

## **Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by South Lanarkshire Council to relocate Walston Primary School from its current location to the village of Elsrickle, opposite the village hall.**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 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 South Lanarkshire Council's proposal to relocate Walston Primary School from its current location to the village of Elsrickle, opposite the village hall. 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 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:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 30 August 2016 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 site of Walston Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## **2. Consultation Process**

2.1 South 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 15 August 2016 to 30 September 2016. During this period the council held a public meeting at Elsrickle Hall. Notification of the proposal was provided to all statutory consultees and the documentation was made available on the council's website, in council offices, public libraries and Walston Primary School. A proforma and an email address were available for submissions. The council received 27 submissions of which 22 were in favour, four were against and one was undecided. Thirty-one stakeholders attended the public meeting. The main issues raised at the public meeting were safe routes to school and the impact of the school on the infrastructure of Elsrickle village.

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

3.1 The proposal to relocate Walston Primary School has many excellent educational benefits. The current building is in poor condition. Currently, the Rural Communities Nursery makes use of the school hall two days a week, limiting access for school pupils. The delivery of high quality physical education is limited due to lack of appropriate indoor and outdoor facilities. There is no appropriate space in the current school for private meetings with outside agencies. The proposal will provide increased and appropriate space for school children and dedicated facilities for nursery children. This has the potential to increase the delivery of early years education and improve the learning experiences of all children in the nursery and school.

3.2 All parents, pupils and staff who met with HM Inspectors strongly support the proposal. They agree that the new site offers many benefits, including the potential to increase the interaction with the local community, easier access and improved facilities in which to teach and learn. They have some concerns about safe routes to school and the design of the building. They are very keen to work with the council to help deliver the best possible outcome for the children.

## **4. Summary**

South Lanarkshire Council's proposal to relocate Walston Primary School to a new site opposite Elsrickle Hall has strong educational benefits. It will provide modern purpose-built facilities for nursery and school children. There will be increased outdoor space and enhanced facilities for staff, pupils, parents and the local community. The new school will have the potential to help staff improve learning and

teaching for all children. In taking forward its proposal, the council should continue to work with all stakeholders to deliver safe routes to school and a design, within the council's respective budget, which meets the needs of pupils, parents, staff and the local community.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
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