

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Lothian Council to establish a new primary school and its associated catchment area within the land at Craighall, Musselburgh

1. Introduction

This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments contained in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of East Lothian Council's proposal to establish a new primary school and its associated catchment area within the land at Craighall, Musselburgh. 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 a copy of 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 legislative 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.

1.1 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of neighbouring 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.

1.2 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- 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 the proposed new school, Campie Primary School and Stoneyhill Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 East Lothian Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

2.2 The consultation process ran from 8 November to 20 December 2016. During this period the council held a public meeting at Brunton Hall which was attended by three parents or other members of the public. Statutory consultees, including Parent Councils of the schools directly involved and Musselburgh Community Council, were informed of the consultation in writing. Consultation documentation was published on the East Lothian Council website and copies were available for public consultation at several venues during the consultation period, including the schools concerned. A proforma questionnaire and an email address were made available for responses. The council received twenty-five responses. Of the responses which provided an overall view about the council's proposal, almost all expressed support. Stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors felt that the council had provided good opportunities for being consulted and for giving their views.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 This proposal involves a change to the existing catchment of Campie Primary School. A new primary school catchment area will be established for the Craighall area currently in the Campie Primary School catchment area. This school has still to be built but will serve planned housing developments in the Craighall area of the town of Musselburgh. The affected area of land currently contains a small number of residential properties. The new primary school will be established initially at Stoneyhill Primary School through a 'hosting' arrangement for up to thirty-six months until the new Craighall primary school building is complete. Upon completion, the new primary school will relocate to its permanent site.

3.2 The planned new Craighall primary school will accommodate the projected school roll arising from the proposal. It has the potential to provide children who will attend the new school with a purpose-built learning environment well-suited to their learning needs. East Lothian Council has successfully developed new schools in a number of its communities. At the same time, the proposal will reduce the possibility of overcrowding at both Campie Primary School and Stoneyhill Primary School as a result of the new housing development. The proposal, therefore, offers clear educational benefits to children in each of the three schools.

3.3 Almost all parents, pupils and staff who met with HM Inspectors support the proposal. There is a clear understanding that the rolls of both Campie and Stoneyhill Primary Schools would outstrip capacity in coming years as a result of the significant housing developments in the area. However, given that the new housing development has not yet commenced, there were many areas relating to the practicalities of hosting the new Craighall primary pupils within Stoneyhill Primary School that were unclear at this time.

3.4 In taking forward its proposal, the council should continue to work with stakeholders and the Headteachers of the Musselburgh Grammar School cluster.

The council should ensure that interim transition arrangements apply to both children living in the new Craighall housing development who will be initially 'hosted' at Stoneyhill Primary School and children who attend Stoneyhill Primary School. During the interim 'hosting' period the council should provide both groups of children with a high quality education. These transition arrangements relate to class arrangements and use of existing classroom space as the first groups of children from the new Craighall catchment begin to attend Stoneyhill Primary School. Parents, children and staff also wished to continue to be consulted about staffing, safe routes to school, enrolment in the Stoneyhill Primary School nursery and access to popular and well attended after school and school holiday programmes. These issues should be clearly addressed. The council should ensure that all transition arrangements are well planned and clearly communicated to all stakeholders to meet the needs of the children who attend Stoneyhill Primary School, Campie Primary School and the new Craighall school.

4. Summary

East Lothian Council's proposal to establish a new catchment area for the planned Craighall primary school has clear educational benefits. The proposal has the potential to provide children who will reside in the Craighall housing development with modern, purpose-built accommodation designed to meet the needs of its learners. The new school will provide a range of leisure and learning facilities which will potentially benefit the wider community. In the medium term, the proposal will also reduce the possibility of overcrowding at both Stoneyhill and Campie Primary Schools. Almost all stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors support the proposal. In taking its proposal forward, the council should continue to engage with stakeholders over its planned transition arrangements for children who will attend the new school and those children who attend Stoneyhill Primary School.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
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