

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Stirling Council to Review Education Provision at Baker Street Nursery and Allan's Primary School.

January 2020

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 Review Education Provision at Baker Street Nursery and Allan's Primary 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 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.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the settings; 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 22 October 2019 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 sites of Baker Street Nursery and Allan's Primary School, 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 council undertook the consultation between 30 September and 29 November 2019. Stakeholders were informed of the consultation by letter. The council's proposal document does not provide sufficiently specific details of the consultation process such as how the consultation was advertised, how its proposal paper was made available to statutory consultees or dates and details of its public meeting. The council will need to provide these details in its final proposal paper. A public meeting held on 22 October 2019 was not attended by any members of the public. The council received three responses to a questionnaire on its website all of which supported the proposal.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 Stirling Council proposes to amalgamate Baker Street Nursery and Allan's Primary School and to formalise and make permanent a shared headship arrangement between the two establishments. This would result in Baker Street Nursery becoming Allan's Primary School nursery class and the permanent closure of Baker Street Nursery as an independent establishment. The two establishments are a short walking distance apart within the historic town centre of Stirling. The council's proposal does not include consideration of any change to the sites for the provision for either nursery or primary education.

3.2 The council's proposal is of potential educational benefit. It could improve joint planning and sharing of expertise between school and nursery staff. It has the potential to improve children's experiences through enhancing their transition between nursery and school. It could enable children at different stages to learn together on joint projects and themes. Under existing shared headship arrangements, school and nursery staff undertake collaborative work, for example, a teacher from Allan's Primary School provides a weekly science lesson at Baker Street Nursery and joint whole school and nursery projects have been undertaken. Formalising the shared headship arrangement could provide the potential to enhance and extend joint work. Parents and families could benefit from improved continuity in their relationships with nursery and school. This could result in improved levels of parental engagement with the school.

3.3 Staff and parents at both Allan's Primary School and Baker Street Nursery who spoke to HM Inspectors agreed that the council's proposal was beneficial and welcomed the changes that had already been made. They thought that formalising the changes could result in improved learning experiences for children. Parents who had children of different ages at both nursery and primary school welcomed the changes and thought that they had improved communication and relationships with the school. Children at Allan's Primary School welcomed the changes and looked forward to the additional opportunities that the amalgamation could provide.

3.4 Staff at Baker Street Nursery had some concerns, including the implications of the proposal for the nursery's provision for children under the age of two years. They were concerned that the council's proposal paper makes no reference to this provision, stating only that the nursery is registered for 72 children aged from two to five years. The council will need to clarify this in its final proposal paper. Staff at Baker Street Nursery were also concerned about the loss of the nursery's identity, with the council's proposal resulting in the nursery formally becoming Allan's Primary School nursery class. They felt that the name was part of the established identity of the nursery and was important in the local community. The council will need to consider this in its final proposal paper.

3.5 Parents made reference to current discussion with the council on separate options being developed to improve the condition and suitability of Allan's Primary School. Some parents had concerns for the future of nursery provision at the Baker Street site, if options under consideration included Allan's Primary School moving to an alternative site. The council's paper states that its proposal will not influence any particular outcome on project options being developed. However, it would be helpful for stakeholders if the council could provide an outline of its process for discussing project options in its final proposal paper.

4. Summary

Stirling Council's proposal is of potential educational benefit. It would enable the Allan's Primary School and Baker Street Nursery to build on work undertaken to improve children's transition experience between nursery and primary school. Staff could benefit from sharing expertise and parents could experience improved continuity in relationships as children move from nursery to primary school. In its final consultation paper, the council should clarify the position regarding Baker Street Nursery's provision for children under two years of age. It should consider the views of nursery staff regarding the Baker Street Nursery name and identity. The council should also provide an outline of its process for exploring separate project outcomes for improving the condition of Allan's Primary School.

**HM Inspectors
January 2020**