



# **Relocation of St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School**

## **Consultation Report**

**07 August 2017**

## Consultation Report

Proposed relocation of St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School to a new school campus on Rosewell Road in Bonnyrigg.

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## 1. Summary of the proposal

### 1.1 Proposal

Midlothian Council has consulted on the proposal to relocate St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School from its current location on Polton Street to the new school campus on Rosewell Road in Bonnyrigg.

### 1.2 Background

The Bonnyrigg/Lasswade area has 7,300 homes which are served by four non denominational primary schools, Burnbrae, Bonnyrigg, Hawthornden and Lasswade Primary Schools, and one denominational school, St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School.

The Local Development Plan proposes a further allocation of 1,090 houses for Bonnyrigg/Lasswade spread across the town; 660 units in the catchment of Bonnyrigg, 375 in the catchment of Burnbrae and 55 in the catchment of Lasswade. This will lead to an increase in the pre-school and school age population in the area and requires the Council to expand and increase school capacity for the whole area.

St Mary's Primary School has a nursery class as well as 7 primary classes with 142 pupils. Overall 8% of pupils from the Bonnyrigg and Lasswade area currently choose to attend St Mary's compared with 10% of Midlothian's population who identify themselves as Roman Catholic (RC). Assuming the current rate choosing to attend St Mary's continues, the roll is forecast to rise to 208 pupils. If the proportion of pupils choosing to attend St Mary's increases to 10% then the forecast would rise to 277 pupils.

### Housing Growth and Projected Pupil Numbers for St Mary's

	Projected Catchment Properties	Roll Forecasts	St Mary's Projected Pupil Roll	
		Peak Projected Catchment Rolls	At current % of catchment	At 10% of catchment
Bonnyrigg	2,133	670	53	73
Burnbrae(inc Hs12)	2,592	1,041	75	112
Hawthornden	2,152	420	49	47
Lasswade	2,247	420	31	45
Total	9,124	2,551	208	277

The current St Mary's Primary School building was built in the 1930's and is located at 62A Polton Street, Bonnyrigg, alongside the existing Council offices at Dundas Buildings which has been vacated. St Mary's is built on two floors

with a slate roof, it has a nursery class as well as 9 primary classes with capacity for 263 primary pupils. The school's playground offers no soft landscaping and does not include playing fields. The school site measures 5,500 square metres whereas to be in line with the School Premises (Scotland) Regulations 1967 a school for 263 primary pupils and a nursery should have a school site of no less than 10,280 square metres.

The current St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School building is rated as Condition B (Good) and Suitability B (Good). However, the cost of bringing all maintenance up to date, refurbishing and revising the existing building to align it with modern education delivery would be significant and would create considerable disruption to pupils.

In May 2016 elected members decided in principle to replace St Mary's Primary School and instructed officers to identify a suitable site. A pre-consultation was carried out to gather feedback and ideas from parents, carers and the community on the use to be made of the former Hopefield Primary School site on Rosewell Road. It covered a range of options and four of these options favoured a replacement St Mary's on that site. Elected members made the decision in February 2017 to make the new school on Rosewell Road a joint campus to provide a replacement St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School and to provide additional capacity for Burnbrae Primary School.

### **1.3 Educational Benefits of the proposal**

The move to the new campus will offer an enhanced learning environment to improve the quality of education for all children. The facilities will be purpose built and up-to-date. They will provide improved access to spacious well-equipped classrooms and breakout areas that will support the delivery of high quality teaching and learning for all learners.

The replacement school will be built on the Rosewell Road site that will include playing fields and attractive outdoor areas supplied with modern equipment. In addition to providing open areas for outdoor learning they will also allow for extra-curricular and out of school activities which will contribute to the development of the wider talents of young people, better enabling them to develop the skills for life, learning and work they will need in the future. Building the school on this site has the advantage of keeping the school in its current locality, central to the population of its catchment area and close to its church. It will also avoid any disruption to children's learning during the construction period.

The replacement St Mary's is planned to be a single stream school with 8 classrooms and capacity for 242 pupils along with a 40 place nursery. This will provide sufficient capacity to accommodate children presently attending the school and any increase in the school roll that results from housing development that is currently committed in the catchment area. This is based on the current uptake of 8% for places at St Mary's from the Bonnyrigg and Lasswade area. The projected roll based on a 10% uptake would require further capacity for St Mary's, however we estimate that this is not likely to be

required until 2025. By that time we anticipate that the total number of pupils in the Burnbrae catchment will have started to drop back to the projected established roll of 400 pupils and that Burnbrae Early will require less space on the school campus. It is therefore anticipated that more space on the school campus can be made available to accommodate further growth at St Mary's. .

#### **1.4 Consultation**

Midlothian Council has undertaken the consultation on this proposal with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The statutory consultation period ran from 8 May until 19 June 2017. Copies of the proposal document were made available to stakeholders and other interested individuals. One public meeting was held at St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School on 24 May 2017. A staff consultation meeting was held on 22 May 2017 and the pupil council attended a pupil consultation meeting on 2 June 2017.

The council consulted formally with the Parent Council, parents, including those of any children expected to attend within two years and pupils and staff from St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School. The council also consulted the Community Councils of Bonnyrigg and Lasswade, Poltonhall and District and Midlothian Community Planning Partnership. There has been formal consultation with the Roman Catholic Church through the diocesan representative. The Headteacher, has also been involved in discussions about the consultation with the local church and its parishioners.

#### **1.5 Correction to proposal document**

At the time of publishing the consultation documents it was planned to complete the new school building during 2018/19 and the published document states 'It is planned to complete the new building during the 2018/19 school session'.

Since then, to allow time for the planning of the new school building to take into account representations made during the consultation, the planned completion date has been put back to Summer 2019. The revised plan is therefore that the proposal should take effect from August 2019.

#### **1.6 Proposal to be recommended to Council**

Upon completion of the new school campus building, planned for August 2019, all nursery and primary school pupils attending St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, and those who will attend in future, will move from the current location at Polton Street to the replacement school at the joint school campus on Rosewell Road, Bonnyrigg.

## **2. Consultation Findings**

### **2.1 Representations made on the proposals during the consultation period**

#### **2.1.1 Summary of written representations**

In total 4 written representations and 9 responses to an online survey were made on the proposals. 11 respondents made clear statements supporting the proposal, 2 did not comment on the proposal. In summary the written representations were supportive of the proposal; they found it to be a positive move and long needed for the school. Respondents stated that the current building was not fit to facilitate the education of children, did not support modern teaching methods and was in a poor state of repair. Some concerns were raised around the construction of the new school and a small number asked for assurances on the safety of the buildings. 2 respondents objected to the joint campus and a number asked questions around the use of shared spaces.

#### **2.1.2 Summary of oral representations made at the public meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

In total 10 members of the public attended, including one child. The representations in summary were largely supportive and discussions were centred on the design and layout of the new building and the outdoor space that would be provided. Parents of St Mary's pupils were positive about the move however some raised the question on whether the nursery at St Mary's would be separate from Burnbrae Early. One attendee asked if there would be community facilities on the joint campus and another asked if there would be increased car parking and drop off provision given the campus was accommodating two schools.

#### **2.1.3 Summary of oral representations made at the pupil consultation held on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2017**

In total 20 pupils aged P1-P7 attended along with the Head Teacher. The pupils were happy about the proposed location as it is in the middle of the St Mary's catchment area. They were excited about being involved in the design of the new building, providing lots of ideas about what they would like in their new school. These included size of classrooms, furniture, thinking pods, technology provision, PE facilities, outdoor space and playground equipment. They said that having a garden is important to them as well as having areas of the playground designated for younger children.

They had a number of questions about the changes to the school buildings which included asking about what would happen to the old St Mary's building, would the St Mary's school name change and when would the new school building be finished. The pupils showed some interest in the shared campus

arrangements, asking about the age of the children who will attend Burnbrae Early and whether the nursery space will be used for classrooms.

#### **2.1.4 Summary of oral representations made at the staff consultation held in St Mary's Primary School on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017**

20 school staff attended, including office and janitorial staff. The staff were positive about a move to a new school and had a number of questions regarding the practicalities and design of the new building. They questioned the reflection of growth in the projections and the allowance for the increase in nursery hours when looking at the size of the school. They expressed a keen interest in being involved in the design and layout of the new school with questions around storage, medical rooms, kitchen facilities and provision of ICT equipment.

Staff asked if there would be two administrative teams and two janitors given that it was a joint campus. They expressed concern about the impact on the nursery at St Mary's with the proposal that Burnbrae Early Learning and Childcare was to be part of the campus.

## **2.2 Education Scotland Report Summary**

In their report HM Inspectors stated that the proposal has clear educational benefits. These include the potential to enhance children's learning, including when outdoors. They felt that children would have better access to digital technology and increased opportunities to enhance their experiences, for example, in science and in health and wellbeing. They also felt that staff would have much improved learning and teaching spaces and modern purpose-built resources and facilities. However, HM Inspectors also noted that it would be important for the Council to provide clarification on how staff from both schools on the new shared campus and the early learning and childcare provision would work together should there be any shared resources and/or facilities. HM Inspectors also noted that the council would need to provide a clear, communication strategy to keep stakeholders informed about the implementation of the proposal.

## **2.3 Midlothian Council's response to representations made during the consultation period and to Education Scotland's report.**

### **Shared facilities and resources**

Concerns have been raised regarding the sharing of resources and facilities on the new campus. This was also noted by Education Scotland, who requested that this report address how staff from both schools would work together should there be any shared resources and/or facilities.

As part of the detailed planning process for the new building, the Council will work closely with all stakeholders to ensure strong communication links are established and all views are taken into account. In consultation with both schools, consideration will be given to the spaces required to ensure that the

facilities will provide a high quality learning experience for all the pupils on the campus. As part of the detailed design process all stakeholders will be consulted on the design and layout of the new school campus.

St Mary's will have dedicated nursery space, independent of Burnbrae Early, designed to meet the needs of its Early Level children. Each school will have its full complement of staff, in line with the Scheme of Devolved School Management including administrative staff.

Midlothian Council has experience of managing establishments which are shared campus sites between non denominational and denominational schools. At the heart of this type of shared campus has been the fostering of high quality relationships between both schools through strong leadership and good communication. There is good evidence that staff there are working collaboratively to enhance professional learning and practice. Further there have been no major issues around any shared facilities with clear agreement on operational use with any problems being dealt with through negotiation and flexibility. A key part of the joint working is that Parent councils of both schools are encouraged to work together for the benefit of all children.

We will be working to ensure this situation is duplicated within the new shared campus site on Rosewell Road. The headteachers of both schools will work with their School Group Managers to formalise a clear plan covering; collaborative professional practice, shared events and agreement on the use of shared facilities with a clear aim to be inclusive and maximise the educational benefit for all children on the campus. There will be an opportunity to fully consult on this with stakeholders through their respective Parent Councils and the relevant plan will be fully communicated to all stakeholders by both schools.

### **Safer Routes to School and Traffic Management**

A common topic raised during the consultation was safer routes to schools, traffic management and the provision of additional parking and drop off points.

When the Council undertakes detailed planning work for a new school it always considers the access routes using all modes of transport from the housing areas in the catchment. The Policy and Road Safety Team creates a School Travel Plan with safer routes to school. In taking forward this proposal the Council will take into account the traffic flow and road design. The Council is committed to working with the police, pupils, parents and the local community to ensure that healthy and safe routes to school are established to encourage walking, cycling, scooting to school and "park and stride" for all those for whom it is an option, to minimise the potential for congestion at drop off and pick up times. Walking routes, cycle paths, roads, bus routes and parking will be revised, where appropriate, with lowered speed limits, additional crossings and improved lighting.

The detailed planning work will also include provision for adequate parking spaces in the school grounds.



## **Community Use**

During the public meetings the question was raised as to whether the new campus would have community facilities.

The new campus will be in close proximity to the Lasswade Centre and Bonnyrigg Primary School, both of which provide community facilities for this area.

It is not the intention for this school campus to enhance the community facilities already provided in the Bonnyrigg area, but arrangements will be considered in discussion with all stakeholders where a requirement is identified, for example for the provision of after school care.

## **School Design**

Both the pupils and staff of St Mary's expressed an interest in being involved in the design of the new school building. The pupils commented on the size of classrooms, choice of furniture, thinking pods, technology provision, PE facilities, outdoor space, garden, designated playground areas and playground equipment. Staff expressed concern about the size of the school questioning whether sufficient allowance had been made for growth projections and the forthcoming increase in nursery hours. They also commented on storage, medical rooms, kitchen facilities and the provision of ICT equipment.

As part of the detailed planning and design of the new school campus, all stakeholders will be consulted on the design and layout of the internal and external spaces. In consultation with both schools, consideration will be given to the spaces required to ensure that the facilities will provide a high quality learning experience for all the pupils on the campus and those who will attend in future years.

## **2.4 Statement of how Midlothian Council has reviewed the proposals having regard to any relevant representations made during the consultation period and to Education Scotland's report**

The proposal to Council on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2017 will be to relocate St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School from its current location on Polton Street to the new campus on Rosewell Road, with effect for primary pupil intake from August 2019.

In consideration of the representations made during the consultation and in Education Scotland's report, the proposals have been reviewed. As a consequence, in implementing the proposal, the Council is committed to:

- working closely with all stakeholders to ensure that the strong communication links that are already established between the early learning and childcare teams, both schools and Council officers are maintained to ensure a smooth transition into the new campus;
- ensuring the headteacher and School Group Manager from both schools work together to formalise a clear plan and agreement on shared campus working and the sharing of facilities with a clear aim to be inclusive and maximise the educational benefit for all children on the campus;
- ensuring the Council's Policy and Road Safety Team reviews School Travel Plans and parking requirements when planning the new school and making appropriate enhancements;
- considering the needs of stakeholders when designing the school spaces and facilities in the new school campus; and
- involving and consulting with pupils and staff in the design and layout of internal and external spaces at the new school campus.

If this proposal and the proposal to use the additional non-denominational capacity for Burnbrae Primary School on a new school campus on Rosewell Road in Bonnyrigg as Burnbrae Early Level education are approved, the council will engage with staff, parents, children and the wider community to ensure that the benefits of the proposals are maximised and that the shared campus operates to the benefit of all.

## **2.5 Time for further consideration**

There will be a period of 3 weeks from the date of publication of this report for further consideration before the next meeting of Midlothian Council on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2017, when the Council will make a decision on whether to progress with the proposal, either in whole or in part.

Any further representations in respect of this report should be emailed to [joni.connell@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:joni.connell@midlothian.gov.uk) before 28<sup>th</sup> August 2017 so that the Council can take them into consideration.

### **3. Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Midlothian Council to relocate St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, including the nursery, to a new school campus on the former Hopefield Primary School site in Bonnyrigg.**

#### **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 Midlothian Council's proposal to relocate St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, including the nursery, to a new school campus on the former Hopefield Primary School site in Bonnyrigg. 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 of the school and 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:

- 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 sites of the current St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School and the proposed new site of the former Hopefield Primary School site, including discussion with school staff, children, parent council representatives and parents.

## **2. Consultation Process**

Midlothian 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*. The statutory consultation period ran from 8 May until 19 June 2017. Copies of the proposal document were made available to stakeholders and other interested individuals. The council consulted formally with the Parent Council, parents, including those of any children expected to attend within two years and pupils and staff from St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School. The council also consulted the Community Councils of Bonnyrigg and Lasswade, Poltonhall and District and Midlothian Community Planning Partnership. The council held one public meeting at St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School on 24 May 2017. Ten members of the public came along, including the local church representative. A staff consultation meeting was held on 22 May 2017 attended by 17 staff. Twenty pupils from P1-P7, including the pupil council attended a consultation meeting on 2 June 2017. The council received four written responses and nine responses to an online survey about the proposal. Overall, across these meetings and surveys, almost all stakeholders reported that they were supportive of the proposal and saw positive benefits for the children's education. They also raised several, similar points where they wanted further clarity should the proposal go forward. There has been formal consultation with the Roman Catholic Church through the diocesan representative. The headteacher, has also been involved in discussions about the consultation with the local church and its parishioners.

## **3. Educational Aspects of Proposal**

3.1 The proposal has clear educational benefits, including lower maintenance as the current school building is likely to need a significant amount of maintenance work to maintain current standards. The move to the new campus has the potential to enhance children's learning experiences in modern, purpose-built facilities. Staff would have improved access to additional space in classes and breakout areas to develop further children's learning and achievement. The proposal also indicates that the new school would have increased outdoor spaces with modern resources including playing fields and areas to enhance children's learning when outside. There is scope for these areas to potentially support children's broader achievements, including developing their skills as 'Midlothian learners' when outdoors, including in science throughout the year. There are clear benefits for maintaining the school in its current locality, including its population within the catchment area and the proximity and links to the church. There is unlikely to be any disruption to children's learning during the building period. Improved facilities and resources for early learning and childcare would allow children to access indoors and outdoors as one learning environment. Parents with younger children might also be able to access better facilities, for example, places to shelter in inclement weather and park buggies and prams.

3.2 All parents, children and staff who spoke with HM Inspectors during the visit to St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School supported the proposal. Staff and parents reported that they had waited a long time for a new school and were confident that the proposal offered their children a much improved learning environment. The Roman Catholic Church is in favour of the proposal. All consultees saw clear advantages to the proposal, including better access to modern purpose-built facilities and resources, such as digital technology and quality outdoor spaces for children's learning and enjoyment. Staff and children are keen to be involved in influencing the design and making decisions when appropriate when choosing some resources, including furniture. Children are looking forward to taking forward their travel plan subject to the proposal going ahead. All staff and parents who met with HM Inspectors commented on the importance of maintaining the school's Catholic identity and values on a shared campus. Points on which consultees are seeking further clarification relate to traffic management, school capacity, community use of and any plans for shared facilities with Burnbrae Primary School on the new campus. Staff and parents are also unclear about the links between the early learning and childcare provision on the new campus. Parents want assurance that the building itself would reflect the highest possible safety standards. Written responses from consultees reflected the views noted in this section.

#### **4. Summary**

Overall, there are clear educational benefits to the proposal. Relocating St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, including the nursery, to a new campus on the former Hopefield Primary School site in Bonnyrigg has the potential to enhance children's learning, including when outdoors. Children would have better access to digital technology and increased opportunities to enhance their experiences, for example, in science and in health and wellbeing. Staff would have much improved learning and teaching spaces and modern purpose-built resources and facilities. However, an important consideration has been raised on how staff from both schools and from the early learning and childcare provision would work together should there be any shared resources and/or facilities. In taking its proposal forward, the council needs to provide clarification about this, including a communication strategy to keep stakeholders informed providing greater detail in its final report.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
June 2017**