
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	9 May 2023
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/21/23/MR
Contact Officer:	Michael Roach	Contact No:	01475 712850
Subject:	Outcome of Statutory Consultation Process – Change of Blairmore Nursery School to Blairmore Children’s Centre		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to ask members of the Education and Communities Committee to approve the outcome of the statutory consultation process regarding the future leadership and status of Blairmore Nursery School.
- 1.3 The Education Service carried out a pre-formal consultation process with key stakeholders on the future leadership and status of Blairmore Nursery School in Greenock during October and November 2022. The outcome of this was shared with the Education Committee in January 2023 and as a result agreed to a statutory consultation process being carried out.
- 1.4 The statutory consultation process ran from 27 January 2023 to 14 March 2023. The full background and process followed is outlined in the attached report on the consultation process in Appendix 1.
- 1.5 Education Scotland were fully involved in the consultation process and have produced a report which can be found within the appendixes of Appendix 1. HM Inspectors agree that the proposal allows for continuity of the education provision within a standalone ELC.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members of the Education and Communities Committee are asked to approve the outcome of the statutory consultation that Blairmore Nursery School should become Blairmore Children’s Centre from August 2023.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 Please refer to Appendix 1 which outlines the pre-consultation and formal consultation process in full.

4.0 PROPOSALS TO BE TAKEN FORWARD TO FORMAL CONSULTATION

4.1 Given the outcome of the formal consultation process alongside the report carried out by Education Scotland, officers now recommend that the proposal to change Blairmore Nursery School to Blairmore Children’s Centre should be taken forward.

4.2 The key action for the service, should the recommendations of this report be agreed, would be the recruitment process for a new head of centre which can be carried out allowing a new head to take up post for August 2023. The current Acting Head teacher is in post until August 2023.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial	X		
Legal/Risk	X		
Human Resources	X		
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)		X	
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty	X		
Children & Young People’s Rights & Wellbeing		X	
Environmental & Sustainability		X	
Data Protection		X	

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
00687 Blairmore Nursery	Employee Costs	August 2023	(£17,000)	N/A	This is the salary differential between a Headteacher and a Head of Centre. This was agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget process and the part year effect for 2023/24 is £11,000.

5.3 Legal/Risk

A statutory consultation has taken place in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act.

5.4 Human Resources

The recruitment of a new Head of Centre will be carried out if approved.

5.5 Strategic

N/A.

5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

✓	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
✓	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty.

5.7 Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
✓	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

5.8 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
✓	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

5.9 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
✓	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The formal statutory consultation has been completed as per the report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Appendix 1 provides the background to this report.

Outcome of the Statutory Consultation on the proposal to change the current Blairmore Nursery School to a standalone Early Learning Centre under the leadership of a Head of Centre.

April 2023

This report has been published by Inverclyde Council in response to the statutory consultation undertaken under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. This report will be presented to the Education and Communities Committee of Inverclyde Council for consideration in May 2023.

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. Phone: (01475) 712853.

Contents

- 1. Purpose of the report**
- 2. Background on the consultation process**
- 3. Summary of written responses**
- 4. Summary of oral responses from public meetings**
- 5. Summary of response by Education Scotland**
- 6. Review of proposals by Education Services (Inverclyde Council)**
- 7. Resource, risk and policy implementation**

Appendices

- 1. Consultation paper and response form inc list of consultees**
- 2. Comments from consultation response form submissions**
- 3. Report from Education Scotland**

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise all stakeholders on the outcome of the statutory consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the proposal to change the current B Blairmore Nursery School to a standalone Early Learning Centre under the leadership of a Head of Centre.

2. Background on the consultation process

- 2.1 A consultation proposal document was issued as a result of a decision taken by the Education and Communities Committee on 24th January 2023 to consult on the proposal to change the current Blairmore Nursery School to a standalone Early Learning Centre under the leadership of a Head of Centre.
- 2.2 Notice of the proposal and publication of the proposal document was placed in the Greenock Telegraph to engage with the general community.
- 2.3 A copy of the proposal document was made available from 27th January 2023 to 14th March 2023 to statutory and other consultees as listed in Appendix 1.
- 2.4 The consultation document was available from a variety of sources including the Inverclyde Council website, schools and early years centres, libraries and the council buildings.
- 2.5 The consultation, in terms of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 was carried out over the period 27th January 2023 to 14th March 2023 during which time all interested parties were invited to submit written representations. A copy of the consultation response form and the consultation document is attached to this report (Appendix 2). The collated feedback received from the consultation response forms is shown in Appendix 3.
- 2.6 As part of the consultation process there were also one public meeting was held. This was held on Monday 27 February 2023 at 6:30 pm at All Saints Primary School. No one attended this meeting and so no summary of any oral representations was able to be collated.
- 2.7 Inverclyde Council sent a copy of the proposal document to Education Scotland on 27th January 2023. As required, just after the 14th of March Education Scotland was provided with a summary of all relevant written responses and oral representations made during the consultation period.
- 2.8 Inverclyde Council received a copy of Education Scotland's report on 24 March 2023. A summary of this report is included in section 5 of this report and a copy of the full report is included in Appendix 5.
- 2.9 Following the consultation period it is the Council's duty to review the proposal taking account of the feedback received from stakeholders during the consultation period which includes online responses, written responses and oral representations made during the public meetings. The content of Education Scotland's report should also be taken into consideration.
- 2.10 It should be noted that this consultation outcome report is published at least 3 weeks before it is formally considered by the Education and Communities Committee on 9th May 2023.

3.0 SUMMARY OF WRITTEN RESPONSES (FULL RESPONSE APPENDIX 2)

- 3.1 An online survey generated 41 responses, 31 partial responses and 10 complete. Most of the partial responses answered yes or no as to whether they were in agreement with the proposal. Across all the responses, 29 were in favour, four were not and four were undecided. The majority of survey respondents are in favour of the proposal.

4. Summary of oral responses from public meetings

- 4.1 As above a public meeting was held, with a representative from Education Scotland in attendance, but no one attended. Therefore, there is no summary of oral responses made.

5. Summary of response by Education Scotland (full report in appendix 5)

- 5.1 The section below is the summary of the report by Education Scotland addressing the educational aspects of the proposal by Inverclyde Council to change the current Blairmore Nursery School to a standalone Early Learning Centre under the leadership of a Head of Centre.
- 5.2 HM Inspectors agree that this proposal allows for continuity of educational provision. The change from a nursery school to an ELC will be implemented through the recruitment of a Head of Centre instead of a headteacher. This is the only change proposed within this consultation. As a result, children attending the nursery school should not experience any disruption to their learning.
- 5.3 As the council have stated, the implementation of this change will bring Blairmore Nursery School in line with other ELCs in Inverclyde. Blairmore Nursery School and one other are the only establishments operating as nursery schools. Other ELCs offer more flexibility for age ranges and more flexible hours. However, it should be noted that a change to the operating hours of the centre is not part of this consultation. The council also notes that whilst primary teachers can undertake the role of Head of Centre, there are decreasing numbers of available teachers, which affects recruitment.
- 5.4 Parents who met with HM Inspectors value the helpful and respectful relationships they have with staff in the nursery rooms. Blairmore Nursery School is very much part of the community. Parents highlighted the importance of continuity of the provision for their children and do not wish this to change. Children attending the nursery school enjoy being able to play indoors and outdoors. They have access to a varied range of activities to support learning and enjoy circle time. Well established relationships with staff are important to them.
- 5.5 Blairmore Nursery School staff who met with HM Inspectors expressed differing views. A few do not agree with the proposal. They stated that they would prefer to be led by a headteacher as this would best support the delivery of the nursery school curriculum, particularly for literacy and numeracy. A few staff members welcome the opportunity to be led by an early years professional who has a good understanding of their sector and thought that this will support and improve planning. All staff agree that it is important to have good links with teaching staff to support transitions from

nursery to school. Although not part of this consultation, should the proposal go ahead, staff raised concerns regarding the potential for changes to their hours of work. All staff welcome the opportunity to develop links with wider catchment primary schools and becoming part of a wider network of early years providers in Inverclyde.

5.6 Council response

Inverclyde Council welcome the findings of Education Scotland that the proposal to change the current Blairmore Nursery School to a standalone Early Learning Centre under the leadership of a Head of Centre is of educational benefit to pupils and will have no detrimental effect. Education Scotland raised some key issues in respect to proposal 10 that the council should consider if the proposal is taken forward. Education Scotland asked the council to indicate about how it plans to work with the St Columba's High School community to address the capacity and congestion concerns raised over changes to catchment areas resulting from this proposal.

Inverclyde Council acknowledge the concerns raised by members of staff at Blairmore in relation to their working hours, however there is no proposal to change the term time offer from the provision and so no changes will be made to staff's hours / contracts. If this were to be considered in the future, further consultation would be required.

6. Review of proposals by Education Services (Inverclyde Council)

6.1 Education Scotland have made no proposals in relation to this consultation.

7. Resource, risk and policy implementation

7.1 Resource implications

If the proposal is approved, a new Head of Centre for Blairmore will be recruited before August 2023. There are no other resource implications.

7.2 Risk implications

There are no major or significant risks in taking forward this proposal.

7.3 Policy Implications

There are no changes to council policy.

Appendix 1:

Education Services Proposal to change the current Blairmore Nursery School to a standalone Early Learning Centre under the leadership of a Head of Centre

Any proposed proposals to discontinue permanently a school (this includes special schools and nursery schools) or a stage of education in a school (this includes years in a secondary school or all nursery classes in a primary school or a special class in a mainstream school or where the council proposes to discontinue Gaelic medium provision); are subject to statutory consultation through the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010.

A pre-consultation process has been undertaken and this showed that the option to change the school to a standalone family centre was the one preferred by the community.

Consultation proposal document

Inverclyde Council are looking for your views on our proposal to change the current Blairmore Nursery School to a standalone Early Learning Centre under the leadership of a Head of Centre.

Any proposed proposals to discontinue permanently a school (this includes special schools and nursery schools) or a stage of education in a school (this includes years in a secondary school or all nursery classes in a primary school or a special class in a mainstream school or where the council proposes to discontinue Gaelic medium provision); are subject to statutory consultation through the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010.

A pre-consultation process has been undertaken and this showed that the option to change the school to a standalone family centre was the one preferred by the community.

Closing date for responses on this consultation will be:

- **Tuesday 14 March 2023**

There will be a public meeting held on:

- **Monday 27 February 2023 at 18:30 at All Saints Primary School**

This document has been issued by Inverclyde Council for consultation under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. Phone: (01475) 712850.

Contents

List of Consultees and how to access the proposal document

- 1. Background to the proposed changes and pre-consultation process**
- 2. Proposed Options**
- 3. The consultation process**
- 4. Implementation date for the proposal**
- 5. Educational benefits – assessment of the likely effects of the proposal**
- 6. Employee implications**
- 7. Financial implications**
- 8. Responding to the proposal**
- 9. Appendix 1 – Consultation response form**

Communication list and how to access the proposal document:

Statutory consultees:

- The Parent Council of affected schools
- The parents/carers of the pupils at the affected schools
- Parents whose children are expected to attend the affected schools within 2 years of publication of the proposal document
- Pupils (where they are considered to be of suitable age and maturity)
- Council employees at the affected schools
- Trade Union representatives
- Church representatives
- Bord na Gaidhlig

Other stakeholders who will be contacted:

- Education Scotland
- Elected members
- Local Members of Parliament and local members of Scottish Parliament
- General Public (Inverclyde)
- Community Councils

Consultees will be informed that in order for their views to be taken into account, they must complete and submit a copy of the Consultation Response Form. Interested parties are invited to respond to the proposal by making an online submission using the link:

www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay

Alternatively, written submissions should be made using the form attached at the end of this document no later than Tuesday 14 March 2023.

Accessing the proposal document

The steps listed below have been taken to ensure that the proposal document is widely available.

- Notice of the proposal and of publication of this proposal document have been placed in the Greenock Telegraph to engage with the general community.
- The proposal document has been published on the Inverclyde Council website:

www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay

- This document can be made available in alternative forms or translated by contacting Education Services on (01475) 712850.
- The proposal document will also be available for inspection at all educational establishments, Council Customer Services and libraries.

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED CHANGES AND PRE-CONSULTATION PROCESS

1.1 Blairmore Nursery School is located in the East End of Greenock. It shares a campus with All Saints Primary School. The Head teacher retired in August 2022. A temporary Headteacher is in place for session 2022 / 23.

The School provides Early Learning and Childcare for 72 children aged 3 -5 years and 15 children aged 2 – 3 years. Family support services are provided within the school and the community. The service provides high quality care and learning. This is evidenced by internal self-evaluation processes, Authority quality assurance processes and external evaluations.

We undertook a pre-consultation process because the retirement of the head teacher has allowed the authority to explore different, and potentially better, ways of delivering early years education in the area.

The pre-consultation considered three different options, each with potential merits but also each with potential disadvantages or implications. The options are outlined below.

- Option 1 - The nursery school remains as a standalone nursery school and a replacement Headteacher is recruited.
- Option 2 - The nursery school is incorporated into All Saints Primary School as a nursery class under the leadership of the Headteacher of the Primary School.
- Option 3 - The nursery school becomes a standalone Early Learning Centre (ELC) under the leadership of a Head of Centre.

The results are outlined below:

Option	Number in favour
Option 1: The nursery school remains as a standalone nursery school and a replacement Headteacher is recruited.	16
Option 2: The nursery school is incorporated into All Saints Primary School as a nursery class under the leadership of the Headteacher of All Saints Primary School.	7
Option 3: The nursery school becomes a standalone Early Learning Centre under the leadership of a Head of Centre.	23

Options	Reasons for choosing the option
Option 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave things as they are as the current school is doing well under a headteacher • Any change could have a negative impact on what is working • Pupils and staff already getting the support they need from a head teacher • Becoming part of All Saints school could have a detrimental impact as there would be too much pressure on the head of the school as Blairmore has a total of 87 children. • Blairmore is non denominational whereby All Saints is a catholic school • The nursery has a great reputation within the community and is a desirable early years establishment that gets a good reputation for

	<p>providing high quality service and has a personal approach to all who attend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nursery is run well with a teacher as head and this should continue as the teacher is bringing different skills from an EYECO and this can only benefit the children that attend
Option 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions would be easier / smoother • Easier for parents to communicate with just one Head teacher • Happens in other schools and works well. • Would save the council money.
Option 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery needs its own head to provide support to families and staff and maintain current standards • Too many children for one headteacher to oversee and support if part of a larger school • Family centres provide a wide range of support and can engage parents in a wide variety of learning opportunities • Blairmore has a strong reputation for family support and engagement this would be promoted more in an Early Learning centre rather than incorporated with a large primary school • One respondent chose this option due to the possibility of extended hours and a change in provision but this is not being proposed. • Model 3 offers own budget to be spent responsively on learners needs responsively and decided by management and not shared across the school as well

2.0 PROPOSED OPTIONS

The option to change the school to a standalone Early Learning Centre (ELC) was the one preferred by the community and is the option being proposed during this consultation.

3.0 THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 The formal consultation on the proposal within this document will be undertaken under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. The consultation requires to run for 30 school days and will start on 27 January 2023 and will end on 14 March 2023. Written representations must be received by this date in order to be taken into account.

3.2 The schools affected by this proposal are:

Blairmore Nursery School

3.3 Public Meeting

There will be 1 public meeting to held on:

- Monday 27 February 2023 at 6:30 pm at All Saints Primary School

The meetings will provide those in attendance with an opportunity to:

- Hear about the proposal.
- Ask questions about the proposal.
- Express views about the proposal.

A note will be taken of the views expressed during the public meeting and of any questions asked. In addition to the public meeting, written representations including online responses will be able to be made during the consultation period.

3.4 Who will be consulted?

Statutory consultees:

- The Parent Partnership (or equivalent) of the school.
- The parents/carers of the pupils at the affected school.
- Parents whose children are expected to attend the affected schools within 2 years of publication of the proposal document.
- Pupils (where they are considered to be of suitable age and maturity).
- Council employees at the affected schools.
- Trade Union representatives.
- Church representatives.
- Bord na Gaidhlig.

Other stakeholders who will be contacted:

- Education Scotland
- Elected members
- Local Members of Parliament and local members of Scottish Parliament
- General Public (Inverclyde)
- Community Councils

Consultees will be informed that in order for their views to be taken into account, they must complete and submit a copy of the Consultation Response Form.

Pupil consultation will take place through primary (P4 - 7) and Secondary Pupil Councils where appropriate.

3.5 Involvement of Education Scotland

The Council will provide the proposal document to Education Scotland at the start of the consultation period. When the consultation period has ended, the Council will collate all of the written and oral representations. Thereafter, the following information will be provided to Education Scotland:

- A copy of relevant written representations made to the Council on the proposal (or summary of them if agreed within Education Scotland).
- A summary of oral representations made at the public meetings.
- Other relevant documentation, as far as is practicable.

Education Scotland will prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal taking account of the above, the Educational Benefits Statement contained in this proposal document and in so far that Education Scotland considers them relevant, any written representations made directly to them. Education Scotland may also visit the schools affected by the proposal and make reasonable inquiries of persons there and of such other persons as they consider appropriate. Education Scotland require to send their report to the Council no later than 3 weeks (or longer if agreed with the Council) after having received the information from the Council.

3.6 Consultation Report

After receiving Education Scotland's report, the Council will review the proposal taking account of relevant written representations received during the consultation period, oral representations made during the public meeting and Education Scotland's report. The Council will then prepare and publish a consultation report which will include a recommendation on the proposal.

The Council will notify key stakeholders of the publication of the consultation report, which will be made available on the Council website, in schools and at Council Headquarters.

The consultation report will be published 3 weeks before it is formally considered by the Council.

3.7 Inaccuracies or omissions

Where inaccuracies or omissions are discovered within this proposal document, the Council will determine whether relevant information has been omitted or, if there has been an inaccuracy. Appropriate action will then be taken by the Council which may include issuing corrections, issuing a corrected proposal document or an extension of the consultation period. In any of these events all relevant consultees (and where applicable the notifier(s) of any omissions or inaccuracies) and Education Scotland will be advised of the appropriate action. Notifiers of any omissions or inaccuracies will also be given the opportunity to make representations if they disagree with the Council's determination of and any action on the matter, which may result in the Council making a further determination / decision on the matter.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE FOR THE PROPOSAL

4.1 It is expected that the proposal, if accepted, would be implemented from the start of the school term in August 2023.

5.0 EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS – ASSESSMENT OF THE LIKELY EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSAL

Education is a key priority of Inverclyde Council.

5.1 Inverclyde Council is firmly committed to delivering a high-quality education provision in learning environments fit for learning and teaching in the 21st century. Environments that nurture ambition and aspirations, improve attainment and achievement, and create and widen opportunities for all children and young people to achieve their full potential and move into positive and sustained destinations when they leave school. The Council also demonstrates its strong belief in the value of education through financial investment to allow full implementation of Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and supporting programmes and activities that focus on removing barriers to learning and closing the attainment gap.

5.2 Across Inverclyde there are differing models of early years establishments, the majority of which are either standalone family / early learning centres or nursery classes as part of primary schools. There are also two remaining standalone nursery schools in Inverclyde (Blairmore and Newark). The provision of early years through a standalone nursery school has become less common as early years childcare and education has progressed through 1140 hours.

- 5.3 Family / early learning centres tend to offer more flexibility for age ranges and can operate increased flexible hours. The Head of an early learning centre is trained specifically in early years education and experience has shown us that the leadership progression route through this type of service is very popular and produces strong management teams.
- 5.4 Whilst some primary teachers choose to specialise in early years provision, this has become less popular over the years with many teachers who seek promotion opting to transfer to primary schools because of the increased opportunities through the management structure. Recruitment to leadership posts in education establishments continues to be a challenge nationally and in particular for Head teacher posts of Nursery Schools. The ability to attract strong leadership is essential for the delivery of a high-quality early years' service.
- 5.5 Although, attaching the nursery to the neighbouring school was considered in the pre-consultation, this was not a popular option with those who responded. This is because people felt that the school and nursery would be too big for the leadership team to be able to provide support for family's needs. Those who responded also felt that the model of a standalone family centre would be more responsive to the needs of the young people.
- 5.6 The option being considered will not only provide a high-quality model that is replicated across Inverclyde, it will also provide a small saving to the Council. This saving allows Inverclyde Council to demonstrate an appropriate allocation of resources taking into account best value for the public pound.
- 5.7 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken in the preparation of this proposal and any equality issues that are raised during the consultation period will be taken into account.

6.0 EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This proposal will result in a small saving of £17,000.

8.0 RESPONDING TO THE PROPOSAL

- 8.1 Page 4 of this document provides details on how to access a copy of the proposal document.
- 8.2 Interested parties are invited to respond to the proposal by making an online submission using the link:

www.inverclyde.gov.uk/yoursay

Alternatively, written submissions should be made using the form attached at the end of this document no later than Tuesday 14 March 2023.

Appendix 1

Education Services

**CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO ADDRESS MINOR
ANOMALIES IN SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREAS**

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Please use this form to let us know what you think about this proposal

The closing date for responses is **14 March 2023**.

This form should be returned to:

Education Services
Wallace Place
Greenock
PA15 1JB

Inverclyde Council are looking for your views on our proposal to change the current Blairmore Nursery School to a standalone Early Learning Centre under the leadership of a Head of Centre.

Any proposed proposals to discontinue permanently a school (this includes special schools and nursery schools) or a stage of education in a school (this includes years in a secondary school or all nursery classes in a primary school or a special class in a mainstream school or where the council proposes to discontinue Gaelic medium provision); are subject to statutory consultation through the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010.

A pre-consultation process has been undertaken and this showed that the option to change the school to a standalone family centre was the one preferred by the community.

Q1 Do you agree with the proposal to change Blairmore Nursery School to a standalone early learning centre?

Yes

No

Undecided

This box gives an opportunity to explain the reason for your response.

This box gives an opportunity to explain the reasons for your response.

In order to validate your response to this proposal please provide your details:
(this section must be completed in order for your views to be taken into account)

Name

Address

If you would like to make any comment on the proposal, or suggest an alternative option for consideration please do so in the space below:

Q2 I am responding in my capacity as a *(please indicate by selecting the appropriate answer below):*

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Parent/carer of a child at primary school | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent/carer of a child at secondary school | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent/carer of a child in nursery | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent Council member (primary school) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent Council member (secondary school) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Member of staff at primary school | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Member of staff at secondary school | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Church representative | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Elected member | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Trade Union | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Member of the public | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Member of Community Council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bord na Gaidhlig | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other group (please specify)

Handling your response – Please note that:

We will use the information you provide for the purpose of this consultation, including statistical and analytical purposes.

We will pass a full copy of your response to Education Scotland, or a summary of it if agreed with them.

We are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and therefore would have to consider any request made under the Act for information relating to written responses/records or oral representations made to us relating to this consultation.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form

Appendix 3:



Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Inverclyde Council to change the current Blairmore Nursery School to a standalone Early Learning Centre under the leadership of a Head of Centre.

March 2023

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 Inverclyde Council's proposal to change the current Blairmore Nursery School to a standalone Early Learning Centre (ELC) under the leadership of a Head of Centre. 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. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all statutory 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 of the setting; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children 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 27 February 2023 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 Blairmore Nursery School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

- 2.1 Inverclyde Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).
- 2.2 The proposal to change the current Blairmore Nursery School to a standalone ELC under the leadership of a Head of Centre is the preferred option of Inverclyde Council following a pre-consultation process. During the pre-consultation process, stakeholders were asked to consider three options. These were to maintain the nursery as a school and seek a replacement headteacher; to incorporate the nursery into All Saints Primary School under the leadership of the headteacher or to become a standalone ELC under the leadership of a Head of Centre. The pre-consultation survey had 46 respondents with half in favour of the option to become an ELC.
- 2.3 The council carried out a formal consultation on the option to become a standalone ELC in accordance with statutory guidance. A public meeting was held at All Saints Primary School on 27 February 2023. No stakeholders attended this meeting. An online survey generated 41 responses, 31 partial responses and 10 complete. Most of the partial responses answered yes or no as to whether they were in agreement with the proposal. Across all the responses, 29 were in favour, four were not and four were undecided. The majority of survey respondents are in favour of the proposal. The council did not receive any other direct communication in relation to the proposal.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

- 3.1 HM Inspectors agree that this proposal allows for continuity of educational provision. The change from a nursery school to an ELC will be implemented through the recruitment of a Head of Centre instead of a headteacher. This is the only change proposed within this consultation. As a result, children attending the nursery school should not experience any disruption to their learning.
- 3.2 As the council have stated, the implementation of this change will bring Blairmore Nursery School in line with other ELCs in Inverclyde. Blairmore Nursery School and one other are the only establishments operating as nursery schools. Other ELCs offer more flexibility for age ranges and more flexible hours. However, it should be noted that a change to the operating hours of the centre is not part of this consultation. The council also notes that whilst primary teachers can undertake the role of Head of Centre, there are decreasing numbers of available teachers, which affects recruitment.
- 3.3 Parents who met with HM Inspectors value the helpful and respectful relationships they have with staff in the nursery rooms. Blairmore Nursery School is very much part of the community. Parents highlighted the importance of continuity of the provision for their children and do not wish this to change. Children attending the nursery school enjoy being able to play indoors and outdoors. They have access to a varied range of activities to support learning and enjoy circle time. Well established relationships with staff are important to them.

Blairmore Nursery School staff who met with HM Inspectors expressed differing views. A few do not agree with the proposal. They stated that they would prefer to be led by a headteacher as this would best support the delivery of the nursery school curriculum, particularly for literacy and numeracy. A few staff members welcome the opportunity to be led by an early years professional who has a good understanding of their sector and thought that this will support and improve planning. All staff agree that it is important to have good links with teaching staff to support transitions from nursery to school. Although not part of this consultation, should the proposal go ahead, staff raised concerns regarding the potential for changes to their hours of work. All staff welcome the opportunity to develop links with wider catchment primary schools and becoming part of a wider network of early years providers in Inverclyde.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal allows for continuity of the education provision within a standalone ELC. Children who attend Blairmore Nursery School and their families will continue to benefit from support and well established relationships with their peers and staff. A new Head of Centre will have the opportunity to build on the strengths of the current staff team. Inverclyde Council should ensure that there are ongoing links with teaching staff to continue to support the ongoing development and delivery of the curriculum and opportunities for professional learning.

HM Inspectors

March 2023