

# **Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by South Lanarkshire Council to realign Auldhouse Primary School's catchment area and re-zone the proposed Shields Road development site to Castlefield Primary School.**

## **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 Auldhouse Primary School's catchment area and re-zone the proposed Shields Road development site to Castlefield Primary School. 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; 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 6 October 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;
- consideration of further information on all schools affected; and
- visits to the site of Castlefield and Auldhouse Primary Schools, 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 21 September 2015 until 13 November 2015. The council posted the proposal document on its website and lodged copies in the schools concerned and in council offices. In addition it notified 193 stakeholders and placed an advert in a local newspaper. The council held a public meeting on 6 October 2015 and one stakeholder attended. The council received no written responses to the proposal. Appropriate arrangements were put in place to ensure that children's views were heard.

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

3.1 South Lanarkshire Council has set out a sound rationale for its proposal to realign Auldhouse Primary School's catchment area and re-zone the proposed Shields Road development site to Castlefield Primary School. A housing development site at Shields Road which currently has planning permission in principle is predicted to generate 87 non-denominational primary-aged children. Although firm timescales for building are not yet available, it is unlikely that any houses will be complete before August 2017. Commendably, the council is planning ahead to eliminate uncertainty for families with primary-aged children who may come to live in the new housing development in the future.

3.2 The current catchment non-denominational primary school for the Shields Road development site is Auldhouse Primary School. The new-build Auldhouse Primary School opened to pupils in February 2014. During the design phase of the school, the Local Development Plan had no identified development site at Shields Road. As a result, the school does not have capacity to accommodate the projected 87 children.

3.3 The council has identified Castlefield Primary School as the more suitable of the two non-denominational primary schools closest to the development site to accommodate non-denominational primary-aged children who may live in the new houses. In reaching this view, the council has taken good account of other planned housing developments in the area as well as other primary school catchment re-zoning which it has recently agreed following statutory consultation. As a result,

the proposal will assist the council to manage its school estate efficiently and effectively.

3.4 As reported by HM Inspectors in August 2015, Castlefield Primary School has a number of key strengths. These include its attractive learning environment, its positive ethos and stimulating learning opportunities for children. Children who may, in future, attend the school from the new housing development will benefit from these aspects of the school's educational offer. In finalising its proposal the council will need to set out clearly the educational benefits that it believes will result from the implementation of the proposal.

3.5 Children, parents and staff from the Castlefield Primary School community who spoke to HM Inspectors were very positive about the proposal. They felt that the council had ensured that they were very well-informed and they had reached a view that by welcoming families from the proposed new houses, their school community would be made stronger. Children were enthusiastic about having more friends. Staff were looking forward to increased opportunities for professional learning as the staff group expanded as a result of more children attending the school. Parents felt that the future of the school would be more secure as a result of having a larger catchment area and more children on the roll.

3.6 Members of the Auldhouse Primary School community who spoke to HM Inspectors were in favour of the proposal. Auldhouse Primary School has a friendly and welcoming ethos. However, parents, staff and pupils recognised that there is insufficient space within the school to accommodate all the non-denominational primary-aged children who may live in the new houses. They were aware that some families from the new houses may in future seek to enrol children in Auldhouse Primary School. Parents were seeking reassurance that younger siblings of children who currently attend Auldhouse Primary School as a result of placing requests would be given priority should they seek a place at the school in future. This is a reasonable request and the council will need to engage with Auldhouse Primary School parents to outline its plans for managing placing requests in future.

#### **4. Summary**

The proposal has the potential to bring educational benefits to children and families who may live in the Shields Road development in future. The council's forward planning will eliminate uncertainties for families. It will ensure that children have opportunities to benefit from the attractive learning environment, positive ethos and stimulating learning opportunities available in Castlefield Primary School. In addition it will assist the council to realise best value through efficient and effective management of its school estate. In taking forward the proposal, the council will need to strengthen its educational benefits statement.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
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