

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Glasgow City Council to close Elba Lane Nursery School and open a new nursery in the Dalmarnock/Parkhead area which is open all year and provides early learning and childcare for children from age six weeks to five years.

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 Glasgow City Council's proposal to close Elba Lane Nursery School and open a new nursery in the Dalmarnock/Parkhead area which is open all year and provides early learning and childcare for children from age six weeks to five years. 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 and young people of the nursery 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:

- 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

- visit to the site of Elba Lane Nursery School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 Glasgow City 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 formal consultation ran from 5 October to 20 November 2015. Arrangements were put in place to ensure that the process was inclusive. This included an easy-read version of the proposal document being produced, translator services and crèche facilities available at public meetings if required. Consultation papers were distributed to a range of stakeholders. In addition, a notice to advise of the consultation arrangements was placed in the press. A dedicated page was set up on the council website for both information and to enable interested parties to respond to the proposals. A public meeting was held on 20 October 2015 to outline the reasons for the proposal and explain the consultation process. No members of the public attended the meeting. At an Elba Lane Nursery School parents' meeting on 20 October 2015, 11 parents attended. Most favoured the proposal. At the Elba Lane Nursery School staff meeting on 20 October 2015, 12 people attended who overall, had a positive reaction to the proposal. There was also an evening meeting held by the Parkhead Housing Association on 11 November 2015 attended by 22 people. At the meeting, overall, there were no objections to the nursery being built. Several concerns were raised over the access arrangements for their residents. The council received four written responses to the proposal. Three agreed with the proposal.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 The proposal has potential to offer considerable educational benefits for families living in the area and for those who will move into the community. The timing of the release of housing in the area has created an immediate need for additional nursery and primary school places in the area. The proposal will also form an important part of the council's strategy to support the development of the community. It will help families to access early learning and childcare within their local area. With an increasing population in the area, there is an increasing demand for nursery provision to support parents in and into employment as well as to meet the council's duty under the legislation to provide parents with access to high quality early learning and childcare.

3.2 Elba Lane Nursery School is open currently term-time from 8.30am to 4.30pm. In the HM Inspectors of Education letter of 19 November 2013, the nursery was noted for providing quality provision. The nursery has 15 full-time equivalent places currently for two year olds and 40 full-time equivalent places for 3 to 5 year olds, with an additional 15 places for 2 year olds being made available in the current location once building works have been completed. The new nursery has the potential to continue to provide quality early learning and childcare. The proposal has the potential to improve the current early learning and childcare offer in the area by providing a 50 week service in place of the current term-time facility. The

proposal would allow for 12 full-time equivalent places for under 2s and 128 full-time equivalent places for 2 to 5 year olds. This is a significant increase in the number of places which would be available and with extended hours which would give parents greater flexibility. This is a significant improvement on the current provision offered in the existing location of Elba Lane Nursery School.

3.3 The current building is in a poor state of repair, including frequent leaks and variation in heating throughout the premises. The outdoor area does not allow children free-flow access to this space and has to be planned. The council's proposals will help develop children's learning experiences further, particularly in outdoor learning. Children will have increased and better access to outdoors, including fresh air and space to play. Overall, the quality of facilities will be much improved both in and out-of-doors. In addition, being built on the same campus as the proposed new primary school has the potential to increase and enhance the transition arrangements for children and families who attend both provisions.

3.4 The council's plans to relocate the nursery and develop a new purpose-built setting as part of its investment in and development of the community will expand the number of places available to younger children and will help support families. The relocation of the nursery, including improved facilities, has the potential to enhance family learning and support employability, making it easier for families to access the help which they need. This has the potential to enhance the health and wellbeing of local families.

3.5 Overall, almost all stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors were very positive about the proposal. They considered that a new building in the new location would be a valuable asset which would help meet local families' needs as well as contributing to developing the community. Almost all parents who met with HM Inspectors agreed with the proposal. Staff were confident that the council would take into account their terms and conditions of service when developing plans for the new provision. The proposal notes that a staffing structure would be put in place for the new nursery, which would take into account the requirements of the Care Inspectorate. All staff recognised the need for a new building and to increase the provision available for children and families. A few would have preferred a new-build on the existing site.

4. Summary

Glasgow Council's proposal has potential to offer significant educational benefits for children and families who attend the provision currently and in future. The increase in available housing in the area will result in a need for increased early learning and childcare. The proposal has the potential to improve the current early learning and childcare offer in the area by providing a 50 week service in place of the current term-time facility. The proposal will build on the strong community identity that exists within Elba Lane Nursery School. It forms an important part of the council's strategy to develop early learning and childcare provision and also to support development of the community. In taking forward its proposal, the council needs to continue to engage with individual families whose children may access the new provision and

ensure that appropriate transition plans are in place. It also needs to continue to engage with stakeholders to ensure that their views about access arrangements for local residents are fully explored in terms of best outcomes.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
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