

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Dundee City Council to the closure of Braeview Academy and Craigie High School and the re-delineation of existing school catchments to form a new single catchment area for a new joint secondary school/community learning campus from August 2024; and the expansion of the catchment area for Grove Academy from August 2024 to embrace the current Craigiebarns Primary School catchment area.

October 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 Dundee City Council's proposal to close Braeview Academy and Craigie High School and re-delineate existing school catchments to form a new single catchment area for a new joint secondary school/community learning campus from August 2024; and expand the catchment area for Grove Academy from August 2024 to embrace the current Craigiebarns Primary School catchment area. 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. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

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:

- 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 Braeview Academy, Mill of Mains Primary School, Craigie High School, Claypotts Castle Primary School, Grove Academy and Craigiebarns Primary School including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation process began on 10 February 2020 and was due to end on 27 March 2020. With schools across the country closing as a response to the spread of Covid-19, the council was unable to complete the consultation within the proposed timescale. The council extended the period of consultation with a revised closing date of 4 September 2020. The proposal

has two aspects:- the closure of Braeview Academy and Craigie High School with a new purpose built school to replace these; and secondly a change to the catchment area for Grove Academy. A public meeting was held on 5 March 2020 where six stakeholders attended. The council received responses from 24 stakeholders. Half (12) agreed with the proposal, a third (eight) had questions about the proposal and the remaining four stakeholders disagreed. In order to seek the views of stakeholders prior to the national lockdown, the council held a number of consultation sessions with stakeholders from six schools. These included parents, children and young people. The responses were largely positive. During the period of extension to the consultation, weekly online feedback to stakeholders' questions were published on the council's website on the 24 August, 31 August and 7 September 2020.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council believes that the proposal to replace the existing Braeview Academy and Craigie High School will bring a number of educational benefits in addition to securing best value. HM Inspectors agree that there are clear potential educational benefits from young people learning in a well-equipped and modern digital learning environment. A larger school should offer a wider range of curricular opportunities and promote further senior phase pathways which develop skills for learning, life and work. Improved accommodation will enable creative approaches to enhancing partnership working with, for example, Dundee and Angus College, Michelin Skills Centre/Industrial Park and Dundee Schools Music Theatre. New facilities will provide improved accessible and inclusive learning spaces which better meet the needs of all learners. The inclusion of bespoke pupil support areas including sensory enhanced support has the potential to improve experiences for young people with additional needs.

3.2 All stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors agreed with both aspects of the proposal. They agreed with the closure of both secondary schools and the building of a new school as well as expanding the catchment area for Grove Academy to include the current catchment area for Craigiebarns Primary School. Stakeholders recognise the range of advantages a new purpose-built school would bring for learners in terms of digital learning, specialist classrooms, flexible learning spaces and common areas. All stakeholders were positive about the wider curriculum a larger school could offer including enhanced links with the local college and other partners. They acknowledge the benefits to the community in having access to facilities at the new school beyond school opening hours. A few stakeholders expressed concern about the accessibility of public transport from some areas of the catchment, about safe routes to school and about the possibility of flooding around the site of the proposed new school.

3.3 Staff in all schools that received a virtual visit agreed with other stakeholders in terms of the advantages for children and young people as well as the community in general. They also welcomed the opportunity to work in collaboration with colleagues in a larger school and cluster. They felt this would provide rich opportunities for collaborative learning, planning and moderation.

3.4 The movement of the Craigiebarns Primary School catchment to Grove Academy will provide certainty for parents who have made the choice to send their children to Grove Academy. Young people will have access there to a modern learning environment and a wide curriculum. They will no longer need to wait for the outcome of placing requests. For children too, there is re-assurance that they will be able to move with their classmates to the same school. Children from Craigiebarns Primary School whose older siblings attend Craigie High School would like to be guaranteed a place in the new school.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the two aspects of the proposal have the potential to bring clear educational benefits for the children and young people in the area. In relation to the proposed new secondary school, whilst all stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors agree, a few also raised concerns about transport, safe routes and the potential for flooding at the proposed site. Should the proposal go ahead, the council should continue to work with the community to provide re-assurance and seek solutions where appropriate. In relation to the proposal to change the catchment area of Grove Academy to include Craigiebarns Primary School, stakeholders are in favour of this, but a few would like re-assurance regarding the position of siblings whose older brothers or sisters attend Craigie High School.

HM Inspectors
October 2020