

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Clackmannanshire Council to permanently relocate St Mungo's Roman Catholic Primary School to the site of Alloa Academy.

August 2024

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 a proposal by Clackmannanshire Council to permanently relocate St Mungo's Roman Catholic Primary School (RCPS) to the site of Alloa Academy. 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' view. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it alongside any relevant considerations the council received and then prepare its consultation report. The council's 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 consultation report at least three weeks before it takes its final decision. With all proposals the council needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the schools; any other users and 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:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 15 May 2024 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 St Mungo's RCPS and Alloa Academy, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The statutory consultation ran from 17 April to 31 May 2024. Copies of the consultation proposal were made available to statutory consultees. The council published the proposal on its website, through council digital media products and by making paper copies available in council buildings. A public meeting took place at Bowmar Community Centre on 15 May 2024 which was attended by 52 members of the public. The council received 324 responses to an online questionnaire relating to the public consultation. One written response was received on 3 June 2024 after the consultation had closed and was therefore not included. The council

arranged stakeholder group consultation sessions involving children, young people, parents/carers and staff from St Mungo's RCPS and Alloa Academy. Overall, almost all stakeholder's who engaged with the consultation do not support the proposal to relocate St Mungo's RCPS within Alloa Academy.

2.3 Stakeholders were also consulted on the renaming of the building to 'Alloa Campus'. Most consultees were opposed to the suggested new name. They felt for both school's identities, it was important they kept their existing names.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 This proposal by Clackmannanshire Council would permanently relocate St Mungo's RCPS to Alloa Academy. St Mungo's RCPS was temporarily moved to Alloa Academy in 2018 due to building conditions at the primary school. The council state that the permanent move is an economic, low risk and workable solution to the issue of where St Mungo's RCPS is located.

3.2 HM Inspectors agree there are potential educational benefits to this proposal. These include access to modern, inclusive and specialist facilities that are not available to many other primary schools. However, the current arrangements do not yet enable the primary school to make best use of these potential benefits.

3.3 Almost all children, parents and staff who met with HM Inspectors do not support the proposal. They are concerned the capacity of the building is not sufficient to meet the differing demands of the primary school, secondary school and the enhanced additional support needs (EASN) base. Stakeholders that met with HM Inspectors agree that Alloa Academy is in good condition. However, St Mungo's RCPS using the building has presented many challenges. These include equipment and furniture not being appropriate for primary school aged children and timetabling restrictions. All children, parents and staff of St Mungo's RCPS that met with HM Inspectors raised concerns regarding the current allocated space for the school. They are concerned the limited space and facilities impact negatively on the school experience of children. All stakeholders that met with HM Inspectors feel the toilet provision is inadequate. They are concerned that the current toilet arrangements are impacting on the safety and dignity of children, young people and adults. The current provision for the school does not provide a private space for children to receive medical and personal care. HM Inspectors recommend that the council review the facilities to ensure that provision, including of toilet facilities, best meet the needs of children, young people and staff.

3.4 All stakeholders that met with HM Inspectors raised practical concerns about how the two schools share the facilities. Stakeholders state that the current dining arrangements for the two schools are inadequate with children not having sufficient time to eat their lunches. Stakeholders, including children and young people are concerned about how they can best and safely share social spaces. Young people within EASN base now have reduced access to outdoor learning and play as a result of sharing the same playground area as St Mungo's RCPS. Staff across both schools told HM Inspectors they have limited areas to store resources safely and securely as a result of St Mungo's RCPS accessing areas within Alloa Academy. HM Inspectors recommend that the council work with staff in the schools and other stakeholders to address these concerns.

3.5 All stakeholders associated with St Mungo's RCPS that met with HM Inspectors are concerned about their school maintaining its identity and ethos if the proposal is agreed. Stakeholders expressed with the current temporary arrangements in place, they feel like visitors in Alloa Academy. Access to St Mungo's RCPS is currently via a separate secure entry door. Stakeholders believe the lack of an official school entrance and reception area is impacting

negatively on the identity of the school. It is impacting on communication and relationships with parents and partners.

3.6 Most parents and staff expressed concern about the increase in road traffic around the campus and the ongoing need for improved infrastructure to support safe walking routes to school.

3.7 Representatives of the Roman Catholic Church who met with HM Inspectors do not support the proposal. They are of the view that the proposal provides few educational benefits for children at St Mungo's RCPS. They believe provision within Alloa Academy is not suitable for the primary curriculum. The Roman Catholic Church representees would prefer St Mungo's RCPS to be a stand-alone facility, which would help to maintain St Mungo's Roman Catholic identity.

4. Summary

The council has outlined educational benefits within the proposal, including the building condition and access to a range of facilities. HM Inspectors agree that there are potential educational benefits to this proposal that could enhance children's experiences. However, stakeholders have concerns about the current arrangements that would need to be addressed to fully achieve these benefits. Almost all stakeholders do not support the proposal to permanently relocate St Mungo's RCPS within Alloa Academy. If the proposal goes ahead, the council should provide further detail of how it intends to address stakeholders' concerns. This should include addressing practical issues such as provision of toilets. It should also explore with stakeholders how to best support the identity of the St Mungo's RCPS within a shared facility.

**HM Inspectors
August 2024**