

## **Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by North Lanarkshire Council to re-zone part of the St Margaret of Scotland Primary School catchment area to form part of the St Lucy's Primary School catchment area.**

### **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* 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 North Lanarkshire Council's proposal to re-zone part of the St Margaret of Scotland Primary School catchment area to form part of the St Lucy's Primary School catchment area. 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 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:

- 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 St Margaret of Scotland Primary School and St Lucy's Primary School, which involved discussion with relevant consultees, including, representatives of the Roman Catholic Church.

## **2. Consultation Process**

2.1 North Lanarkshire 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 consultation process ran from 10 January 2018 to 23 February 2018. During this period the council held two public meetings on 22 and 25 January 2018. A total of eight people attended these meetings. Statutory consultees, including Parent Councils of the schools affected by the consultation were informed of the consultation in writing. Consultation documentation was published on the North Lanarkshire Council website. A helpful pro forma questionnaire was made available for children to have their views heard. Three hundred and twenty-seven children responded. An overwhelming majority (90%) of pupils at St Lucy's Primary School expressed support for the proposal. The majority (53%) of responses from pupils at St Margaret of Scotland Primary School opposed the proposal. The council received one written response to its consultation paper which indicated strong support for the council's proposal.

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

3.1 This proposal involves the re-zoning of part of the St Margaret of Scotland Primary School catchment area to form part of St Lucy's Primary School catchment area. The area of land concerned is currently uninhabited but is scheduled for development with a significant number of planned new houses.

3.2 The proposal offers clear educational benefits for children who will live in the area of land which is about to be developed. This area of land is closer to St Lucy's Primary School than St Margaret of Scotland Primary School. The area of land is expected to become part of the Abronhill district and the proposal will provide opportunities for children to learn and play with others from that same community. The proposal should also have a positive impact on the number of pupils attending the two schools and will reduce the possibility of the roll of St Margaret of Scotland Primary School exceeding its capacity. Children attending St Lucy's Primary School are very positive about the potential which the proposal brings for making new friends and for enhancing their learning opportunities.

3.3 Almost all parents, pupils and staff who met with HM Inspectors support the proposal. These stakeholders view the proposal positively and understand that it will allow pupils who will come to live in the area of land which is about to be developed to attend the nearest denominational school alongside others in the Abronhill community.

3.4 In taking forward its proposal, the council should continue to work with stakeholders of St Lucy's Primary School to ensure that safe walking and cycling routes from the area being developed are identified and promoted.

3.5 Local representatives of the Roman Catholic Church have been kept well informed about the council's proposal and support the planned re-zoning of the catchment areas.

#### **4. Summary**

North Lanarkshire Council's proposal to re-zone the catchment areas of St Margaret of Scotland Primary School and St Lucy's Primary School has clear educational benefits. The proposal will enable children living in the new development to attend the nearest denominational school to their homes and will help these children and their families to integrate with the wider Abronhill community. The proposal will also reduce the likelihood for the roll of St Margaret of Scotland Primary School to exceed its capacity. Almost all stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors agree that the proposal provides important educational benefits.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
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