

Consultation proposal by Glasgow City Council

Report by Education Scotland, addressing educational aspects of the proposal to close Wellfield Nursery School in its current location, and to relocate within a new family learning centre in the former Gadburn School building.

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.

As the council is proposing to close Wellfield Nursery School, it will need to follow all legislative obligations set out in the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining the opportunity for representations to be made to Ministers.

1. Introduction

1.1 Glasgow City Council proposes to close Wellfield Nursery School in its current location within Balornock Primary School, and to develop a new Family Learning Centre in the former Gadburn School building to include nursery provision.

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 on Tuesday 8 October 2013 at one of two public meetings held 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 sites of the existing Wellfield Nursery School within Balornock Primary School, and Duntarvie Pre-school Assessment Centre within the existing Gadburn School building, including discussion with relevant consultees.

1.4 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the nursery; 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
- 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 Glasgow City Council undertook the initial consultation on its proposals with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. The consultation included two public meetings and the distribution of consultation papers to a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties. In addition, a dedicated page was set up on the council website for both information, and to enable interested parties to respond to the proposals.

2.2 The council received six written responses to the consultation. This included one response which was against the proposal, and five in favour.

2.3 Parents felt that they had received sufficient information regarding the proposal. A few of the parents who met HM Inspectors commented on the impact they would experience personally as they would lose the convenience of having nursery and primary children in the same location, and as a result have a more complex dropping off and picking up schedule. However, these parents were also able to see the potential benefits of Wellfield Nursery expanding in a new location, and gaining improved facilities.

2.4 Staff from Wellfield Nursery School, Balornock Primary School and from Duntarvie Pre-school Assessment Centre are in favour of the proposal and recognise the potential benefits for all three establishments and the pupils they serve.

2.5 The proposal for the new Family Learning Centre will enhance early years provision for the local community. Children who currently attend Wellfield Nursery School will be offered a continued placement at the new Family Learning Centre, or an alternative early years establishment based on parental choice. The new Family

Learning Centre would have increased capacity to meet the anticipated demand for placements based on roll projection. It will also offer new provision for very young children aged 0-3 years.

2.6 Duntarvie Pre-school Assessment Centre currently uses one wing of the Gadburn School building. This provision, which provides a 12 week assessment programme for children of pre-school age who have found it difficult to manage in mainstream nursery provision, will remain. A move within the building will be necessary, for part of the existing accommodation.

2.7 Additional development of the remainder of the Gadburn School building is proposed. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde will refurbish a wing of the building and relocate the Child Development Centre, currently in the Glenfarg Centre in Possilpark, providing enhanced facilities.

3. Educational aspects of the proposal

3.1 Glasgow City Council has set out in its proposal a range of educational benefits. The current accommodation for Wellfield Nursery School restricts the range of approaches to learning for pre-school children. Plans indicate that the new location will offer improved facilities with high quality playrooms, to provide a better learning environment and support children's learning within Curriculum for Excellence at the early level. Toilet and changing facilities will be improved to meet the needs of all children including those with additional support needs.

3.2 As part of the refurbishment of the Gadburn School building, the grounds will be improved to provide high quality playground and outdoor space to provide better opportunities for children to play and learn outdoors than currently exist in Wellfield Nursery School.

3.3 The proposed Family Learning Centre will benefit from dedicated dining facilities which should improve children's lunchtime experiences, offering increased opportunities to further develop approaches to health and wellbeing.

3.4 The colocation of the Family Learning Centre, incorporating Wellfield Nursery School and Duntarvie Pre-school Assessment Centre in the former Gadburn School building provides greater opportunities for partnership working amongst staff and other professionals who might share the building. Throughout the consultation the heads of each establishment have worked effectively to influence the plans and intentions presented by the council.

3.5 The Family Learning Centre would be open for 52 weeks throughout the year, from 0800 hrs to 1800 hrs. This represents a significant increase in the available capacity for early years provision in the area, and should reduce pressure on other establishments in the north of the city.

3.6 If the proposal goes ahead, the space made available at Balornock Primary School when Wellfield Nursery School moves, will provide benefits for children there. The space will ultimately allow expansion, and will in the short term allow flexibility as

the planned refurbishment within the council's school estate refurbishment programme takes place, with less disruption through decant.

4. Summary

The council has outlined clearly the educational benefits of the proposal. In taking forward the proposal, the council should continue to involve staff actively in the development of the plans for the Gadburn School building in transforming it into the new Family Learning Centre. The intention to consult parents and children on a name for the new Family learning Centre is also welcomed. Parents of children currently at Wellfield Nursery School should continue to be updated on what other options might be available to them, if the separation from Balornock Primary School presents them with logistical challenges. Discussions around start times for Balornock Primary School and the nursery in the new location may need to be reviewed where that might alleviate potential problems.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
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