

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HM Inspectors of Education addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Glasgow City Council to close St Stephen's RC Primary and St Kevin's Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Primary Schools and, create a new combined, inclusive primary school.

January 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 Glasgow City Council's proposal to close St Stephen's RC Primary and St Kevin's ALN Primary Schools and, create a new combined, inclusive primary school. 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. 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 16 November 2021 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
- a virtual visit to the site of St Stephen's RC Primary and St Kevin's ALN Primary Schools, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation period ran from 1 November 2021 to 5 January 2022. A public meeting was held on 16 November 2021 where no stakeholders attended. In total, 16 responses to the consultation were received by the council. Of the responses, two were in favour of the proposal and 14 against. The main reason for opposing the proposal was concern about the wide-ranging needs of children from both schools and in meeting additional support needs should the schools

be brought together. Those in favour felt a strong level of support for the proposal. They see it as a natural step for the schools, which have been led by the same headteacher since 2018 and have, over time, worked more closely together. They acknowledge the wide range of needs of children in the combined school. However, they expressed confidence in the schools current ability and saw it as something the school was well placed to continue.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 Glasgow City Council set out a number of educational benefits in its proposal to close St Steven's RC Primary and St Kevin's ALN Primary Schools and create a new combined, inclusive primary school. St Steven's Primary School is a denominational school providing education to P1-P7 children living in the Sighthill area of Glasgow. The current roll is 197 pupils. St Kevin's Primary School is an ALN provision providing education to P1–P7 children from across the city who have a range of additional support needs, including those with complex learning and communication needs. The current roll is 64 pupils. Placement in St Kevin's ALN Primary School is decided through Glasgow City Council's allocation panel. The rolls of both schools are increasing over time. Stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors share the view that there are potential educational benefits to the proposal.

3.2 In 2019, St Stephen's RC Primary and St Kevin's ALN Primary Schools moved into a purpose-built school development at Sighthill Community Campus. Stakeholders who spoke to HM Inspectors spoke positively of the improved learning environment and subsequent improvements in ethos and culture that now exist within the school campus. Children cited widening friendships, improved play, social interaction opportunities and wearing the same uniform as important aspects of feeling a sense of belonging to a whole school community. Children and families new to the school spoke of the improved sense of feeling welcomed and a strong sense of school community. HM Inspectors agree that bringing both schools together into one campus and the subsequent provision of high-quality accommodation is better meeting the wellbeing and learning needs of children across both schools. It is fostering improved opportunities for learners and their families to work, interact and learn together within an environment appropriate to their needs.

3.3 The children in St Kevin's RC Primary School have a wide range of additional support needs; including those with complex learning and communication needs. These children require high levels of support and assistance within their learning. An increasing number of children within St Stephen's ALN Primary School have a range of additional support needs. Collectively, these learners require well-managed, bespoke, and flexible approaches to learning which meet their needs and an appropriately differentiated curriculum. Similarly, children who learn in line with expected stages of learning and development and those more able will continue to require a curriculum and approaches which will fully maximise their learning. The schools are currently able to offer a good range of bespoke and flexible programmes. HM Inspectors agree with stakeholders who highlight benefits and challenges in meeting the wide range of needs if the two schools are brought together. Therefore, it is important that this is carefully managed. This will allow parents and carers from both schools to have confidence that their children's needs, including any additional support needs, are understood and met.

3.4 Currently, the majority of children in both schools benefit from appropriate experiences to engage and learn with peers across the campus. Building on this positive start, the school should ensure that further opportunities for learning together are planned, assessed, and well-matched to learners needs in order to enhance the learning, teaching, and wellbeing of all learners. If developed well, the proposal has potential to support further the delivery of the council's vision for an inclusive school.

3.5 HM Inspectors agree with stakeholders that the established shared leadership team across both schools is providing valuable opportunities for staff to engage in rich professional learning. Building on the existing good practice and positive relationships, working with a wider range of professional partners, will assist staff in offering inclusive and bespoke approaches to maximize opportunities for all learners.

3.6 The Archdiocese of Glasgow is supportive of the council's proposal. The church and Roman Catholic community believe the proposal is well placed to provide continuity of religious observance and sacraments for the children. The proposal, if progressed, will continue to provide inclusive catholic education within the city.

4. Summary

HMI Inspectors agree that the proposal to close St Steven's RC Primary and St Kevin's ALN Primary Schools and create a new combined, inclusive primary school with an enhanced provision has potential educational benefits. The establishment of a new school will allow the stakeholders to develop further as a diverse, inclusive, and forward looking school community taking full account of its current and evolving context.

Should the proposal be accepted, HMI Inspectors believe that it is important that the council responds to the concerns expressed by stakeholders in relation to meeting the wide ranging learning and development needs of all learners. This should include steps that will be taken in relation to how the school plans to assess and meet in full the wide range of learning and additional support needs for all learners. It would be helpful for stakeholders to be informed further about approaches, resources, and staffing structures that will exist within the new school.

In taking forward the proposal, the council should set out how it will continue to monitor the progress of all learners within the new school. Senior leaders should continue to work with stakeholders to explore how aspects of the heritage of both schools can be acknowledged and preserved. Taking forward the above steps will assist the community to more fully understand the council's vision to create a new combined, inclusive primary school.

HM Inspectors
January 2022