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**East Ayrshire**  
COUNCIL

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES**

## **A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

**The proposals in this consultation document have implications for:**

- **Woodstock School**
- **Witchhill School**

**This document has been issued by East Ayrshire Council Education Committee for consultation in terms of the Education (Publications and Consultation etc) (Scotland) Regulation 1981 and Amendment Regulation 1987, 1988 and 1989.**

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL SERVICES**

**THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT**

- The proposal to amalgamate Witchhill School, Kilmarnock and Woodstock School, Kilmarnock in August 2004 or as soon as possible thereafter.

**1. BACKGROUND**

**1.1** On 21 November 2002 the Education Committee of East Ayrshire Council agreed to issue a series of consultative documents under the title “Building Learning Communities”. These documents describe the Council’s vision for its schools into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Council wishes to ensure that all pupils are given every opportunity to develop their potential to the full. A key factor for the Council is to ensure that the best possible educational environment is available through the provision of a safe, secure and up-to-date environment.

**1.2** The vision for the schools estate gives priority to these key features:

- Ensuring that all aspects of the modern curriculum can be delivered to children of all abilities.
- Providing the most up to date Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in all schools.
- Providing maximum access for pupils, staff and parents.
- The development of the Arts, Culture and Sports and Health education and the creation of Centres of Excellence to deliver an agenda of continuous improvement.
- Providing a secure environment for all who are educated and work in the school.
- Providing access to the community having regards to those with particular need.
- Providing catering and dining facilities of the highest standard in a modern environment.
- Providing appropriate social area provision for parents and pupils.
- A commitment to the environment and environmental issues.
- Developing Learning Partnerships through the New Community Schools model and forming strong partnerships with local/national organisations committed to offering support.

**1.3** The two schools that are the focus of this proposal have developed a high reputation for their support to children and families. They offer specialist accommodation together with well-trained, experienced and dedicated

staff. This proposal seeks to safeguard and strengthen this quality of provision.

## **2. PRESENT POSITION**

**2.1** The pattern of provision for children with special educational needs in East Ayrshire reflects a spectrum of provision. Most are educated in mainstream schools where they are fully integrated into classrooms and are taught alongside their peers. A substantial and growing number of children requiring additional support, and who in the past might have been educated in special schools, are educated in specialist support bases that have been established on mainstream campuses. These learning centres are:

- Barshare Primary School SEN base
- Cumnock Academy SEN base
- Crosshouse Communication Centre
- Patna Supported Learning Centre
- Doon Academy Supported Learning Centre
- Loudoun Academy Communication Centre (operational from August 2004)

The development of such provision is consistent with the Council's policy of inclusion and the legal requirement of the presumption of mainstream education under section 15 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools Schools etc Act 2000.

**2.2** There are presently 4 special schools:

- Park School, Kilmarnock for children with moderate learning difficulties
- Hillside School, Cumnock for children with complex learning difficulties
- Witchhill School, Kilmarnock for children with profound learning difficulties
- Woodstock School, Kilmarnock for children with severe learning difficulties

These schools are specially staffed and resourced to meet children's needs. They cater for children at all stages of education.

**2.3** A very small number of children have very complex needs, or needs which require extremely specialised support. These children are educated using placements specifically purchased in other authorities, or in the private or voluntary sector.

## **2.2 Witchhill School**

**2.2.1** Witchhill School is situated at the junction of Witch Road and Hill Street Kilmarnock and comprises a single building set in its own grounds. A site map is included at Appendix 1. In addition to the building there is a small tarmac and grassed area surrounding the school. The original building was completed in the 1960's and consists of number of learning bases and specialist care areas. The latter is in recognition of the extensive care needs of some of the children.

The present roll of the school is 8 and its capacity is 20.

**2.2.2** A detailed roll projection is shown as Appendix 2.

**2.2.3** The school staff presently consists of:

- 1 Headteacher
- 1 Depute Head
- 1 Teacher
- 2 Instructors
- 1.5 Auxiliary
- 1 Driver
- 1 Escort (18.5 hours)
- 1 Clerical Assistant (29 hours)

The school is also supported by a range of health professionals and enjoys additional support from volunteers.

**2.2.4** The children and young people in Witchhill School are amongst the most vulnerable in the Authority area. Each child needs a well developed educational and care package. Some children require access to modern and large scale mobility devices such as hoists and standing frames to allow them to benefit from their education. Specialist care areas are also required.

## **2.3 Woodstock School**

**2.3.1** Woodstock School is situated in Woodstock Street, Kilmarnock. It shares the site with Woodstock Centre with which it has common utilities. It is a single building of 1960 vintage set in its own grounds. The accommodation was recently extended. A site map is included at Appendix 3. In addition to the building there is a tarmaced area to the front of the school and a grassed area to the rear. The accommodation consists of number of learning bases and specialist areas such as a home economics base.

The present roll of the school is 30 and its capacity is 35.

**2.3.2** A detailed roll projection is shown as Appendix 4.

**2.3.3** The school staff presently consists of

- 1 Headteacher
- 1 Depute Head
- 5 Teachers
- 5 Instructors
- 4 Auxiliary staff
- 1 Clerical assistant

Like Witchhill, Woodstock School is also supported by a range of health professionals and enjoys additional support from volunteers.

**2.3.4** The children of Woodstock School have a different range of needs to the Witchhill children. They require significant levels of support from staff, but have mobility and are physically active. This does however mean that they require significant working space. Teaching groups have to be formed in such a way that the needs of the children within the group are compatible.

### **3. PROPOSAL**

**3.1** It is proposed to amalgamate Woodstock and Witchhill Schools with effect from August 2004 or as soon as possible thereafter and unify the management and staffing structures.

### **4. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROPOSAL**

**4.1** The Woodstock School roll has been maintained with the establishment working at full, or near full capacity. However, the roll of Witchhill School has declined steadily over recent years and is not expected to increase in the foreseeable future. A diminishing roll means that there are reductions in staffing and physical resourcing. This creates difficulties in matters such as staff cover, continuing professional development, and securing best value from support services. It is anticipated that if the present position is maintained, Witchhill School will soon be below the level of viability.

**4.2** Being part of a larger establishment will enable the Authority to provide reassurance to the children and families of the present Witchhill School regarding the continuity of services.

**4.3** For Woodstock School there will also be advantages coming from a larger establishment. There will be more flexibility in terms of staffing and access to resources. It will also enable a modernised management

structure to be developed within “A Teaching Profession for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** This proposal recognises that the needs of children of both schools must be considered fully. The availability of space and specialist care and learning accommodation is essential to ensuring that the needs of individuals and groups can be met. Similarly, the support of skilled and caring staff in sufficient numbers has been essential to the success of both schools to date.
- 5.2** The pressure on the present accommodation of Woodstock School means that there is very limited scope to physically amalgamate the two schools in the immediate future by bringing both sets of pupils together. To secure best use of resources this will, however remain an important aim. There is need for a detailed study of how to get the best value from available premises.
- 5.3** There would require to be a merging of the management structures of the two schools under one headteacher. This would be done within the terms of “A Teaching Profession for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. School Boards would require to amalgamate under the conditions of the relevant legislation.
- 5.4** The staffing and resourcing of special schools is closely related to the individual needs of children. It is an important part of this proposal that the needs of the children in both schools are paramount. While there will be some scope to harmonise the staffing of both schools into the new merged establishment it is envisaged that this proposal will have limited budgetary implications in the short term and would be mainly related to the merging of the headteacher posts.
- 5.5** Staff and trade unions will be consulted on any aspect of this proposal that affects individuals or groups of employees.
- 5.6** There will be detailed, and if necessary individual consultation with parents on how their children will be supported in keeping with present best practice in special educational needs.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1** It is recommended that the Education Committee agree to adopt the proposal that:

- (i) Witchhill School Kilmarnock should be merged with Woodstock School Kilmarnock.
- (ii) This merger will take effect from August 2004 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- (iii) At an appropriate point in the future the Director of Educational and Social Services should produce a report on the possibilities for the development of accommodation within the Kilmarnock area for the benefit of children with profound and severe learning difficulties.

It is further recommended that:

- (i) all interested parties be invited to make written or electronic submissions on the proposal to the Director of Educational & Social Services, East Ayrshire Council, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock KA3 7BU, E-mail: [educationppp@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:educationppp@east-ayrshire.gov.uk) no later than Thursday 10 June 2004.
- (ii) the Director prepare a report on the results of the consultative process for consideration at a future meeting of the Education Committee.

GRS/GRS

04/05/2004

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Nil**

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER : GRAHAM SHORT**

## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX 1	LOCATION OF WITCHHILL SCHOOL
APPENDIX 2	ROLL PROJECTION – WITCHHILL SCHOOL
APPENDIX 3	LOCATION OF WOODSTOCK SCHOOL
APENDIX 4	ROLL PROJECTION – WOODSTOCK SCHOOL

## Appendix 2: Detailed Roll Projection of Witchhill School

Session	Pre School	Primary	Secondary	Post 16	TOTAL ROLL
2004		3	2	3	8
2005		2	2	1	5
2006		2	2	1	5
2007		2	2	1	5
2008		2	2	1	5

THE CURRENT SCHOOL ROLL IS 8PUPILS

THE SCHOOL CAPACITY IS 20 PUPILS

#### Appendix 4: Detailed Roll Projection of Woodstock School

<b>Session</b>	<b>Pre School</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Post 16</b>	<b>TOTAL ROLL</b>
2003		13	11	6	30
2004		13	10	6	29
2005		12	10	6	28
2006		12	10	6	28
2007		12	10	6	28
2008		12	10	6	28

THE CURRENT SCHOOL ROLL IS 29 PUPILS

THE SCHOOL CAPACITY IS 35 PUPILS