

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The City of Edinburgh Council to establish a new non-denominational primary school at Gilmerton, Station Road and implement catchment changes.

October 2024

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His 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 a proposal by The City of Edinburgh Council to establish a new non-denominational primary school at Gilmerton, Station Road and implement catchment changes. 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' view. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it alongside any relevant considerations the council received and then prepare its consultation report. The council's 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 consultation report at least three weeks before it takes its final decision. With all proposals the council needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act.

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:

- attendance at the public meetings held on 18 and 26 September 2024 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 Gilmerton Primary School, Gracemount High School and Liberton High School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 They undertook the consultation between 22 August to 3 October 2024. Public meetings took place in Gilmerton Primary School and Gracemount High School. A total of nine members of the public attended these meetings. Those stakeholders who attended the public meeting had a few concerns, including traffic control measures and safe routes to school. There were also questions on community use of a new school building and the potential provision of out of school care. The consultation paper was made available to the public via the council website. The council received 153 responses to the consultation. Most respondents were in favour of the proposal, a

few did not support the proposal or were undecided. The council received 140 responses to an online questionnaire, completed by children and young people from across the three effected schools. The majority of children and young people were in favour of the proposal that a new primary school was needed. A minority did not support the proposal and a minority neither agreed or disagreed with the proposal.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The City of Edinburgh Council has set out a clear rationale of how they intend to establish a new non-denominational primary school and nursery classes. The new school will be aligned to Gracemount High School. The council also proposes to implement catchment changes to Gilmerton Primary School, Gracemount High School and Liberton High School. The council estimates new housing developments in Gilmerton Primary School catchment could generate up to 663 additional primary pupils in the area. As a result, existing non-denominational primary schools anticipate increasing demand for nursery and school places. They state that this proposal will address future capacity issues at Gilmerton Primary School and Liberton High School. The proposal will provide schools in the area with suitable catchment rolls that are appropriate to the capacity of each school.

3.2 HM Inspectors agree that the proposal to build a new non-denominational primary school at Gilmerton, Station Road has potential education benefits. These include access to a modern, inclusive and accessible learning environment. The new building should support creative and engaging learning aligned with the Curriculum for Excellence. It will offer facilities to encourage health and wellbeing and support outdoor learning. Nursery accommodation on site will allow for children to progress in learning from nursery to P1 within a familiar setting. Proposed catchment changes may lead to more socio-economic diversity in schools.

3.3 All children, young people, parents and staff who met with HM Inspectors are supportive of the proposal to build a new non-denominational school and nursery at Gilmerton, Station Road. They recognise the potential educational benefits, which include access to a modern and accessible learning environment and may provide a variety of peer group opportunities. All stakeholders agree that the existing primary schools in the area do not have the capacity for additional pupils that may be generated by the ongoing housing developments. All stakeholders agree with the proposal to change the catchment area to align the new school with Gracemount High School. All stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors, agree that this proposal should streamline transition arrangements, which may help to reduce anxiety for pupils who were uncertain of which secondary school they would progress to. Children from Gilmerton Primary School also highlighted the importance of progressing to the same secondary school as their peers.

3.4 Almost all young people and parents who met with HM Inspectors had significant concerns about the amount of traffic in and around the surrounding area of the proposed school and associated catchment areas. They suggested that speed restrictions on a few roads could be implemented to help reduce the risk of accidents. If the proposal is accepted, the council should work with stakeholders to ensure there are safe routes to schools put in place prior to the new primary school opening. A few parents are concerned that this proposal may result in their children attending different schools, which may lead to longer travel time to schools. Parents would welcome greater clarity around the sibling guarantee. Parents expressed the need for the council to consider including a community hub as part of the new build and the need for out of school care provision. If the proposal is agreed, it will be important for the council to work with stakeholders to develop ways to mitigate their concerns raised.

4. Summary

The council's proposal provides strong evidence to support the establishment of a new non-denominational primary school and nursery class at Gilmerton, Station Road and implement catchment changes. HM Inspectors agree that there are potential educational benefits to this proposal. If implemented, the proposal could see an increased number of children in the area accessing a modern and accessible learning environment, which will support the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. If approved, the council should work with parents, staff, children and young people to ensure safe routes to Gracemount High School and mitigate the concerns of stakeholders.

HM Inspectors
October 2024