



# **ABERDEEN**

## **CITY COUNCIL**

### **Public Consultation Document**

**Proposal: To close Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools and to establish a new amalgamated school within the existing Quarryhill building and campus.**

**Statutory Consultation Period  
26 August – 11 October, 2013 (inclusive)**

**All submissions expressing views on the proposals detailed in this document  
should be made in writing or by email  
by 5.00pm on 11 October, 2013.**

**It is intended to respond to issues raised from correspondence  
within a report presented to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee  
on 30 January, 2014.**

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## **Section 1**

### **Public Consultation (Statutory)**

## **1.1 Public Consultation**

Aberdeen City Council is proposing to close Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools and to establish a new amalgamated school within the existing Quarryhill building and campus.

The amalgamated school will accommodate all pupils in the current Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools delineated areas (school catchment areas/zones).

A period of Statutory Consultation is scheduled for **26 August – 11 October, 2013** (inclusive), a total of 33 school days.

The period of public consultation must last a minimum of thirty school days.

In 2013, Monday 20 and 23 September are holidays when the schools will be closed and are therefore excluded contributing to the requisite number of days in the period of consultation.

## **1.2 Legislative Requirements**

This document meets the criteria laid out within Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and Scottish Government's formal response to the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education Report.

Under this legislation, there is a requirement for a Local Authority to publish a proposal paper containing the following:

- details of the proposal
  - proposed date for implementation
  - the educational benefits statement
  - other appropriate supporting evidence or information
  - a summary of the consultation process
- and
- for rural school closure proposals, details of the authority's assessment of the three factors to which they have had special regard.

This proposal does not relate to closure of rural schools.

### **1.3 Submission of Views**

Any written observations should be sent to:

Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Consultation  
Education, Culture and Sport  
Aberdeen City Council  
Business Hub 13  
Second Floor North  
Marischal College  
Broad Street  
ABERDEEN  
AB10 1AB

or by email to

[schoolestate@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:schoolestate@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

by **5.00pm** on **Friday 11 October, 2013**.

### **1.4 Public Meetings**

A series of public consultation meetings will be held on

Friday 13 September from **09:30 – 11:00** at Northfield Community Centre

Friday 13 September from **13:30 – 15:00** at Northfield Community Centre

Wednesday 18 September from **19:30 – 21:00** in Northfield Academy

Wednesday 2 October from **19:30 – 21:00** in Northfield Academy

In addition, officers will provide one opportunity per school to meet with Parent Council representatives to discuss the proposals.

Other requests from relevant partner organisations will be considered by officers as appropriate.

### **1.5 Availability of Consultation Document**

A copy of this statutory consultation document will be available for public consultation during the period of consultation at:

- Marischal College
- Central Library
- Mastrick Library
- Northfield Library
- Bramble Brae School
- Quarryhill School

- Northfield Academy
- Middlefield Community Project Nursery
- Lord Provost Henry Rae Community Centre
- Mastrick Community Centre
- Northfield Community Centre
- Sheddocksley Community Centre

## 1.6 Availability of Information

To assist stakeholders in accessing relevant information, a dedicated area of Aberdeen City Council website has been populated with all information within this consultation document and further detail on the consultation process and data relating to the proposal.

The relevant web pages can be accessed at

[www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill)

Please contact us on the telephone number below if you want this document in Braille, large print or on an audio CD, or if you want the document translated into another language.

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## 1.7 Involvement of Education Scotland

Education Scotland is required to prepare a report on the consultation and to submit it to the Council within three weeks of the consultation process (or longer if agreed). It is anticipated that Education Scotland will submit their report to Aberdeen City Council by Friday 15 November, 2013.

## **1.8 Final Report to Committee**

Following the consultation period, a final Consultation Report will be presented to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee. This will include a summary of representations received during the consultation period and representations made at the public meetings, along with the Service responses to representations made.

It will also include reference to Education Scotland's report which will be made available to Committee and the public prior to the Committee Meeting which will consider the report.

The report to Committee will provide responses to the issues raised during the consultation and will make recommendations on how to proceed.

There is a requirement for Aberdeen City Council to allow a period of three weeks from the date of publication of the Consultation Report before making a decision on whether to approve the recommendations. It is anticipated that the Report will be presented to a meeting of the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on **Thursday 30 January, 2014**, setting out final recommendations.

## **1.9 Potential Involvement of Scottish Ministers**

Should the Committee decide to accept any recommendation to amalgamate Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools, the decision must be referred to Scottish Ministers within six working days. Scottish Ministers would then have six weeks from the date of the Committee decision to decide whether to “call in” the proposals for determination.

In considering whether to call in the proposal, Scottish Ministers are to take account of representations made to them within the first three weeks of that six week period. Any persons wishing to make representations to the Scottish Ministers that the decision should, or should not, be called in have three weeks from the date of the Authority's decision, to convey their representations to the Scottish Ministers.

## **1.10 Implementation of the Decision**

Aberdeen City Council cannot proceed to implement the decision until the six week period has elapsed, unless Scottish Ministers have given notice before the end of the period that they will not call in the decision.

If Scottish Ministers decide not to call in the proposal, then the Aberdeen City Council can implement the decision. Based on a Committee decision on 30

January, 2014, the six week potential call in period would expire on Thursday 13 March, 2014.

### **1.11 Statutory Consultees**

The following individuals and organisations will specifically be invited to participate in the consultation process.

Education Scotland;

Parent Councils of Bramble Brae, Heathryburn, Holy Family RC, Manor Park, Muirfield, Quarryhill and Westpark School Schools;

Parent Council of Northfield Academy;

The parents/carers of pupils at Bramble Brae, Heathryburn, Holy Family RC, Manor Park, Muirfield, Quarryhill and Westpark Schools;

The parents/carers of the pupils at Northfield Academy;

The parents/carers of any children expected to attend the affected schools;

Pupils at Bramble Brae, Heathryburn, Holy Family RC, Manor Park, Muirfield, Quarryhill and Westpark Schools (depending on age and stage);

Pupils at Northfield Academy;

Staff at Bramble Brae, Heathryburn, Holy Family RC, Manor Park, Muirfield, Quarryhill and Westpark Schools and trade union representatives;

Mastrick, Sheddocksley and Summerhill Community Council;

Northfield Community Council.



## **Section 2**

# **Context of the Schools Estate Strategy**

## 2.1 Improving the Learning Environment for Pupils

Aberdeen City Council has been reviewing its Education, Culture and Sport Estate over a number of years, and has established clear priorities for its School Estate, in line with Scottish Government guidance. The Council's approach to its School Estate dovetails with the Council's Asset Management Strategy, which complies with national good practice.

The Education, Culture and Sport Directorate undertakes periodic detailed reviews of different elements of its asset portfolio, involving intensive consultation and engagement with key stakeholders. The review of educational establishments was split into two phases, commencing in 2009 with a review of the secondary school provision in the City, followed by a subsequent review of the nursery and primary school provision in 2012.

The outcomes of reviews are reported to the Council's Education, Culture and Sport Committee to ensure sound political governance.

Both reviews take account of the developing, and recently adopted [Local Development Plan](#) which identifies potential growth of approximately 36,000 new houses across the City over the next 20–30 years. This will result in considerable pressure on existing infrastructure, including schools and community facilities.

It is acknowledged that there is a requirement to manage the school estate in a manner that is sustainable, efficient and maximises value for money.

The report on the outcome of the [Nursery and Primary School Estate Review](#) was considered by the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 4 February, 2013.

The [decision of Committee](#) was to progress to Statutory Consultation on the proposal:

- *To amalgamate Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools and create a new school within the existing Quarryhill building and campus.*

This proposal intends to create a new school that is sustainable in terms of numbers of pupils, enabling a wide range of experiences through the formal and informal curriculum to be delivered.

An amalgamated school will provide improved opportunities to meet emerging expectations of Curriculum for Excellence.

In Scotland, local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure adequate and efficient provision of school education.

Some, but not all, of the benefits of providing a fit for purpose school estate are:

- An efficient management of the changing demands for educational provision as a result of significant housing developments in the vicinity;

- Improvement in transitions between Nursery and Primary and between Primary and Secondary;
- Greater flexibility to deploy a more significant pool of resources to provide greater opportunities for all pupils;
- Greater flexibility of staffing allowing opportunities for further development of partnership working and enhanced opportunities for staff to share experiences and expertise in all aspects of school life;
- Larger schools with more staff which will allow teacher expertise in particular specialisms to be exploited giving greater opportunities for pupil participation in languages, sports etc. This is also in line with the national initiative “Active Schools”, aimed at improving health through fitness;
- Reduced expenditure on maintenance and upkeep which will allow investment in education, greater support of curriculum resources, enhanced learning and teaching and Continuing Professional Development.

## **2.2 The Need for Change**

The roll at Bramble Brae is low and is projected to decrease further to around 150 in two years and to below 130 by 2019. This has negative implications for the delivery of the curriculum and learning experiences for pupils. It is economically inefficient in terms of managing the school estate. In addition, the building requires significant investment to bring its condition up to a suitable standard and there are serious concerns about its suitability as an environment for delivery of a modern curriculum. In addition, the building is not compliant with current accessibility legislation.

Quarryhill School is under-occupied and can provide sufficient places to accommodate all current and future pupils from Bramble Brae. The facilities both internally and in particularly externally and better at Quarryhill, making it a better learning environment for children and improved working conditions for staff.

## **2.3 Transformation Programme Objectives**

Aberdeen City Council is committed to improving the learning environments for all pupils by:

- ensuring Aberdeen’s pupils and teachers have school buildings fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century;
- increasing the number of young people attending schools which are of the optimum size to optimise curriculum choice and flexibility, and to deliver the full range of extra curricular activities;

- increasing the number of pupils attending new or refurbished schools;
- modernising service delivery and ensuring that there is appropriate investment in staff equipment and accommodation;
- ensuring expenditure on education delivers maximum benefit to pupils' education.

## 2.4 Current and Projected Service Trends

### 2.4.1 Demographic Trends

Aberdeen has a population of over 200,000 citizens. At September 2012, there were 12,186 pupils enrolled in primary schools and 8,940 in secondary schools.

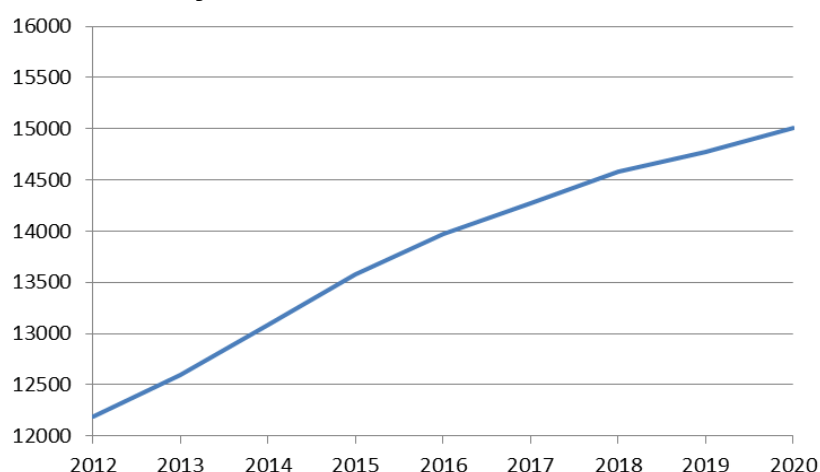
The historic trend of falling pupil numbers has been reversed, partly due to incoming migration and the increased housing allocations under the Aberdeen City Local Development Plan.

The projected pupil numbers, based on the annual school census carried out in September 2012 and the likely impact of proposed and current housing developments are shown in Table 1 and Graph 1, below.

**Table 1: Actual (2012) and projected (2013-20) pupil numbers, Aberdeen City**

	Actual 2012	Projected							
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Primary	12186	12592	13086	13575	13970	14272	14586	14773	15008
Secondary	8940	8751	8685	8610	8518	8599	8855	9201	9570

**Graph 1: Actual (2012) and projected (2013-20) pupil numbers, Aberdeen City**



### **2.4.2 Associated Schools Group**

Aberdeen schools are arranged into Associated Schools Groups (ASGs) with several primary schools and their associated secondary school.

Bramble Brae and Quarryhill are both part of the Northfield Academy ASG.

### **2.4.3 Pupil Numbers**

Aberdeen City Council uses a range of data to formulate projected pupil numbers at each school for the future eight years.

The projected pupil numbers at the two schools are provided in Sections 5 and 6 of this document.

## **2.5 Educational Considerations**

### **2.5.1 Curriculum for Excellence**

Local Authorities are expected to provide an efficient and suitable education for the children and young people within their area.

All Local Authority schools in Scotland are implementing the new curricular arrangements, *Curriculum for Excellence*. Pupils in S3 in session 2012-13 will be the first cohort to experience the new curriculum in its entirety.

There are many aspects to Curriculum for Excellence and full details can be found at Education Scotland's web site:

[www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/index.asp](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/index.asp)

Whilst arrangements are in place for the current cohorts of pupils, the nature of Curriculum for Excellence means that it will evolve over time, being amended and adapted to meet local circumstances.

There are, however, certain principles embedded within the philosophy of Curriculum for Excellence of which all schools have to take account.

The curriculum should be continuous from age 3 to 18. Pupils are expected to build upon prior learning. This means transitions between different stages have to be well developed.

Transitions, such as from Nursery/Pre-school to Primary One, can be challenging both for children and for staff as the transfer of prior learning is not always easy to achieve. The close association, both physically and philosophically makes this process more efficient and when children at all stages are co-located, their learning is less significantly affected at the point of transition.

There are a number of underlying expectations within the new curriculum including an increased level of active learning, which means pupils are not

passively 'taught at' and this will include physical activity, practical work, cooperative learning, to name a few.

Another element is that of formative assessment where a pupil's progress is evaluated, not necessarily by a test, and future activities and learning are based upon that evaluation of progress. This is a very different approach to summative assessment where pupils' work is more formally assessed.

All these elements mean that the formal classroom layout of many schools does not lend itself to implementation of Curriculum for Excellence as the buildings and internal configurations were designed to accommodate a very different curriculum.

### **2.5.2 Curricular Experiences**

Access to an appropriate curriculum is fundamental to engaging pupils in their learning and preparing them for the next stage of their learning journey.

Larger schools tend to have more flexibility in configuration of classes and within classes, groups for particular activities, such as reading.

### **2.5.3 Educational Progress**

Education Scotland (formerly, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education, HMIE) currently evaluates the work of schools under the following core Quality Indicator categories:

- Improvements in performance (QI 1.1)
- Learners' experiences (QI 2.1)
- The curriculum (QI 5.1)
- Meeting learning needs (QI 5.3)
- Improvement through self-evaluation (QI 5.9)
- Leadership of Improvement and Change (QI 9.4)

Overall, there is scope for improvement in both schools in terms of the core Quality Indicators.

The most recent information on inspection of the two schools is available in Section 5 of this document.

### **2.5.4 Educational Benefits Statement**

The Educational Benefits Statement (Section 7 of this document) addresses all relevant Educational Considerations of the existing schools and the proposed amalgamated school.

## **2.6 Financial Considerations**

The main driver for this proposal is not financial. It is relevant however to take account of the financial aspects of the proposal.

### **2.6.1 Unit Cost per Pupil**

Education Authorities have a legal responsibility to provide an effective and efficient educational service for children and young people. It is important, therefore, to carefully manage the limited budgets available for services, including the costs associated with schools.

In Aberdeen, the current average unit cost for a primary pupil is £3,943, excluding the 3Rs schools (Airyhall, Braehead, Hazlehead, Heathryburn, Kaimhill, Manor Park and Seaton Schools), whose costs include Facilities Management and other lifetime costs and so are not directly comparable.

The costs per pupil at Bramble Brae and at Quarryhill are provided in Section 5 of this document.

### **2.6.2 Total Running Costs**

The total costs associated with schools is a combination of salaries and wages and other costs including those related to consumables, rates, energy, cleaning, grounds maintenance, transport, tenants repairs, waste management, life cycle replacements, furniture/ fittings replacement, supplies & services, administration and ICT replacement.

A comparison of the whole life costs involved in retaining the two schools and amalgamating the schools on a single site is provided in Section 5 of this document.

### **2.6.3 Condition and Suitability**

Aberdeen City Council is required to maintain its assets in a condition that allows the facility to function over its lifetime. To evaluate and prioritise the investment required to maintain its school buildings, a recent audit of the condition of school buildings highlighted was carried out. The identification of those schools most in need of investment will allow improvements which will better facilitate schools in their ability to better deliver Curriculum for Excellence.

Within this specific context for schools, it is essential to develop a long term, holistic asset management strategy that effectively, efficiently and economically meets the needs of our communities. This strategy must help to drive the integration of services and improvement in learning outcomes through maximising the combined impact of schools, libraries, community centres, housing, and sports and cultural facilities.

**Condition** is evaluated on a four point scale:

A: Good - performing well and operating efficiently

B: Satisfactory - performing adequately but showing minor deterioration

C: Poor - showing major defects and/or not operating efficiently

D: Bad - life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure

**Suitability** is the extent to which a school can effectively operate in terms of delivering the curriculum and providing access to all relevant activities.

It is also evaluated on a four point scale:

A: Good - Performing well and operating efficiently (the school buildings and grounds support the delivery of services to children and communities)

B: Satisfactory - Performing well but with minor problems (the school buildings and grounds generally support the delivery of services to children and communities)

C: Poor - Showing major problems and/or not operating optimally (the school buildings and grounds impede the delivery of activities that are needed for children and communities in the school)

D: Bad - Does not support the delivery of services to children and communities (the school buildings seriously impede the delivery of activities that are needed for children and communities in the school)

The overall ratings for both Condition and Suitability are reached using a range of weighted criteria. In all schools, there will be elements which are better and poorer than the overall evaluation.

The Condition and Suitability Evaluations of the two schools are provided in Sections 5 and 6 of this document.



## **Section 3**

# **The Proposal**

### 3.1 The Proposal

To close Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools and to establish a new amalgamated school within the existing Quarryhill building and campus.

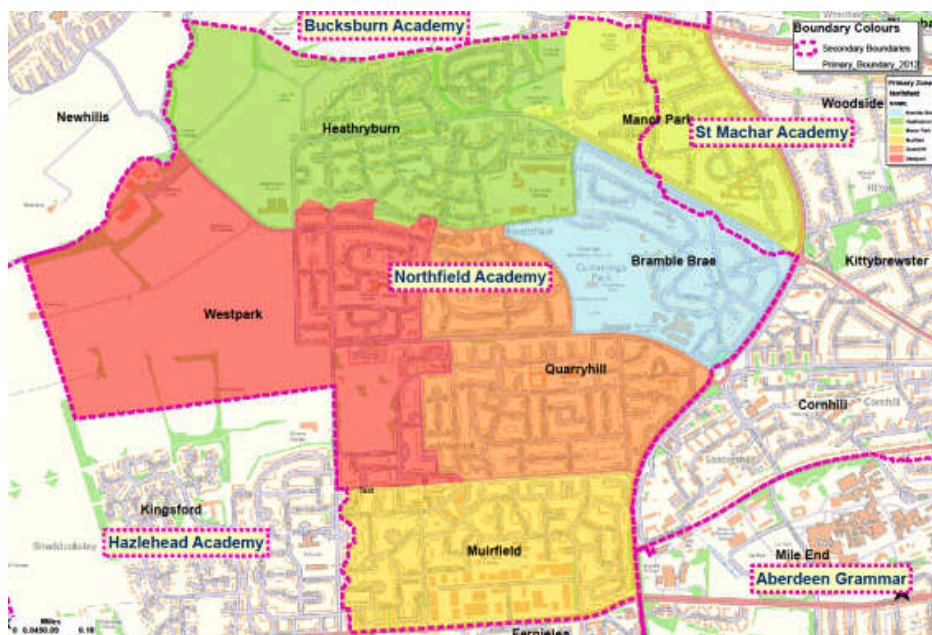
This proposal would be implemented in time for the new school session 2014-15, i.e. in August, 2014, unless any unexpected factors prevented this timescale from being implemented.

#### 3.1.1 Detailed Proposals

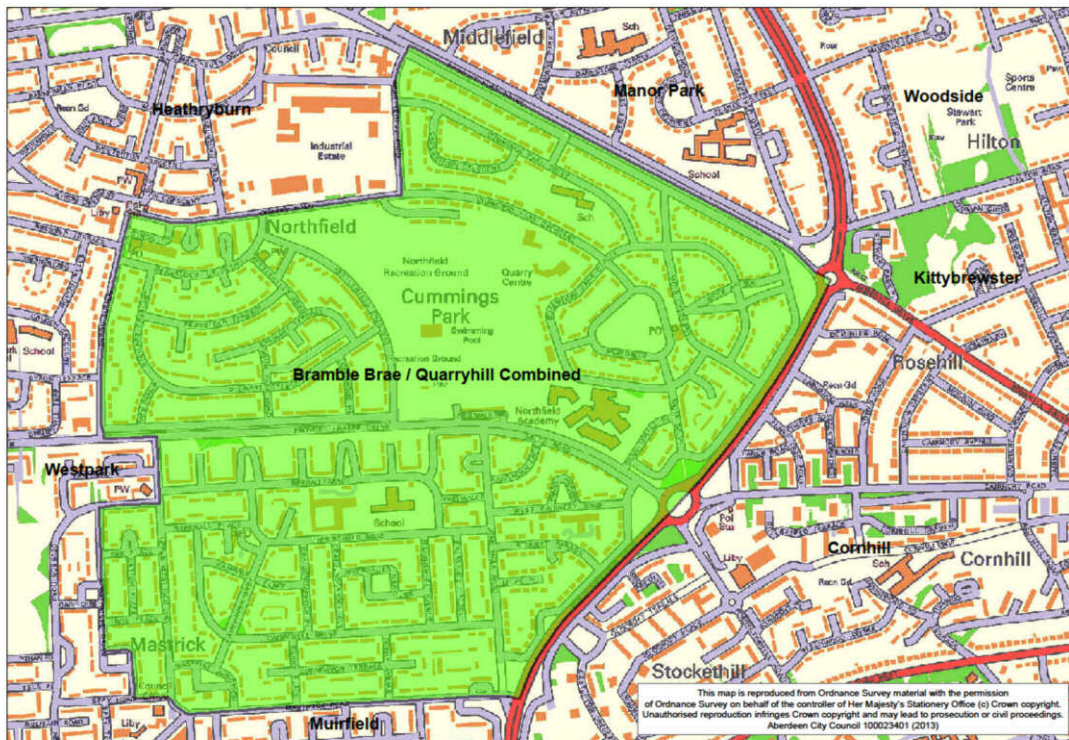
The detailed proposals are that:

- Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools will close in July 2014;
- the existing Bramble Brae and Quarryhill catchment areas will be combined to form a single catchment area;
- all pupils within the combined catchment area will have the amalgamated school as their zoned primary school;
- the amalgamated new school will open for pupils at the beginning of school session 2014-15, i.e. in August, 2014;
- all educational facilities required for the delivery of the curriculum will be provided within the amalgamated school;
- the zoned secondary school for the new combined zone will remain Northfield Academy for all pupils.

**Map 1: Northfield Academy ASG showing existing primary school zones**



**Map 2: Northfield Academy catchment area showing proposed combined Bramble Brae and Quarryhill catchment area.**



### 3.1.2 Further Proposals Requiring Statutory Consultation

At a later date, it is the intention that further statutory consultations take place to implement other resolutions on the Primary School Estate taken by Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 7 February 2013.

This will include the proposal to change the secondary school zoning arrangements for some parts of the existing St Machar Academy zone to Northfield Academy.

It should be noted that the proposal to change the secondary school zoning arrangements forms no part of this statutory consultation which only concerns primary school provision.

## 3.2 Rationale for Proposal

The rationale for the proposal to amalgamate Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools to create a new school within the existing Quarryhill School building and campus can be summarised as follows:

- We wish to improve facilities for all pupils to provide enhanced curricular opportunities.

- The current and projected roll for Bramble Brae is low and decreasing. There are no significant new housing developments in the area and this decline is likely to continue.
- The current and projected roll at Quarryhill is relatively stable. There are no significant new housing developments in the area and this relatively stable number is likely to continue.
- Occupancy at Quarryhill is currently 51%, with over 190 unfilled pupil places. This is projected to increase very slightly to 54% with over 180 unfilled pupil places by 2020.
- The cost per pupil at both schools is higher than the city average (excluding costs at 3Rs schools which include Facilities Management and other costs).
- The condition of both schools requires significant investment.
- The most recent suitability surveys categorise Bramble Brae as C (Poor - showing major problems and Quarryhill as B (Satisfactory - Performing well but with minor problems (the school buildings and grounds generally support the delivery of services to children and communities). This does not meet the aspiration for Aberdeen City Council to have all schools at Category B or above.

## **Section 4**

### **Proposed Date of Implementation**

#### **4.1 Actions should Committee Approve Proposal**

It is widely acknowledged that it is best to avoid where possible implementing the creation of a new school during the course of the school year.

The enabling works so far identified at Quarryhill required for an amalgamated school are likely to be relatively minor and could be completed over the summer holiday period in 2014.

Detailed design of the enabling works at the amalgamated school would take place once a final decision on the proposal is taken. As it is proposed to take the final report to Education, Culture and Sport Committee in January 2014, the earliest delivery of the amalgamated school is likely to be in time for the start of the 2014-15 school session, i.e. **August, 2014**.

Details of an implementation strategy will be developed and communicated to parents/carers and staff if the proposal is approved.

#### **4.2 The Amalgamated School**

There is no proposal to replace the building and the amalgamated school would occupy the existing Quarryhill buildings and campus.

The school would have a new identity with a new name, school badge etc.

There is an opportunity to review the ethos of both existing schools and to take the best elements of both into the amalgamated school.

There will be open recruitment of a Head Teacher for the amalgamated School in line with current Council policy.

Staff from the two existing schools will have the opportunity to work within the new school.

#### **4.3 The Vacated Site**

It is acknowledged that vacated sites frequently become the subject of rapid dilapidation through lack of maintenance, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour.

Should the proposal be approved, it would be intended to establish, prior to vacation of the Bramble Brae site, the future use to be made of the building and their environs, once the amalgamated school is established.

Agreed procedures within the Corporate Asset Management Plan allow for the future of any asset to be determined.

If there is no identified service use, the sites would be declared as excess to service needs and then

1. offered to other services of the Council, such as Housing etc.,
2. declared as excess to the Council and offered to other public services, such as NHS Grampian, Police Scotland etc.,
3. declared as excess to the Council and disposed of on the open market.

## **Section 5**

# **School Profiles**



## School Profile

### 5.1 Bramble Brae School

<b>5.1.1 Address</b>	Cummings Park Drive Aberdeen AB16 7BL
<b>5.1.2 Head Teacher</b>	Alan Baxter
<b>5.1.3 Type of school</b>	Nursery and Primary
<b>5.1.4 Capacity (and Roll)</b>	198 (155, plus 40 nursery)
<b>5.1.5 Parent Organisations</b>	Bramble Brae Parent Council 'Friends of Bramble Brae'

#### **5.1.6 Neighbourhood context**

Bramble Brae is a non-denominational primary school with nursery provision, serving mainly the community of Cummings Park area of Northfield.

The neighbourhood is mainly a largely local authority housing estate, which now has significant owner occupancy.

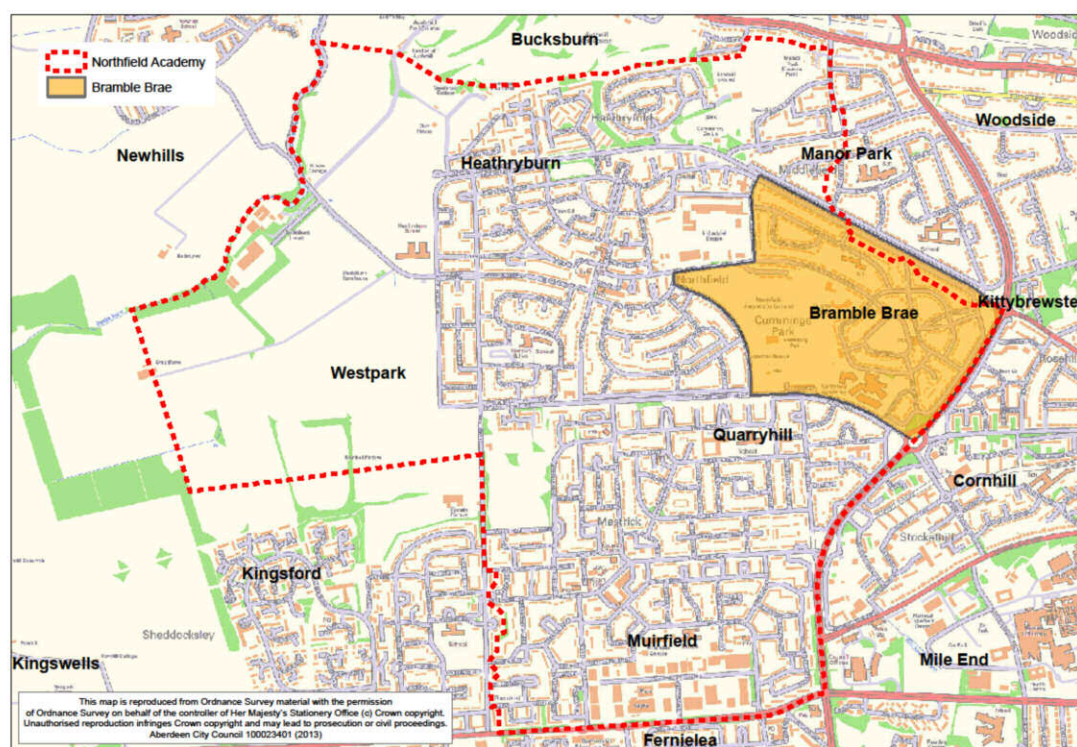
The main area of housing area was constructed in the 1960s and the school was opened to meet the then expanding population.

#### **5.1.7 Catchment Area**

The catchment area is bounded by a main road to the east (North Anderson Drive) and by adjacent primary school catchment areas to the south (Quarryhill), the west (Heathryburn) and the north (Manor Park),

For secondary education, the school is zoned to Northfield and to St Machar Academies. Future statutory consultation to re-zone the whole catchment area to Northfield Academy will be carried out at a later date.

**Map 3: Catchment Area - Bramble Brae School**



### 5.1.8 Site Plan and Accommodation

Bramble Brae is situated on a constrained site, bounded on all sides by residential streets.

**Map 4: Site Plan: Bramble Brae School**



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There are few facilities on the site other than educational provision.

Bramble Brae School consists of a main teaching block currently providing accommodation for learning and teaching for both nursery and Primary 1 to 7 pupils.

The internal floor plan is available on the website at [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill)

The nursery provides places for twenty children in each of two sessions – one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

There are:

7 teaching areas

a games hall and other specialised teaching areas and the external provision includes grassed and hardstanding play areas which can also be utilised for learning and teaching.

2 General purpose spaces

There is a dining area providing hot and cold lunch options.

Offices

Staff Room and ancillary areas

### **5.1.9 Pupil Population**

In August 2013, there were 40 children in the Nursery and 155 pupils, distributed by year group as

P1	20
P2	25
P3	27
P4	22
P5	18
P6	19
P7	24

In session 2012-13, of the 217 pupils living in the Bramble Brae catchment area, 113 attended the school – a retention rate of 52%.

In session 2012-13, of the 160 pupils attending Bramble Brae School, 113 (71%) were 'in-zone' and 47 (29%) were 'out of zone'.

The 104 pupils zoned to Bramble Brae School who chose not to attend Bramble Brae attended 20 different schools.

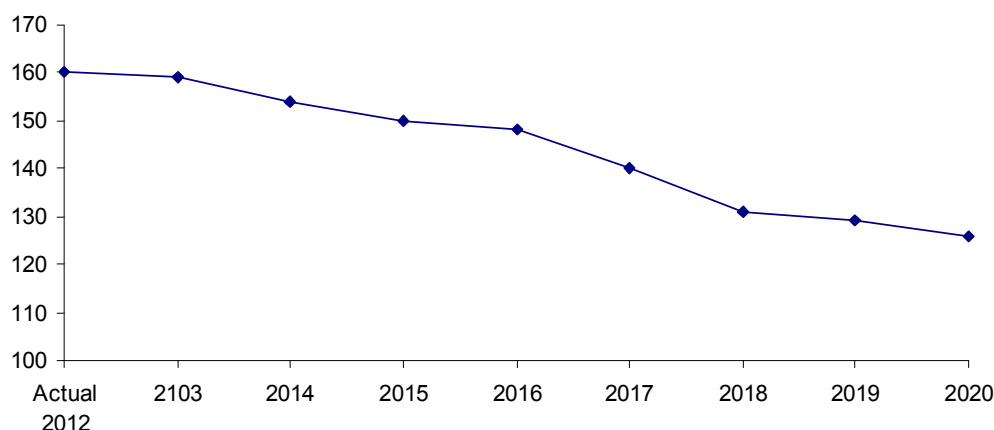
**Table 2: Primary School Attended by Pupils Living in the Bramble Brae School zone, 2012-13**

School attended	Number of pupils from Bramble Brae catchment area
Bramble Brae School	113
Ashley Road School	1
Cornhill School	15
Ferryhill School	2
Gilcomstoun School	5
Greenbrae School	2
Hanover Street School	3
Hazlehead Primary School	2
Heathryburn School	6
Holy Family RC School	10
Kingsford School	1
Manor Park School	24
Mile End School	1
Muirfield School	3
Quarryhill School	8
Riverbank School	2
St Peter's RC School	1
Stoneywood School	2
Tullos School	1
Westpark School	11
Woodside School	4

**Table 3: Pupil Numbers Bramble Brae actual (2012) and projected (2013-2020), based on 2012 school census**

School	Actual	Projected							
	2012	2103	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bramble Brae	160	159	154	150	148	140	131	129	126

**Graph 2: Actual and Projected Pupil Numbers - Bramble Brae School, based on 2012 school census**



The projected decrease in numbers until 2016 is due mainly to the aging demographic of the population. There is no evidence that this trend is likely to change post-2020. These are expected to continue beyond 2020,

#### **5.1.11 Staffing**

##### **Teaching Staff**

The Senior Leadership Team is made up of one Head Teacher and one Principal Teacher. There are no other promoted staff in the school. There is a teaching entitlement of 13.8 full time equivalents (fte).

##### **Support Staff**

Support staff include a school administrator and office staff and Pupil Support Assistants. There are also janitorial, cleaning and catering staff.

Bramble Brae is in an area of regeneration and receives an additionality to staffing because of the relatively high level of deprivation in the area.

#### **5.1.12 Building Use**

Other than day-time educational provision, there is limited use of the building other than after-school activities.

#### **5.1.13 Multi-Agency Services**

Although no external agencies are based within the school, there is regular engagement with the Pupil Support Service, Health & Social Care and Educational Psychology. Multi-Agency Meetings also take place within the school.

The school welcomes a number of external agencies, including

- Local Churches and Faith Groups
- Scottish Police

#### **5.1.14 Curriculum**

The school is currently implementing nursery and primary elements of the 3-18 curriculum, 'A Curriculum for Excellence.' This will involve provision of a Broad General Education up to the end of P7, at which point pupils will transfer to secondary school.

#### **5.1.15 Educational Attainment**

Measurement of educational attainment is currently undergoing significant change.

In session 2012-13, Curriculum for Excellence progress was measured for the first time. It is, therefore, challenging to draw meaningful conclusions from performance of the two schools in this context.

Educational attainment is the result of the interaction of a number of variables, not least of all the demographic circumstances of the children.

There is significant deprivation within the catchment area of Bramble Brae School.

When reviewing PIPS\* results, especially for P1, Bramble Brae has a starting point significantly lower than the city average for reading and Maths.

However, Bramble Brae has amongst the best value added in the city and greater value added throughout the year groups on average than the Scottish average.

With regards to Curriculum for Excellence, the relatively recent implementation of moderating attainment was introduced in session 2012-13, making any valid comparison very difficult.

Most pupils at Bramble Brae School achieve and, in some cases, exceed expected milestones in their levels of attainment. The school continues to improve its arrangements for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress in their learning. Staff at the school have worked closely with all other schools in the Northfield Academy Associated Schools' Group (ASG) to develop moderation skills in respect of pupil literacy / numeracy and build teacher confidence in these areas.

The school has been focusing on developing active approaches to literacy and numeracy at all stages of the school. Next steps are to further train staff and fully embed active approaches throughout the school.

Science is an area of strength within the school. Bramble Brae recently attained a Primary Science Quality Mark (Silver) and this reflects strong pupil enthusiasm in this area. Health and Wellbeing has also been an area of strength, with the school recently being presented with a "Commitment to Excellence" award.

Over school session 2013-14, it is planned to develop and extend pupil democracy / "pupil voice" at Bramble Brae.

### 5.1.16 Support for School Improvement

Primary schools in Aberdeen review their own performance on an on-going basis and measure themselves against nationally agreed Quality Indicators (QIs) on a six point scale.

<i>excellent</i>	outstanding or sector leading
<i>very good</i>	major strengths
<i>good</i>	important strengths with areas for improvement
<i>satisfactory</i>	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
<i>weak</i>	important weaknesses
<i>unsatisfactory</i>	major weaknesses

Bramble Brae most recently evaluated itself on the Key Quality Indicators (QIs) as:

Quality Indicator		Self evaluation
1.1	Improvements in Performance	Good
2.1	Learners' Experiences	Good
5.1	Curriculum	Good
5.3	Meeting Learning Needs	Good
5.9	Improvements Through Self Evaluation	Very Good
9.4	Leadership of Improvement and Change	Satisfactory/Good

### 5.1.17 HMIE/Education Scotland Inspection

The most recent inspection of nursery and primary provision at Bramble Brae resulted in the publication of an integrated inspection report in May 2008. The school and the education authority were asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents.

These reports are available at Education Scotland website at

[http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/BrambleBraeSchoolIns20080519\\_tcm4-698270.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/BrambleBraeSchoolIns20080519_tcm4-698270.pdf)

Within two years of the publication of that report, parents were informed about the progress made by the school.

The report, published in May, 2010 stated:

*'Overall the school had made good progress towards meeting the main points for action and continued to show a capacity for improvement. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics showed very good improvement.*

*Good leadership of learning created the necessary capacity for the improvements noted within this report. Improvements to the curriculum, ensuring continuity and*

*progression in pupils' learning, and improving the quality of learners' experiences all showed good progress leading to the noted rise in attainment.*

*Improvements in children's progress in communication and language and early mathematics in the nursery area were identified as being good with a capacity for further improvement noted'.*

This information should be used in combination with the school's internal evaluations of performance.

#### **5.1.18 Other Achievements and Experiences**

Pupils at Bramble Brae have opportunities to participate in a range of non-class based opportunities.

These include:

Fun Runs

Homework Club

Scottish Country Dancing

Sporting Activities including football, athletics and rugby

ICT club

Fund Raising Activities

#### **5.1.19 Attendance and Absence**

**Table 4: Recorded Absence 2010-11 – Bramble Brae School, Aberdeen City and Nationally**

	<b>Average percentage absence 2010-11*</b>
Bramble Brae	8.3%
Aberdeen City	5.5%
National	7.0%

\* Most recent data available as national data is only now published every two years and data on 2012-13 has yet to be published.

The school's absences are higher than both the Aberdeen City and national average.

#### **5.1.20 Cost per Pupil**

The cost per pupil at Bramble Brae School is £4,562 which is significantly above the City of average of £3,943 (excluding 3Rs schools, 2011-12).

#### **5.1.21 Condition**

A condition survey of Bramble Brae School was undertaken on 3 July 2013 to assess the condition of the building fabric and the associated services.

This involved undertaking detailed surveys of the internal areas of the property, external areas, curtilage, and environs.



The overall rating for the school was **B: Satisfactory** - performing adequately but showing minor deterioration. However, there were elements which were rated poorer than this.

Excluding Mechanical and Electrical factors, the building is rated **B, Satisfactory** - performing adequately but showing minor deterioration.

Full details of the evaluations and weightings of each element in the survey are available on the web site.

The building surveyor identified costs associated with repair, maintenance and replacement works which would be required to bring the school up to a standard of the 3Rs schools when handed over to the Council for occupancy.

For Bramble Brae, this equated to £1.25 million. Not all of this would be required immediately but over the period of time, this would require to be invested in the school.

In all cases, costs are based on current prices and exclude any provision for future inflation.

Further details of the evaluations and weightings of each element in the survey are available on the Council website at [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill)

#### **5.1.22 Suitability**

A verified suitability survey of Bramble Brae School was undertaken during August 2013 to assess the suitability of the building and the associated areas for the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. Detailed surveys of the internal areas of the property, external areas, curtilage, and environs were carried out.

Using the methodology of the Scottish Government's School Estate Core Facts guidance, Bramble Brae School was evaluated as **C, Poor** - showing major problems and/or not operating optimally (the school buildings and grounds impede the delivery of activities that are needed for children and communities in the school).

There were major issues regarding accessibility, particularly for wheelchair users and others with mobility difficulties.

The overall rating of C aggregates all twenty five elements surveyed. Several of these were better and others poorer than the overall rating.

Full details of the evaluations and weightings of each element in the survey are available on the Council web site at [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill)

## School Profile

### 5.2 Quarryhill School

- 5.2.1 Address:** Birkhall Parade  
Aberdeen  
AB16 5QT
- 5.2.2 Head Teacher:** Stephen Coutts
- 5.2.3 Type of school:** Nursery and Primary (P1-7)
- 5.2.4 Capacity (and Roll):** 390 (247, plus 20 in the morning nursery class and 20 in the afternoon nursery class)
- 5.2.5 Parent Organisations:** Quarryhill Parent Council

**5.2.6 Neighbourhood context:** Quarryhill School is a non-denominational primary school with provision for preschool and ante-preschool children within a nursery which forms part of the school. The school serves part of the Mastrick/Northfield area in the northwest of the city.

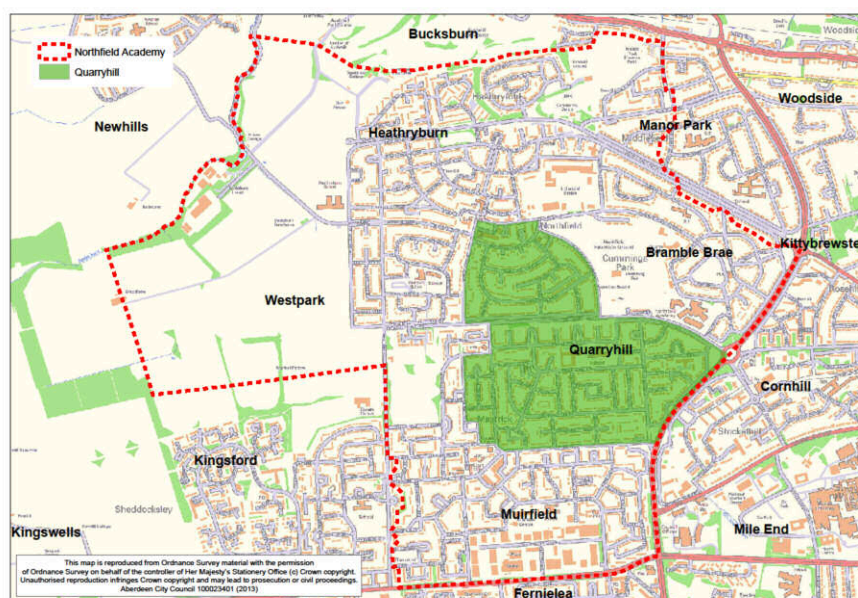
The school opened as a full nursery/primary school in 1999, having been established as a P4-P7 school in 1954.

Quarryhill's zone is adjacent to that of Bramble Brae. The zoned secondary school is Northfield Academy.

#### 5.2.7 Catchment Area

The catchment area is made up mainly of social housing but many properties have been purchased and are now owner-occupied.

#### Map 5: Quarryhill School, within the Northfield Academy ASG



### 5.2.8 Site Plan and Accommodation:

The building is surrounded by an extensive grassy playground area which incorporates two adventure play areas.

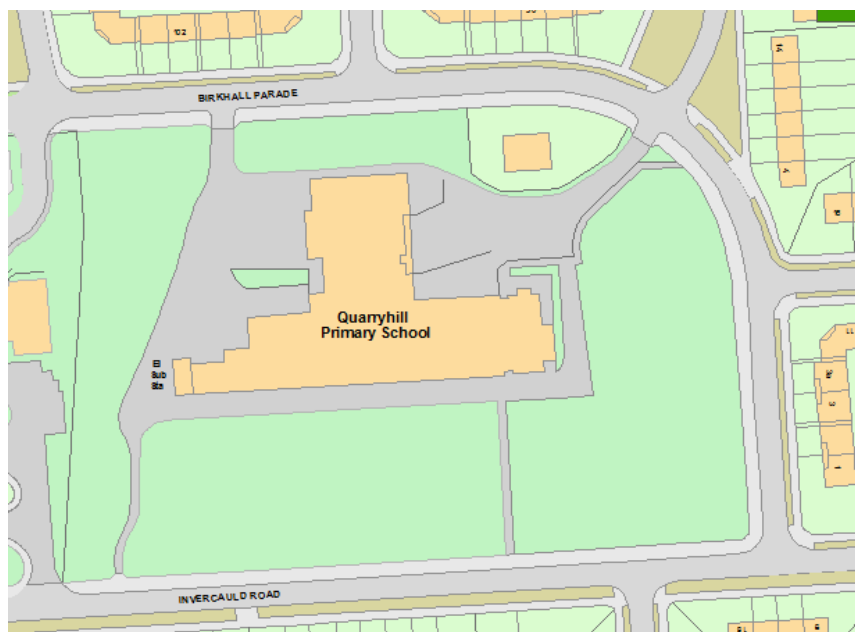
The internal floor plan is available on the website at [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill)

The accommodation consists of

- 16 Teaching areas
- 4 General Purpose Spaces
- Library/Resources area
- Hall (used for PE and dining)
- Offices
- Staff Room and ancillary areas

In addition to a range of classrooms, and a Nursery, there is a large gymnasium, where lunches are also taken, a computer suite, well equipped library and a kitchen where meals are prepared on the premises.

### Map 6: Site Map - Quarryhill School



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### 5.2.9 Pupil Population:

In session 2013-14, there were 40 children in the Nursery and 210 pupils, distributed by year group as

P1	35
P2	36
P3	23
P4	33
P5	22
P6	30
P7	31

There is a 14 place base for children with additional support needs.

In session 2012-13, of the 287 pupils living in the Quarryhill catchment area, 141 attended Quarryhill School - a retention rate of 49%.

In session 2012-13, of the 206 pupils attending Quarryhill School in 2013, 141 pupils (68%) were 'in-zone' and 65 (32%) were 'out of zone'. The 146 pupils zoned to Quarryhill who chose to not to attend the school attended 21 different schools.

**Table 5: Primary School Attended by Pupils Living in the Quarryhill School zone, based on 2012 school census**

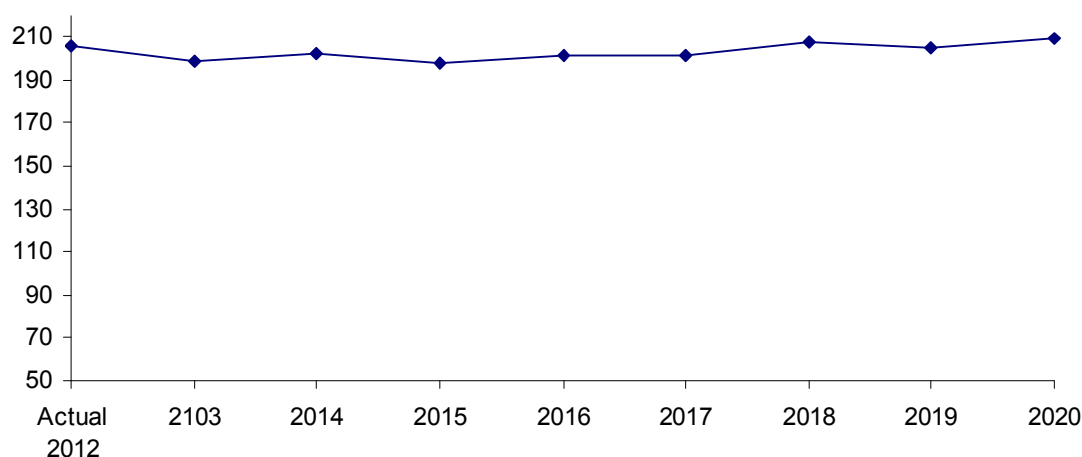
<b>School Attended</b>	<b>Number of Pupils</b>
<b>Quarryhill School</b>	<b>141</b>
Bramble Brae School	5
Brimmond Primary School	2
Broomhill School	1
Cornhill School	11
Ferryhill School	1
Gilcomstoun School	7
Hanover Street School	2
Hazlehead Primary School	5
Heathryburn School	6
Holy Family RC School	5
Kaimhill Primary School	2
Kingsford School	13
Middleton Park School	1
Mile End School	4
Muirfield School	32
Riverbank School	1
Seaton School	1
Skene Square School	3

St Joseph's RC School	5
Walker Road School	1
Westpark School	38

**Table 6: Actual (March 2013) and Projected Pupil Numbers (2013-2020): Quarryhill, based on 2012 school census**

School	Actual 2012	Projected							
		2103	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Quarryhill	206	199	202	198	201	201	208	205	209

**Graph 3: Actual (March 2013) and projected pupil numbers (2013- 2020), Quarryhill School, based on 2012 school census**



There are no significant housing developments in the existing Quarryhill School catchment area. The projected pupil numbers reflect a fairly stable pupil population in the next eight years. There is no evidence to suggest this trend will not be continued.

#### **5.2.10 Staffing**

##### **Teaching staff**

The Senior Leadership Team consists of the Head Teacher and two Depute Head Teachers. There is a teaching entitlement to a total of 14.8 full time equivalents (fte).

##### **Support Staff**

There is a school administrator and reception staff as well as Pupil Support Assistants. There are also janitorial staff, cleaners and catering staff.

#### **5.2.11 Building Use**

Other than day-time educational provision, there is limited use of the building other than after-school activities.

#### **5.2.12 Multi-Agency Services**

Although no external agencies are based within the school, there is regular engagement with the Pupil Support Service, Health & Social Care and Educational Psychology. Multi-Agency Meetings also take place within the school.

The school welcomes a number of external agencies, including

- Local Churches and Faith Groups
- Scottish Police

### **5.2.13 Curriculum**

In common with all other schools in Aberdeen, Quarryhill School is currently its approaches to implementing the 3-18 curriculum, 'A Curriculum for Excellence.'

The main intention is to provide opportunities for all pupils to develop the four capacities: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

The curriculum continues to be developed under the headings of Health and Well Being, Languages, Mathematics, Expressive Arts, Science, Social Studies, Technologies and RME.

A range of extra-curricular activities are provided including sporting and other opportunities.

### **5.2.14 Educational Attainment**

Educational attainment is the result of the interaction of a number of variables, not least of all the demographic circumstances of the children.

With regards to Curriculum for Excellence, the relatively recent implementation of moderating attainment was introduced in session 2012-13, making any valid comparison very difficult.

Measurement of educational attainment is currently undergoing significant change.

With regards to Curriculum for Excellence, the relatively recent implementation of moderating attainment was introduced in session 2012-13, making any valid comparison very difficult.

Most pupils at Quarryhill School achieve and, in some cases, exceed expected milestones in their levels of attainment.

The school continues to improve its arrangements for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress in their learning, and, working in partnership with colleagues in the Northfield A.S.G. Schools, is developing moderation skills in literacy and numeracy.

Quarryhill is highly committed to recognising the wider achievement of its pupils.

Active approaches to literacy are well embedded in the early stages classes, and strategies, which have been introduced at the middle stages, will be consolidated and extended in the forthcoming session.

Areas of particular focus for the new session will be numeracy and science.

Last year, the school received a major boost when it became one of only three schools in Aberdeen city to be selected for participation in the Grounds for Learning Programme. Outdoor learning and imaginative play will, therefore, be key initiatives for whole school development this year.

#### **5.2.15 Support for School Improvement**

Primary schools in Aberdeen review their performance on an on-going basis and measure themselves against nationally agreed performance indicators on a six point scale.

Quarryhill School most recently evaluated itself on the Key Quality Indicators as

<b>Quality Indicator</b>		<b>Self evaluation</b>
1.1	Improvements in Performance	Satisfactory
2.1	Learners' Experiences	Good
5.1	Curriculum	Good
5.3	Meeting Learning Needs	Good
5.9	Improvements Through Self Evaluation	Good
9.4	Leadership of Improvement and Change	Not Available

#### **5.2.17 HMIE/Education Scotland Inspection**

The most recent inspection report of Quarryhill School was published in June 2009.

The Follow Up Report which was published in August 2010 concluded that there was evidence of considerable improvement and the school now performs well overall. Improvements in performance and approaches to self-evaluation are now at a satisfactory or better level and therefore Education Scotland made no further visits in relation to the June 2009 report.

The reports are available at Education Scotland website at

[www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/QuarryhillSchoolIns20090625\\_tcm4-700496.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/QuarryhillSchoolIns20090625_tcm4-700496.pdf)

and

[www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/QuarryhillSchoolAberdeenCity.asp](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/QuarryhillSchoolAberdeenCity.asp)

This information should be used in combination with the school's internal evaluations of performance.

### 5.2.18 Other Achievements

Pupils at Quarryhill School have the opportunity to participate in a range of non-class based opportunities.

These include

Dance

Sporting activities including football and basketball

Young Engineers

Stay and Play

Cheer Leading

Quarry Girls for girls

DJ Club

Choir

### 5.2.19 Recorded Absence

**Table 7: Absence 2010-11, Quarryhill School, Aberdeen Average and Nationally**

	<b>Average percentage absence 2010-11*</b>
Quarryhill	6.2%
Aberdeen City	5.5%
National	7.0%

\* Most recent data available as national data is only now published every two years and data on 2012-13 has yet to be published.

The absence rate is slightly higher than the Aberdeen City average and lower than the Scottish national average.

### 5.2.20 Cost per Pupil

The cost per pupil at Quarryhill School is £4,656 which is above the City average of £3,943 (excluding 3Rs schools, 2012).

### 6.2.21 Condition

A condition survey of Quarryhill School was undertaken during July 2013 to assess the condition of the building fabric and the associated services. This involved undertaking detailed surveys of the internal areas of the property, external areas, curtilage, and environs.

The overall rating for the school was **B: Satisfactory** - performing adequately but showing minor deterioration. However, there were elements which were rated higher and poorer than this.

Excluding Mechanical and Electrical factors, the building is rated **B, Satisfactory** - performing adequately but showing minor deterioration. However, there were elements which were rated higher and poorer than this.

Full details of the evaluations and weightings of each element in the survey are available on the web site.



The building surveyor identified costs associated with repair, maintenance and replacement works which would be required to bring the school up to a standard of the 3Rs schools when handed over to the Council for occupancy.

For Quarryhill School, this equated to approximately £2.5 million. Not all of this would be required imminently but over the period of time, this would require to be invested in the school.

In all cases, costs are based on current prices and exclude any provision for future inflation.

Further details of the evaluations and weightings of each element in the survey are available on the Council web site at [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill)

#### **6.2.22 Suitability**

A validated suitability survey of Quarryhill School was undertaken during August 2013 to assess the suitability of the building and the associated areas for the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. Detailed surveys of the internal areas of the property, external areas, curtilage, and environs were carried out.

Using the methodology of the Scottish Government's School Estate Core Facts guidance, Quarryhill School was evaluated as B, Satisfactory - Performing well but with minor problems (the school buildings and grounds generally support the delivery of services to children and communities).

The overall rating of C aggregates all twenty five elements surveyed. Several of these were better and others poorer than the overall rating.

Full details of the evaluations and weightings of each element in the survey are available on the Council web site at [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill)

## **Section 6**

# **Analysis of Current Provision**

## 6.1 Background

Aberdeen City is undergoing a period of demographic change with a population that is projected to grow significantly over the coming years.

The Local Development Plan has also been agreed which will mean the construction of major new housing developments in and around the City. These changes will have a significant impact on the school estate and the Education Authority has a responsibility to plan for these changes.

The process of managing the demands on the school estate began with the 3Rs Programme which has recently delivered nine new schools and one major refurbishment.

This process has continued and a review of secondary provision was carried out in 2010. This was complemented by a review of primary provision in 2012-13. The evidence from these reviews has provided the basis for setting out a long term strategy for the school estate in Aberdeen City.

The proposal to amalgamate Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools within the existing Quarryhill building on the Quarryhill campus is part of the long term strategy, the aim of which is to create the most beneficial and positive learning environments for our children and young people.

## 6.2 Demographic Trends

### 6.2.1 School Rolls and Projected Pupil Numbers

Using methodology agreed by Education, Culture and Sport Committee in January 2010, the capacity of Bramble Brae is 198 and Quarryhill is 390.

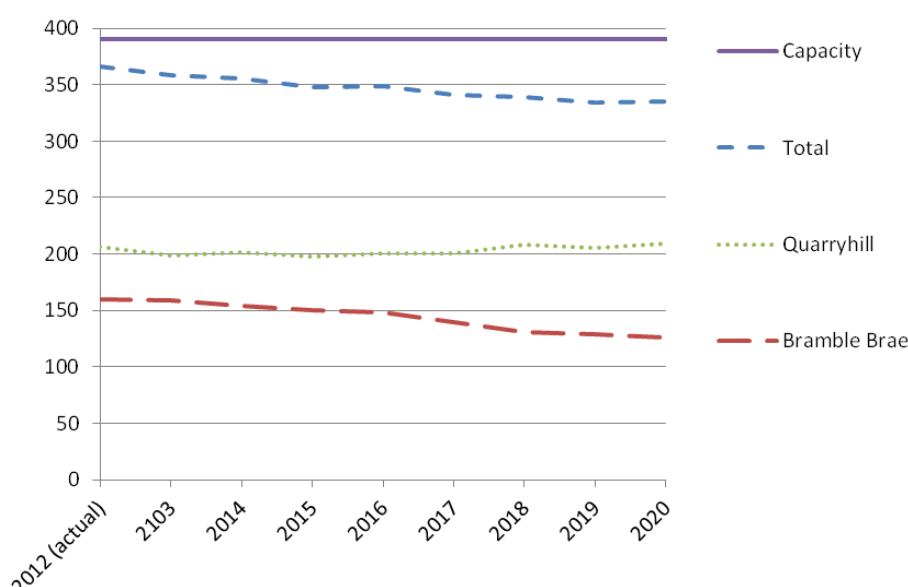
The total capacity between the two schools is, therefore, 588.

**Table 8: Pupil Numbers Bramble Brae, Quarryhill and Total, actual (2012) and projected (2013-20), based on 2012 school census**

School	Actual 2012	Projected							
		2103	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bramble Brae	160	159	154	150	148	140	131	129	126
Quarryhill	206	199	202	198	201	201	208	205	209
Total	366	358	356	348	349	341	339	334	335

Graph 4 below shows the current (2012-13) and projected (2013-2020) number of pupils at Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools, the total number of pupils in the two schools over the same time period, as well as the combined total capacity (number of pupil spaces) in the two schools.

**Graph 4: Actual (2012/13) and projected (2013-20) Number of Pupils at Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools, the Total Number of Pupils and the Capacity at Quarryhill School, based on 2012 school census**



There is significant excess capacity at both schools, a total of **222 unfilled pupil places** at June 2013 across the two schools.

This is projected to increase to **253** by 2020.

If the schools are amalgamated, the capacity will be that of Quarryhill School – i.e. 390.

The maximum projected pupil roll of the combined school would be 358, leaving 32 unfilled places in session 2013-14. The number of unfilled spaces increases year-on-year thereafter.

### 6.2.2 Housing Developments

The Local development Plan (LDP) makes provision for up to 36,000 new homes across Aberdeen in the next 20 to 30 years. The LDP contains no significant housing developments within the two existing school zones.

## 6.3 Financial Considerations

### 6.3.1 Unit Cost per Pupil

The cost per pupil is the total operational costs of a school divided by the number of pupils on the roll.

Both schools have a higher unit cost per pupil compared to the Aberdeen average which is £ 3,943, excluding costs at 3Rs schools.

### 6.3.2 Total Running Costs

The total full year costs of the retaining the two schools and for the combined replacement school are shown in Table 9 below for Year 1 to 6, assuming the amalgamated school is formed at the beginning of session 2014-15.

**Table 9: Total life time costs for two existing schools and single amalgamated school and potential savings (Years 1 to 6).**

Total Costs (£)	Year						
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16*	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-2020
Retain Two Existing Schools	1,872,307	1,872,307	1,891,020	1,909,930	1,929,029	1,948,319	1,967,802
Single Amalgamated School	0	1,051,086	1,681,738	1,715,541	1,732,696	1,750,023	1,767,523
Potential Saving	0	119,106 <sup>#</sup>	209,282	194,389	196,333	198,296	200,279

<sup>#</sup> Part year saving

\* A notional 1% per annum increase has been factored in beyond 2015-16 to address likely increasing costs. More accurate projections are challenging to provide as there are a number of variables which affect costs, such as changes in pupil numbers and inflation.

At this stage, no allowance has been made for enabling works. Any such enabling works' costs are not expected to be significant and would be met from existing budgets.

Further details are available on the web site at [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill)

### 6.3.3 Condition and Suitability

The table below shows the overall condition and suitability evaluations of Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools, as moderated in 2013 by Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure, Aberdeen City Council.

**Table 10: Condition and Suitability Evaluations, Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools, moderated 2013**

	Bramble Brae	Quarryhill
Condition	B	B
Suitability	C	B

Whilst the overall rating for condition in both schools in the survey was B: Satisfactory - performing adequately but showing minor deterioration, there were elements which were rated better and poorer than this.

The building surveyor identified costs associated with repair, maintenance and replacement works which would be required to bring the school up to a standard of the 3Rs schools when handed over to the Council for occupancy.

This equated to a total for the two schools of approximately £4 million for Bramble Brae (£1.5 million) and Quarryhill (£2.5 million) School, Not all of this would be required imminently but over the period of time, this would require to be invested in the schools.

In all cases, costs are based on current prices and exclude any provision for future inflation.

The schools were re-visited in July 2013 by officers of the Council and re-evaluated where appropriate, thus providing a consistent and impartial evaluation of the suitability.

For Suitability, using the methodology of the Scottish Government's School Estate Core Facts guidance, Bramble brae was evaluated as C (Poor) - showing major problems and/or not operating optimally (the school buildings and grounds impede the delivery of activities that are needed for children and communities in the school). Quarryhill was evaluated as B Satisfactory - Performing well but with minor problems (the school buildings and grounds generally support the delivery of services to children and communities)

#### **6.4 Educational Considerations**

All educational considerations can be found within the Educational Benefits Statement, Section 7.

#### **6.5 Community and Engagement**

In addition to educational provision, schools provide a focal point for the community. Whilst both schools have limited community usage, the loss of the provision from the immediate neighbourhood is frequently seen as a retrograde step.

##### **6.5.1 Engaging with Local Communities**

A number of site options were the subject of informal engagement. Attendance at engagement events was variable.

##### **6.5.2 Feedback from Informal Engagement**

Opportunities were also provided during informal consultation, for staff and separately for other interested persons to obtain information about the school estate and to offer suggestions as to how improvements might be made.

Two public events took place in the Northfield area, both at Northfield Academy. There were eight attendees, including elected members at the first event and no members of the public attended the second event.

Submissions were received by email, letter and on comment cards left at the engagement events.

**Table 11: Number of Participants Attending the Engagement Events**

Venue	Number of Participants
Northfield Academy 1	8
Northfield Academy 2	0

There were four members of the public and three elected members at the first event at Northfield.

Notes from the discussions at the first event at Northfield Academy can be found on the Council website at [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill)

## **6.6 School Travelling Routes**

Aberdeen City policy on the maximum walking distance to school stands at two miles for primary school pupils. All schools are covered by this policy. This policy is consistent with other local authorities in Scotland.

The proposal to amalgamate Bramble Brae and Quarryhill in the existing Quarryhill building on the Quarryhill campus will result in a new school zone. In this new, amalgamated zone, no pupil will be required to walk further than the statutory two miles and therefore there are no transport implications for the council.

Some parents and residents raised the issue of crossing a main road – Provost Fraser Drive. A significant number of pupils who are zoned to Quarryhill live to the north of this road. Accordingly they already cross this road on a regular basis. There is no evidence to suggest that there would be an increase risk to pupils crossing this road.

Currently, most pupils at Quarryhill School walk to school.

It should be noted, however, that other than in those cases where the Authority arranges for the transportation of pupils, the responsibility for ensuring the safety of children on the journey between home and school and, where appropriate, supervising the journey, rests with the parents and carers.

Aberdeen City Council also has a Local Transport Strategy which advocates healthy attitudes to transport, including walking and cycling to school for pupils and to work for staff. The use of public transport is also promoted.

Pupil safety is of paramount importance to Aberdeen City Council and, therefore, a review of Safe Routes to School will be carried out, prior to any final recommendation on the proposal being made. This review will form part of the report to Committee in due course and will also inform a School Travel Plan which is required for all new schools.

An initial assessment of school travel for an amalgamated Bramble Brae and Quarryhill School is provided as Appendix 1.

The report acknowledges that the schools are relatively close together and travelling times to the proposed amalgamated school would not be significantly increased for pupils.

It recommends improvements in safety measures on the main road and these will be formally evaluated and implemented where appropriate, in addition to addressing issues related to increased traffic movement around the amalgamated school.

The report further recommends that measures to encourage sustainable travel choices should also be implemented.

## **6.7 Equal Opportunity Legislation**

This proposal is intended, in the first instance, to improve the equality of educational opportunity for learners throughout the Bramble Brae and Quarryhill School zones. By educating all children in the same school, there is a greater opportunity for equality of provision.

The distance travelled to any school site cannot be equal for all pupils, as there will inevitably be greater distances to be travelled by those pupils who live further from any school. Arrangements will be put in place to ensure that all routes to school are safe and that there is compliance with all existing procedures and protocols.



## **Section 7**

### **Educational Benefits Statement**

## 7.1 Background

Aberdeen City Council believes that this Proposal will provide a range of educational benefits and enhance its efforts to meet statutory requirements of the following legislation:

Education (Scotland) Act, 1980;

Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act, 2000;

Local Government in Scotland Act, 2003;

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act, 2004;

Educational (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act, 2009; and

Equality Act, 2010.

The Council takes the view that implementation of this proposal will improve the educational experiences of learners and this is likely to have positive outcomes on the life chances for young people. This will be achieved through the delivery of a high quality, wide and relevant curriculum in appropriate facilities.

A school of the size proposed will enable the Headteacher to plan a curriculum that offers breadth, depth, coherence, relevance, challenge and enjoyment as the flexibility to do this is enhanced within a larger school.

The amalgamated school will be able to offer more flexibility in terms of class and group configuration. This will allow for a broader range of learning activities, from individual and paired work, to group and whole class work. The increased number of pupils will allow better grouping of children with similar needs and of similar levels of skills and abilities. It will enable more opportunities for team teaching, sharing of expertise and greater flexibility.

Greater pupil numbers will result in classes to be structured in such a way to offer greater opportunity than smaller schools by providing more age-related classes and more options for grouping by ability, in particular providing enhanced opportunities for more gifted and talented pupils.

The amalgamated school will be able to deploy and maximise resources to ensure the highest quality learning experience. This will widen pupils' access to enhanced opportunities for global learning, integrated technology, interdisciplinary learning, and active learning. These opportunities will motivate learners and ultimately provide them with a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning experience.

The amalgamated school can provide a stimulus for improvement and a catalyst for change. The ethos of the amalgamated school can be re-visited, enhancing the best elements of the existing schools and new priorities where appropriate.

The following sections offer further detailed evidence to support the proposal.

We have chosen to use those reported on by Education Scotland in their evaluation of school performance during inspection:

- Improvements in performance
- Learners' experiences
- The curriculum
- Meeting learning needs
- Improvement through self-evaluation

In terms of these core Quality Indicators, both schools have identified scope for improvement in all areas. This proposal can provide a catalyst for the schools continuing their journey from good to great in terms their performance and that of their pupils.

The opportunities provided by an amalgamated school will assist in this improvement by having larger numbers of pupils attending a more appropriate and diverse range of educational experiences. Motivation and interest will be increased, leading to better outcomes for learners and enhanced performance.

## **7.2 Improvements in performance**

In terms of attainment, there is broad similarity between the two schools. In summary, whilst in some measures pupils at Quarryhill appear to perform particularly well, the value-added performance of pupils at Bramble Brae is amongst the highest in the city.

The proposal to amalgamate the schools can lead to sharing of the current best practice in both, in particular value-added improvements, leading to improved outcomes for a greater number of learners.

## **7.3 Learners' Experiences**

Curriculum for Excellence allows for a wider choice of learning experiences for pupils. The more widespread and flexible learning spaces of the combined school will provide more opportunities a variety of approaches to learning.

There will be a range of more flexible areas where the available space can be used for investigative work and active learning. Outdoor learning, including more readily accessible sporting facilities, will promote opportunities which are more likely to engage all pupils. There is currently a project to enhance the external learning and play facilities at Quarryhill, under the Grounds for Learning programme. It is likely these improvements will be complete by August 2014.

Collaborative learning is an important opportunity which is more easily achievable in a school with more flexible learning spaces. This will provide more opportunities for active learning, open plan learning, independent learning and cross fertilisation of teaching ideas and delivery which is central to successful implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence*. There will also be more opportunities for the development of skills based learning.

Pupils are likely to experience a higher quality learning experience because of the enhanced facilities which will be available, improving the experience of all pupils.

There will be an emphasis on innovation and personalisation rather than on standardisation. Learners and teachers will have more opportunities for challenge and inspiration, this being made possible through the existence of more flexible and non-standard spaces of different dimensions and configuration. The floor plans of both schools are available on the Council website at [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/bramblebraequarryhill)

Overall, the amalgamated school will allow a broader range of pedagogical approaches to be undertaken such as use of research findings, including lesson study and action based research, establishment of learner groups of different ages and/or similar abilities.

#### **7.4 The Curriculum**

Education, Culture and Sport Directorate within Aberdeen City Council fully supports the Key Messages within the '*Building the Curriculum*' publications from Education Scotland (available from the Education Scotland web site at [www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum)).

We believe this proposal will allow the pupils in the amalgamated school to have better opportunities to experience the curriculum than if the schools remain separate.

*Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 4 - skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work* describes nine aspirations of a modern curriculum:

1. The development of skills based learning is essential to learning and education to help young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

The skills and attributes which children and young people develop should provide them with a sound basis for their development as lifelong learners in their adult, social and working lives, enabling them to reach their full potential.

2. All children and young people are entitled to opportunities for developing skills for learning, life and work. The skills are relevant from the early years right through to the senior phase of learning and beyond.

3. The skills should be developed across all curriculum areas, in interdisciplinary studies and in all the contexts and settings where young people are learning. They have been embedded into the *Curriculum for Excellence* Experiences and Outcomes. As such they are the responsibility of all pre-school, school and college staff, professionals and adults working with children and young people. It will be important to recognise and reflect the important role of parents and carers in influencing young people.

4. Progression in skills is signposted in the Experiences and Outcomes. This will help practitioners to ensure that as they progress through the levels, learners build on, extend and apply similar skills developed at previous levels.

5. *Curriculum for Excellence* is firmly focused on the learner. Opportunities to develop skills may be offered in different ways appropriate to learners' needs. The opportunity to engage in active learning, interdisciplinary tasks and to experience learning in practical contexts is important in enabling all children and young people to develop, demonstrate and apply a wide range of skills.

6. It is important that children and young people are aware of, and understand, the value of the skills that they are developing. Adults, practitioners and learners should work together on their progress in the range of skills that they consider to be important in their learning, lives and work.

7. The assessment process should help children and young people to understand why skills are important, reflect on how they are developing their skills, identify the next steps in their skills development and understand how the skills they have acquired can be used across the curriculum and in their lives in and outside the classroom or establishment.

8. Every child and young person is entitled to flexible support, due to the larger and more diverse range of staff available, to enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities to develop their skills which *Curriculum for Excellence* can provide. The larger staff in the proposed school will make this more achievable. Timely provision of support to meet individuals' needs will enable children and young people to effectively engage with opportunities for skills development.

9. *Curriculum for Excellence* can best be delivered through partnership working. One school will have access to all the partners currently shared between the two schools. All establishments should work with partners and share a common understanding and language around skills development and application. Together, they should plan and deliver learning and other experiences which meet the needs of individual children and young people.

We believe that all the above aspirations can be better met within the amalgamated school due mainly to the increased size of the staff and the enhanced opportunities available to a larger establishment.

This school would provide an opportunity to utilise better the experience in both schools. This will involve building upon existing partnership working between staff of the two schools.

The learning and teaching as well as play resources at Bramble Brae can be added to those at Quarryhill, again increasing the educational experiences of all pupils which staff can use to engage with pupils.

Schools with relatively small rolls have some curricular limitations mainly due to the relatively small number of children and staff. It will be possible to expand personalisation and choice in a larger school. This is likely to have a positive impact upon motivation by focusing on the interests of individual pupils.

Opportunities to work collaboratively are more achievable in a larger school, allowing cohorts of pupils to experience more opportunities for inter-disciplinary and cooperative learning and experience the benefits of input from partners - local companies, employers and other organisations.

The wider curriculum expertise and greater scale of opportunities can only enhance pupils' curricular experiences and lead to improvements in learning and teaching.

The resultant increase in motivation should bring additional benefits such as increased attendance and this in turn should lead to increases in achievement and attainment.

## **7.5 Meeting Learning Needs**

A larger school has more staff, including a greater number of teachers. This will lead to a broader range of staff experience within the amalgamated school. This will allow a better sharing of good practice, due to the broader experiences of the more diverse range of staff. Teachers in a larger school will, therefore, be better placed to have a deeper understanding of pupils' learning and development and a better understanding of the need to provide high quality feedback, personalised for each learner.

Effective assessment strategies and tracking of progress and achievements will be more likely in the amalgamated school, again due to the wider staff experience. This will allow pupils and staff to better plan the next steps in the learning journey.

A larger school will also allow greater flexibility and shared responsibility for staff, providing enhanced opportunities for teachers and other staff to plan and work closely with other staff and agencies and establishments to ensure continuity and progression for young people, particularly at transition times.

There will be more opportunities to work in partnership to develop individual or extended transition programmes as required for particular pupils and groups of pupils due to the larger pupil cohorts in the amalgamated school.

Better learning and sharing of experiences of teachers will allow pupils to more consistently work at a brisk and challenging pace as a result of improved learning and teaching approaches.

A more diverse and experienced staff who share their experiences with colleagues are more likely to collaboratively prepare and deliver lessons and

activities which are well organised and set in meaningful contexts with challenging outcomes. There will be a more varied range of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for staff and, as described above, more scope for teachers to plan and deliver work collaboratively and innovatively. Staff will be in a better position to use comparative data and to use the most effective quality assurance elements from both schools.

There will be a more varied range of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for staff and, as described above, more scope for teachers to plan and deliver work collaboratively and innovatively.

Different approaches to learning and use of a broader range of materials and resources will ensure that learners master concepts and are able to move onto appropriate next steps more quickly. Pupils will also experience a broader range of experiences in Health and well Being, Personal, Social and Health Education made possible by the larger school.

The larger, amalgamated school will also have a more diverse range of pupils and this will provide pupils with a richer cultural and learning experience.

Overall, these advantages of a larger school make it highly likely that pupils' learning needs are met more effectively and efficiently than within a smaller school.

## **7.6 Improvement through Self-evaluation**

Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools have a good reputation within their communities.

This proposal provides an opportunity to improve the approaches to learning and teaching through the establishment of an amalgamated school by taking best practice from both existing schools to the amalgamated school.

Staff, parents and pupils work effectively in both schools, it has proved challenging to sustain significant improvement in outcomes for learners in either school over a number of years.

Both schools are working to embed self evaluation as a cornerstone of improvement. By bringing the schools together, the shared experiences and enhanced opportunities will result in this process being accelerated.

## **7.7 Leadership of Improvement and Change**

Establishment of a new, amalgamated school provides pupils and staff with the opportunity to implement a new and enhanced school ethos, with a focus on aspirations and improvement in educational outcomes.

It will be important that the Senior Leadership Teams of both existing schools work collaboratively to prepare the staff, pupils and parents of both schools and the associated primary schools for the move to amalgamation.

This process will begin as soon as a decision to progress is reached, and will continue beyond the occupation of the amalgamated school.

The additional opportunities afforded by the establishment of an amalgamated school include the establishment of a new ethos and school identity.

Staff will transfer to the amalgamated school, the Head Teacher post will be recruited openly, as per existing council policies.

The amalgamated school can effectively start afresh, and strive to increase the quality of learning and teaching and increase the proportion of learners whose needs are being effectively met, this leading to an improvement in attainment and achievement. The best elements of the existing schools will, however, be carried through to the amalgamated school.

## **7.8 Ethos**

Unique opportunities exist at a time when a new school is being established, allowing the leadership team to set a new aspirational and visionary ethos in the amalgamated school. This is an important factor in ensuring a high quality learning experience for pupils. The amalgamated school can provide an opportunity to raise esteem and instigate a system of positive behaviour management, based on the best approaches currently employed within the two schools.

There is clear evidence from amalgamated schools in Aberdeen that this can be achieved very successfully.

For pupils, as part of a larger school, there would be an opportunity to encourage increased aspiration and ambition. There would be greater opportunities to take part in a range of experiences which would develop self-confidence and a range of personal and social development skills.

There would be increased opportunities particularly in the upper stages for pupils to take more responsibility and experience leadership opportunities, for example, a greater number of pupils being involved as class or year group representatives on pupil/school councils.

In taking forward this proposal, it will be essential to provide on-going reassurance to children, staff and parents/carers and ensure that the amalgamation process will involve building upon current strengths of both schools.



## **7.9 Pupils with Particular Support Needs**

Quarryhill School currently provides a base for pupils with Additional Support Needs for the Northfield Academy ASG.

There are a number of pupils within both schools for whom there will be a requirement to identify and plan specific needs. The provision of the larger school with enhanced facilities, such as adaptations to the base for pupils with additional support needs, will make it easier to provide the support individual pupils require.

There will be a continuation of the support for learners, in particular supporting English as an Additional Language pupils and those who have other specific identified additional needs.

There will an opportunity to enhance the support available to pupils, rather than merely to make equivalent provision, due to the higher entitlement to staffing and resources.

Additional resources, and funding where appropriate, is made available to provide the support required for these pupils and would continue to be the case in the amalgamated school.

The amalgamated school will provide an opportunity to support the most vulnerable learners by having a larger, more experienced staff who can accelerate support, resulting in improved outcomes for learners. This will be achieved by staff sharing expertise in supporting pupils with Additional Support Needs and their particular areas of specialism.

A comprehensive review of support across the city is currently underway and the new school could provide a focus for enhanced provision of support.

It is increasingly challenging to be able to demonstrate that there is equality of provision and opportunity across all schools in the city and this proposal will contribute to addressing these issues.

There are particular issues associated with access for disabled pupils and staff and the current Bramble Brae School does not meet the requirements of the Equalities Act.

Both schools have areas of good practice, such as transition arrangements and particular expertise in specific areas of the curriculum. These would also be available to more pupils in the amalgamated school, again leading to improvement in learning and teaching.

Consideration has also been given to whether the amalgamation of the two schools would be likely to have any adverse impact upon attendance, performance, pastoral care of pupils at either school.

Our experience, and that of other local authorities who have managed school amalgamation, has shown that there can be a resistance to the change from a very small minority of the community. However experience has shown that this quickly resolves itself and there is no evidence of longer term adverse impact.

### **7.10 Extra-Curricular Opportunities**

The range of extra-curricular opportunities would be enhanced as it is likely that all provision in both schools would continue and therefore pupils in the two schools would have access to the opportunities currently only available at the other school. For example, there would be capacity for more representative teams and groups to be formed. Currently both schools find it challenging to provide school-based teams, particularly at different year groups due to small cohort sizes.

There would be capacity for more representative teams and groups to be formed. Currently both schools find it challenging to provide school-based teams, particularly at different year groups due to small cohort sizes.

The Active Schools Programme will also be enhanced in a larger school as there will be more opportunities for a diverse range of activities for pupils to participate in sport before, during and after school such netball, football and other team and individual sports.

Currently it is challenging, in particular for Bramble Brae, to constitute school teams at specific age groups for sports. The amalgamation of the schools will significantly enhance these opportunities.

Access to these extra-curricular activities, particularly those after school, will be enhanced and the management of the school will work to ensure that pupils from throughout the catchment area will be able to attend activities and return home safely.

### **7.11 Staff**

There would be substantial benefits for staff, both teaching and support, working in a larger school.

For both teaching and support staff, there are advantages in being part of a larger professional community with regard to professional development, increased opportunities for leadership across a larger school and opportunities to develop experience in delivering lessons in a variety of new and innovative ways.

All the current staff will have the opportunity to transfer to the amalgamated school, with the exception of the head teachers, as described above. This would bring together teaching and support staff with a broader range of experience than is currently available in either school.

It is widely accepted that where a broader range of teaching experience is provided, staff learn from each other and experiences and outcomes for learners is are improved. Enhanced Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for all staff will also be possible, particularly that delivered by staff within the school to colleagues through team teaching, shadowing and through courses and external CPD opportunities.

There will be a need to increase the overall teaching staff numbers in the amalgamated school. Bramble Brae's enhanced staffing due to being in an area of regeneration would be sustained in the amalgamated school. This would reduce the overall cost saving of the proposal but would result in appropriate support for the most vulnerable learners.

The amalgamated school, with support from Quality Improvement Officers and the Pupil Support Service, will be well placed to effectively manage transition activities and to ensure that young people moving to the new school are well supported.

## **7.12 The Learning Environment**

Overall, facilities at Quarryhill are better than those at Bramble Brae although both schools are evaluated similarly for condition.

The social and outdoor learning spaces are better at Quarryhill and there is currently a programme to further enhance the outdoor learning opportunities at Quarryhill. This will progress whether or not this proposal proceeds.

In addition, the Bramble Brae building does not have good access for those with disabilities.

There will be some re-configuration of the internal spaces at Quarryhill if this proposal progresses. Parents/carers and staff will be kept informed of any significant changes.

There will be sufficient capacity in the amalgamated school to accommodate all current pupils from the existing schools, the projected increasing numbers to 2020 and beyond.

## **7.13 Potential Impact on Other Schools in the Area**

Parents will continue to have the right to exercise parental choice and apply in the first instance, for an alternative school (to that proposed) which would be subject to the normal constraints of capacity being available. However, in planning school and estate capacity, any proposals for change must be based on

being able to accommodate the maximum number of catchment pupils within available capacity.

Parents would also have the option of their child attending any other city school.

In accordance with the existing placing in schools policy, if there was insufficient space any school to meet demand, applications are prioritised:

1. Resident within Zone
2. Family
3. Childcare
4. Others

Full details of the placing request policy and arrangements is available from

School Placements

Education, Culture and Sport

Business Hub 13

Second Floor North

Marischal College

Broad Street

Aberdeen, AB10 1AB

Email Address: [schoolplacings@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:schoolplacings@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

Tel (01224) 522753 or 522609

Fax (01224) 522022

## **7.14 Research**

There is limited research evidence to support the optimum size of a primary school or to link the size of a school to performance and outcomes for learners.

## **7.15 Conclusion**

There are clear educational benefits for current and future pupils within the catchments of Bramble Brae School and Quarryhill School being educated in a single, amalgamated school.

An opportunity will be available to build upon established links which already exist between the two schools.

The amalgamated school will provide a better learning environment for pupils and working environment for staff.

There will be significantly enhanced curricular opportunities in the amalgamated school, giving pupils a wider range of learning experiences.

The amalgamated school will provide more flexible learning spaces which can be used to deliver a more diverse range of approaches to learning and teaching.

There will be the potential for changes in ethos within an amalgamated school and enhanced leadership opportunities for pupils.

A wider range of extra-curricular opportunities will be available to more pupils.

Staff motivation is likely to be increased and teachers will have much more opportunity to deliver innovative and interesting programmes of work which again is likely to result in improved outcomes for learners.

The educational benefits outlined within this document for current and future pupils within the combined school would provide an improved educational experience and enhance the life chances of learners.

## **Section 8**

# **The Proposed Amalgamated School**

## **8 The Amalgamated School**

The combined school will provide accommodation for up to 390 pupils.

It is not anticipated at this time that there will be significant enabling works required to accommodate the additional pupils at Quarryhill.

A detailed evaluation of the alternatives will be carried out and options presented to staff and parents/carers in advance of deciding upon a recommendation to Committee.

### **8.1 Accommodation and Facilities**

The school will be appropriately equipped with facilities to allow for the delivery of a curriculum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

There will be provision for:

- More flexible teaching areas and storage facilities for all mainstream subject areas;
- Specialised area for pupils with additional support needs, not currently provided at Bramble Brae;
- More flexible general purpose spaces for all areas of the curriculum;
- Area for pupil assembly;
- Internal and external spaces for Physical Education;
- Enhanced external areas for learning and play;
- Library/resource areas;
- Dining facilities;
- Administration offices;
- External areas to include playgrounds and car parking;

### **8.2 Staffing**

The combined school will be staffed according to local and national policies and agreements in place at the time, which are designed to ensure that all the duties and responsibilities of the school are carried out.

The staffing levels in schools are principally determined by pupil numbers. There will be a slightly enhanced teaching entitlement because of the status of part of the amalgamated zone as an area of regeneration.

The transfer of staff would be managed in accordance with existing agreed council policies and procedures. For almost all non-promoted teachers, this is likely to be uncomplicated. The Head Teacher post will be advertised and openly recruited.

Most support staff will transfer to the amalgamated school.

All other posts will be filled according to the requirements of the new school and any staff for whom a post is not available will be subject to existing Human resources policies and procedures.

### **8.3 Liaison between Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Schools**

It is acknowledged that there has been significant liaison between staff at the two schools and this on-going relationship will be developed.

A range of transition activities, including school visits in class groups, parent meetings, tours of the school etc. will be organised in advance of the school amalgamation.

Staff and the Senior Leadership Teams will prepare an appropriate programme, in association with centrally deployed officers within Education, Culture and Sport.

Curricular planning should also be well established in advance of the schools coming together.

### **8.4 Partnerships**

Both schools currently work with local businesses and other partners. These links will be enhanced in a larger school and there will be opportunities for more pupils to be involved in partnership activities. Bramble Brae's partnerships will be added to those of Quarryhill, increasing the opportunities for working with others.



## Initial Assessment of School Travel for a Merged Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Primary School

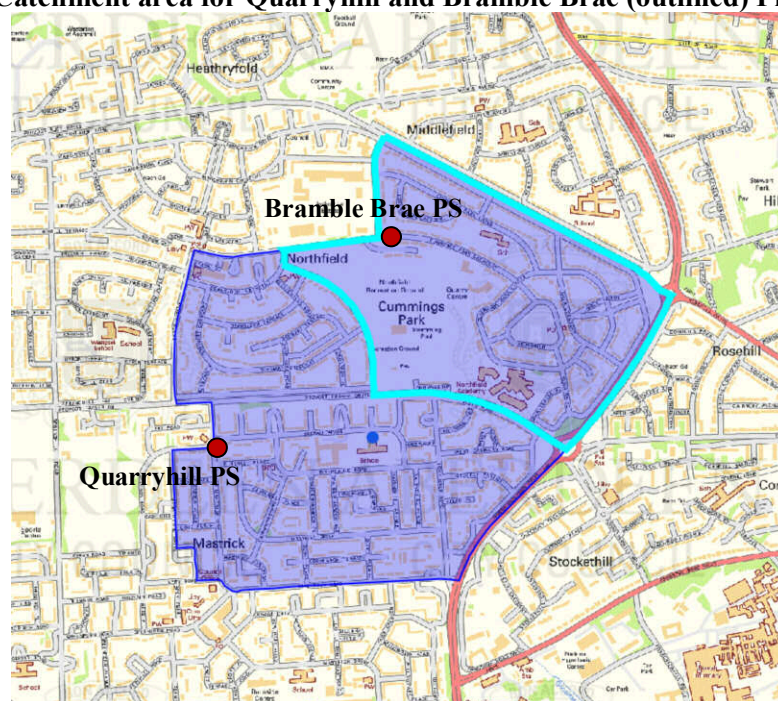
### 1. Introduction

Aberdeen City Council (ACC) are proposing to merge two primaries in the Northfield area of Aberdeen; Bramble Brae and Quarryhill. It is proposed that Bramble Brae Primary is closed and the catchment area is extended to include both catchments to be served by one Primary at the Quarryhill Primary School site. The estimated school roll for the amalgamated primaries is 420 primary school pupils.

#### 1.1 School Locations

Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Primary schools are located in Northfield, North West Aberdeen. The schools are located within two neighbouring catchment areas. The catchment area for both schools is marked on Figure 1.1 with Bramble Brae catchment outlined in blue.

**Figure 1.1 – Catchment area for Quarryhill and Bramble Brae (outlined) Primary Schools**



#### 1.2 Bramble Brae

Bramble Brae school roll is approximately 165 pupils (August 2013) with an additional 40 nursery pupils. Bramble Brae is located on Cummings Park Drive in the north of the catchment area and serves children living in the local streets noted in Table 1.1. There are a small number of pupils residing to the north of the catchment area who opt to attend Bramble Brae Primary.

**Table 1.1 - Streets served by Bramble Brae Primary catchment**

Bramble Brae	Hillcrest Place
Caperstown Crescent	Moir Avenue
Cummings Park Circle 1 - 143, 2 - 180	Moir Crescent
Cummings Park Drive & Crescent	Moir Drive 1 31 - 2 - 56
Cummings Park Terrace	Moir Green
Granitehill Place	North Anderson Drive 267 - 341
Granitehill Road	Provost Rust Drive 1 - 187

### **1.3 Quarryhill**

Quarryhill Primary School is the proposed site for the merged schools. Located on Birkhall Parade, the school is to the south of Provost Fraser Drive which runs west-east through the proposed new catchment. The school roll was 246 in December 2012 with an additional 40 nursery pupils. Pupils currently at Quarryhill Primary will not face any direct changes to their route to school.

## **2. Routes to School**

### **2.1 Introduction**

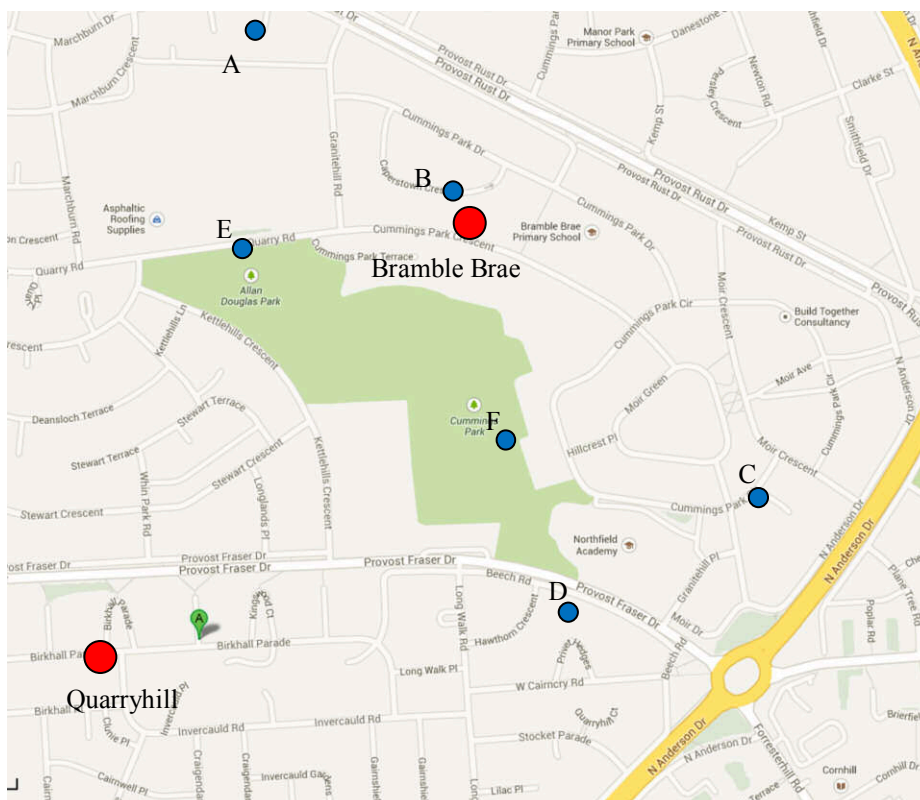
Sustainable travel options are encouraged by the government and local authorities with priority of travel methods being walking, cycling, public transport then car. Both affected Primaries are located in residential areas and it is assumed current walk routes to school within each catchment meet the requirements for safe routes to school.

Extension of the catchment area will mean pupils currently in the catchment for Bramble Brae will have to cross Provost Fraser Drive in order to reach Quarryhill Primary. Pupils within the Quarryhill catchment area will face no direct change to their walking route to school as a result of the amalgamation.

### **2.2 Walk distances**

Aberdeen City Council policy states the statutory walk distance for pupils attending their catchment primary is 2.0 miles. Those living out-with the 2.0 mile boundary are entitled to free school travel. All pupils within the extended catchment area are within the 2.0 mile walk distance to Quarryhill Primary School. Some pupils living in the current catchment area for Bramble Brae Primary will experience longer travel to school times compared with their current situation. Travel distances and times have been considered for selected departure points within the Bramble Braes catchment, as indicated on the map in Figure 2.1. Table 2.1 displays the travel distance change from the selected streets within the Bramble Brae catchment area.

**Figure 2.1 – Selected departure points from Bramble Brae catchment, relative to the catchment Primaries**



**Table 2.1 - Example Travel Distances for pupils travelling to Quarryhill Primary from the current Bramble Brae catchment**

	Street	Current Walk distance to Bramble Brae	Proposed walk distance to Quarryhill	Difference
A	Granitehill Rd at junction with Provost Rust Drive	0.3 miles	0.8 miles	+0.5 miles
B	Marchburn Drive at junction with Cummings park Drive	<0.1 miles	0.9 miles	+0.8 miles
C	North Anderson Drive at Moir Crescent	0.4 miles	0.7 miles	+0.3 miles
D	Granitehill Place at Moir Drive	0.5 miles	0.5 miles	0
E	Cummings Park Terrace	0.3 miles	0.6 miles	+0.3 miles
F	Moir Green at Hillcrest Place	0.3 miles	0.8 miles	+0.5 miles

Some pupils will face lengthier journeys to school as a result of an amalgamation. Pupils living closest to Bramble Brae will face the greatest travel distance increases. Pupils residing in the south of the Bramble Brae catchment may face no change in their travel to school distance. Indicative walking times in Table 2.2 are calculated at an estimated child's walking pace of 25 minutes per mile.

**Table 2.2 Example Travel Times for pupils travelling to Quarryhill Primary from the current Bramble Brae catchment**

	Street	Average walking time to Bramble Brae	Average Walking time to Quarryhill	Difference
A	Granitehill Rd at junction with Provost Rust	8 minutes	20 minutes	+12 minutes

	Drive			
B	Marchburn Drive at junction with Cummings park Drive	2 minutes	23 minutes	+21 minutes
C	North Anderson Drive at Moir Crescent	10 minutes	18 minutes	+8 minutes
D	Granitehill Place at Moir Drive	13 minutes	13 minutes	0
E	Cummings Park Terrace	8 minutes	15 minutes	+7 minutes
F	Moir Green at Hillcrest Place	8 minutes	20 minutes	+12 minutes

### 2.3 Core Paths

There is a core path which runs along Provost Fraser Drive, cuts through the west side of Northfield Academy and then cuts through Moir Green towards Provost Rust Drive. As such, approximately half of the route between the two schools is classed as a core path. There are no other core paths in the surrounding area.

### 2.4 Walking Routes to Quarryhill

There are likely to be two main travel flows to Quarryhill Primary for pupils walking from the current Bramble Brae catchment zone; those walking to the west of Cummings Park, and those to the east. Routes are through residential streets with street lighting.

#### 2.4.1 Walking from the north west of Bramble Brae Catchment

It is estimated that 80 pupils will travel from the north west of the catchment zone encompassing Cummings Park Crescent, Cummings Park Drive, Cummings Park Terrace and Caperstown Crescent.

From this side of the catchment, the most convenient and quickest route to Quarryhill Primary is to walk west along Quarry Road then southwards along Kettlehills Crescent to Provost Fraser Drive. Quarryhill Primary is across Provost Fraser Drive and down to Birkhall Parade.

Both Quarry Road and Kettlehills Crescent have pavements on both sides of the road. There are no pedestrian refuges or other assisted crossing points along Quarry Road. There is a shortcut between Quarry Road and Kettlehills Crescent along a lit pathway through Allan Douglas Park.

#### 2.4.2 Walking from the south east of Bramble Brae Catchment

From the southern section of the catchment zone, there is estimated to be about 50 pupils travelling to Quarryhill Primary. Likely walking routes from this side of the catchment will be along Cummings Park Circle and via the core path to the west of Northfield Academy, or southwards along North Anderson Drive to Provost Fraser Drive. Provost Fraser Drive must be crossed and walked along until Birkhall Parade is reached.

Some pupils from the east of the Bramble Brae catchment may walk down North Anderson Drive to reach Provost Fraser Drive. Although North Anderson Drive is parallel to the A90 dual carriageway, pupils taking this route will be separated from the A90 by a grass / tree buffer. There is a continuous pavement along the western, residential side of North Anderson Drive.

#### 2.4.3 Provost Fraser Drive

Pupils currently in the Bramble Brae catchment will have to cross Provost Fraser Drive to reach Quarryhill Primary. This road is subject to school zone traffic calming measures – flashing 20 mph speed limit applies between Birkhall Parade and Granitehill Place on Provost Fraser Drive as Northfield Academy is located at the east end of the street, and between Kettlehills Crescent and Whin Park Road where pupils currently cross to Quarryhill Primary. School zone signs are located along this road to raise drivers' awareness of school pupils.

There is one zebra crossing situated west of Granitehill Place on Provost Fraser Drive. Along the remainder of the road there are 4 pedestrian refuges, at regular intervals, to improve the safety of the crossing.

Approximately 70 pupils within the Quarryhill catchment currently cross Provost Fraser Drive to reach Quarryhill Primary. It is noted in the Quarryhill School Prospectus that a crossing patrol exists on Provost Fraser Drive, near Kettlehills Way to assist pupils crossing to and from school.

### **2.5 Particular areas warranting further investigation with regard to safety of walk to school routes**

For pupils walking to Quarryhill Primary from the current Bramble Brae catchment, most of their walking route will be along streets currently used as routes to both primaries and to Northfield Academy. The exception to this is the walk along Provost Fraser Drive, and its crossing. Provost Fraser Drive and Quarry Road are locations where options for safety interventions such as crossing patrols, pedestrian refuges or safety barriers should be investigated. The crossing of Provost Fraser Drive near Long Walk Road and of Quarry Road near Granitehill Road are particular points worthy of assessment.

### **2.6 Cycle Facilities**

Aberdeen City website does not state any cycle routes close by the two schools. However, there are many recommended routes (on road), including ones on Fraser Provost Drive next to Quarryhill Primary School and on Deveron Road and Long Walk Road onto Cairnwell Drive to the south west and southeast of the school respectively.

### **2.7 Public Transport**

Frequent public bus services operate along Provost Fraser Drive. The number 11 First bus operates between Northfield and Kingswells, via the city centre. The number 12 operates to the north of the catchment zone, along Quarry Road and Provost Rust Drive. This service operates between Heathryfold and Torry, via the city centre. For travel to school, these services may be of benefit to any pupils travelling from out-with the catchment zone to Quarryhill Primary. A child single fare is £1.10 with an adult single costing between £1.20 and £2.50.

### **2.8 Parental pick up / drop off implications**

As a result of an enlarged school roll and greater distance for some pupils travelling to school, there is likely to be an increase in the number of cars on the surrounding roads at Quarryhill Primary, particularly Invercauld Road to the south and west, and Birkhall Parade to the north and east. Raising awareness of safe walking routes to Quarryhill Primary and encouraging sustainable travel methods through provision of a walking bus or 'walk to school days' could encourage alternatives to driving.

## **3. Key Findings**

- a. If any child zone lives over 2.0 miles from their catchment primary school, free transport should be provided by the local authority as stated in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.
- b. If the current catchment areas for Bramble Brae and Quarryhill Primaries are to form the new catchment area, all pupils within the catchment zone will be within 2.0 miles walking distance to the school site on Birkhall Parade.
- c. Nearly all pupils will be within a mile walking distance from the school site.
- d. Walking routes to school are within the current catchment zones, along routes currently used to reach the respective Primaries.
- e. Most of the walk to school routes are along residential streets with the exception of a possible shortcut through Allan Douglas Park. The routes are lit and pavements / pathways exist.
- f. Pupils currently within the Quarryhill Primary catchment zone will have no change to their route to school.

- g. Walk to school distances for pupils currently in Bramble Brae catchment zone could increase by up to a maximum of 0.8 miles, an increase in time of up to 17 minutes for pupils, based on an assumed walk speed of 25 minutes per mile. The majority of pupils will be less than this.
- h. Provost Fraser Drive is currently the boundary between the two school zones. Provost Fraser Drive is a popular road and bus route and all pupils living north of Provost Fraser Drive will be required to cross it to access Quarryhill Primary.
- i. Pedestrian refuges, a crossing patrol and a zebra crossing exist along Provost Fraser Drive at present. Assessments of the requirement for additional crossing facilities, near the top of Long Walk Road, should be considered for pupils crossing nearer the east end of Provost Fraser Drive.
- j. Quarry Road is not currently used by pupils travelling to their catchment school. Assessment of facilities at the east end, close to Granitehill Road, should be considered.
- k. Amalgamation and increased travel to school distances for some pupils are likely to result in an increased number of cars accessing Quarryhill Primary to drop off and collect pupils. A risk assessment of the local pick up and drop off points is suggested in light of the additional cars accessing the school. Measures to encourage sustainable travel choices should also be implemented if the proposal progresses.