

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

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by North Lanarkshire Council to relocate Mavisbank School to the 'existing' Carnbroe Primary School within North Lanarkshire.**

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 relocate Mavisbank School to the 'existing' Carnbroe Primary School within North Lanarkshire. 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 young people of the school; any other users; and young people 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 7 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
- visits to the site of Mavisbank School and Carnbroe 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](#). Details of the proposal were located on the council website.

2.2 The consultation period for the proposal took place from 1 March 2023 to 27 April 2023. During this period, North Lanarkshire Council held a meeting at Mavisbank School for relevant consultees on 7 March 2023, 10 members of the public attended. Stakeholders asked questions about the future school roll, aspects of safety at the proposed new school location, proposed

facilities in the school if relocated and matters related to staffing. The council arranged a further drop in at Mavisbank School session on 27 April 2023, no members of the public attended. The council invited further views on the proposal from consultees via email. The council responded to all questions, including those received by email. The council created a helpful 'frequently asked questions' paper, which was published online for public view along with the notes and the presentation from the meeting. The council's proposal to relocate Mavisbank School to the location of Carnbroe Primary School relies on a few key milestones. If the proposal is accepted by the council, the relocation will happen following Carnbroe Primary School moving to its new building. After Carnbroe Primary School moves, the council should continue with its plans to extensively refurbish the vacated Carnbroe Primary School building before young people are relocated.

2.3 North Lanarkshire Council consulted with staff from Mavisbank School on 7 March 2023, where 15 members of staff attended. It provided a further drop-in session on 27 April 2023, no members of staff attended. Staff shared with the council their suggestions for facilities and resources for the school, should the proposal move forward. The council sought the views of young people affected by the proposal. Due to the range and complexity of additional support needs of young people attending the school, responses were gathered using appropriate approaches. Seventeen young people had their views represented by staff who considered the young person's needs in the responses. Three young people provided their views through recording and sharing what they like about school. Overall, consultees consider the proposal as a positive one for young people at the school. They understand that the proposed new location for the school provides more space and increases the potential range of opportunities for learning.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The local authority has outlined and connected a number of the educational benefits directly to its review of Additional Support Needs in 2019. Overall, HM Inspectors agree that many of these educational benefits have the potential to impact positively on young people. The proposed new location for Mavisbank School can provide young people with significantly more space for learning. If the council agrees the proposal, staff and young people will benefit from up to eight classroom spaces compared to the four classroom spaces in the current school. HM Inspectors recommend that council planners consult with young people, staff, allied health professionals and parents before finalising refurbishment plans. This approach may support planners to understand how internal spaces can be utilised effectively to meet the range and complexity of needs of young people. When compared to the current school location, there is potential to align the proposed location's areas better to the sensory and therapeutic needs of young people. Within its educational benefits statement, it is unclear how the council plan to use technologies to support young people attending Mavisbank School. Before making its final decision, the council should make clear what technologies it plans to use and design to support the young people attending Mavisbank School.

3.2 The majority of classrooms in the proposed new location have direct access to the school grounds. The council recognises the potential to develop these school grounds to increase the outdoor learning opportunities for young people. HM Inspectors agree that there is potential to develop the grounds and provide high-quality outdoor learning experiences. It will be important to ensure that outdoor areas are accessible and safe for all young people at Mavisbank School. HM Inspectors recommend that the council undertake a comprehensive risk assessment of the school grounds and make appropriate adaptations to improve accessibility for young people. In doing so they should address parents' concerns over young people's safety on school grounds.

3.3 The proposed new location for Mavisbank School will share a section of the school with two other North Lanarkshire special schools. The purpose of the shared section of the campus is

to provide targeted vocational and life skills programmes for young people in their senior phase. HM Inspectors recognise that this approach has the potential to broaden educational pathways for young people in Mavisbank School, particularly during their senior phase. Parents who spoke with HM Inspectors are unaware that the campus will have a shared section for other special schools to utilise in partnership with Mavisbank School. The council should work with parents to develop their understanding of this potentially important resource for young people from Mavisbank School. The council recognise that transitions for some young people at Mavisbank School will be difficult. HM Inspectors recommend that the council works with staff, parents and young people to develop appropriate and flexible transition arrangements. If the council agree the proposal to relocate Mavisbank School to the new location, the predicted entry date is April 2024. The council, staff and parents should assess whether relocating young people in their final months of statutory education to the new campus will meet their needs. Where it is assessed as not meeting a young person's needs, HM Inspectors recommend that young people should be supported to complete their final months of statutory education in the current school building.

#### 4. Summary

Overall, HM Inspectors agree that the proposal to relocate Mavisbank School to the existing Carnbroe Primary School has clear potential education benefits. The proposed new location provides additional indoor and outdoor space that may support staff increase the range of learning opportunities for young people. There is potential for areas in the proposed location to be refurbished to a high-standard and to increase therapeutic and sensory opportunities for young people. If the council agree to the relocation, HMI Inspectors recommend that it includes young people, parents, staff and other relevant professionals in refurbishment planning. It should alleviate any safety concerns of parents. The council should engage with parents to support their understanding of the purpose of the shared space and the potential benefits it has for young people. HM Inspectors recommend that information is provided by the council to relevant consultees regarding the plans for technologies. In doing so, the council should make clear what technologies it plans to use and how this will support young people at Mavisbank School.

**HM Inspectors**  
**June 2023**