

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Dunbartonshire Council to establish an enhanced learning resource at Harestanes Primary School.

December 2018

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of East Dunbartonshire Council's proposal to establish an enhanced learning resource at Harestanes 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 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 statutory 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 of the 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.

1.3 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
- visits to the site of Harestanes Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

2.1 East Dunbartonshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The consultation period ran from 22 October 2018 until 30 November 2018. A public meeting was held at Harestanes Primary School on 6 November 2018 which was attended by six members of the public. Responses could be made electronically or in writing, posted to the council headquarters. There were 18 responses to the consultation. Of those who expressed a preference, 17 were in favour of the proposal and one was against it.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council believes that this proposal will ensure local, accessible provision to meet children's needs, which will reduce the time required for transport to and from school and offer opportunities for inclusion within the local community. This is in line with the council's strategy for provision for children with additional support needs which proposes that an Enhanced Learning Resource Base should be provided in each locality area and is a potential educational benefit.

3.2 The council also believes that the proposal will lead to a greater flexibility of provision which can be adapted to meet the needs of each child. The new provision, should it deliver the anticipated greater flexibility of provision locally, is likely to be an educational benefit.

3.3 The council thinks that the proposal will develop staff capacity to meet a wider range of needs. Whilst details have yet to be finalised, current school staff are aware that more training and development opportunities about meeting a wider range of learning needs are going to be made available to them as a result of this proposal. This is therefore a potential educational benefit.

3.4 The council believes that implementation of the proposal will result in a greater range of experiences and opportunities for all children within the school. The council envisages that children from the rest of the school will work with children from the enhanced learning resource and that these children will also work as appropriate within classrooms with their peers. This is therefore an educational benefit and is likely to result in all children having a more inclusive understanding of the needs of other learners.

3.5 Staff from Harestanes Primary School who spoke to HM Inspectors are generally in favour of the proposal. They welcome the inclusion of an enhanced learning resource and would now be keen to get more detail about what is proposed and to visit similar provisions. They would like more clarity about traffic management on the new site and also the location of the current community centre building which sits on school grounds. They would also welcome more detail about the role of clerical staff relating to the new provision.

3.6 Children from Harestanes Primary School who spoke to HM Inspectors are enthusiastic about the proposed new provision. They can see the advantages of having a resource like this situated in their school. They have also generated a number of questions about this proposal which they would now like answered.

3.7 Parents of children who attend Harestanes Primary School who spoke to HM Inspectors are in favour of the proposal. However, they would like reassurance about levels of staffing, training and transition arrangements for new pupils, as well as a review of school security arrangements. They would prefer the community centre was relocated elsewhere. They realise that appropriate awareness raising for staff, children and their parents about the needs of pupils in the enhanced learning resource will be key to its success.

4. Summary

Overall, there is a range of potential educational benefits to this proposal. Parents, children and staff are generally agreed about the educational benefits of the proposal. In taking the proposal forward, the council needs to continue to engage with all stakeholders and to address their concerns. In taking its proposal forward, an effective communication strategy and an action plan will be essential for the council to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged. The council should include details of these in its final report.

**HM Inspectors
December 2018**