

# **Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The City of Edinburgh Council to establish a new non-denominational Primary School and Nursery Class at Builyeon Road and undertake primary school catchment changes in Queensferry.**

November 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 The City of Edinburgh Council's proposal to establish a new non-denominational Primary School and Nursery Class at Builyeon Road and undertake primary school catchment changes in Queensferry. 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. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children 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 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:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 3 October 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
- visits to the site of Queensferry High School, Queensferry Primary School, Echline Primary School and Dalmeny Primary School 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 for this proposal ran from 11 September 2023 until 31 October 2023. The council published the proposal paper on its website. Paper and electronic copies of the proposal paper were made available to a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties. Written responses were also accepted by letter or email. Senior leaders at the schools

affected involved children in the consultation process through discussions on 15 and 16 November 2023. A public meeting took place on 3 October 2023. There were 17 public attendees. There were 29 responses to the questionnaire, including 10 comments not supporting the proposal. The majority of respondents to the questionnaire were parents or carers of school aged children or those that had a child or children attending nursery.

2.3 The council provide two options for the catchment area proposals. Option one is to realign the Ferrymuir area of Queensferry Primary School's catchment with the new school at Builyeon Road; and realign the west side of the South Scotstoun housing development in Queensferry Primary School's catchment area with the new school at Builyeon Road. Option two is to realign Ferrymuir Gait area of Queensferry Primary School's catchment with Echline Primary School; and realign the Ferrymuir area of Queensferry Primary School's catchment with the new school at Builyeon Road. Overall, responses to the proposals show that just over 34% supported Option 1; 31% supported option 2 and just over 34% did not support either of the proposed options. Most objections were focused on the catchment area proposals and the location of the new school linked to road safety concerns. Those stakeholders who attended the public meeting had a few concerns, including safe routes to school, as a result of the proposed catchment area changes. There were also questions on community use of a new school building, potential provision of out of school care and concerns on future capacity in Queensferry High School.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 HM Inspectors consider that the council has set out a reasonable case for this proposal. The council estimates new housing developments in Queensferry could generate 400 additional primary pupils within the area. As a result, existing non-denominational primary schools are expected to face increasing demand for nursery and school places. The main educational benefit of this proposal is that it addresses future capacity issues at Echline and Queensferry Primary Schools. It will enable the council to continue to provide sufficient places for children in the catchment areas covered by the proposal. The catchment area proposals aim to distribute the pressure arising from new housing development more evenly across primary schools in Queensferry. Queensferry Primary School may initially experience an increase in roll. However, this should reduce once the new school is operational and catchment area changes are fully implemented. This may also lead to more sustainable and efficient staffing and pupil numbers. In taking forward this proposal, the council should ensure a sibling guarantee associated with catchment changes. They should clearly communicate this to all parents and carers.

3.2 HM Inspectors agree that the building of a new school at Builyeon Road has potential educational benefits. These include that it will be a modern learning environment which is accessible for all. The new building should support creative and engaging teaching approaches aligned to the Curriculum for Excellence. It will also offer facilities that will help to encourage health and wellbeing, participation in sport, and outdoor learning. The provision of nursery accommodation on the site will allow for progression in learning from nursery to P1.

3.3 All parents, staff and children from Queensferry and Echline Primary Schools who met with HM Inspectors are supportive of the proposal to build a new non-denominational primary school and nursery on the Builyeon Road site. They agree that existing primary schools in Queensferry do not have the capacity for additional pupils generated by ongoing housing development. However, parents and staff expressed concerns that the interim demands on existing primary schools, before the school is built, may negatively impact on current children's educational experiences. A few parents suggested that Dalmeny Primary School could have capacity and should be included in the catchment area proposals. This was a view shared by staff and parents at Dalmeny Primary School to sustain future pupil numbers in the school. Parents raised concerns about safe routes to school with increasing levels of traffic around the schools. If the proposal is

agreed it will be important for the council to work with stakeholders to develop ways to mitigate these concerns.

#### **4. Summary**

The council's proposal provides a strong case to establish a new non-denominational primary school and nursery class at Builyeon Road and undertake primary school catchment changes in Queensferry. HM Inspectors agree that there are clear educational benefits to this proposal. If approved, the proposal could see an increased number of children in the area benefitting from a modern and accessible learning environment designed to support the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. The council should ensure that the capacity of the new school meets projected increased demands at Queensferry Primary and Echline Primary Schools. This should help to reduce pressure on school facilities and ensure all schools in the area have a viable and sustainable school roll. If approved, the council should work closely with parents, staff and children to ensure safe routes to existing primary schools in the Queensferry area and the proposed new school at Builyeon Road. In its final consultation report, the council should clearly state which catchment option outlined in the proposal will be taken forward.

**HM Inspectors  
November 2023**