

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The City of Edinburgh Council to establish an Annexe of Kirkliston Primary School at Kirkliston Leisure Centre.

January 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 The City of Edinburgh Council's proposal to establish an Annexe of Kirkliston Primary School at Kirkliston Leisure Centre. 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 of the school; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper;
- 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 14 November 2019 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 Kirkliston Primary School, Kirkliston Leisure Centre and Kirkliston Nursery, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The statutory consultation period ran from 28 October 2019 until 9 December 2019. A public meeting was held on the 14 November 2019 in Kirkliston Primary School. The public meeting was advertised on the consultation hub and details of the meeting were included in the consultation paper. The consultation document was sent to statutory consultees. Copies of the consultation document were also available on the council website and at the public meeting.

2.3 The public meeting was attended by 18 members of the public. In addition, 50 responses were received through the online survey and two people completed drop-in forms. Of the responses to the online survey and from the two drop-in surveys 46 of the 52 were from parents or carers. Of the 52 responses, 33 were in favour of the proposal and 19 against. The main areas of

concern raised through the comments and from stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors were about whether this provides a long term solution or whether a second school is required to accommodate the growing population of Kirkliston. In addition, many were concerned about the impact that splitting the school across two sites could have for school cohesion.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council outlines how the proposal to establish an annexe of Kirkliston Primary School at the Kirkliston Leisure Centre site will reduce accommodation pressure at the existing Kirkliston Primary School site. It states that were the proposal not to go ahead this would result in significant accommodation pressure at the existing site. There are educational benefits to this aspect of the proposal as the current site could not accommodate the projected increase in the school roll without compromising access to gathering, play and some learning spaces.

3.2 The council outlines how the proposal will maintain a single school with an unchanged catchment area in Kirkliston. The proposal sets out how this will address future accommodation pressure while avoiding splitting the community into two catchment areas that developing a new school would necessitate. In finalising its proposal, the council needs to consider further whether the decision to not develop a second primary school in the area will be the correct one in the longer term.

3.3 The council outlines how the proposal will improve the learning environment for children in P1. The nursery is relocating to the leisure centre site. There are potential educational benefits to having nursery and P1 pupils on the same purpose built site which will be well equipped to deliver a play based early level curriculum. The consultation sets out a potential third phase of the site development to accommodate P2 pupils should the school roll require this. It is less clear that this is of educational benefit other than reducing accommodation pressure on the main site.

3.4 The proposal accepts that there are potential disadvantages to splitting the school over two sites. Parents and pupils also raised concerns about this. For example, parents were concerned about start and drop off times at the two sites, a reduction in integration between P1 and the rest of the school and arrangements for P1-P2 transition. Parents and pupils were concerned about any potential loss to existing highly valued school systems such as the buddy programme. However, senior leaders are already developing plans to reduce any negative impacts which should mitigate against any educational disadvantage.

3.5 A minority of stakeholders are concerned about traffic management around both sites and safe walking routes between the sites. In addition, a few parents were concerned about air quality standards at the new site given its proximity to a major road network. The council needs to consider how best to ensure pupils and their families have safe access and walking routes around and between both sites.

3.6 Pupils at the school considered the proposal well, setting out thoughtful concerns and proposals. They have identified potential educational benefits such as the option to develop a mini-buddy system between nursery and P1 children and more outdoor space for P1s to play in.

4. Summary

Given the current accommodation situation at the main Kirkliston Primary School site and the potential it provides for a more cohesive early level transition from nursery to P1 the proposal has the potential to provide some educational benefits. However, the council may need to review the estate should current roll projections change. Senior leaders at the nursery and school are developing coherent plans to ensure that if the proposal goes ahead there is no loss to existing valued programmes and to address practical issues such as starting times.

**HM Inspectors
January 2020**