

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by North Lanarkshire Council to build a new Gartcosh Primary School and to incorporate a Language and Communication Support Centre and Early Learning and Childcare provision.

June 2023

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 North Lanarkshire Council's proposal to build a new Gartcosh Primary School and to incorporate a Language and Communication Support Centre and Early Learning and Childcare 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 8 March 2023 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
- visit to the site of Gartcosh Primary School including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation ran between 1 March and 27 April 2023. A public meeting was held in Gartcosh Primary School on 8 March 2023 and attended by approximately 50 local people and a few staff from North Lanarkshire Council. Members of the public were encouraged to respond to the consultation by email to the address given on the council website. Six written responses were received by North Lanarkshire Council during the consultation period. All those who responded to the consultation are in favour of the proposal. However, a few local parents and residents had questions about the design of the building, future use of the current school building and vehicle access to the new school.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council outlines the educational benefits of the new school, including improved access to high quality, flexible learning spaces that will have a positive impact on the general health and wellbeing of children and staff. They anticipate that this will lead to a greater range of educational experiences, including outdoor learning, which is limited in and around the current building. They state that this should provide increased opportunities for learners to achieve across all areas of Curriculum for Excellence. HM Inspectors agree that the new school will potentially provide a rich learning environment for those children currently attending Gartcosh Primary School and those attending in future. The current school building is over 100 years old and is no longer fit for purpose. The rising school roll presents a challenge for North Lanarkshire Council. It is increasingly difficult to deliver the curriculum for 240 children in a building designed for 188. As a result of extensive housebuilding, the school roll is predicted to rise further in the next few years.

3.2 All stakeholders are positive about the new school. Children who met with HM Inspectors are excited about being in a new building. They feel that more space will allow them to participate in a wider range of learning experiences such as drama and music. They like the idea of an early learning and childcare provision, allowing children to experience a smoother transition into primary school. Those staff who met with HM Inspectors agree that a new building will potentially provide a better learning environment for children. They recognise that the existing building can limit the delivery of some areas of the curriculum such as physical education (PE) and information and communications technology. They are frustrated about the lack of storage space in the current building and the poor toilet facilities. Staff feel that a dedicated space for the school library would be beneficial in supporting learning.

3.3 Parents who met with HM Inspectors feel that the provision of a new school is long overdue. They indicated that the current school is overcrowded but that the staff do their best in difficult circumstances. More suitable spaces for PE and larger classrooms are also welcomed by parents. The Parent Council is also supportive of the proposal. However, a few parents that attended the public meeting and responded to the consultation in writing have questions about the location of the new school and safe walking routes to school.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree with the councils' proposal to build a new primary school in Gartcosh. The school roll is predicted to rise further in the coming years due to house building and the existing building may not meet the demand. HM Inspectors also welcome the inclusion of an early learning and childcare provision which has potential to help facilitate the transition from nursery to primary school. Should the proposal go ahead, North Lanarkshire Council should continue to work with parents, staff and local residents to ensure that they are kept informed of and engaged in progress.

**HM Inspectors
June 2023**