

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by South Lanarkshire Council to realign catchment areas of both Kirktonholme and Hunter Primary Schools (and Duncanrig Secondary and Calderglen High School by association).

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 South Lanarkshire Council's proposal to realign catchment areas of both Kirktonholme and Hunter Primary Schools (and Duncanrig Secondary and Calderglen High School by association). 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 schools; 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 16 February 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 Kirktonholme and Hunter Primary Schools; Duncanrig Secondary; and Calderglen High School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 South Lanarkshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) 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 ran from 25 January 2016 until 11 March 2016. The council posted the proposal document on its website and lodged copies in the schools concerned and in council offices. In addition, it announced the consultation in the local press. The council held a public meeting in Kirktonholme Primary School on 16 February 2016 and four stakeholders attended. The council received one written response to the proposal. Appropriate arrangements were put in place to ensure that the views of children and young people affected by the proposal were heard and taken into account.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 South Lanarkshire Council has set out a sound rationale for its proposal to realign catchment areas of both Kirktonholme and Hunter Primary Schools (and Duncanrig Secondary and Calderglen High School by association). The current catchment area map shows clearly that Hunter Primary School has part of its catchment area isolated from the rest. This isolated area is adjacent to Kirktonholme Primary School and all streets affected are within the Stewartfield area. This is a historical anomaly resulting from previous capacity pressures within Kirktonholme Primary School during the development of housing within the Stewartfield area. Currently there are 16 pupils from this area attending Hunter Primary School and 34 attending Calderglen High School.

3.2 There is now sufficient capacity within Kirktonholme Primary School to accommodate those pupils from Stewartfield currently zoned for Hunter Primary School. In addition there are potential pressures on the accommodation available at Hunter Primary School, due to proposed housing development near to the school. Commendably the council is planning ahead by proposing that the area in Stewartfield currently zoned for Hunter Primary School be re-aligned to Kirktonholme Primary School. By association, this will impact on the catchment areas for Calderglen High School and Duncanrig Secondary School.

3.3 The council cites a number of benefits that it believes will result, should the proposal go ahead. These include a reduction in travelling time between home and school, increased opportunities for socialising out of school and strengthening of the local community as a consequence of children from the affected area having the right to attend a more local school. HM Inspectors are of the view that the council's

assertions are reasonable and that the proposal will assist it to achieve best value by managing its school estate efficiently and effectively.

3.4 Should the council decide to go ahead with the proposal; the arrangements will be implemented in August 2016. The council has made appropriate provision for families with children from the affected area with siblings already attending Hunter Primary School to have the option to enrol there without a placing request. This option is available until August 2022. Similarly, siblings of pupils from the affected area who currently attend Calderglen High School will have the option of attending Calderglen High School without a placing request. This option is available until August 2020.

3.5 A small number of parents, children and staff of the school communities met with HM Inspectors. Overall, they were in favour of the proposal, regarding it as a common sense way to address a historical anomaly with the catchment areas for the two primary schools. They were positive about the provision made by the council for siblings of children from the affected area who are already attending Hunter Primary School and Calderglen High School.

4. Summary

The proposal has the potential to deliver educational benefits for children from the affected area of Stewartfield. It will eliminate uncertainty in response to projected occupancy rates for local school buildings resulting from local housing development. It will also assist the council to realise best value through efficient and effective management of its school estate. The council has proactively made appropriate provision for children with siblings already attending Hunter Primary School or Calderglen High School to be educated together without the need for placing requests.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
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