

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HM Inspectors of Education addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Perth and Kinross Council to amend the catchment area for Abernyte Primary School to include the area north of the A90 which is currently within Inchtute Primary School catchment area.

August 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 Perth and Kinross Council's proposal to amend the catchment area for Abernyte Primary School to include the area north of the A90, which is currently within Inchtute 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 2010 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 schools; any other users and 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:

- 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 sites of Abernyte Primary School and Inchtute Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation process ran from 16 May 2022 to 29 June 2022. A public meeting was held at Inchtute Primary School on 9 June 2022 and was attended by nine members of the public. Attendees asked questions to clarify how the proposal may affect their families. The main concern raised was to have increased flexibility to allow younger siblings to attend Inchtute Primary School should older siblings already attend the school. The council received 12 responses to the online survey. Ten responses were in favour of the proposal and two against the proposal. Consultation with pupils in P1 to P5 was undertaken in the two affected primary schools on 20 June 2022. Pupils in P6 and P7 are not affected by the proposed change to the catchment area. These pupils will be at secondary school in August 2023 when the proposed change to the catchment area would be implemented. Most children in both schools were in favour of the proposal.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 Perth and Kinross Council propose to increase the catchment area of Abernyte Primary School catchment area to build a sustainable school roll.

3.2 HM Inspectors agree with the council's educational benefits statement and are confident that there is sufficient merit to amend the catchment area for Abernyte Primary School. The council's proposal provides a possible solution to secure a sustainable roll for Abernyte Primary School with minimal to no impact on Inchtute Primary School. By sustaining the roll at Abernyte Primary School, it is likely that the current two composite class structure can be maintained. HM Inspectors agree with the council that the proposal could also support a better gender balance, opportunities for cooperative teaching and increased opportunities for peer relationships.

3.3 Children, parents and staff at Abernyte Primary School who met with HM Inspectors' are in favour of the proposal. Children are very proud of their school and recognise the potential benefits from an increase in the number of children attending. They particularly welcome opportunities to have a bigger peer group. They offer a solution focused approach to any challenges that may result from more children attending their school, for example, lunch routines. Children at Abernyte Primary School would like consideration given to cloakroom and toilet facilities should the roll grow more considerably. Staff at Abernyte Primary School welcome the proposal and view it as a common sense change that could help secure the future of the school. They would like the council to consider the resourcing required to support learning and teaching across the curriculum for potentially larger year groups. Parents who spoke with HM Inspectors' are all in favour of the proposal. They are passionate about securing the future of Abernyte Primary School. They are keen that other families have the opportunity to attend and benefit from similar positive experiences their children are having. Parents are keen that any amendments to the catchment are clear and publicised well to help prevent any future uncertainty. They feel this will also help secure the future roll of the school.

3.4 Children, parents and staff at Inchtute Primary School who met with HM Inspectors' do not have any strong feelings either in favour or against the proposal. They are respectful of the views of stakeholders of Abernyte Primary School but view the proposal as having minimal or no impact on Inchtute Primary School.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors' agree that there are potential educational benefits in the proposal to amend the catchment of Abernyte Primary School. There have been previous periods of uncertainty around the future of the school therefore measures to secure a sustainable future roll are welcome. HM Inspectors' agree with the views of stakeholders that the proposal brings potential longer term benefits to Abernyte Primary School with minimal impact to Inchtute Primary School. Should the proposal go ahead it would be helpful if the council clarified the revised catchment area in the form of a map to ensure clarity for all stakeholders.

**HM Inspectors
August 2022**