

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The City of Edinburgh Council to: relocate St Crispin's Special School to a new building in the Burdiehouse area and to create two behavioural support units within the new site to meet the needs of children from St Crispin's School and from Kaimes, Prospect Bank, Pilrig Park, Redhall and Braidburn Special Schools.

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 The City of Edinburgh Council's proposal to relocate St Crispin's Special School to a new building in the Burdiehouse area and to create two behavioural support units within the new site to meet the needs of children and young people from St Crispin's School and from Kaimes, Prospect Bank, Pilrig Park, Redhall and Braidburn Special Schools. 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.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of St Crispin's, Kaimes, Prospect Bank, Pilrig Park, Redhall and Braidburn Special 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 meeting held on 22 May 2018 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;
- visit to the proposed site at Burdiehouse Crescent; and
- visit to the site of St Crispin's Special School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 The City of Edinburgh Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

2.2 The formal consultation ran from 3 May 2018 to 19 June 2018. Copies of the proposal were made available electronically and in paper format at the council offices at Waverley Court, Central Library, Captains Road Library, Newington Library and at the schools affected by the proposals. A public meeting was held on 22 May 2018. The council posted the consultation document on its website.

2.3 Four parents/carers attended the public consultation meeting. They were supportive of the proposal but requested further detail on areas such as: location of toilets, height of fencing and how children and young people from other special schools attending the behavioural support units would be supported. The council received seven responses to an online survey. Five of the responses were supportive of the proposal. Two were not. Reasons given for not supporting the proposal included: the lack of reference to primary children in the proposal and concerns about how the vacated site will be used.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 The council has set out a reasonable case for the re-location of St Crispin's Special School to a new building in the Burdiehouse area and for the creation of two behavioural support units accessible to learners from across the city. Over recent years there has been an increase in the number of children identified with Autism in Edinburgh. The most recent figures indicate that around 850 pupils in the city of Edinburgh schools have Autism. This proposal has a number of educational benefits for children and young people. The new St Crispin's School will provide a high quality, safe and secure learning environment for children and young people with complex additional support needs arising from a learning disability and Autism. It will offer more effective use of space, improved storage and dedicated specialist facilities. Opportunities for indoor and outdoor learning will be improved as will access to digital learning opportunities. Drop off and pick up facilities will be improved. Children and young people from other Edinburgh special schools will

benefit from access to the proposed behavioural support units. The proposal makes reference to a gradual shift in emphasis for St Crispin's School in favour of upper primary and secondary school provision. However, it does not set out how this shift will be achieved and how the needs of lower primary children will be met.

3.2 Staff and parents from St Crispin's Special School who met with HM Inspectors strongly supported the proposal. They were able to clearly articulate the benefits to children and young people. Benefits included: a modern, purpose built learning environment with improved access both internally and externally. Improved classroom design supported by modern technology, reduced noise disruption, improved toilets and more efficient storage systems. Increased safety and effective traffic systems for dropping off and picking up children were also seen as being beneficial. St Crispin's Special School staff welcomed increased storage, improved class layout, better regulated temperature and ventilation. They liked the proposed layout of the new building with designated wings and central areas. They felt the council had actively listened to, and acted on, their suggestions. However, staff were unclear as to how the proposed behavioural support units would be staffed. Parent representatives were unsure what impact, if any, the new site would have on existing out of school activities such as weekend swimming and after school club.

3.3 No staff or parents from Kaimes, Prospect Bank, Pilrig Park, Redhall and Braidburn Special Schools met with HM Inspectors.

4. Summary

The council's proposal is of clear educational benefit to children and young people with complex additional support needs arising from a learning disability and Autism. It addresses the identified increase in the number of children identified with Autism in Edinburgh. The new St Crispin's School has the potential to provide a safe and secure high quality learning environment for children and young people. It will offer more effective use of space, improved storage and dedicated specialist facilities. Access to digital learning opportunities will be improved. Drop off and pick up facilities will be improved. Children and young people from other Edinburgh special schools will benefit from access to the proposed behavioural support units. In taking forward the proposal, the authority should engage further with stakeholders. It will need to clarify how the proposal will contribute to effective sustainable provision for children of all ages across the range of its special school provision.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
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