

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Dumfries and Galloway Council to relocate Loreburn Primary School from its existing building to the Minerva Building on the Dumfries Academy campus.

December 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 Dumfries and Galloway Council's proposal to relocate Loreburn Primary School from its existing building to the Minerva Building on the Dumfries Academy 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:

- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, and
- visits to the site of Loreburn Primary School and Dumfries Academy campus, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The main proposal within the consultation is to relocate Loreburn Primary Infant School from its existing building to the Minerva Building on the Dumfries Academy campus.

2.3 A public meeting took place at Dumfries Academy campus on 22 September 2022. There were no attendees. No written or electronic representations were forwarded to the council and no expressions of opposition to the proposals were received during the consultation period. The formal consultation ran from 5 September 2022 until 4 November 2022. Copies of the proposal were made available electronically on the council website and in paper format via central locations. School staff met with pupils to discuss proposals. A few stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors expressed the view that communication on the proposal could have been improved.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council set out its rationale for an options appraisal in 2019 to assist in identifying a solution to the poor condition, accessibility and suitability of Loreburn Primary School. Currently, the building is rated C, which is poor for suitability and condition. As a result, an initial scoping of options was developed in consultation with the Parent Council and staff. Analysis by council officers indicated that three out of four options were not viable. The Parent Council agreed with this and supports the option which forms this proposal, namely to relocate Loreburn Primary School.

3.2 The council set out its proposal to relocate Loreburn Primary School from its existing building to the Minerva Building on the Dumfries Academy campus and the associated educational benefits. HM Inspectors agree that if all the planned renovations are carried out, then relocation to the Minerva building and Dumfries Academy has potential to improve the learning environment for children, staff and other stakeholders. The co-location has potential to enhance access to specialist staff, resources and collaboration between primary and secondary teaching staff. Improved accessibility following the renovation of the Minerva building should enable more inclusive opportunities for children and young people to learn. However, HM Inspectors believe that the educational benefits of the proposal need to be expanded upon in the final consultation report.

3.3 HM Inspectors met with pupils, parents, staff, including headteachers and other stakeholders. All were supportive of the proposal. However, almost all of those who met with HM Inspectors raised concerns regarding the availability of safe, green outdoor space and safe routes to school, particularly during building work at Dumfries Academy campus.

3.4 Children who met with HM Inspectors are looking forward to bigger classrooms and physical education space. However, a few are concerned about access to toilet facilities and sharing a building with older children and young people. A few secondary school pupils are concerned about disruption during the transition period and ongoing co-location.

3.5 Almost all of the children, young people and teaching staff who met with HM Inspectors have concerns around the shared use of the Minerva building. These include noise levels and the need for sufficient parking. Further clarification from the council on how the building will be configured to ensure the needs and concerns of both schools are taken into account would be beneficial. Similarly, stakeholders would benefit from further information relating to access to the Bridge education facility, and how this might impact on its future use by children attending Loreburn Primary School.

4. Summary

The council's proposal provides a strong case to relocate Loreburn Primary School from its existing building to the Minerva Building on the Dumfries Academy campus. HM Inspectors agree with the educational benefits as set out in the proposal, however, these need to be expanded in the final consultation report. If the proposal proceeds, it has potential to improve the environment for the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence and potentially improved outcomes for learners. Although all stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposal, they raised a few concerns around the planned shared use of the Minerva building. In its final consultation report, the council will need to consider how they intend to address these concerns.

HM Inspectors
December 2022