

## Education Service

### **Educational Benefit Statement**

#### **Proposed Onthank Supported Learning Centre**

The formal incorporation of the existing inclusion resource at Onthank Campus as a Supported Learning Centre.

The extract below is from section 29 of the full Consultation Paper. Please read the statutory consultation proposal document before you submit your comments.

#### **Educational Benefits**

Onthank Primary School incorporating a Supported Learning Centre:

The proposal to establish specialist provision for children with additional support needs within Onthank Primary School is of clear educational benefit. If implemented, the proposal will establish additional support needs specialist provision within a deep refurbishment/retrofit of Onthank Primary to ensure high-quality accommodation and facilities. It will result in additional specialist provision and enhance East Ayrshire Council's capacity to meet the learning needs of children with significant additional support needs within mainstream school settings and their locality. The Supported Learning Centre will include a dedicated drop off area; separate entrance for children using the facility; three additional support needs classrooms; specific purpose designed rooms and outdoor spaces, and shared areas within the school including a personal care room and outdoor play area. The specialist provision is intended to accommodate up to 30 children.

The vision to create a Supported Learning Centre within the Onthank Primary campus is based on a number of reasons, we believe, and can evidence, that the request to create such provision is needs led.

An analysis of data on children currently accessing specialist provision shows that a high proportion of children accessing both Park School and Crosshouse not taken cognisance, until now, of the significant population spread in the North West Kilmarnock area. This new resource seeks to address this issue and would allow more young people to be educated in their home area.

This may be perceived to be an inequity of access to specialist resource, as children are required to be transitioned out of their local school community to receive the type of educational provision that they require. There is significant practitioner expertise within Onthank Primary School. The school has undertaken a significant journey over the last 4 years in order to fully understand the needs of children with a range of additional support needs, including Autism and Social Communication needs, and is now at a point where it could ably support the establishment of a Specialist Supported Learning Centre.

The need to ensure suitable ASN provision and this growing need has been evidenced, for example, by Psychological Services Relationships Framework Needs Analysis, data on Psychological Services involvement with individual children & projected Special School Placements, and our Local Authority Staged Intervention process.

Onthank Primary School has undertaken a hugely successful pilot study in regards to the development of an inclusion resource onsite to allow almost all young people to attend and succeed in their own environment. This enhanced school provision was created in strong collaboration with the expertise of teachers, specialist staff, and the school's Parent and Pupil Council. As a large primary with over 600 pupils, 25% pupils have Additional Support Needs and 7% attend the provision in a flexible range of ways. The aim was to address the needs of children experiencing trauma, dysregulation, displaying distress and who can find it challenging to access the school curriculum and whole class environment on a full-time basis. The 'Centre' as pupils call it is at the heart of the school and has evolved to support children who require a more developmentally appropriate learning experience, than can be offered within a full-time mainstream class.

Developing this enhanced provision further and incorporating it formally into the education estate as a Supported Learning Centre, namely Onthank SLC, will match the needs of children now and the in the future. Furthermore, it will ensure that the resource is formally recognised and resourced, and that young people requiring to attend can access it via the Team Around the Child (TAC) process, that allows the assessment of their needs and supports to be fully discussed underpinned by the GIRFEC Framework.

Scottish Government (2019) state:

*"Inclusive education in Scotland starts from the belief that education is a human right and the foundation for a more just society. An inclusive approach which recognises diversity and holds the ambition that all children and young people are enabled to achieve to their fullest potential is the cornerstone to achieve equity and excellence in education for all of our children and young people"*

The ASL Review (Scottish Government, 2020) states:

*"The concept of 'mainstream' needs to be redefined and repositioned for the profile of children and young people as they are now and are projected to be in the future, not as they were in the past "*

Therefore this new resource would be created in order to meet the following goals:

- To meet the needs of learners experiencing significant additional support needs that currently mean they are unable to fully access the curriculum in a mainstream setting.
- To provide 25 hours per week of educational resource to a small number of children whose needs are so great that they are unable to cope within a mainstream class setting
- To provide learners with a flexible spectrum of support within a mainstream school which allows them depth of progression and may involve a package of mainstream and SLC supports, as appropriate.
- The resource would have permeable & flexible boundaries in keeping with the 2020 ASL Review (Scottish Government). We are keen to ensure that the resource is truly inclusive, meets individual learner need and does not operate as a 'school within a school'. We are confident that Onthank are in a position to implement a new integrated model of special education and ensure that it does not become a fragmented resource
- To offer children high expectations of themselves and others, within an equitable educational provision
- To ensure that learners' needs are met within the Scottish legislative and policy frameworks, with particular regards to the Additional Support for Learning Act (Scotland) 2004, Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2020, Included Engaged and Involved Parts I & II (Scottish Government, 2019 and 2017)
- To create a full spectrum of inclusive provision on the campus.

With specific regard to how the proposal to incorporate a SLC onto the campus, there will be positive effects for young people in associated schools and ECCs. A flexible model, with permeable boundaries would allow improvement in the depth, breadth, coherence, relevance, challenge and enjoyment provided by the curriculum.

Children would continue to be educated as members of an inclusive educational community, with their peers, avoiding stigmatisation and offering them self-respect, dignity and confidence.

All children will have access to mainstream resources, offering the widest learning opportunities through a range of approaches suited to individual learning styles. In particular there is open access to specialist curricular resources in the primary sector in support of basic skills.

It will create opportunities for greater personalisation and choice for children and young people with improved continuity and progression in their learning as it will allow specialist and mainstream teachers to collaborate in developing an exciting and flexible curriculum underpinned by research, which supports development of children's knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and wellbeing.

Children and families will be given the opportunity to remain within their local school community. This will ensure children are fully included, engaged and involved in the life of the school, benefit from relationships with local peers and reduce potential stigma of travelling to a different school out with their catchment.

As identified in the ASL Review (2020, Scottish Government), the physical environment can create a barrier for some of our learners. This is particularly true for some children with sensory issues. While a refurbishment of Onthank Primary School overall can take cognisance of this, a more specialist built environment in this location would allow an increased number of children to be present, achieving, supported and participating within their local school.

ASL Review (Scottish Government, 2020) states:

*"The physical environments of many schools create significant difficulties for children and young people with particular conditions and increase the likelihood of distressed behaviour. Many of the improvements and solutions in physical environments would appear to be of benefit to all children and young people".*

The building will be modernised to deliver the vision of personalised learning. It will meet the needs of today's learners and will ensure a more effective environment for learning and teaching. Children will have access to additional accommodation which will help ensure a learning experience that is relevant, meaningful and challenging for them.

The modernised accommodation will comply fully with equalities legislation and will be accessible to people with mobility difficulties and additional support needs. This will help support the Council's aim to develop a fully integrated education service which meets the needs of all learners. The external areas will also be developed to create flexible spaces which encourage learners to socialise and improve their health and wellbeing.

Through being in receipt of additional funding, Onthank PS has greatly reduced both exclusions and Health and Safety incidents. By creating integrated specialist provision, this would further improve staff morale and confidence and cement the truly inclusive ethos of the school. It is hoped that including specialism within an overall spectrum of inclusive educational supports, would ensure equality of opportunity for all within an inclusive educational experience.

The school's own self-evaluation demonstrates current positive impact on meeting the needs of learners with significant additional support needs. Leadership of this change across the school community, at all levels, would become further embedded. This clearly benefits learners at both universal, targeted and specialist levels.

The resource would allow children to access appropriate provision in their own local community and allow progression and access to mainstream classes and school in line with their skills and aptitudes.

With specific reference to the full community, East Ayrshire Council places a strong emphasis on school/community partnerships. The modernised facilities will provide a high quality learning environment which children and the community can enjoy. The facilities will also encourage continuous engagement with learning and provide an accessible range of services and opportunities which will enrich the local community and lives of learners and their families. The accessible nature of the new facilities means there are fewer limitations on who can use the facilities which makes them available to a wider range of community users.

In respect of future learners, the creation of the resource would allow children with a range of significant additional support needs to transition from their current Early Childhood provision into their catchment primary school and remain in their local community. This proposal will ensure that future learners have access to modern accommodation, facilities and resources which can best support their learning needs.

Should children in the Kilmarnock Education Group require the level of provision that Onthank can offer, the Onthank resource would replace Park School as their closest specialist provision. This would allow children to remain in their local education group in the North of Kilmarnock. Over time, this may require a similar resource to be considered in Kilmarnock Academy to allow children to continue to be supported in their local secondary school with specialist support.

A key facet of consideration has been the potential impacts on other young people in the council area. The resource would not have an adverse impact on children outwith the North Kilmarnock area as we already have a suite of appropriately located specialist and integrated specialist provisions across the council. It also may reduce the numbers of children requiring to access Crosshouse and Park schools, freeing up capacity in these provisions.

Our Inclusion Redesign activity seeks to allocate additional targeted resource to schools where there is an identified pattern of need. Where a child's needs within the Kilmarnock Education Group are greater than a mainstream school can currently offer, a place within Onthank SLC could be considered.