

# **Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Renfrewshire Council to: establish a Pre School Assessment and Development Unit and Primary Communication Service in Carolside Primary School; and to move the current Social Emotional and Behavioural Needs Outreach Service to Carlibar Communication Centre to an enhanced nurture classroom.**

October 2022

## 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 East Renfrewshire Council's proposal to establish a Pre School Assessment and Development Unit and Primary Communication Service in Carolside Primary School and to move the current Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN) Outreach Service to Carlibar Communication Centre to an enhanced nurture classroom. 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:

- 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 Carlibar Primary School, Carlibar Communication Centre and Carolside Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## 2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation ran from 17 August to 3 October 2022. Copies of the consultation proposal document were made available in local council buildings, the three settings most directly affected and via the council website and social media. A public meeting was held on 14 September 2022. In addition, three Parent Council meetings were held between 31 August and 13 September 2022, one in each of the three settings most directly affected by the proposal. At each meeting, officers from East Renfrewshire Council shared a presentation offering further information on the proposal and included the council's views of educational benefits. The council answered queries and responded to any concerns raised. The council received 100 responses from stakeholders to their online questionnaire. Ninety percent of respondents were in favour and 10% were against.

2.3 The council engaged the services of a consultant to gather the views of children in the three settings most directly affected by the proposal. The consultation was simplified using a social story to enable children within Carlibar Communication Centre to participate. Of the children who responded to the consultation, 91% in Carlibar Primary School, 85% in Carlibar Communication Centre and 89% in Carolside Primary School were in favour of the proposal.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 East Renfrewshire Council sets out a number of educational benefits in its proposal to establish a Pre School Assessment and Development Unit and Primary Communication Service in Carolside Primary School. Stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors share the view that there are potential benefits from the creation of this new unit based within Carolside Primary School.

3.2 In its proposal, the council highlights the benefits of expanding specialist provision to meet the needs of an increasing number of children with additional support needs by providing additional suitable high quality learning environments and more specialist staff. Stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors agree that increasing specialist capacity is essential. However, parents and staff would like further assurance that any adaptations to Carolside Primary School will provide an equivalent high quality learning environment, such as sensory support, to that currently provided in Carlibar Communication Centre. Parents of children in Carolside Primary School share the view that the new provision would enhance inclusive practice and ethos across the school. However, they would like further assurance that any changes to the school building and grounds will not have any negative impact on the experiences and outcomes for children in the mainstream primary school.

3.3 In the educational benefits statement, the council provides less detail on the anticipated benefits of moving the current SEBN Outreach Service to Carlibar Communication Centre to an enhanced nurture classroom. For example, how any transition arrangements and part-time placements will be managed to support inclusion and entitlements. As a result, most stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors were less clear about the potential benefits from setting up this new classroom within Carlibar Communication Centre under the management of the headteacher. Parents of children in Carlibar Communication Centre highlighted their concerns about establishing an enhanced nurture classroom within the unit. They are worried about the potential impact of how the needs of individual and cohorts of children will be met. Staff who spoke to HM Inspectors are currently unclear of how the new classroom will operate alongside the continuation of the SEBN Outreach Service.

3.4 Stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors recognise the potential educational benefits that can be gained through specialist staff sharing their expertise with mainstream staff and the establishment of support networks to share inclusive pedagogy and good practice. They agree that, with appropriate time for staff to share inclusive pedagogy, this will lead to improved quality of learning, teaching and achievement for children both within and out with specialist provisions. Stakeholders also agree that by reducing the need for some children to spend less time travelling across the area to access provision, they can benefit from more time to learn, play and socialise with their peers. A few parents in Carolside Primary School shared some slight concerns around traffic management in and around the grounds which may add to longer standing local issues.

3.5 Overall, the proposal is welcomed by almost all stakeholders who recognise an immediate need to increase capacity across specialist provision within East Renfrewshire. However, a few stakeholders questioned the sustainability of the current proposals. They asked what plans the council has in place to best meet the educational needs of all children and young people in the longer term and how they will build further capacity across the school estate. While the current

proposal does not provide detail on future provision, it does state that educational places for children and young people with additional support needs will be kept under review.

#### **4. Summary**

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has potential educational benefits. The proposal will, if approved, provide much needed additional capacity to meet the increasing number of children with additional support needs in East Renfrewshire. The new unit in Carolside Primary School will, over time, reduce travel for children and families who will benefit from specialist provision closer to their own community. If approved, the council should continue to work closely with staff, parents and children to ensure that they are fully and clearly informed and involved in the implementation of the proposal. The council could provide more detail outlining the specific educational benefits of moving the current SEBN Outreach Service to Carlibar Communication Centre to an enhanced nurture classroom.

**HM Inspectors  
October 2022**