

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

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by North Lanarkshire Council on the creation of P4-P7 Language Communication Support Centre (LCSC) as part of St Aidan's Primary School LCSC**

December 2021

## 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 North Lanarkshire Council's proposal to the creation of a P4–P7 as part of St Aidan's Primary school LCSC. 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 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 online public meeting held on 20 October 2021 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 St Aidan's Primary school, St Aidan's LCSC and the proposed site for the new P4-P7 provision at the Edward Lawson Centre, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## 2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation process ran from 27 September 2021 until 16 November 2021. The council's proposal was made available to members of the public and published on the council's website. Additionally, the council created a Frequently Asked Questions document which was also published on the website. Taking account of public health concerns, the council held a virtual public meeting on 20 October 2021. The virtual meeting was attended by 24 individuals. Officers from North Lanarkshire Council shared a presentation offering further information on the proposal and included the council's views of education benefits. The council accepted questions up to two

days before the public meeting. This was to include better those who may have been prevented from offering their view at the public meeting.

2.3 Stakeholders requested reassurance that the proposed off site P4-P7 cohort from the LCSC would remain an integral part of St Aidan's Primary School. Council officers offered assurances that engagement with mainstream and LCSC peers would continue to be available based on the individual needs of children. Stakeholders raised concerns and requested clarity surrounding the roads and traffic management around the school. This point was noted and council officers offered an explanation that the Roads Department were a statutory consultee, and that all traffic management considerations would be taken into account.

2.4 Over 100 responses were received in relation to the proposal. This includes online and class based questionnaires. Responses represented included the views of 44 parents, 12 staff and two other interested parties. Of those who responded, almost all are in favour of the proposal citing the benefit and importance of inclusion and a sense of belonging to the school. No responses were against the proposal, with only a few undecided. The majority of children attending the LCSC and most children at St Aidan's Primary School responded to the pupil questionnaire. Their views were gained through the use of a whole class response. Almost all classes were in favour of the proposal citing the benefits of feeling a part of the school, the importance of peers and friendships, and working with staff who know and support them well. No pupil responses stated that they were against the proposal.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 North Lanarkshire Council set out a number of education benefits in its proposal for the creation of P4-P7 LCSC as part of St Aidan's Primary School LCSC. Stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors share the view that there are potential educational benefits.

3.2 In its proposal, the council identifies that the LCSC requires additional high-quality accommodation to meet the wellbeing and learning needed of children in P4-P7 within the south locality. The Edward Lawson Centre has the potential to provide a high-quality learning environment for children from the LCSC entering upper primary stages. As a result, children may benefit from bespoke, flexible and modern indoor learning environments. The proposed location offers potential for improved outdoor learning and leisure spaces, when compared to existing premises. With better educational spaces, the curriculum can be enhanced further through increased opportunity to provide individualised and specialist learning activities.

3.3 In the current school location, further development of appropriate learning spaces is not possible. However, in the proposed new location, the overall internal and external space available on the indicative plan requires to be further clarified. This will ensure that any potential benefit in the learning environment can be fully realised. Facilities should include classrooms, multipurpose spaces, quiet spaces, and sensory spaces designed to meet the individual needs of children as they grow and develop. If developed well, the proposal has potential to support further the delivery of a relevant and meaningful curriculum. The proposed new location at Edward Lawson Centre also has potential to develop outdoor spaces that will further enhance learning, teaching and wellbeing. However, significant ground works will be required to provide safe, secure and high-quality outdoor spaces.

3.4 HM Inspectors share the concern of the majority of stakeholders surrounding the feasibility, practicality and safety of travel to and from the proposed new location and the existing school. The busy road between Edward Lawson Centre and St Aidan's Primary School has no traffic controls. Currently, this will significantly impact on the number of opportunities to safely move between the two school locations. Therefore, children attending the LCSC will have less capacity to spend time

at St Aidan's Primary School learning alongside peers or being part of the wider school community. This has the potential to negatively impact on the school's current and effective inclusive approaches highlighted to HMI inspectors.

3.5 The Diocese of Motherwell are generally in favour of the proposal. St Aidan's Primary School has strong links with the church and its local community. As a result, the diocese representatives believe the proposal is well placed to provide continuity of religious observance and sacraments for the children.

## 4. Summary

HMI Inspectors agree that the proposal to relocate the P4 – P7 LCSC to the Edward Lawson Centre has potential educational benefits. It offers the possibility to reduce unnecessary transitions. There is potential to provide continuity of school provision for those children assessed as requiring a significant level of additional support and curriculum adaptation. However, any renovation work to improve the Edward Lawson Centre should provide spacious, flexible and high-quality learning environments. Should the proposal be accepted, HMI inspectors believe that it is important that the council demonstrates clearly how they intend to respond to the concerns expressed by stakeholders. This should include steps that will be taken in relation to improving road safety and traffic flow in and around the proposed new location. The council should include clarity of approaches for proposed safe routes between the P4-P7 LCSC and St Aidan's Primary School.

At present, all P4 children have been retained in the LCSC base at St Aidan's Primary School to support unnecessary disruption while the consultation takes place. This will impact upon availability of placements for any new identified P1 children assessed as requiring the specialist support of the LCSC. The council, in preparing its final report, should give full consideration to the likely impact on potential preschool children who may require the support of the LCSC from P1. In reviewing this, the council should ensure that children who are assessed as requiring the support of an LCSC, have their identified needs met in full.

**HM Inspectors  
December 2021**