshire Council in the proposal. They have demonstrated their support through working with each other and council representatives to consider alternatives to the proposal. They have provided very helpful suggestions to managing the safety of children through suggested walking routes and parking around the Ayr Academy site. Stakeholders are happy with the proposed community use of the relocated school and would like to continue to work with South Ayrshire Council to ensure that their children would benefit from the planned Community Arts facility during the school day. The proposal to include an ELC provision within a relocated Ayr Grammar Primary School was very much welcomed.

3.3 Almost all children who spoke with HM Inspectors were in agreement with the proposal. They stated that they would appreciate modernised and increased space for learning. They are particularly in favour of improved arrangements for PE and quality space for outdoor learning. Children also welcome the inclusive nature of the proposal which should result in their peers with mobility difficulties being able to access all of the facilities for learning. They also recognised the potential benefits of the inclusion of an ELC provision for their families and the school.

#### **4. Summary**

South Ayrshire Council has set out a very clear statement of educational benefits which could result if the proposal goes ahead. The council has worked with stakeholders over time to seek a solution to the challenges presented by the Ayr Grammar Primary School building and in doing so has engaged them well. All of the educational benefits outlined in the proposal have the potential to be realised. Should the proposal go ahead, stakeholders would like to continue to work closely with the council as the plans are developed and the involvement of children within the Community Arts facility established.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
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