

# **Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by North Lanarkshire Council to re-zone part of Woodlands Primary School catchment area to form part of Abronhill 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 Woodlands Primary School catchment area to form part of Abronhill 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; 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 Abronhill Primary School and Woodlands Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## **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 period began on 10 January 2018 and concluded on 23 February 2018. The council announced the consultation in local press and information, including the proposal paper, was placed on the council website and in council buildings. Copies of the proposal were provided to parents. Stakeholders were invited to respond to the proposal through a consultation response form. A public meeting was held on 15 January 2018 in Abronhill Primary School. There were no attendees. A planned public meeting in Woodlands Primary School on 18 January 2018 was cancelled due to inclement weather and suitable alternative arrangements were made. The council received two responses to the consultation. Three hundred and fifty-five children responded to the consultation in school. The majority were in favour of the proposal.

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

3.1 This proposal would see the catchment areas of Woodlands and Abronhill Primary Schools re-zoned to allow the transfer of the Mid Forest residential site from Woodlands Primary School to Abronhill Primary School catchment area. The Mid Forest residential site is not yet developed but could see approximately 600 new homes being constructed.

3.2 HM Inspectors agree the proposal is of educational benefit. The council rightly states that the proposal is likely to bring about a better balance of pupil numbers across the two schools thus alleviating current and future capacity issues. Both schools benefit from flexible learning spaces and a better balance of pupil numbers will enable the schools to continue to make best use of these. Potential pupils from the proposed Mid Forest residential site would be able to attend the primary school which would be closest to their home and therefore children would be able to attend school with their peers.

3.3 All stakeholders felt that the council had communicated the proposal well. Children valued the presentation about the proposal provided to them by council officers. Parents who met with HM Inspectors agree with the proposal. They feel it is sensible and will alleviate future capacity issues. All children who met with HM Inspectors agree with the proposal and feel it will be of benefit to the children who are likely to move into new housing on the Mid Forest site. They also feel it will bring about a better balance of pupil numbers across the two schools. Staff from both schools support the proposal and the educational benefits asserted by the council.

## **4. Summary**

HM Inspectors believe that the proposal has educational benefit for children, their families and staff. The proposal will enable children from the new Mid Forest residential site to attend the primary school closest to their home. The proposal will help bring about a better balance of pupil numbers across the two schools thus

alleviating future capacity issues. It will also enable both schools to continue to make flexible learning environments available to children.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
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