

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Stirling Council to amalgamate Doune Primary and Nursery Schools.

February 2019

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 Stirling Council's proposal to amalgamate Doune Primary and Nursery Schools. 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 and young people of the nursery and school; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children 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 15 January 2019 in connection with the council's proposal;
- 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 Doune Primary and Nursery Schools, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation process ran from 4 December 2018 until 8 February 2019. Two parents attended the public meeting on 15 January 2019 and there were three respondents to the council's online questionnaire. Parents were supportive of the proposal.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 Stirling Council outlined the educational benefits which it believes will result from the implementation of the proposal. As part of a trial arrangement, the school and nursery have been managed for the last two years by the headteacher of the primary school. The council wishes to make this a permanent arrangement as it believes this has brought about improved experiences for children in both establishments. HM Inspectors agree that transition between nursery and primary has improved, as has the development of the 3-18 curriculum with improved planning and self-evaluation particularly at the early level. The council believes that the arrangements now are of benefit to parents with a joint management team across both schools.

3.2 All Stakeholders are in favour of the proposal. They see advantages in now formalising the current arrangements. Parents, including those who met with HM Inspectors, believe this will strengthen further the transition between the nursery and primary. They see the increased use of the primary school by nursery children as helpful. Children in both settings enjoy the increased opportunities to share their learning. Paired reading and buddying are improving children's health and wellbeing with improved confidence and resilience. Staff are now experiencing greater opportunities for joint professional learning. They feel this is improving their understanding and practice.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal will bring about educational benefit to the children in the nursery and primary schools. Improved transition and curriculum planning are already improving children's experiences. Parents are fully supportive and recognise the improvements for them and their children. Staff are confident that their professional learning and practice is developing further.

HM Inspectors
February 2019