

Stirling Council

Schools, Learning and Education

Buchanan Primary School

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Summary of Proposal and Educational Benefits Statement

Proposal

In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, this paper proposes that a formal consultation be undertaken to consider that:

- Education provision at Buchanan Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 24 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- Pupils of Buchanan Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Drymen Primary School, from 25 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- The delineated catchment area of Drymen Primary School be permanently extended to include the delineated catchment area of Buchanan Primary School from 25 June 2022, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Reasons for formulating Proposal

Buchanan Primary School was mothballed in sessions 2017/18 (from January 2018), 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 following decision at Stirling Council Children and Young People Committee. During the period of mothballing, the catchment area of Drymen Primary School was extended to include the area covered by Buchanan Primary School and most children living in the Buchanan catchment area currently attend Drymen Primary School.

Prior to mothballing, Buchanan Primary School operated as a single teacher primary school serving the village of Milton of Buchanan and the surrounding area. The capacity of Buchanan Primary school is 75 pupils. Buchanan Primary School is a feeder primary school for Balforn High School.

Prior to mothballing, the roll at Buchanan Primary School had fallen steadily over the past 5 school sessions. At the start of the 2017/18 session, there were 5 children enrolled at Buchanan Primary School. Between August and October 2017, placing requests for all 5 children were submitted and accepted for Drymen Primary School.

Future pupil projections for the Buchanan Primary School catchment (using data provided by Forth Valley NHS in September 2020) indicate that the following P1 intakes are expected:

	2021	2022	2023
P1 Pupils expected	7	4	4

These circumstances result in a diminished school pupil population for Buchanan Primary School, with the unlikely prospect of an increased pupil population.

Likely impact on Buchanan Community

Prior to mothballing of Buchanan Primary School, some families living within the catchment already chose for their children to attend larger schools locally, mainly Drymen Primary School, due to wanting opportunities for wider social interaction and opportunities for group work with peers. Drymen Primary School is accessible at 2.5 miles by road from Buchanan Primary School. Two other local primary schools, Killearn Primary School and Balfron Primary School are also within travelling distance at 7.7 miles and 7.5 miles respectively. Thus should parents wish to place their child at another local school, choices are available. It is therefore unlikely that closure of the school will encourage families with school-age children to leave the community or discourage young families from moving to the community.

In recent years until January 2018, Buchanan Primary School building has only been used for the purpose of educating primary school aged children during school hours. Milton of Buchanan has a Memorial Hall used for public meetings, local events, fetes, surgeries and recreational activities.

If the proposal is accepted and the school closed permanently, Stirling Council Infrastructure Delivery Team would assume responsibility for the building.

Travel Plan for Pupils

Currently children who live within Buchanan Primary School catchment area and who are distance entitled to transport are transported by a combination of methods to Drymen Primary School. Some pupils have been awarded parental mileage contracts, whilst others are transported on a minibus. If the proposal is accepted, this arrangement will continue as pupils resident in the Buchanan Primary School catchment area would be distance entitled to transport (School Transport Policy, March 2020).

Alternatives to the Proposal

Alternatives to the proposal are:

- Continued mothballing of Buchanan Primary School. By August 2021, Buchanan Primary School will have been mothballed for three and a half years. This will exceed the maximum length of time recommended in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- Buchanan Primary School could be re-opened. The school would have a very small roll, with roll projections remaining static or decreasing. Buchanan Primary School would continue to have a shared headship with Drymen Primary School. This is not considered a reasonable alternative at this time.

Educational Benefits

This Educational Benefits Statement considers the educational benefits for pupils to attend Drymen Primary School, which would be designated as the catchment school, should the proposal be implemented. By highlighting the educational benefits of Drymen Primary School, it is not implied that many of these benefits did not already exist in Buchanan Primary School. The benefits are being considered when looking at the proposal in terms of what would be provided in the rezoned school of Drymen Primary School:

- Access to a broad and rich curriculum and motivating contexts.
- Learning experiences are differentiated to meet the pupils' needs and pupils benefit from being able to work on co-operative learning tasks with others. Children's progress is regularly reviewed and a range of interventions are planned to provide additional support as required.
- French is taught from Primary 1 through to Primary 7, with Spanish being introduced as a third language from Primary 5. Makaton is also led by Primary 1 and 2 Makaton Leaders.
- Access to a range of technologies including iPads, chrome books and laptops.
- Support staff at Drymen Primary School are skilled and well deployed to meet identified needs for individuals and groups of children.
- Drymen Primary School has a Support for Learning Teacher for half a day each week. This assists in meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with ASN.
- Robust tracking and monitoring of children's learning. Most pupils achieving appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels.
- Pupils are fully involved in planning learning and taking a leadership role.
- Every teacher at Drymen Primary is involved in leadership of change through involvement in a working group, leading a specific aspect of school improvement.
- Pupils of all age groups within the school which allows pupils the opportunity to work in pairs, groups, at peer level and across stages in the school.
- Provision of opportunities for wider achievement is a strength of Drymen Primary School, including opportunities for children to participate in Community Leadership Groups.
- Wide range of opportunities to develop skills in team games and sports.
- Outdoor learning is an important strength of Drymen Primary School. Older classes have benefitted from partnership working with rangers from the National Park.
- There are strong links with community organisations and businesses.
- Opportunities for social interaction as a result of attending a larger school.
- Active Parent Council and parental involvement at Drymen Primary School.
- Wide range of lunch/after school activities and clubs run by parents, staff, and volunteers.
- Relocation of Croftamie Nursery to Drymen Primary School as part of the school and this supports smooth transition between nursery and school.