

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by North Lanarkshire Council to relocate Mavisbank Primary School to the Drumpark/Greenhill Campus

April 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 relocate Mavisbank Primary School to the Drumpark/Greenhill 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 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 meeting held on 10 March 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
- virtual visits to the site of Mavisbank School, Drumpark School and Greenhill Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The Consultation ran from 17 February 2021 until 31 March 2021. Taking account of public health concerns, the council held a virtual public meeting on the 10 March 2021. The meeting was attended by 15 people. Authority officers shared presentations offering further information. Officers committed to answering questions where they arose. Stakeholders were keen to determine what adaptations would be made to physical aspects of the buildings and organisation of staff to ensure additional support needs continued to be met. HM Inspectors welcome the council's approach to providing further information through the publication of a Frequently Asked Questions section located in the council's website. Since the original public meeting, a presentation has been shared

outlining further aspects of the council's views of the educational benefits for the secondary aged young people remaining in Mavisbank.

2.3 In order to seek further the views of stakeholders, the council arranged two additional consultation sessions on 30 March 2021. The meeting for staff with 34 staff in attendance and the meeting for parents with 11 parents in attendance. The council received 83 responses and comments from their stakeholder engagements. Forty-eight respondees were parents or carers, 34 were staff and one was an interested party. Just under half (49%) of all respondees were not in favour of the proposal with a minority (34%) undecided. A further minority (17%) of respondees were in favour of the proposal.

2.4 The council received 35 responses from children attending Mavisbank School, Drumpark School and Greenhill Primary Schools. Most (80%) of the children's responses were positive and identified the potential to make new friends and have more people to help them.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 North Lanarkshire Council set out a number of educational benefits in the original proposal to relocate Mavisbank Primary School to the Drumpark/Greenhill Campus. HM Inspectors agree with stakeholders' concerns about the original proposal paper. The educational benefits set out there did not clearly identify improvements for all children and young people attending Mavisbank School and Drumpark School. It was unclear from the original proposal that primary aged children currently attending Mavisbank will be enrolled in Drumpark School. The timescales relating to Drumpark School building works and adaptations to Mavisbank School were vague. Within the virtual public meeting, council representatives clarified that Mavisbank will cease to have primary aged pupils and will support only secondary aged pupils. Therefore, primary aged pupils from Mavisbank School will enrol in Drumpark School. During the consultation process, the council provided additional information to stakeholders through a presentation which outlined further the educational benefits for primary aged children. Additionally, the council developed a second set of educational benefits to demonstrate better the benefits of the proposal for secondary aged young people. HM Inspectors welcome this additional information.

3.2 There are a number of potential educational benefits for primary aged children. For example, increased interaction with a range of pupils within the shared campus and inclusion in a wider range of learning and social contexts. The more modern facilities within the campus could offer the potential for a broader range of learning activities suitable to the learner's needs. Through increased engagement with a wider range of staff and children, there is potential for learners to develop their skills further when compared to their current educational context. In addition, there are opportunities for children to learn alongside a diverse range of children. The development of the lower mezzanine has potential to provide additional space and high quality additional learning environments for children attending Drumpark School. However, it is not yet clear whether the development of the lower mezzanine will benefit or meet the additional support needs of the children relocating from Mavisbank School. Parents who discussed their views with HM Inspectors shared their concerns about meeting the needs of their children if relocated to Drumpark School. There are further considerations for the council to undertake to ensure this space is accessible, has capacity and is suitable for all children attending Drumpark School. Stakeholders from across the three schools stated that there is potential for increased traffic around the school at key points of the school day. It was not clear within the proposal how the council plan to mitigate some of the risks associated with an increase in traffic around the school. It is the view of HM Inspectors that a majority of the educational benefits stated for primary aged children have the potential to enhance educational experiences and outcomes.

3.3 The council provides a stronger case within the proposal relating to educational benefits for secondary aged young people. It recognises the opportunity to develop a more focused approach better reflecting the needs and capabilities of the young people. There is potential in adapting the environment of Mavisbank School to better align with young people's current and future needs. For example, adaptation of the environment may improve and enhance curriculum pathways to be aligned better with young people's age and cognitive development. Projections of possible numbers of young people returning to Mavisbank School from other educational placements may have an impact upon what spaces within the school can be adapted and for what purpose. It would be supportive to all stakeholders if the council now provides clarification on what adaptations are being considered. HM Inspector discussions with consultees highlight the number of devices required to transfer safely young people around the school building. There is potential, as part of any adaptations, for the council to review this with partners and stakeholders to improve accessibility for young people moving around the school.

3.4 HM Inspectors welcome the addition of 'Proposed Phases of Transition' within the updated Additional support needs (ASN) presentation. This better represents key considerations required prior to beginning any transition process. However, there is a need to ensure children avoid any unnecessary transitions. Additionally, it is not clear whether transitions will begin prior to full completion of building works.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors consider that, overall, there are potential educational benefits to enrol primary aged children from Mavisbank School in Drumpark Primary. In addition, there is a reasonable case to move provision to a secondary specialist facility for young people attending Mavisbank School. There is potential for all children enrolled in Drumpark Primary to broaden their learning and social experiences within a diverse campus. Secondary aged young people remaining in Mavisbank will benefit from adaptations to the environment as this has the promise of enhancing educational experiences and specialised curriculum design. Overall, HM Inspectors endorse the revised educational benefits of the proposal.

Should the council take forward the proposal, it should ensure that transition planning fully meets the needs of children and young people, particularly for those nearing the end of their primary school experience. Careful planning with parents and children based upon robust assessment should be a feature of transition planning. The council needs to articulate better, how transition will avoid disruption or negatively impact upon prior progress learners have made.

If the council proceed with the proposal, it should provide clear proposed timescales for moving primary aged children to Drumpark School, ensuring building works and adaptations are complete prior to completion of any transitions. It is important for the council to be clear on how they can ensure that Drumpark School has sufficient capacity to increase the school roll. Clear timescales for proposed adaptations to the current Mavisbank School environment should be shared with all stakeholders. HM inspectors recognise stakeholders' legitimate concerns about increased traffic around the Drumpark and Greenhill school building as part of the proposal. The council should consider this as part of its ongoing planning.

HM Inspectors
April 2021