

## **Consultation proposal by South Ayrshire Council**

**Report by Education Scotland, addressing educational aspects of the proposal to enhance pre-school provision in the Prestwick area by developing the existing building the Space Place, Prestwick to create a nursery. It is proposed that the new nursery would open in August 2014.**

### **Context**

This report from Education Scotland is required under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. It has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the Act. The purpose of this report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of the council's consultation proposal. Section 2 of this report sets out the views expressed by consultees during the initial consultation process. Section 3 sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal and the 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 it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation 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. Introduction**

1.1 South Ayrshire Council proposes to enhance pre-school provision in the Prestwick area by developing the existing building the Space Place, Prestwick to create a nursery. It is proposed that the new nursery would open in August 2014.

1.2 The report from Education Scotland is required under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. It has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the Act.

1.3 HM Inspectors undertook the following activities in considering the educational aspects of the proposal:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 19 February 2014 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 Kingcase Primary School, Pine Trees Nursery (private partner provider), the Space Place and Prestwick Community Council, including discussion with relevant consultees.

#### 1.4 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children attending the four local authority pre-five establishments (Heathfield Nursery Class, Kingcase Nursery Class, St Ninian's Nursery Class, Glenburn Nursery Class) and Pine Trees Nursery (a private provider); 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
- benefits which the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

## 2. Consultation process

2.1 South Ayrshire Council undertook the initial consultation on its proposals with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. The consultation included a public meeting and an invitation for written submissions. The council also sought the views of parents of children affected by the proposal.

2.2 The council received a total of three written responses to the proposal to establish a nursery in Prestwick with a capacity of 30:30 places. All of the respondents were in favour of the proposal.

2.3 Attendees at the public meeting included parents, elected members and the chair of the Prestwick South Community Council. The proposal was explained clearly and succinctly. Many of the attendees asked questions related to obtaining a place at the proposed nursery; security; staffing; the outdoor area of the proposed nursery; arrangements for dropping off and picking up children; and other establishments where a nursery could be attached to or extended. Many of the attendees stated that there was a need for more nursery places in Prestwick and wished to know more about how the council allocates nursery places.

2.4 Staff at Pine Trees Nursery, while not opposed to the proposal, were concerned about the possible impact it could have on the number of children that would attend their nursery. This in turn could affect the number of staff working in Pine Trees Nursery. They also had further concerns about the security of the proposed nursery, the number of car parking spaces and traffic management around the Space Place. They were positive about working with the staff of the proposed nursery and felt that they could share ideas and practices.

2.5 Staff at Kingcase Primary and Nursery class were supportive of the proposal. They stated that there was a need for more nursery places in Prestwick. They stated that a proposed nursery at the Space Place would not have an impact on the children attending their nursery and that the proposal would help some children in getting a nursery place. All of the staff in discussion groups were in favour of the proposal.

2.6 Parents of children attending Kingcase Primary and Nursery and whose children would be attending a nursery in the future were supportive of the proposal. They stated that there was a lack of nursery places in Prestwick and that this proposal would help to alleviate that problem. They stated that they would have preferred the proposed provision to be part of a primary school. They were positive about the proposed provision and hoped it would be well resourced and organised in a similar way to other nurseries in Prestwick.

2.7 Prestwick Community Council are in favour of the proposal and are positive about the Space Place building being used for the proposed nursery. They feel that there is a need for more nursery places in Prestwick and the unused building, when refurbished and modified would provide a suitable and central provision.

### **3. Educational aspects of the proposal**

3.1 South Ayrshire Council's proposal to enhance pre-school provision in the Prestwick area by developing the existing building the Space Place, Prestwick to create a nursery is of clear educational benefit for children and the community. It will help ensure a broad general education for all children from age three and provide continuity and progression in their learning. This will be achieved through the existing network among early years staff in Prestwick. It will also create opportunities for the council to provide extended support to families including working with parents and carers.

3.2 The proposal will provide parents and children with increased nursery provision within the local area. The proposed nursery would also meet the projected demand of providing a nursery place for all three year old children in Prestwick. The council's projected figures indicate that there will be 4% increase in the number of pre-school children in Prestwick every year for the next five years. Implementation of the proposal will also enable the council to provide 600 hours nursery provision for all three and four year olds by autumn 2014. It will also enable the council to provide 600 hours of early learning and childcare for looked after two and three year olds and two year old children who are subject to Kinship Care orders. By 2015, the council plans to provide 10:10 childcare places for children aged two and three years. This will enable the council to provide local provision and reduce the need for children to be referred through the locality forum to be transported outwith Prestwick.

3.3 South Ayrshire Council plans to develop the Space Place to provide a high quality learning environment with direct access to an outdoor play area. The Space Place is currently unoccupied and was previously a youth facility. The proposal would make effective use of the building. The council plans to open the nursery in August 2014.

3.4 South Ayrshire Council considers that the proposed nursery will not have a significant adverse impact on Pine Trees nursery, as that nursery provides all day care provision for children from birth to five years.

## **4. Summary**

4.1 South Ayrshire Council's proposal to enhance pre-school provision in the Prestwick area by developing the existing building the Space Place, Prestwick to create a nursery has clear educational benefits. The proposal would increase the number of nursery places for three and four year olds and has the potential to meet the current and future demands of an increasing population of children of this age. The proposal would also enable some Prestwick parents to place their child in a local nursery. The proposed nursery has the potential to provide all pre-school children with continuity and progression in their learning as they move from nursery to primary. It is proposed that the new nursery would open in August 2014.

4.2 The Space Place building and surrounding areas, when refurbished and customised has the potential to provide appropriate accommodation for nursery education. The Space Place option allows the council to use an empty facility effectively. The proposal would also enable the council to provide other services for parents and the community within the Space Place building and has the potential to be a community resource in the future.

4.3 Whilst the proposed nursery is close to Pine Trees nursery, it may not have an adverse impact on it. Pine Trees caters for children between birth to five year olds and is open longer than the proposed nursery. The proposed nursery would be for three and four year olds.

4.4 There is no opposition to the proposal and those consulted agree that the proposed nursery is a positive development. The council would need to monitor closely the refurbishment to ensure that it was on track to open in August 2014. The council needs to ensure that alternative plans are in place in the event that this deadline is not met. The council needs to ensure that the refurbishment is of a high quality, that security measures are in place inside the proposed building and at the proposed outdoor play area. The council needs to ensure that parents are constantly kept informed of the progress of the proposed nursery.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
March 2014**