

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Dumfries and Galloway Council to relocate Langlands School to the proposed new North West Campus in Dumfries.

1. Introduction

1.1 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 Dumfries and Galloway Council's proposal to relocate Langlands School to the proposed new North West Campus in Dumfries. 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 the school; 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 Wednesday 2 September 2015 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 site of Langlands School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

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

2.2 The statutory consultation period ran from Monday 24 August 2015 to Monday 5 October 2015. The proposal document was posted on the council website and paper copies were available from schools and local libraries.

2.3 A public meeting was held to discuss the proposal in Langlands School on Wednesday 2 September 2015. The meeting was publicised in the local press, online through the Dumfries and Galloway Council website and also by the school through letters and text messages sent directly to parents. No parents or other members of the public attended the meeting. Minutes of the meeting were subsequently posted on the council website until the end of the consultation period.

2.4 The council invited comments by email or letter in the proposal paper and on its website. There were no written submissions made to the council in relation to this proposal during the consultation period.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 Langlands School offers educational provision for secondary pupils across Dumfries and Galloway who have severe and complex additional support needs. The council considers that pupils will benefit from a modern, purpose built facility which should aid learning and teaching and enhance their experience of education. The current flat-roofed building has been assessed as having major defects and is neither operating adequately nor fit for purpose. The proposal therefore has the potential to offer significant educational benefits for young people in Langlands School.

3.2 The council also considers that the co-location of Langlands School on the new North West Campus will improve working relationships between staff in all schools involved. There is potential educational benefit for pupils in Langlands if staff were able to work more closely with staff from other schools which they are co-located with, as the school is currently comparatively isolated. This could facilitate more regular professional dialogue between staff which could improve the provision for Langlands pupils.

3.3 The council states that the proposal should provide greater opportunity for Langlands pupils to access mainstream classes and for mainstream pupils who require additional support to access facilities at Langlands where appropriate. This has the potential educational benefit of making an appropriate curriculum more accessible both for Langlands pupils and for others on the same shared campus.

3.4 Parents of young people at Langlands School who spoke to HM Inspectors are aware that the school is in urgent need of a modern, purpose-built building. They welcome the proposal for a new school and appreciated the opportunity to discuss it with council staff. They are generally content with the idea of locating it as part of the new North West campus. They have some concerns about the size of the new school and access to it within the new campus. In the preparation of its final report, the council should confirm that procedures are in place to allow parents to take a full and active part in planning for the new school.

3.5 Staff at Langlands School who spoke to HM Inspectors also welcome the proposed new school. They are aware of the need for improved facilities for young people including a design which is accessible for all learners. They are keen for this aspect to be implemented across the campus to promote and encourage inclusion of young people who use wheelchairs and other mobility aids. In the preparation of its final report, the council should confirm that procedures are in place to allow Langlands staff to take a full and active part in planning for the new school.

4. Summary

This proposal has potential educational benefits for young people who are currently attending Langlands School. Almost all stakeholders who spoke to HM Inspectors agree that the provision of a new school within the proposed North West Campus would be likely to improve outcomes for young people. However, they would welcome further information about how this will work in practice. The council should ensure that this is clarified in its final report and that current Langlands School staff and parents are fully involved in planning for the new school.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
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