

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Glasgow City Council to establish the Govan Annexe as a school for Gaelic Medium Education in its own right, with a defined catchment area. Glasgow City Council also propose the establishment of another Gaelic Medium Education primary school in the north east of the city. Glasgow City Council has proposed catchment areas, should the consultation result in there being four schools for Gaelic Medium Education in the city.

February 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 Glasgow City Council's proposal to establish the Govan Annexe as a school for Gaelic Medium Education in its own right, with a defined catchment area. It also proposes the establishment of another primary school for Gaelic Medium Education in the north east of the city. 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. This should include 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, written and oral submissions from parents and others;
- telephone discussions relating to the proposals; and
- visits to the site of the Govan Annexe, Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu and Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghleann Dail, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The formal consultation ran from 31 October 2019 to 26 January 2020. The proposal paper was distributed to a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties. These included Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Comann nam Pàrant. All education authorities surrounding Glasgow City Council were included on the distribution list. This included education authorities who make placing requests to send children and young people to Glasgow City Council to be educated through the medium of Gaelic. A notice to advise of the consultation was placed in the press. A dedicated area of Glasgow City Council's website afforded interested parties both information and an opportunity to respond to the consultation.

2.3 The Executive Director of Education and other officers held a public meeting at each of the Gaelic Medium provisions within the city. The numbers attending these meetings, as provided by the council were: Govan Annexe - 11, Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu - 24 and Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghleann Dail - 16. Attendees were supportive of the proposals. They requested further detail on aspects such as: location of schools, catchment areas, staffing, provision of early learning and childcare, and opportunities for staff to collaborate for professional learning on Gaelic Medium Education.

2.4 The council posed four questions about their proposals in an online questionnaire, to which 198 responded. Almost all respondents were in favour of the Govan Annexe being a free-standing Gaelic Medium School. Almost all respondents were in favour of establishing a fourth Gaelic Medium primary school in the former St James' Primary School in the north east of the city. Most respondents were in favour of the two sets of proposed catchment areas being set up around the proposed and existing primary schools for Gaelic Medium. HM Inspectors' other evaluative activities confirmed similar data to that received by the questionnaire. Evaluative activities also highlighted some very pertinent concerns. Going forward, consultees' comments are very useful in supporting the successful implementation of the proposals, should they be implemented. The council should continue to clarify with parents how their concerns will be addressed.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 This proposal represents strong support from Glasgow City Council to an increasing demand for Gaelic Medium Education. The council are following statutory Guidance for Gaelic Education by planning to meet this parental demand. The proposal involves the establishment of two additional primary schools where immersion through Gaelic will be available. Almost all consultees felt that the Govan Annexe was ready to have its own identity as a standalone school. Parents felt that definite timescales for the opening of the proposed second new primary school, and more information about it, would be useful. The establishment of two new primary schools would increase capacity at the site of Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu. This would enable expansion of secondary education through the medium of Gaelic for the whole of the city. The proposals offer educational benefits to those currently in Gaelic Medium Education and for those who may be in the future.

3.2 Parents at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghleann Dail, as well as other parents using Gaelic Medium Education, had reservations about the catchment area set around Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghleann Dail. These stemmed from the size of the school and that it quickly becomes over-subscribed. The Govan Annexe, in their view, is becoming the default school. Parents appreciate that it can be difficult to know from year to year how many children are likely to enrol for Gaelic Medium Education. The council should continue to work with parents to get the best solution in drawing up catchment areas. For almost all parents, the mutual partnership and reciprocal benefits between the community and its school are important. This is particularly so for supporting children and young people's fluency in Gaelic. Parents felt that the issues around the proposed catchment area of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghleann Dail may present challenges in achieving positive impact of community engagement. The council have intimated that they welcome consultees' alternative proposals for catchment areas. They should now do some further work with parents to achieve the best possible arrangement. The council should also discuss further with parents their intentions for effective arrangements for same placing of siblings; convenient provision of early learning and childcare through total immersion and parity across the city's schools for Gaelic Medium in accessing opportunities for music, culture and sports.

3.3 Almost all of the consultees, with whom HM Inspectors discussed the proposal, were positive about the council's approach to having a short-life working group to jointly strategically plan for Gaelic Medium Education. One of the short-life working group's outcomes was the

proposals set out in this consultation. The short-life working group, it was felt, was representative of parents and enabled them to participate very effectively in making decisions.

3.4 A number of consultees expressed concerns about staffing challenges in the Gaelic sector. With new schools and expansion planned, parents reiterated the importance of having sufficient high-quality fluent staff. HM Inspectors fully appreciate parents' concerns. The proposal paper outlines the council's intention to continue to work with the Scottish Government to ensure that their workforce planning meets the council's staffing requirements.

3.5 A few parents who use the council's Gaelic Medium Education provision, but reside in another local authority, expressed some concerns. Their concerns focused on possibly losing their much appreciated access to Glasgow City Council's Gaelic Medium provision as the council prioritises meeting its own parental demands first and foremost. The current provision supports the national aspiration to increase the numbers of speakers of Gaelic. Parents were concerned that 3-18 Gaelic Medium provision would not be available to learners out with the city, including to provide continuity from primary to secondary. Commendably, the council has involved all surrounding local authorities in the consultation on their proposals. Some of these parents report that the secondary provision at Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu, which delivers the curriculum through Gaelic as far as possible, is what they want for their child. Bòrd na Gàidhlig did not respond to this consultation as a statutory consultee. It would be helpful to stakeholders and the council to hear Bòrd na Gàidhlig's views of this as the proposal is progressed.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the council's proposals will bring further educational benefits to the Gaelic sector. The proposal will help the council meet increased demand for Gaelic Medium Education. Consultees raised a few concerns as outlined in section two and three of this report. Going forward, the council should continue to work with parents in addressing these.

HM Inspectors
February 2020