

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Renfrewshire Council to revise catchment arrangement between Bishopton Primary School and a new primary school to be built at Dargavel Village.

May 2019

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her 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 Renfrewshire Council's proposal to revise catchment arrangements between Bishopton Primary School and a new primary school to be built at Dargavel Village. 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 of the schools; children 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:

- 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 Bishopton Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The statutory consultation period ran from 5 February 2019 until the 26 March 2019. Communication was issued to all stakeholders including parents of every pupil at Bishopton Primary School, the Parent Council, pre-school providers in the area and elected members, MSPs and MPs for the Renfrewshire area. Copies of the consultation document were available at local libraries and on the council website. A public meeting, advertised in the local press, was held on the 5 February 2019 in Bishopton Primary School.

2.3 The public meeting was attended by 62 members of the public. In addition, 64 responses were received through the online survey, questionnaires and one by email. These included 46 from parents. Of the 64 responses to the online survey and questionnaires, 54 were in favour and ten against the proposed catchment areas. The main areas of concern raised through these responses and from parents who met with HM Inspectors were the risk of dividing the community

in two, along old village and new build lines, and that for some children the proposed boundary would mean that they do not attend their closest school geographically.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council outlines in general terms how the proposal to build a new school will provide potential benefits to children who will attend. The other significant educational benefit arises from how the development of a second primary school in the Bishopton area will address capacity pressures at Bishopton Primary School. Parents and staff of Bishopton Primary School look forward to having more capacity as the school roll reduces once the school in Dargavel is open. The proposal outlines the potential benefits with regard to the accommodation and resources provided within the new school. However, the proposal does not outline the educational benefits to Bishopton Primary School once the new school at Dargavel is established. This will be helpful information for parents going forward.

3.2 Almost all parents who responded, including those who met HM Inspectors, agree with the proposed catchment boundaries. They recognise that the proposed boundaries are sensible and likely to ensure safe walking routes to school. However, the proposal paper does not outline the location of the new school within the new housing development. This would have been helpful information for parents in considering safe walking routes. Stakeholders raised the issue that for some children the proposed boundary is likely to mean that they do not attend their closest school geographically.

3.3 Stakeholders, including some of the parents and pupils HM Inspectors met, are concerned about the potential for the proposed boundary to split the village into two areas; the old village and the new housing development. They would welcome the opportunity to work with the council to support both community coherence and a consistency of educational approaches once the new primary school opens. Parents, pupils and existing school staff are keen that both Bishopton Primary School and the primary school in Dargavel work together closely in the future to serve the children of the area.

3.4 Parents value the information they receive from the Parent Council in regard to the planned changes. There is a need to ensure full and clear communication with stakeholders, including parents of current and future pupils of both schools with regard to the location and development of the new school, the process of the transition of pupils from one to two schools, and the changes this will mean for the existing primary school.

3.5 Parents with children currently at Bishopton Primary School welcome that the proposal makes it clear that those pupils currently attending Bishopton Primary School will be entitled to continue attending and if they are entitled to free school transport then this entitlement will also continue. They also value the commitment from the council regarding siblings of children already registered at Bishopton Primary School.

4. Summary

Overall, Renfrewshire Council's proposal to review the catchment area of Bishopton Primary School and a new primary school to be built at Dargavel Village offers potential educational benefit by providing a newly built school in Dargavel Village whilst also addressing capacity issues at Bishopton Primary School. The proposed boundary between the two catchment areas is clear, has the support of most stakeholders and is likely to provide for safe walking routes to school. There is an ongoing need to ensure full and clear communication with stakeholders, including parents of current and future pupils of both schools, with regard to the location and development of the new

school and the transition process for children. There will also be a need to work with both schools and relevant stakeholders to support community coherence once the new primary school opens.

HM Inspectors
May 2019