

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**THE RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE EDUCATIONAL
PROVISION FOR NURSERY AGE CHILDREN IN DAME HELEN'S NURSERY
SCHOOL, DALMELLINGTON.**

Report by Director of Education

**Appendix A – List of respondents
Appendix B – the consultative document**

Written submissions from interested parties on the consultative process are available for inspection in East Ayrshire Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 7BU.

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Report by Director of Education

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** On Thursday 16 March 2000, the Education Committee approved the issue of a consultative document on the future educational provision for nursery age children in Dame Helen's Nursery School, Dalmellington.
- 1.2** The document recommended that Dame Helen's Nursery School be re-designated as a nursery class.
- 1.3** The main points raised in the document were:-
- (i) Dame Helen's Nursery School be re-designated as a 20/20 place nursery class.
 - (ii) The nursery class would be located in Dalmellington Primary School.
 - (iii) The Head Teacher of Dalmellington Primary School would manage the nursery class.
 - (iv) A teacher and a nursery nurse would staff the nursery class.

2 THE CONSULTATION

- 2.1** Written representation on the Committee's proposals were sought from interested parties in terms of the Education (Publication and Consultation, etc.) (Scotland) Regulations 1981 and amended regulations 1987, 1988 and 1989.
- 2.2** In accordance with the statutory requirements, parents of children affected by the proposals and appropriate school boards have been consulted. Copies of the consultative document were also made available to the staff of Dame Helen's Nursery School, Dalmellington Primary School and associated nursery provision and schools in the area. Copies were also made available to local elected members, the Member of Parliament, the Member of the Scottish Parliament and to representatives of appropriate unions.
- 2.3** The existence of the document was publicised in the press and copies were made available in the education offices, the affected schools, the local libraries and the local Council office.
- 2.4** The Senior Depute Director was invited to and attended a meeting called by the parents and other interested parties on Friday 31 March 2000.

3. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED

3.1 A considerable number of people responded to the consultation document. Individual submissions have been received from 12 parents and a petition was submitted signed by 759 parents and interested parties. A total of 51 respondents signed a letter prepared by the School Board of Dalmellington Primary School. A further 7 respondents signed a prepared letter from parents in the nursery school and in addition 8 parents provided a response but did not disclose addresses. The Head Teacher and Staff of Dalmellington Primary School, local Authority staff from Pre-five sector and the EIS have also commented on the proposal. A list of respondents is attached as Appendix A.

3.2 The school board issued a letter to all parents stating that if the following issues are resolved the board would not oppose the proposal.

- Inadequate size of the existing playground
- Storage space for nursery equipment
- Disruption of primary children as the nursery children arrive and leave
- Cloakroom and toilet facilities
- Space for physical activity for the nursery children

However the board stressed that if any of the above are not resolved the board would oppose the proposal strenuously.

3.3 Of the 51 respondents who signed the letter prepared by the school board, 8 responses accepted the proposal on the proviso that the issues were resolved, 39 were against the proposal and 4 did not indicate a preference.

3.4 The comments contained in the individual responses from parents can be summarised as follows:

- The reduction of the number of classrooms in both schools will narrow the curriculum opportunities available to children.
- The current playground space available is inadequate for the children who attend the Primary School. A further reduction of this space to create a play area for nursery class children may result in an increase of playground accidents.
- Concern exists about the disruption to the Primary School when children enter and leave the nursery.
- Concern about the deterioration of education services in Dalmellington and the loss of another facility in the community.
- Lack of suitable toilet facilities for children aged 3 – 5 years.
- Lack of storage space in the Primary School for large play equipment
- No suitable area in the Primary School to set up the Soft Play equipment.

- Concern about the increase in vehicular traffic and congestion at the Primary School gates.
- The difference in the proposal in the Dame Helen's consultation to the Muirkirk proposal, where Muirkirk Nursery will remain in its current building and be managed by the Head Teacher of the Primary School.
- The focus of the proposal to relocate the nursery in the Primary School is financial as opposed to the needs and interests of children.

3.5 The Head Teacher of Dalmellington Primary School and Staff welcome the opportunity to develop more effective links with the nursery children, their parents and staff. The Head Teacher and staff would be happy to support the proposal to re-designate the Nursery School as a nursery class under the management of the Head Teacher of Dalmellington Primary School and the nursery class to be retained in the nursery building.

Concerns expressed are as follows:

- There is no available storage space for nursery equipment in the primary school. An outdoor container would be necessary to store the outdoor play equipment. There is no space available to store the soft play equipment nor a suitable area for it to be set up and used.
- The school playground is already too small and is the cause of an increasing number of collisions, leading to arguments. If a portion of the playground were fenced off for the nursery class this would reduce the playground space available further.
- Physical play for children would be restricted to the times when the school gym hall is available, which may not coincide with the attendance of nursery children.
- No cloakroom space is available in the primary school and therefore this facility would need to be located in the nursery playroom.
- Concerns are expressed on the disruption to the education of primary school children when the nursery children enter and leave due to the confined area.
- The school would be prevented in developing the available classroom into a computer suite which would be detrimental to the IT development in the school.

3.6 The Head of Bellsbank Family Centre agrees that the Nursery School should be re-designated as a 20/20 nursery class under the management of the Head Teacher of Dalmellington Primary School.

3.7 Local Authority staff agree with the proposal to re-designate the Nursery School as a 20/20 nursery class under the management of the Head Teacher of Dalmellington Primary School. The following points were raised in relation to the proposal to relocate the nursery in the Primary School:

- The space available in the existing nursery school building offers opportunities for different types of play.
- The outside play area was re-surfaced in the last few years and provides a safe area for outdoor play.
- The existing nursery building can provide adequate storage for all the curricular materials and equipment.
- The nursery building also accommodates the Early Intervention Team and the gym hall in the building provides additional space for examination purposes for Doon Academy.

3.8 The EIS do not agree that the proposal should be pursued in its current form. Concerns are expressed that by re-designating the Nursery School as a nursery class, that there would be a loss on the accumulated experience and expertise of a nursery Head Teacher. Through the loss of the nursery Head Teacher post, there would be fewer opportunities for promotion for teachers. It is recognised that the proposal for management of the nursery class by the Head Teacher of Dalmellington Primary School is viewed as positive and the nursery building is in close proximity to the school. However, the issue of workload for the Head Teacher is raised as an issue.

4. COMMENTS ON THE VIEWS EXPRESSED

4.1 The principal focus in the consultation exercise is to re-designate Dame Helen's Nursery School as a 20/20 nursery class under the management of the Head Teacher of Dalmellington Primary School and to relocate the nursery in the Primary School. From the submissions received, the majority of respondents agree that the Nursery School should be re-designated as a 20/20 nursery class under the management of the Head Teacher of the Primary School. There is less support from the parents or the wider community to relocate the nursery in the Primary School.

4.2 Presently there are 17 nursery classes located in Primary Schools in East Ayrshire. There is no evidence to suggest that the curriculum opportunities available to primary or nursery class children are curtailed due to these arrangements. In fact, the proposed arrangement would offer stronger links with the 5-14 curriculum and ensure continuity throughout the educational process.

- The integration of a nursery class and primary school is an enhancement to the education service in Dalmellington with many benefits ie direct liaison between early stages primary and nursery, continuation of early intervention strategies, children's familiarity with the primary school.

- Nursery classes throughout East Ayrshire share toilet accommodation with early stages primary.
- It is recognised that the playground area in Dalmellington Primary School is inadequate and that this is an issue which merits priority consideration to extend the playground area.
- Large and outdoor equipment could be stored in a container sited in the playground.
- The operational times of the nursery class will be set out to avoid congestion at the primary school gates. The Head Teacher will ensure that the arrangements put in place, protect the best interests of all the children. Health and Safety is a priority.
- The needs and interests of children are taken into account as part of the proposal. The proposal secures the continuation of pre-school education for 3 and 4 year olds in Dalmellington where there is a falling population.
- Appropriate and suitable areas will be explored to store and use soft play equipment in Dalmellington.
- The Early Intervention Team presently located in Dame Helen's Nursery can be found alternative accommodation in the wider locality.

5. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 Property costs for Dame Helen's Nursery School currently total £2,381. It is estimated that energy costs will amount to £500 for the nursery class and an increase in rates of approximately £500 will apply to Doon Academy/Dalmellington Primary School. Therefore, the savings from the property costs will amount to £1,381.

5.2 The building is in a fair condition apart from the roof, windows and electrics which are in a poor condition. The cost for these areas of work are as follows:

Re-slating of roof	£ 80,000
Rewiring	£ 15,000
Windows	<u>£ 10,000</u>
Total	<u>£105,000</u>

5.3 There are 18 children who will return for their pre-school year in August 2000. From the current register of applicants for 3 year olds, the intake will be as follows:

- 8 x children eligible for a place in August 2000
- 3 x children eligible for a place in January 2001
- 3 x children eligible for a place in April 2001

A total of 32 places will be allocated from a potential 40 places for school session 2000/2001.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The Education Department has taken full cognisance of the points raised by parents, staff and other interested parties and listened to the views expressed.

There is support for Dame Helen's Nursery School to be re-designated as a nursery class under the management of the Head Teacher of Dalmellington Primary School. There is less support for the nursery class to be located in the Primary School building as the premises do not afford the same space as the present nursery school building. It is perceived that this will potentially limit curriculum development.

6.2 The Education Department at all times will ensure high quality education is available to the children and this will not be diminished by the establishment of a nursery class or indeed, any location in which education is delivered. The delivery of the early years curriculum will be in line with national guidance and authority policies. The children will have every opportunity to achieve the highest standards in a vibrant, stimulating educational environment. The Education Department will ensure that the points raised with regard to health and safety in the playground will be addressed as the highest priority should this proposal proceed.

6.3 The pupil population of Dalmellington has reduced drastically over the past few years. The continuation of a nursery school is not now viable and the creation of a nursery class will secure the continuation of early years provision in Dalmellington.

6.4 Consequently, it is concluded that it is in the best interests of all concerned, and not least the children in attendance at both the nursery and the primary school that, in order to secure long term efficient and effective nursery provision in the area, the nursery be relocated in Dalmellington Primary School, designated as a nursery class.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that the Education Committee agree:

- (i) to proceed with the proposal to re-designate Dame Helen's Nursery School as a nursery class under the management of the Head Teacher of Dalmellington Primary school from 1 May 2000;
- (ii) to proceed with the proposal to locate the nursery class in Dalmellington Primary School from August 2000;
- (iii) the Director of Education draw up proposals to extend the playground taking cognisance of health and safety issues.

John Mulgrew
Director of Education

JA/SB
17 April 2000

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Members wishing further information should contact Margaret Burnell, Senior Depute Director of Education, Tel: (01563) 576104 or Janie Allen, Principal Officer, Pre-5 Services, Tel: (01563) 576185.

APPENDIX A**FUTURE EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR NURSERY AGE CHILDREN IN
DAME HELEN'S NURSERY SCHOOL, DALMELLINGTON****LIST OF RESPONDENTS TO CONSULTATION EXERCISE**

No	NAME	ADDRESS
1	Rona Burns	Bellsbank Family Centre, Craiglea Crescent, Dalmellington
2	Mr J Kennedy	35 Macaterick Drive, Bellsbank, Dalmellington
3	Mr J Kennedy	35 Macaterick Drive, Bellsbank, Dalmellington (Petition)
4	Mrs McClerwood	8 Bellsbank Road, Dalmellington
5	John S Kennedy (on behalf of Parents/guardians)	35 Macaterick Drive, Bellsbank , Dalmellington
6	Iain Harvey, EIS	c/o Loudoun Academy
7	T Jackson	21 Castle Croft, Dalmellington
8	Michelle Copeland	34 High Main Street, Dalmellington
9	Mr & Mrs J Dempster	33 Park Crescent, Dalmellington
10	Miss Tracey Dempster	52 Dalpharson Avenue, Bellsbank, Dalmellington
11	Mr & Mrs P Kennedy	12 Eriff Road, Bellsbank, Dalmellington
12	Ms Mary Buchanan	6 Glenmount, Bellsbank, Dalmellington
13	Dr & Mrs H C Brown	"Lochview", Bellsbank Road, Dalmellington
14	Ms Andrea Napier	13 Dalmellington Road, Waterside, By Patna
15	Mr Jack Paterson (on behalf of himself and staff of the school)	Head Teacher, Dalmellington Primary School, Ayr Road, Dalmellington
16	Anne Aitchison, Pre-School Partnership Link Officer	Woodstock Centre, Woodstock Street, Kilmarnock
17	Mrs Pauline Napier	23 New Cottages, Waterside, Patna
18	Mr John Hill	Glencaple, The Glebe, Cumnock Road, Dalmellington
19	Mr J Kennedy (on behalf of 66 respondents)	35 Macaterick Drive, Bellsbank, Dalmellington (Petition)
20		

LIST OF RESPONDENTS UNACKNOWLEDGED DUE TO NO ADDRESS

<u>No</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date received by Authority</u>
1	Frank Gormanley	10/4/00
2	P McQuiltan	10/4/00
3	Margaret F.....	10/4/00
4	R A Fonta	10/4/00
5	R Gemmell	10/4/00
6	S McKelvie	10/4/00
7	P Anderson	10/4/00
8	D Bonyan	10/4/00
9	C Anderson	10/4/00
10	J McKelvie	10/4/00
11	John Hill	10/4/00
12	J McTurk	10/4/00
13	Danella Y Dale	10/4/00
14	Mrs E Ewart	10/4/00
15	Julie Graham	10/4/00
16	Elizabeth Moodie	10/4/00
17	B Hancoze	10/4/00
18	D McMath	10/4/00
19	Kirsty Whiteford	10/4/00
20	Julie McKnight	10/4/00
21	Jamie Brown	10/4/00
22	K McArthur	10/4/00
23	Elaine J Young	10/4/00
24	Margaret Fitsimmons	10/4/00
25	William Kane	10/4/00
26	Helen Gray	10/4/00
27	Margaret Calderwood	10/4/00
28	Lorraine Millar	10/4/00
29	Mr Brown	10/4/00
30	S Paulin	10/4/00
31	Gaynor Brown	10/4/00
32	Harry Dempsey	10/4/00
33	Catherine Whiteford	10/4/00
34	R Gemmell	10/4/00
35	J Anderson	10/4/00
36	J Orr	10/4/00
37	Cathy Murdoch	10/4/00
38	Julia Paterson	10/4/00
39	R Pettigrew	10/4/00
40	C Pettigrew	10/4/00
41	H	10/4/00
42	Paula Napier	10/4/00
43	Elizabeth Limond	10/4/00
44	Donald Connell	10/4/00

45	Pamela Napier	10/4/00
46	L & W McNair	10/4/00
47	J A Waugh	10/4/00
48	Michelle Brown	10/4/00
49	Elaine Geddes	10/4/00
50	T Yorke	10/4/00
51	Mrs L Mora	10/4/00
52	Eileen Boyd	10/4/00
53	E McCart	10/4/00
54	John Bowie	10/4/00
55	Sean Paul	10/4/00
56	Isobel Barbour	10/4/00
57	J Anderson	10/4/00
58	Darren Rae	10/4/00
59	Adam S Bowie	10/4/00
60	Jeanette Anderson	10/4/00
61	Mary Ann Riggan & J Kennedy	10/4/00
62	L Millar & S Millar	10/4/00
63	Anonymous	10/4/00
64	A Concerned parent	10/4/00
65	Mrs E Boyd	10/4/00
66 Kerr	10/4/00

THIS IS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT

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Report by Director of Education

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Report by Director of Education

1. BACKGROUND – DAME HELEN'S NURSERY SCHOOL

- 1.1** Dame Helen's Nursery School is located in the village of Dalmellington, East Ayrshire and was established 20 years ago.
- 1.2** Prior to 1996 the number of children accommodated within this nursery was 40 in the morning and 40 in the afternoon. The building is of brick construction and stands in close proximity to Doon Academy and Dalmellington Primary School which is now located in the secondary school building.
- 1.3** Since 1996, there has been a noticeable reduction in the number of children attending the nursery due to the fall in population in the area. Over the last two years, the nursery has only operated morning sessions for a total of 30 children.
- 1.4** The staffing structure consists of a Head Teacher, two nursery nurses and a part-time clerical assistant.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1** It is proposed that Dame Helen's Nursery School be re-designated as a 20/20 place nursery class located in Dalmellington Primary School and managed by the Head Teacher of Dalmellington Primary School. This would require to be staffed by a Nursery Class teacher and one nursery nurse.
- 2.2** The school roll of Dalmellington Primary School has reduced over the past few years and is unlikely to increase in the foreseeable future. There is therefore sufficient accommodation within the school to create a nursery class and the Head Teacher would positively welcome this development.

3. CONSEQUENCE OF THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1** The proposal to re-designate Dame Helen's Nursery School as a nursery class within Dalmellington Primary School will offer young children the opportunity to access continuity of education by being located in the primary school managed by the Head Teacher. This will negate the need for a Nursery Head Teacher as the nursery class will be managed by the Head Teacher of Dalmellington Primary School. This is consistent with arrangements for nursery classes in other educational establishments in East Ayrshire.
- 3.2** There will be a requirement to staff the nursery classes with a teacher. The difference in salary between a Head Teacher's post and a teacher's post is £5,228.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** The present structure of Dame Helen's Nursery School is:

1 x Head Teacher	£32,634.96
2 x Nursery Nurses	£27,406.74
10 hrs Clerical Support	£ 3,401.86
TOTAL	£63,443.56

The proposed structure of the nursery class would be as follows:

1 Nursery Teacher	£24,205.98
1 Nursery Nurses	£13,703.37
2 hrs Clerical Support	£ 680.37
TOTAL	£38,589.72

These figures are based on average salaries for 1999/2000 and includes National Insurance and Superannuation.

The savings in this proposal would amount to £24,853.84.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1** It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee agrees to adopt the proposal to:
- (i) re-designate Dame Helen's Nursery School as a nursery class located within Dalmellington Primary School;
 - (ii) issue this report as a consultative document to be made available to all interested parties including school boards;

- (iii) all interested parties be asked to make written representation on the proposals to the Director of Education, John Mulgrew, East Ayrshire Council, Council HQ, London Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 7BU no later than Friday 14 April 2000; and
- (iv) ask the Director of Education to report the results of the consultation exercise to a future meeting of the Education Committee.

John Mulgrew
Director of Education

JA/JP
2 March 2000

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Members wishing further information should contact Margaret Burnell, Senior Depute Director of Education, Tel: (01563) 576104 or Janie Allen, Principal Officer, Pre-five Services, Tel: (01563) 576185.

AGENDA