

# **Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by South Lanarkshire Council to change the catchment areas of both Duncanrig Secondary School and Calderglen High School.**

## **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 South Lanarkshire Council's proposal to change the catchment areas of both Duncanrig Secondary School and Calderglen High 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 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 and young people 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 site of Duncanrig Secondary School, Calderglen High School and Greenhills Primary school including discussion with relevant consultees.

## **2. Consultation Process**

2.1 South Lanarkshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

2.2 The purpose of the council's proposal was to balance the pupil population between the two non-denominational secondary schools in East Kilbride. A new primary school is to be built following new housing developments in the Jackton (East Kilbride Community Growth) Area. A planning application for the new school is anticipated early in 2018. The area is currently zoned for Duncanrig Secondary School but the capacity of Duncanrig Secondary School is likely to be reached by 2022. Calderglen High School has spare capacity sufficient for the predicted number of additional pupils.

2.3 The council has presented two options to address the capacity issues identified. Option 1 would result in the new primary school being aligned to Calderglen High School. Option 2 would result in a change in the association of Greenhills Primary school from Duncanrig Secondary School to Calderglen High School.

2.4 The council undertook the consultation between 9 October and 1 December 2017. Copies of the proposal document were distributed to stakeholders and placed in public libraries, schools affected by the proposal and council offices. A notice of the proposal was placed in a local newspaper. A public meeting was held on 7 November 2017 in Greenhills Hall and was attended by 12 people of whom nine were parents, grandparents and local residents. Almost all who responded to the council's proposal favoured option 1. Of the 276 responses submitted, 261 were in favour of option 1 with 12 in favour of option 2 and three expressing no clear preference.

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

3.1 The main educational benefit from both options in South Lanarkshire Council's proposal is that they would address capacity pressures at Duncanrig Secondary school and make the most efficient use of space at Calderglen High School. Option 1 would involve a new build primary school being zoned to Calderglen High School. For those pupils who currently live in the Jackton area and attend Mossneuk Primary School, parents would be offered a choice for their children to attend either Duncanrig Secondary School or Calderglen High School. Option 2 would involve a change of catchment zone for Greenhills Primary School from Duncanrig Secondary School to Calderglen High School. Siblings of pupils attending Duncanrig High School would continue to have the right to attend Duncanrig High School. Accommodation at both Duncanrig Secondary School and Calderglen High School is of a high standard. Both are modern, purpose built schools with very good facilities for learning.

3.2 South Lanarkshire Council's existing arrangements for school transport would entitle pupils from the Jackton area to school transport under both options in the council's proposal document. The proposed site of the new primary school is geographically closer to Duncanrig Secondary school and the journey to Calderglen High School would be slightly longer than the journey to Duncanrig High School. Under option 2, pupils from Greenhills Primary School who are eligible for school transport under South Lanarkshire Council's existing policies would experience a journey of approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

3.3 Staff, parents and most young people from Duncanrig High School who spoke with HM Inspectors favoured option 2. They felt it made sense for the Jackton area to remain zoned to Duncanrig Secondary School as it was the closest school. They believed that there could be better potential for young people from Jackton to participate in after school activities with their peers if they were to attend Duncanrig Secondary School. A few young people who spoke with HM Inspectors favoured option 1 as they were keen to continue the links with Greenhills Primary. A few felt that under option 2, younger siblings would face a difficult choice when reaching secondary school age of moving to Calderglen High School with their peers or to Duncanrig Secondary School. Road safety issues and the current lack of public transport links to Jackton were raised as areas for concern under both options. All agreed that school facilities and the potential learning experience of young people attending either secondary school would be equally good.

3.4 Staff, parents and young people from Calderglen High School who spoke with HM Inspectors were in favour of option 1. Staff made reference to the changing demographics at the school with an ageing population in parts of the catchment area. They felt that the addition of the new housing development in the Jackton area would rebalance the mix of the pupil population. They were concerned about the potential negative impact of option 2 which would involve a change to learning community arrangements with associated primary schools. They referred to the extensive work to ensure effective pastoral and curricular transitions within the learning community. They made particular reference to the impact of work with primary schools on modern languages for which different arrangements applied between the two learning communities. Teaching staff in the Calderglen Learning Community had received extensive professional learning to improve transitions. They felt that it would be difficult to make the necessary changes involved in rezoning Greenhills Primary School under option 2, whilst option 1 would involve a fresh start with a new school joining the existing learning community.

3.5 Parents, children and staff from Greenhills Primary School favoured option 1. They were concerned about losing the existing learning community relationships including arrangements for transition to Duncanrig Secondary School. Parents were concerned about the potential separation of siblings or peers under option 2. Staff emphasised that they had worked within the existing learning community on an improvement plan with clear priorities for shared work on curricular areas. They felt that they would have to revisit this in a new context under option 2 and that this could be potentially disruptive to children's learning and to teachers' work. Among the areas of concern under option 2 cited by parents and some staff were poor public transport links, safe routes to school and increased distance. A few questioned the accuracy of the statement in the consultation document which stated that Greenhills

Primary School was the closest school with a sufficient pupil roll to have the necessary impact on secondary pupil numbers at Calderglen High School.

#### **4. Summary**

- Both options in South Lanarkshire Council's proposal offer the clear educational benefit of addressing the capacity issues at Duncanrig Secondary School associated with new housing developments. Option 1 involves zoning a new build primary school to Calderglen High School and this would require a slightly longer travel time than to Duncanrig Secondary School. The new primary school would be expected to establish appropriate links to their allocated Learning Community under either option.
- Option 2 would involve a change to relationships between existing schools with Greenhills Primary School being rezoned from Duncanrig Secondary School to Calderglen High School. This could have a negative impact on current collaborative work in the two Learning Communities and could result in additional workload for staff. It would also represent a change to arrangements for parents and children who raised concerns about children being potentially separated from either their peers or siblings on transition to secondary school. The educational benefits of option 2 to Greenhills Primary School are not sufficiently clear. South Lanarkshire Council would need to consider what steps it can take to address concerns raised should it decide to implement this option.
- Staff, parents and children raised questions regarding public transport links, entitlement to school transport now and in the future and safe routes to school under both options. South Lanarkshire Council will need to address these concerns in its final report.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
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