

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

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Fife Council to rezone the primary catchment areas of Carnegie Primary School and Touch Primary School.**

December 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 Fife Council's proposal to rezone the primary catchment areas of Carnegie Primary School and Touch 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 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 and young people 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 and young people 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 meetings held on 26 October 2022 and 1 November 2022 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 Carnegie Primary School and Touch Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## 2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The formal consultation ran from 5 October 2022 until 1 December 2022. The council published the proposal document on the council website. Information about the proposal was made available to stakeholders including children, young people, parents and carers of the schools affected by the proposal. There were 17 attendances across the two public meetings at Carnegie Primary School and Touch Primary School. The council also organised three drop-in sessions at Carnegie and Touch Primary Schools. Children from both primary schools have also been consulted on the proposal. Fife Council received 46 responses to their online consultation. Most were not in favour, a few were in agreement with the proposal, and a few did not know. Fourteen submissions were received by email or letter. Of these, eight were not in favour. The remaining six were seeking clarification on aspects of the proposal and no specific view was

expressed. Almost all submissions received were from parents/carers of children who are currently in the catchment area of Carnegie Primary School.

2.3 All children from Carnegie or Touch Primary Schools who met with council staff, understood the benefits of the proposal. Children at Carnegie Primary School felt it was important that they had access to all the areas in their school for learning activities. They did not want to feel too crowded in the playground. They also thought that they would not get as many opportunities for leadership roles if there were more children. Children at Touch Primary School would be happy to have more children at their school. However, they like the flexible learning spaces they have and would not want to lose all of these to create more classrooms.

2.4 Of the objections received, the majority are concerned that siblings not in the catchment area of Carnegie Primary School would have to attend different schools. The council plans to address this issue through the current guidelines for placing requests. Priority is currently given to children with a sibling already at the chosen school. However, the council points out that this does not guarantee a place. Parents also raised concerns, at the public meeting and through online submissions, for children due to start at Carnegie Primary School in August 2023. Those who will no longer be in the catchment area can attend Carnegie Primary School in August 2023 but if they choose to defer their start, they would then be offered a place at Touch Primary School. Parents have expressed anxiety about having to make this choice.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council outlines the main educational benefit from the proposal as being of assistance in managing capacity pressures at Carnegie Primary School and making better use of the underused capacity at Touch Primary School. The school capacity at Carnegie Primary School is 651. Taking account of a future housing development projections for the school roll show that numbers of children in the current school catchment area will increasingly exceed available places. Rising from 665 in 2022 to 711 by 2025. Carnegie Primary School cannot be extended further to meet increased demand. Pressure on the space at Carnegie Primary School restricts staff's ability to deliver a broad range of experiences to support high quality learning. It also creates uncertainty for parents/carers whose children may not be able to access a place within the catchment area. This could also create a situation where siblings are not offered a place at the same school. Touch Primary School currently has an occupancy of 62%. HM Inspectors agree with the potential educational benefits set out by the council in its proposal.

3.2 The proposal includes consideration of walking routes to both schools, which in most cases are under one mile. Where the distance is more than a mile, transport will be provided by the council. The opportunity to walk to school supports children's daily activity and has health benefits. The proposed re-zone creates clearer school boundaries than those currently in place. The current catchment boundary splits at least one street, meaning that children living there are zoned to different primary schools. The council believes that the proposal will ensure that more children from the same communities can attend school together. This could support peer group relationships and children's socialisation within their communities.

3.3 HM Inspectors met with staff and children at Touch Primary School and a group of children from Carnegie Primary School. No parents chose to meet with HM Inspectors. Almost all staff and children at Touch Primary School who met with HM Inspectors are positive about the proposal. If the proposal were to be accepted, and resulted in the projected increase in school roll, staff and children believe that this would benefit the whole school. If the proposal is implemented, an increased school roll could enable children at Touch Primary School to develop peer relationships with a greater number of children. A few staff would like reassurance that any increase in the

school roll will result in appropriate resources, particularly for those children with additional support needs.

3.4 Children from Carnegie Primary School who met with HM Inspectors, agree with the proposal. They recognise that their school is large and busy. They would like to see the school roll reduced to make better use of the space and have more time with staff. Children from both schools also recognise the health benefits of walking to school and attending school with children from their own communities. They feel that they have more time with their friends when they go to the same school. This helps them to build social skills at school and at home. All the children and staff HM Inspectors spoke to, think that siblings should be able to go to the same school as each other. They think this is important for family life and supporting parents and carers and that it helps school staff to build relationships with the whole family.

3.5 During the consultation period the council identified an error in the proposal, relating to the maps appended to the proposal document. Two maps had been mis-labelled. The council determined that the error did not make a material difference to their final decision on the proposal. Steps were taken by the council to highlight the error and a Notice of Corrections was issued to Education Scotland and all statutory consultees. The council will need to ensure that it takes the necessary steps to include the correction in its final consultation report. The council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies and omissions notified to it.

## 4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that there are educational benefits from the proposal. If approved, this has potential to support a more even distribution of children and young people in the affected schools in the future. The proposed catchment changes will provide clarity to parents on the catchment schools for their area. However, the council should consider the arrangements for children due to start at Carnegie Primary School in August 2023, where deferment means they are no longer in the catchment area. In preparing the final report the council should also consider the potential impact on siblings placed at different schools as a result of the proposed changes. In its final consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address the inaccuracy identified in the proposal appendices.

**HM Inspectors  
December 2022**