

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Renfrewshire Council to relocate Paisley Grammar School to a new build Community Campus.

November 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 Renfrewshire Council's proposal to relocate Paisley Grammar School to a new build Community Campus. 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 and young people of the school; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper;
- 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 virtual public meetings held on 22 and 30 September 2020 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
- virtual visits to the sites of Paisley Grammar, Gallowhill Primary, Mossvale Primary, Ralston Primary, Todholm Primary and Williamsburgh Primary Schools including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation period ran from 31 August to 20 October 2020. The council had originally planned a public meeting for 22 September 2020 to be held at the Lagoon Leisure Centre. However, due to the developing Covid-19 situation and taking account of public health risks, the council cancelled this meeting and arranged two virtual public meetings; one on 22 September and one on 30 September 2020. Sixty-seven stakeholders took part in the virtual meetings. In order to seek further the views of stakeholders, the council arranged a number of consultation sessions with children and young people from Paisley Grammar School and its associated primary schools. The council received 133 responses to an online questionnaire in addition to two email

responses from stakeholders. Fifty-eight percent of the responses were in favour of the proposal and forty-two percent against.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The current suitability of Paisley Grammar School is judged by the council to be at condition and suitability “C” – poor, with a few aspects below that. Young people are required to go offsite to access some physical education facilities. The existing site is not sufficiently large to build a replacement for the current building. The council has clearly set out a number of important educational benefits in its proposal paper. A new campus has the potential to improve the learning environment for young people. The proposed new location could help build further partnership working between the secondary school and West College Scotland in terms of wider curriculum provision.

3.2 Young people who met with HM Inspectors welcome the improved facilities that a new school building will bring. They think the current toilets, changing areas for physical education and social areas within the current school are poor. Staff, parents and young people believe that new outdoor areas for learning, recreation and social meeting areas will enrich young people’s experience. Senior staff and teachers across the cluster are confident that the new campus will be improved through enhanced facilities, for example, in drama, music, technologies and physical education. Improved partnership with West College Scotland could widen curricular pathways and help to develop further young people’s skills for learning, life and work. HM Inspectors agree that the proposed campus also has the potential to open new opportunities for the wider community within and beyond normal school opening times.

3.3 Stakeholders welcome the council’s commitment to designing a campus which will allow spaces to be used flexibly and creatively. They acknowledge that a new campus could enhance and develop further learning experiences which are relevant, meaningful and challenging. Senior leaders are confident the new campus will allow the school to maintain young peoples’ academic achievements whilst increasing the option of following vocational and technological pathways. Young people and staff are keen that the design for the new school creates improved facilities for subjects including STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics); drama, performance and media; and ICT (information and communications technology).

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the council’s proposal has clear educational benefits. A new campus has the potential to provide a high-quality learning environment. A new school could be developed to use space more creatively and flexibly with regard to areas for learning and social spaces. The curriculum could improve through enhanced facilities, for example, in drama, music, technologies and physical education. Improved partnership with West College Scotland could widen curricular pathways and help to develop further young people’s skills for learning, life and work. The proposed campus also has the potential to open new opportunities for the wider community within and beyond normal school opening times.

Parents agree that the new campus will bring wider opportunities and improved experiences for young people. A few parents raised concerns over safety with regard to heavy traffic around the proposed site. Should the proposal go ahead, it is important that the council continues to listen to these concerns and works with stakeholders to find appropriate solutions which brings re-assurance with regard to these issues.

**HM Inspectors
November 2020**