

Middleton Park Parent Council
Statutory Consultation Submission
October 2013



On behalf of the parents, carers and children of Middleton Park School

Submission regarding the Statutory Consultation Process to -

- a. Close Glashieburn and Middleton Park Schools and establish an amalgamated school within the existing Glashieburn building and campus
- and
- b. Vary the delineated (catchment) area of Middleton Park, Brimmond School and Bucksburn Academy

Middleton Park Parent Council



Parents, Pupils, Teachers, Family and Friends All Work Together

*"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education."
Martin Luther King, Jr.*

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Executive Summary

Middleton Park Parent Council surveyed our parents as soon as Aberdeen City Council raised this proposal in February 2013. 100% of respondents were against the closure of our fabulous school and we therefore speak against this proposal on behalf of the whole parent body at Middleton Park.

On behalf of the parents, carers and pupils of Middleton Park we write strongly opposing the proposal to

- a. Close Glashieburn and Middleton Park Schools and establish an amalgamated school within the existing Glashieburn building and campus and
- b. Vary the delineated (catchment) area of Middleton Park, Brimmond School and Bucksburn Academy

Because:

1. **It does not demonstrate Educational Benefit for the pupils and future pupils of Middleton Park School.**
2. **There is no need for change as documented in section 2.2 of the Public Consultation Document.**
3. **Evidence points to an increasing roll not a falling roll (without the Grandhome development) as claimed throughout the proposal.**
4. It is not the 25 year plan it set out to be.
5. Any potential financial saving has been over estimated.
6. The proposal does not take into account key Educational and National Agendas including
 - Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)¹
 - Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning ²
 - Sport Scotland Primary School Sports facilities^{3 4}
 - Schools Health Promotion and Nutrition Act 2007⁵
 - A Games Legacy for Scotland⁶
 - Getting it right for Play⁷
 - Curriculum for Excellence⁸ (although referred to in the Public Consultation document there are no specific local examples)
 - Scottish Government National Indicators⁹

¹ Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Scottish Government 2006

² Curriculum for Excellence through outdoor learning, Learning and Teaching Scotland 2010

³ Design guidance for primary school sports facilities, Sport Scotland, 2004

⁴ School Playing Fields: Planning and Design Guidance. Sport Scotland 2006

⁵ The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition Act, Scottish Government 2007

⁶ Legacy2014.co.uk

⁷ Getting it Right for Play. The Power of Play. Play Scotland 2012

⁸ Curriculum for Excellence, Scottish Government 2009

⁹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Performance/scotPerforms/indicator>

7. The proposal does not take into account the following local priorities
 - Learning Estate Strategy endorsed by the Education, Culture and Sport Committee¹⁰ in 2010 including
 - i. All accommodation in each learning community should include opportunities for appropriate outdoor learning.
 - ii. **Provision in all Aberdeen schools is equivalent in quality and standard to that established for the 3Rs project**
 - iii. Transition for learners from a closing school should be planned effectively.
 - iv. School location taking account of maximising opportunities to walk/cycle and reduce the need for vehicle transport.
 - A Guide to School Travel Plans¹¹
8. Children will be put at risk with a decrease in safe routes to school.
9. Children's health will suffer.

All the issues raised above are detailed in this submission.

We would also like it to be noted that we are offended

1. By the poor quality of the Public Consultation Document.
2. That much of the Public Consultation Document is "cut and pasted" from a proposal to merge two academies in deprived areas into a new build.
3. By the implication that our staff and Glashieburn School staff are not currently delivering the curriculum.
4. By the hastily "moderated" suitability figures now allowing the Council officers to claim the Glashieburn School building and estate are suitable.
5. That despite several suggestions being made during the informal consultation process in the autumn of 2012 no other options were considered.
6. That despite offers from the Parent Council to work with the education department to deliver an above minimum consultation, our views have been sidelined resulting in a confrontational consultation process.

This submission should be considered with those from our partners at Glashieburn Parent Council, and our joint campaign group, Education or Burst?.

This proposal is not of benefit to the children of Middleton Park School. Instead it is merely a poorly thought out and entirely unjustified attempt to save some money.

This proposal is of detriment to the children and their education.

¹⁰ Minutes of Education Culture and Sport Committee. Aberdeen City Council. 18th February 2010

¹¹ Aberdeen City Council, May 2012

Middleton Park School

This is a school where the ethos is strong and the education provided is of the highest quality. Pupils feel safe and secure and are given every opportunity to succeed. This is achieved as the staff have expertise, experience and passion for our children's education. Our school vision will build on this high quality education, integrating with the local and wider communities to equip our children for the needs of a competitive modern society.

Middleton Park encourages a strong partnership between school and home which is central to ensuring children achieve their best. The school cherishes working effectively with the parents and carers. Our school is able to do this as the staff know every child as an individual and there are many opportunities for parents to become involved in school life, with the school in turn central to the wider community.

The school aims to:

- encourage and monitor the emotional, social, physical, creative and intellectual development of all our pupils;
- provide high quality opportunities for active learning to engage our pupils and develop vital skills, knowledge and attitudes;
- develop a culture of ambition and achievement, recognising, rewarding and communicating the successes of all;
- promote positive behaviour and encourage positive attitudes to self and others to develop confidence and self-esteem;
- work as partners with parents in an open and honest way and to encourage parental involvement;
- work with our parents and community to develop and teach pupils respect for self and others, to promote the duties of citizenship and to encourage a culture of enterprise;
- promote inclusion and equality to enable all members of the school community to participate in life-long learning;
- promote the health and well-being of the school community and develop their knowledge and attitudes to enable them to make informed decisions;



Middleton Park School - At the Heart of the Community

Middleton Park School – The Perfect Size

The Public Consultation Document refers to Middleton Park School as a “small school with curricular limitations” (section 7.4).

In fact, **Middleton Park School is the perfect size. We are NOT small.** A small school is defined as a school of less than 100 pupils of primary age¹². With a current roll of 168 primary pupils and 40 nursery children we are considerably larger than this. But neither are we too large. We have the personal touch of a smaller school yet can maintain flexibility of class and group configuration.

Aberdeen City Council is working towards the Scottish government guidelines of class sizes of 18 for P1-3 acknowledging the educational benefit smaller class sizes bring¹³. Two of our four P1-3 classes currently meet these standards. All of our P4-7 classes are smaller than the target size of 33 pupils. We have no composite classes.

The benefits of a smaller school and smaller class sizes are well documented in educational literature¹⁴ -

- The children have a greater sense of belonging.
- Interpersonal relations between and among children and staff are more positive.
- The children’s attitudes towards school are very positive.



Learning is more fun with Friends - Middleton Park, The Perfect Size

¹² <http://www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/small-school-definition>

¹³ Aberdeen City Council FOI-13-0159

¹⁴ Cotton, K. 1996. School Size, School Climate and Student Performance

Space restrictions in the proposed amalgamated school and a roll over capacity will result in less flexibility in class configurations and larger class sizes. There will be more pupils per teacher.

Despite this the Public Consultation Document makes numerous assertions that a bigger school would bring benefits –

The Public Consultation Document states that -	This cannot be an educational benefit of the proposed amalgamated school because -
“small schools have curricular limitations.” (section 7.4)	No small school argument can be applied to Middleton Park. We DO NOT HAVE curricular limitations.
“a school with a larger roll will be able to deliver a broader and more in depth curriculum.” (section 7.1)	The current roll of Middleton Park allows our head teacher to plan a curriculum that offers breadth, depth, coherence, relevance, challenge and enjoyment.
“there will be more flexibility in class configuration.” (section 7.1)	The hugely increased pupil numbers and restricted number of teaching areas will mean less flexibility in terms of class configuration and larger class sizes.
“children will be better supported in a bigger school.” (section 7.4)	The larger class sizes will mean more pupils per teacher. As a result there will be less individualised support available to each pupil.

Capacity and Space.

The Public Consultation Document creates the impression that Middleton Park School has both “significant unfilled capacity” (Section 6.1.1) but at the same time lacks flexible learning spaces - “the amalgamated school will provide more flexible learning spaces” (Section 7.16)

You can't have it both ways! Which is correct?

Is there really significant unfilled capacity at Middleton Park so that there is too generous a space allocation?

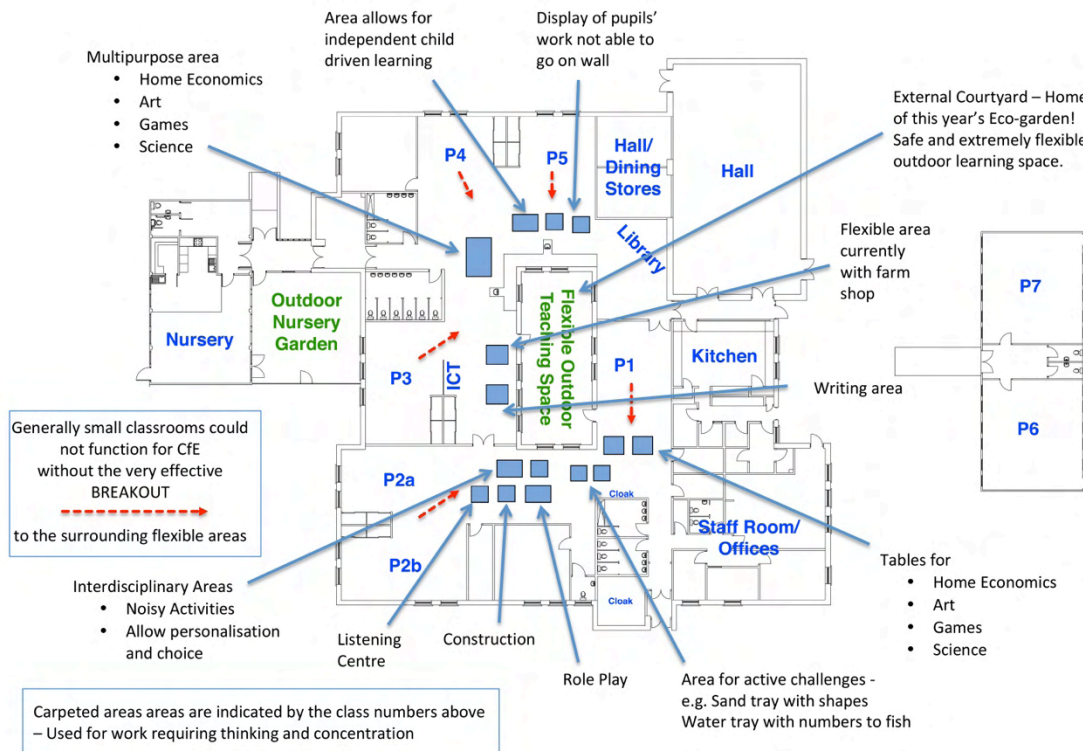
Are our children in desperate need of more “flexible space” to improve their education?



The answer is NEITHER!

Middleton Park has a stated capacity of 240. With a roll of 168 we are currently at 70% capacity but we are not maintaining surplus or underused areas¹⁵. The “room for manoeuvre” that this capacity gives, allows for the flexible learning spaces and the broader range of learning activities that the proposal’s Educational Benefit Statement rates so highly.

Our stated capacity is misleading; A Curriculum for Excellence could not be delivered to such a high standard with a school roll of 240.



The Flexible Teaching Spaces at Middleton Park

Middleton Park is achieving exceptional delivery of Curriculum for Excellence because the available space is flexible. We believe that this balance between space and capacity could not be improved upon.

Forcing the children to the proposed amalgamated school, will not only reduce the total space available but destroy the flexible use of space already used in everyday teaching practice.

The proposed amalgamated school will have one of the largest school rolls in Aberdeen and will have the least internal space per pupil in Aberdeen¹⁶.

THIS WILL BE OF DETRIMENT TO THEIR EDUCATION.

¹⁵ Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's future. Scottish Government/COSLA 2009

¹⁶ <http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=53376&SID=23865>

Outdoor Space – Active Children

Children spend 25% or more of their total school time in the school grounds. They will spend 2000 hours of their lives in the playground. A good outdoor space is an absolutely crucial element to our children’s education, and their current and future health and wellbeing. Yet it is only mentioned once in the Public Consultation Document.

“There will be provision for external areas including playgrounds and car parking” (section 8.1).

This proposal has taken no account of the lack of external space in the proposed amalgamated school and for this reason, it fails our children.

Middleton Park School has a large playing field and playground. These facilities exceed the Sport Scotland size of playing field recommendations¹⁷ providing the children with space to be active. The children benefit from this large outdoor space both in terms of formal activity, such as PE lessons and also informal activity. PE lessons are taken outside as often as the weather and activity allows and the fields are used for class and whole school sports afternoons. Whatever the weather playtimes and lunchtimes see the majority of children engaged in running games, football, skipping and other similar activities. The size and layout of the outdoor space allows different activities to be run concurrently. For example our Kids in Condition Programme takes place during lunch breaks. It is well documented that an active lifestyle will positively benefit the physical, emotional and mental health of our children¹⁸.



Active Happy Children

¹⁷ School Playing Fields: Planning and Design Guidance. Sport Scotland 2006

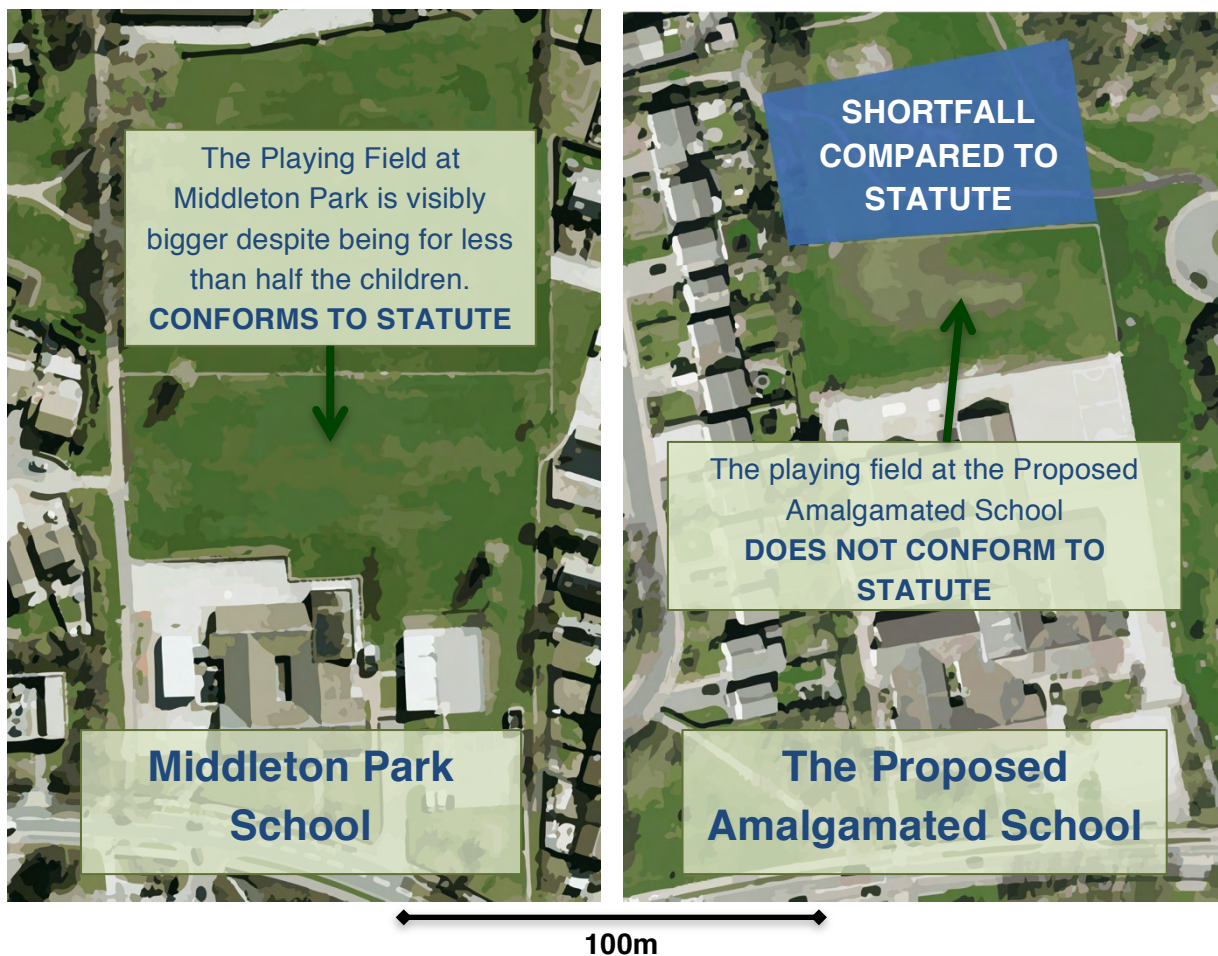
¹⁸ Strong et al. Evidence based physical activity for school- age youth. Journal of Pediatrics 2005;146:732-7

Play is crucial for children’s development, health and well being. “It is one of the most powerful and important elements in children’s enjoyment of their childhood, well-being, health and development”¹⁹. The large outside space at Middleton Park allows the children to play.

It is clear that the outside space is a benefit to the pupils of Middleton Park School and as we work together with an aim of *Getting it right for every child* (GIRFEC)²⁰ the space is a huge advantage in helping them be active, healthy and included - three of the basic requirements noted in the GIRFEC Wellbeing Wheel.

The proportionately larger outdoor space at Middleton Park School provides the potential for new sports and play facilities to be provided. The recently installed basketball hoop has been hugely popular and is clear evidence that the school management and Parent Council plan to continue these developments.

Glashieburn School has a much smaller playing field which is currently below the Sport Scotland recommendations and **the proposed amalgamated school will be even further below this minimum standard with a playing field less than half the size of the Sport Scotland recommendations.**



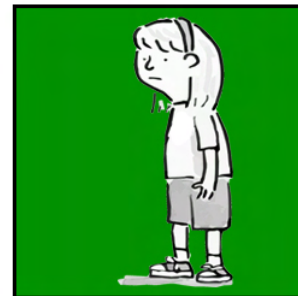
¹⁹ Getting it Right for Play. The Power of Play. An evidence base. Play Scotland 2012

²⁰ Getting it right for every child. Scottish Government 2006

With 6m² per pupil of playing field space at the proposed amalgamated school, compared to 24m² per pupil currently at Middleton Park, there can be no doubt that there will be less opportunity for the children to be active. Less space means increased inactivity with potentially serious consequences. Obesity and poor emotional wellbeing would be two examples. Less grassy space is also known to increase bullying^{21 22}. Less space will result in less opportunity to play and the many benefits this activity has for



**Middleton Park Playing Field Space Per Pupil
= 24m²**



**The Proposed Amalgamated
School Playing Field Space
Per Pupil = 6m²**

As the Commonwealth Games approach and with the memory of the London Olympics still fresh in children's minds we need to engage with *A Games Legacy for Scotland*²³. We need our school estate to provide sport and recreation facilities and activities, helping our children to take part in physical activity, developing skills and confidence to become more active and as a result break the cycle of inactivity and obesity that grips our nation.

There will not be enough outdoor space at the amalgamated school. This will make provision of new facilities to meet Aberdeen City Council and Scottish Government priorities impossible.

Playing field provision at the amalgamated school will be grossly inadequate.

Cutting the children's access to green space by 75% is unacceptable.

For these reasons, this proposal fails our children.

²¹ Brett, A et al (1993) The Complete Playground book.

²² Getting it Right for Play. The Power of Play. Play Scotland 2012

²³ <http://www.Legacy2014.co.uk>

Outdoor Space – Outdoor Learning

Outdoor learning is a key component of A Curriculum for Excellence and has a huge number of benefits for our children. At Middleton Park, we excel in this element and plan to get even better. Our internal courtyard, exclusive nursery outside space, gardens and large school grounds already provide fantastic opportunities and have the potential to be developed further into a first class resource for outdoor learning.

Outdoor learning helps develop the skills of enquiry, critical thinking and reflection necessary for our children, as well as encouraging lifelong involvement and activity in Scotland's outdoors²⁴. Outdoor learning improves physical health, emotional well being and mental health²⁵. It's important and the kids love it!

Our children currently travel near and far for outdoor learning. The P4s love Forest School. The P5s waterwheel experience at the Mill of Benholm and associated work met with acclaim from Education Scotland. Doonie's Farm was a firm favourite with last year's P1s.



Outdoor Learning Further Afield

²⁴ Curriculum for Excellence through outdoor learning, Learning and Teaching Scotland 2010

²⁵ Munzo SA, Children in the outdoors. A literature review, Sustainable Development Research Centre 2009

Our children's outdoor learning is clearly not confined to the school grounds but the school grounds are an important first step in taking pupils outdoors²⁶.



Outdoor Learning at Middleton Park

Our nursery children are outside virtually every day, flowing freely from the nursery classroom to the secure dedicated outdoor nursery space, where they make use of their garden, mud kitchen and climbing frame amongst other things.



Nursery Free Flow

²⁶ Curriculum for Excellence through outdoor learning, Learning and Teaching Scotland 2010

The whole school utilises the external courtyard which is home to our wonderful Eco garden and greenhouse. Gardening and harvesting has provided fantastic learning opportunities in this flexible outdoor space and science experiments from waterwheels to bubble makers are conducted throughout the playground.



Outdoor Learning in the Courtyard

“Local Authorities are required to consider how to make the best use of school grounds and the outdoor spaces as an integral part of the learning environment ensuring that landscape design is at a par with building design”²⁷.

The failure to mention the school grounds in a meaningful way in the Public Consultation Document shows quite clearly that this crucial element of our children’s education has been ignored.

Worse still, the plans for “internal reconfiguration” shown to us towards the end of the consultation period involve the loss of the courtyards – valuable, outside spaces directly connected to classrooms, already in use for outside learning.

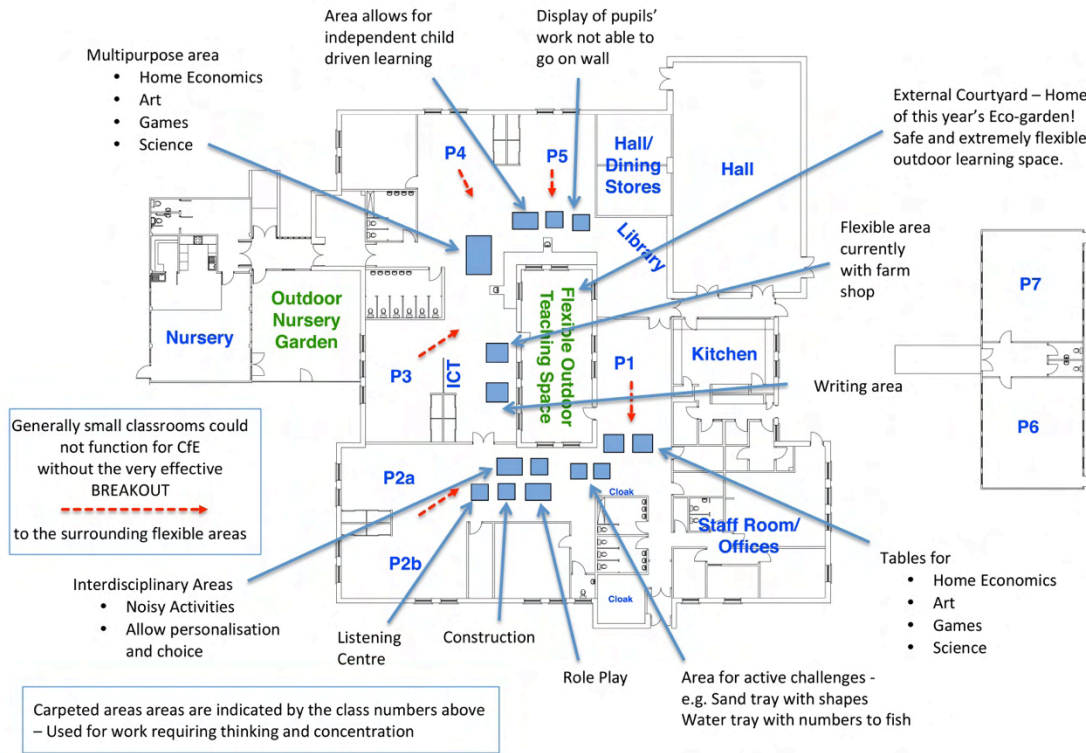
The schools grounds are much smaller at the proposed amalgamated school than Middleton Park School. This will impact on the ability of the children to learn outdoors and reduce opportunities for outdoor classrooms, den building areas, nature gardens, orchards, maths playground and so much more.

For these reasons, this proposal fails our children.

²⁷ Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland’s future. Scottish Government/COSLA 2009

Internal Space

The internal space at Middleton Park School is not perfect. It is not up to 3Rs standard. But it is several orders of magnitude better than the proposed amalgamated school will be.



Our children all enjoy having a classroom which is not in a corridor. There are 3 flexible areas, with wet area facilities, space for active learning, space for working with pupils needing additional support, space for challenges to be set and investigated and space for small group work.

We have a library. Undeniably crucial in a school.



**“If you have a garden and a library you have everything you need” Cicero
We want to keep both!**

Our external courtyard as detailed on page 13 is accessed directly from the classrooms allowing free flow to a sheltered outdoor flexible learning space

We have two general purpose rooms, one of which is innovatively used as our TV Studio for the pupils' weekly news update.

The gym/dining hall can accommodate the whole school to enjoy assemblies as a school, which strengthens our school community, providing leadership opportunities for the older pupils and ensuring the whole school are able to develop their skills as confident individuals and effective contributors.

The same cannot be said for the proposed amalgamated school, where the stated capacity of the Glashieburn facilities of 420 has had to be increased to a proposed 460 as a result of the realisation that the current combined rolls (430) exceeds the current capacity. Despite the Public Consultation Document stating "There is at present no evidence to suggest that significant enabling works would be required to accommodate the additional pupils within the Glashieburn building", the officers have been clear throughout the consultation period that internal reconfiguration would be required to fit the pupils in. When pressed, the officers have presented a number of possibilities. All of which are significant reconfigurations and far from "minor enabling works". No costs associated with these reconfiguration proposals have been presented. We have been assured at the Public Consultation meetings that despite the major structural work indicated on the plans all work will be completed before the proposed start of the proposed amalgamated school in August 2014.

The changes to accommodate the proposed amalgamated school on the existing Glashieburn site are significant enabling works and although there is slight variation between proposed options, are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 List of significant building works required to accommodate both Middleton Park and Glashieburn Schools in the Glashieburn building

- External walls removed
- Roofing over external courtyards
- Internal walls removed and/or built
- Nursery space reduced by up to 50% despite 67% more nursery children
- Reduction and possible relocation of ASN base
- Classrooms and activity areas in corridors
- Reduced staff and office accommodation
- Reduced or no storage space

There are no plans to increase the size of the gym halls at the proposed amalgamated school from their existing 140m² and 133m² and there is no space to do so. When creating a new school Sport Scotland recommends²⁸ that a school the size of the proposed amalgamated school has a main gym hall of at least 324m² and a secondary hall of at least

²⁸ Primary School Sport Facilities. SportScotland 2004

225m². The halls of the proposed amalgamated school are around half this suggested minimum (43% and 59% of suggested minimum respectively).

Clearly multiple sittings for lunches would be required in the proposed amalgamated school. At the consultation meetings we were assured that staggered lunches are successful at other schools of a similar size but were horrified to learn that in Kingswells School this only works because the senior management team of the school supervise the lunch sittings. This is an unacceptable use of their expertise and experience.

There will be no possibility of whole school assemblies as are currently enjoyed by the pupils of Middleton Park, reducing the leadership opportunities available through the weekly pupil led assemblies.

According to the Council's consultation webpage²⁹ the proposed amalgamated school will have the lowest internal floor area per pupil of any current school in Aberdeen. Additionally it will continue to be at the bottom of the league for internal space until 2020³⁰ and likely beyond.

There is large doubt cast on the promise that the amalgamated school can be made ready for the proposed opening. We know school mergers work best and are likely to have less negative impact on attainment if they are well planned and happen relatively quickly³¹. We have seen no evidence of good planning, just numerous unanswered questions, and we now doubt that a merger into a reconfigured school could take place in August 2014 delaying this already drawn out process even further.

It is absolutely clear that there CANNOT be educational benefit from the proposed amalgamated school because

- **There will not be more widespread and flexible learning spaces. Middleton Park currently has five, (including the library and external courtyard) for eight classes. On plans available the amalgamated school will have six (including the library but with no courtyards) for sixteen classes plus the ASN base. (section 7.3)**
- **The lack of space will mean fewer opportunities for active learning, independent learning and collaborative learning. (section 7.3)**
- **The lack of provision for whole school assemblies means less opportunity for leadership opportunities (Section 7.8)**
- **The double Additional Support Needs base will have less space and no external courtyard for their sensory garden or outside learning, with no creation of enhanced facilities. (section 7.9)**
- **Nursery provision has not been considered at all in the proposal (detailed on page 24 of this document).**

²⁹ <http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=53376&sID=23620>

³⁰ <http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=49086&sID=332>

³¹ http://www.haygroup.com/downloads/uk/Staying_on_Track_final_doc.pdf

Middleton Park School – An Innovative School with a Big Vision

“Live Learning” - our weekly news broadcast - showcases the children’s and teachers’ work, and highlights that Middleton Park pupils are being taught and encouraged to learn in innovative ways. In this instance technology, provided by the Parent Council, is used to empower pupils, giving them a platform to share their learning. Viewed via the school website they encourage parents and wider family and friends to engage with children’s education and model how to help children learn.


Please watch at least one or two of these films. They are an important part of our submission and can be found here

www.middletonpark.aberdeen.sch.uk under the ‘Live Learning’ link.

Home→Live Learning

Live Learning

Every Friday afternoon, we will be sharing all our latest news, achievements and our learning through our very own Middleton Park News. Live Learning is part of our journey as we explore innovative ways of using technology to empower our pupils and to give them an authentic audience.



Middleton Park News

Homework for our themed weeks is often ‘released’ on video encouraging parents to be more involved with their children’s homework. We’ve been amazed at the results in our science week, awed by our fashion show in eco week and recently in numeracy week we were flabbergasted by the number seven!

www.middletonpark.aberdeen.sch.uk under the homework link

Home→Homework→Numeracy Home Challenge – 4th October

Numeracy Home Challenge – 4th October

Our video link for our Homework Challenge. Please bring to school on Friday 4th October for our Numeracy Morning.



01:12 vimeo

ICT is also used to enhance learning. Children create their own ebooks and our Friday master classes include podcast tutorials. ICT is being used as a platform to empower the children, providing them with an audience and a purpose for their writing.

The Public Consultation Document claims there will be an emphasis on innovation at the proposed amalgamated school with teachers planning and delivering work more innovatively (sections 7.3, 7.5, 7.11, 7.16)

THIS CAN NOT BE AN EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT OF THE PROPOSED AMALGAMATED SCHOOL because there already is an emphasis on innovation at Middleton Park.



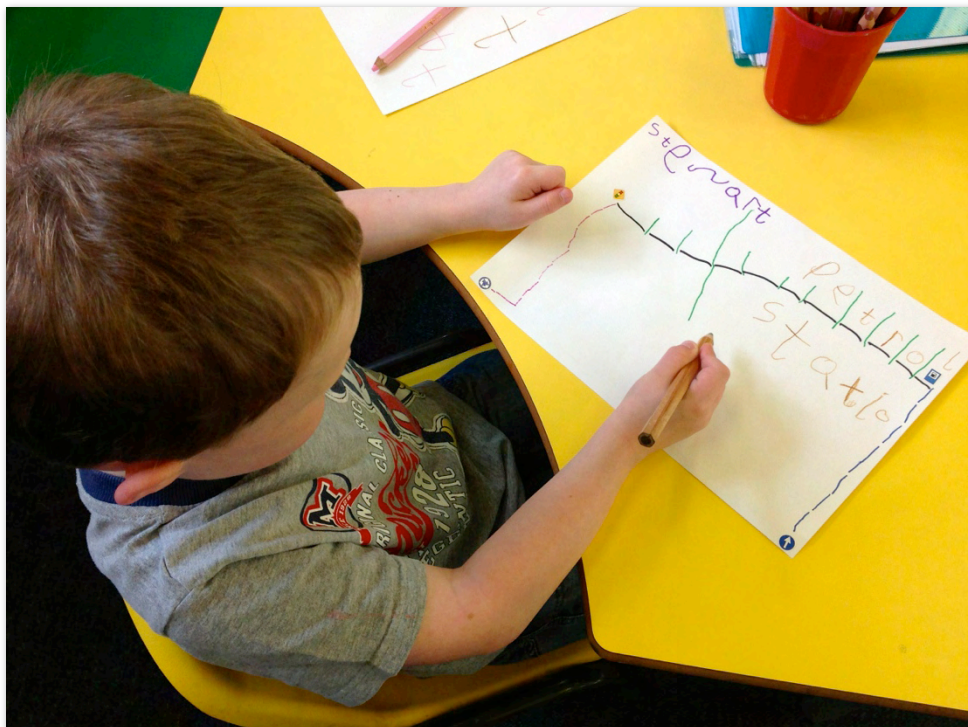
Middleton Park Does Innovation!

Opportunities for Gifted and Talented Pupils

One of Middleton Park School's overarching aims is "to be the best you can be". All of our children are supported and taught at their level, with children grouped according to their ability when appropriate. We encourage increased aspiration and ambition in all our children.

We recognise that some of our pupils are particularly gifted or talented in specific areas and provide opportunities for them to develop their talents. Examples include our upper stages pupils working with Aberdeen University on maths problem solving and some of our pupils presenting at a BEd seminar for University students.

Younger pupils who are ahead of their peers in maths or reading have the opportunity to work with the class above for these activities.



The Public Consultation Document claims there will be enhanced opportunities for gifted and talented pupils in the proposed amalgamated school. THIS CANNOT BE AN EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT OF THE PROPOSED AMALGAMATED SCHOOL because these opportunities already exist.

Middleton Park School – Intentional about Developing Leaders

We offer many opportunities for leadership across the school. Each year the Primary 7 pupils write applications, are interviewed and take part in a leadership sporting activity as part of the process for electing the School and house captains.

We are the only school in Aberdeen City to annually offer Primary 7 pupils the opportunity to undertake a 6 week leadership course equipping them with the skills and knowledge to become Kids in Condition trainers for Primary 1 - 3 classes at lunchtimes. In

All Primary 7 pupils “Buddy” a Primary 1 pupil working hard to help our new pupils settle into the school routine.

Our commitment to developing leaders continues with a new initiative for this term, every Wednesday the Primary 7s organise and deliver our weekly assembly for the rest of the school.

This month, ten of our Primary 7 pupils are attending a Networking Lunch at the Beach Ballroom. They will be giving “Elevator Speeches” to introduce themselves to leaders from the business sector. As a result, we hope to establish several business contacts to share leadership skills back at school.



Building Young Leaders

Leadership opportunities are not restricted to only Primary 7 pupils but instead are encouraged throughout primary school years. Opportunities for paired work, group work, and for groups from across the classes working together allow the children to safely test out, practise and develop their leadership skills. Friday afternoon “master classes”, reading buddies and board game activities are all anticipated eagerly and enjoyed by the children.

They also have the added benefit of helping all the children get to know each other and increasing the sense of family in the school.

The Public Consultation Document suggests that in the proposed amalgamated school there will be a greater number of pupils involved as class or year group representatives on pupil/school councils. This will not be the case. There will be the same number of years with more pupils per class. The constraints of a bigger school will mean that less children get the opportunity to enjoy leadership challenges.

The Public Consultation Document claims there will be enhanced leadership opportunities for pupils in the proposed amalgamated school (sections 7.8 and 7.16).

THIS CAN NOT BE AN EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT OF THE PROPOSED AMALGAMATED SCHOOL. (sections 7.8 and 7.16) because our children currently get many opportunities for responsibility and to experience leadership opportunities. Crucially there will be less opportunities in the proposed amalgamated school.

Nursery and Transitions

Our self contained nursery has its own enclosed garden and outside play area. It's perfectly set up with plenty of space for free flow learning, child led learning and outside learning. Extremely safe and well laid out, the children enjoy choosing their own activities and moving freely between outdoor and indoor learning environments.

The children enjoy daily energetic play, with the freedom to choose indoor or outdoor play most days.

The Nursery are a vital part of our school community often working with the primary ones on projects, enjoying paired reading with older classes and playing their part in the Christmas concerts.

Transition from nursery to Primary one is outstanding resulting in a very smooth start for all our pupils in Primary 1. The school nursery children work throughout the year with the Primary 1 children. By the time the children get to primary 1 they are already very familiar with the school building and feel part of the school. The school works closely with private nursery providers during the six week block of transition activities, to ensure those children have the opportunity to be in school for a morning each week. This is immensely appreciated by parents and allows children to meet and mix with the school nursery children.



Our Brilliant Nursery

All five school nurseries in our Associated School Group (ASG) have waiting lists. This combined with the planned changes to nursery provision from August 2014 make it very clear that our ASG needs more nursery provision. All four plans show that the nursery in the

amalgamated school will struggle to deliver A Curriculum for Excellence for the current number of nursery children and, creating more nursery places here will be impossible.

Nursery provision at Middleton Park School is excellent with a well designed dedicated free flowing learning environment. *The proposed nursery in the amalgamated school will*

- prevent free flow learning occurring;
- reduce the range of activities available;
- increase by necessity, teacher led activities;
- reduce the ability of staff to effectively deliver A Curriculum for Excellence through outdoor learning;
- prevent the staff from giving children the opportunity for daily active and energetic play;
- reduce indoor physical play space by up to 50%;
- lose easy access to a dedicated nursery outdoor area;
- increase pressure on the gym hall space.

Our nursery children will experience educational detriment if this proposal goes ahead. Despite the need to consider the educational benefit of all children affected by the proposal, the nursery children are not mentioned in the Educational Benefit statement

FOR THIS REASON THE PROPOSAL FAILS OUR CHILDREN.

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (asp 2)
Schedule 1—Relevant proposals

SCHEDULE 1
(introduced by section 2)
RELEVANT PROPOSALS

Closure

- 1 (1) A proposal to permanently—
- (a) discontinue a school, or
 - (b) discontinue—
 - (i) all the nursery classes in a school, or

It is proposed to close Middleton Park Nursery with the School, yet this is not mentioned anywhere in the proposal document. The Schools Consultation Act requires this group of children to be considered.

Middleton Park School – Part of the Bigger Picture

Middleton Park School has a key role within Oldmachar Associated Schools Group (ASG). The five primary schools and academy work closely together encouraging each other, sharing skills and knowledge and hosting events across the ASG ensuring all the pupils in the ASG receive the benefit of all the staff's experience and ideas.

The Primary 6s across the ASG are enjoying a joint literacy project working with an author to produce an ePublication. Each chapter will be written by a different school, researching Scottish Inventors. The Academy is collaborating with senior pupils. This is being led by Middleton Park School with funding from the Scottish Book Trust and support from Author Allan Burnett.


With funding obtained by Middleton Park School (from Celebrate, a heritage fund) all the Primary 4-7s from Oldmachar ASG will have a fantastic opportunity to have several weeks of sports training, in collaboration with coaches from Aberdeen Sports Village and Robert Gordon's University, working towards a Commonwealth Games Day at the Sports Village. This amazing experience will be enhanced further with children learning about the countries of the Commonwealth.

The schools also work together with community groups. The local churches work as a team ensuring all the ASG pupils have the opportunity to receive the same experiences to explore Christianity. The most recent event saw the P3s and 4s from each school attend Bible Travellers, travelling back in time to investigate various Bible Stories.

The curricular transitions programme hosted by Oldmachar Academy sees pupils from P3 to P7 attend and enjoy festivals, workshops and experiences hosted by the staff and pupils of Oldmachar Academy. This programme is developed by staff from the Academy and ASG Schools. Please consider the content at the following link part of our submission.

Primary 5 Transitions Event: February


Burns: The Musical
To celebrate Burns Night, the Music and Drama departments worked with students from our ASG schools. Students from the Primary 5 groups in each school came to Oldmachar to learn Burns songs and develop short dramatic pieces. These were then woven into a production by Mrs Gill and Ms Walker. All Primary 5 parents were invited to attend a production of the students' work.




Curricular Transitions
The project was developed as part of the Oldmachar Academy ASG's plan for curricular transitions, which is designed to facilitate contact between secondary staff and primary students, especially in some subjects which students in primary do not often get the chance to experience. The activities designed for Primary 5 students were designed to help them get to know one another and also to let them find out about learning in a secondary environment.



The Impact of the Event
There has been a very positive reaction to the plan for curricular transitions generally and to this event in particular. Parents and students involved really appreciated the event, which is very pleasing for all of those involved in planning and delivering it.



Making New Friends
We believe that helping people to make friends with new people is part of our mission in the community. Here (right) the young people are singing Auld Lang Syne at the end of the production.
Well done to everyone involved!



http://issuu.com/oldmachar_academy/docs/primary_curricular_transitions_prog

This transitions programme is the same for every child no matter which primary school in the ASG they attend. This program is already in place and working very effectively - **it cannot be improved by the proposed amalgamated school.**

The head teachers in the ASG meet fortnightly and the staff share experiences across the ASG schools both formally as part of in-service training and informally by visiting the other schools and teaching spaces. ASG in-service training allows ideas to be exchanged and developed in small groups of teachers from all the schools. This is done in the relative peace and quiet of in-service days and after school sessions without the pressure of a class to teach. Teachers who are specialists for particular subjects use this time to inspire and share their knowledge and good practice across the ASG schools. Middleton Park contributes, with expertise in science, technology, PE, health and well being, literacy and assessment, and receives from this sharing of expertise. **Again this is already working and could not be improved upon by amalgamating Middleton Park and Glashieburn.**

Staff throughout the ASG visit classes observing lessons. This again allows for cross-fertilisation of ideas throughout the ASG. All children therefore benefit from the creativity and knowledge of the ASG staff regardless of their location.

The consultation document makes a number of bold claims regarding teacher's CPD and these are considered in detail on page 29.

Middleton Park is also part of a much wider educational community. Last year our P2s and P3s worked on and shared their Stickman project and puppet show with a school in Shetland using GLOW technology. This is now available as national CPD benefitting the whole of Scotland. Miss Shipley, our science specialist and Mrs Watson, with the

Screen shot of Live Learning video

help of the pupils recently shared the P5s Waterwheel project with the Scottish Learning Festival in Glasgow. This work received accolade from other schools and council areas and is now being shared with hundreds of schools around the country. The Senior Science Officer from Education Scotland commented to the parents of Middleton Park via the weekly learning video "It's my job just now to make sure I share all your [the schools] good work and enthusiasm for science with other schools across Scotland"



And of course we are part of the wider Bridge of Don community with children visiting local Sheltered Housing complexes and engaging with community initiatives such as Angel Tree and food parcels.



Working and Showcasing with our Partners in the Community

Middleton Park has a reputation for being a great school. Families move specifically into our catchment zone, and as pupils are often found showcasing their work in Asda there is no doubt that will continue.

The Public Consultation Document is not correct to state that educational benefits of the proposed amalgamated school would include:

- ***Broader teaching experience (section 7.2)***
- ***Shared teaching experience (section 7.4)***
- ***Teacher collaboration (section 7.5)***
- ***Better CPD (section 7.5, 7.11)***
- ***Shared best practices (section 7.6)***
- ***Shared expertise (section 7.9)***

The proposed amalgamation will not bring any of these benefits as the staff of the ASG schools are already working together sharing experiences regularly. They collaborate to plan and deliver innovative work, sharing best practise with the entire ASG and beyond.

Continuing Professional Development

The importance of meaningful good quality Continued Professional Development for teachers cannot be underestimated. However, the bold claims in the consultation document are misleading. Namely that

- *“There will be a more varied range of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for staff.”* section 7.4
- *“Enhanced 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.”* section 7.11

These claims directly contradict the Aberdeen City Council policy ³² which states *“This service wide policy aims to ensure a **consistency of approach to workforce development and continuous professional development (CPD) across all areas of the Service.**”* The policy strives for a *“consistent and equitable approach to CPD provision across the Service”*. No mention is made in the policy of the need to create large primary schools in order to deliver good CPD. Indeed it is acknowledged that CPD can be provided in a range of ways. Nor are “small schools” seen as inadequate in their provision of CPD opportunities for staff, which is just as well as over half of Aberdeen primary schools have 250 pupils or less.

Already the Associated Schools Group (ASG) meets and shares good practice. Danestone primary acknowledge this on their website³³; *“We have very close working relationships with our neighbouring primary schools, Braehead School, Forehill School, Glashieburn School, Greenbrae School, Middleton Park School & Scotstown School.”* We explore these close links more on page 26.

Each February Aberdeen City Council host a city wide Learning Festival at AECC to showcase good practice and allow teachers at all levels to attend lectures, workshops and exhibitions.

Technology too is being utilised via the GLOW network in Scotland allowing Glow meets and glow TV to link schools across the extremities of Scotland without barriers.

Teacher CPD is enshrined in the McCrone³⁴ Agreement and considered in the recent McCormac³⁵ review. Nowhere do McCormac nor McCrone specifically identify the need for a larger school staff in order for good CPD opportunities to take place.

It is clear that the proposed amalgamated school will have the same CPD opportunities as the two schools currently do. It will not be enhanced or more varied. Increased CPD opportunities cannot be claimed to be an educational benefit.

<http://www.danestoneprimary.co.uk/>

³⁴ A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century: Agreement reached following recommendations made in the McCrone Report Scottish Government 2006

³⁵ Advancing Professionalism in Scottish Teaching: Report of the Review of Teacher Employment in Scotland Scottish Government 2011

Grandhome

The planned large housing development at Grandhome Estate will no doubt increase the number of children in the Bridge of Don area. However, how increasing number of children can be the only need for change given in the Public Consultation document (section 2.2) is baffling. It is claimed that the current zoning for Middleton Park School cannot be sustained until a new school can be built in the Grandhome development. However at present there is no clarity on when a new school will be built, what the socio – economic breakdown of proposed houses for phase one of the project is and the impact upon roll forecast that this will have.

It is even more concerning that the calculations on which the lack of capacity at Middleton Park School is based use a figure of 0.35 children per new house in Grandhome. However a lower figure of 0.25 children per house in Grandhome has been used with the developer to confirm that there is capacity for Phase 1 of the development in Danestone School.

It would surely make more sense to rezone the Grandhome Development between the existing schools until new build schools are provided in phase 2 of the development and beyond. This would also allow integration of the Grandhome development into the existing community as aspired to in the developer’s development plan³⁶.

The timescales of the new development are already delayed and there is no clarity on when a new school in the development will be built. The Consultation proposal document states “first school ...likely to be August 2016” but the Grandhome trust state “primary school ...which is likely to be 2020 at the earliest”³⁷



Why should Bridge of Don’s current kids suffer?

³⁶ <http://www.grandhome.co.uk/downloads/Grandhome%20exhibition%20aw%20lo%20res.pdf>

³⁷ Email communication from Turnberry planning – available on request

The only need for change is for the developer and planners and we therefore ask:

- Are existing Bridge of Don Schools being sacrificed to provide clarity to the developer?
- Why has such a drastic change been based on a development which does not have planning permission?
- Is Middleton Park being closed to ensure local schools are over capacity and force the early construction of a new build school at Grandhome?
- Why has the supposed need to rezone Grandhome been coupled with an unexplained need to close Middleton Park and Glashieburn Schools?
- Why was a simple rezoning not considered as suggested at the informal consultation process in 2012?

Middleton Park can continue to flourish without any children from the new Grandhome development attending the school, the roll forecasts are stable without any Grandhome children for five years and predictions beyond this to quote Derek Samson “are notoriously difficult”.

Therefore there is no need for change.

The Rezoning Enigma

The proposed Grandhome housing development is within the current catchment area of Middleton Park School. Section 3.1.1 of the Public Consultation Document indicates the plan to rezone the very sparsely populated farmland in the current Middleton Park Zone to Brimmond School but with the intention that no pupils from this area would actually go to Brimmond instead that pupils from the Grandhome development would attend Danestone Primary, after a further consultation process next year.

This poses a number of unanswered questions. Principally, why is rezoning taking place for Brimmond School when the sole intention is to send children from the Grandhome development to Danestone Primary? Emails available on the council's website³⁸ clearly show that Aberdeen City Council have already had detailed discussions with Turnberry Planning indicating that Danestone is the preferred option. As the intention is to send these children to Danestone Primary then surely the proposed consultation should have considered Danestone in more detail?

The parents, carers and children of Brimmond and Danestone Schools have not been fully consulted.

Aberdeen City Council identifies the new housing development as the only need to change the school estate in this area. If the children will all be going to Danestone the Grandhome development will have no effect on Middleton Park School. There is no need for school closures.

As suggested at the public consultation meetings a simple process of rezoning the Grandhome development to Danestone would have solved the concern around capacity at Middleton Park School. This causes us to question why we have been forced through an unsettling and lengthy consultation process on the wrong consultation question only to have the issue revisited next year to rezone the children from Brimmond to Danestone.

Rezoning the Grandhome development to Brimmond makes no sense.

Rezoning the Grandhome development to Danestone seems acceptable to all. We know discussions with planners have identified Danestone as the best option due to its proximity to the new houses. We have been reassured by the developers that they will implement safe crossing measures on the Parkway.

None of this is reliant on the closure of Middleton Park School.

³⁸ Aberdeen City Council FOI 13-0445

Roll Forecasting

We have been told throughout the consultation period, that roll projections are difficult to predict. Based on the previous projections for Middleton Park School this has certainly borne true.

- The Need For Change (section 2.2) is predicated on:
 - projected pupil numbers at Middleton Park exceeding its capacity in 2018 due to the proposed housing development at the Grandhome Estate;
 - an alleged falling roll at Middleton Park without the Grandhome development.
- All previous Middleton Park roll forecasts have underestimated the actual school roll.
- No uncertainties or variants in the school roll forecasts are provided; where the roll is described as falling is where it will have the highest uncertainty as the children are not yet born.
- We provide an assessment of the uncertainty of the school roll forecasts concluding the forecasts support a steady roll at the least, not a falling one.
- Birth rate and house sale data in the area points to a steady or increasing roll, not a falling one.
- The number of pupils per household being used by the council for the same homes in the Grandhome Estate is different in different situations.

Section 2.2 of the public consultation document states that projected pupil numbers at Middleton Park will exceed capacity by 2018 due to the proposed housing development at the Grandhome Estate. The Grandhome development will undoubtedly lead to new pupils at Middleton Park and nearby schools. However, we doubt the veracity of the 'Need for Change' argument due to the uncertainties and past performance of Middleton Park forecasts when compared with actual rolls.

Middleton Park without Grandhome

Section 5.2.9 of the consultation document predicts "a significant decrease in the projected roll for Middleton Park" if Grandhome pupils do not attend Middleton Park. This 'decrease' is from 178 pupils in 2018 to 169 pupils in 2020. The consultation document makes no statement about the level of uncertainty on the school roll forecasts. So, is a drop of 9 pupils (5%) in the forecast roll really significant?

The actual school roll for Middleton Park from 2000 to 2013 is compared to several forecasts during that period³⁹ in Figure 1. The 2012 forecast shown here does not include Grandhome and 2010 forecast is truncated as its figures for 2015 and beyond included the Grandhome development.

³⁹ Email dated 25/9/13, from David Wright, Subject: School Roll Query – available on request

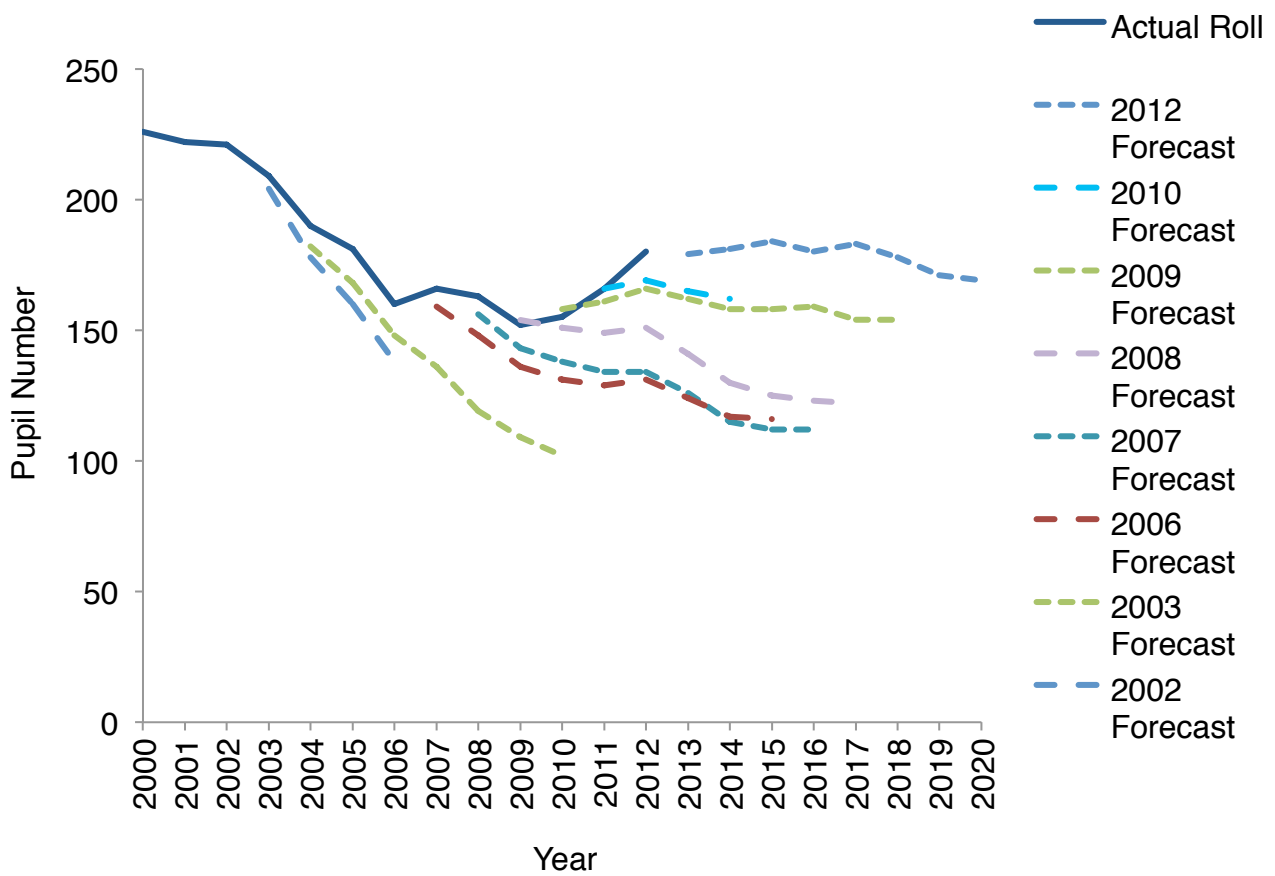


Figure 1: Actual Middleton Park school roll (solid line) compared against different school roll forecasts. Forecasts are identified by base year.

All forecasts underestimate Middleton Park’s actual roll, apart from the 2012 forecast where it is too early to tell.

The 2007-based forecast, used as justification to close Middleton Park during the 2008 consultation, predicted 134 pupils in 2012. The actual school roll in 2012 was 180, 34% higher, despite no new housing in the catchment zone! This inaccuracy is considerably higher than the 5% decrease in the final two years of the 2012 forecast.

Figure 1 also suggests that due to the trend-based approach taken in the forecast model, there is a lag between the actual and forecast roll which has led to systematically underestimating the Middleton Park school roll.

We appreciate the council officer's assistance in making the spreadsheets used in deriving the 2012 forecasts available to us during the consultation period and in answering questions. In reviewing the spreadsheets we concluded they were accurate in that they implemented the desired calculations as intended. We are therefore not asserting that the calculations used to make the school roll forecast are incorrectly implemented. Rather, that a greater appreciation of the uncertainties and assumptions upon which the forecasts are based needs to be reflected in the consultation document.

This is especially important considering that the population estimates and projections used to derive the school forecasts still rely to an extent on the 2001 census. It will not be until Spring 2014 that results from the 2011 census results will become available for use as input into the school roll forecasts ⁴⁰.

A report by the Population Projections Working Group⁴¹, provides further insight into the uncertainties involved in council area population forecasts. In the report, two different methods of estimating populations were compared to estimate an uncertainty in the population forecast. These population forecasts are used by Aberdeen City Council in preparing the school roll forecast. The PPWG report:

- assessed the uncertainty of population projections as +/- 6% (50% Confidence level) for whole council area populations.
- stated that the age group predicted worst across all council areas is 0-15 year olds. We can only speculate what this means for the uncertainties in primary age projections.
- noted the accuracy of certain forecasts to be a fluke, caused by competing factors offsetting each other to arrive at a similar result. A seemingly accurate forecast of one primary school roll in one year cannot therefore be taken as evidence that the forecast method is accurate, contrary to an assertion made by a Council Officer at the public consultation meeting on 1/10/13.

Based on this evidence and the historical tendency to underestimate Middleton Park's school roll we therefore consider the forecast is at least steady, and most definitely not decreasing.

Furthermore we consider there are other indicators that indicate the Middleton Park roll is likely to increase in the future rather than simply remain steady:

- The number of births for the Middleton Park School catchment zone (from Scottish National Statistics) is shown below. It shows a rising birth rate. This will support the Middleton Park School roll into the future without the Grandhome development.
- House sale data also suggests that an influx of people continue into the area, and given the nature of housing these are likely to be families with children.

⁴⁰ Email dated 1/10/13, from Tom Snowling, Subject: RE: Roll figures – available on request

⁴¹ Accuracy of the Sub-National Population Projections for Scotland, PPWG (06) 09.

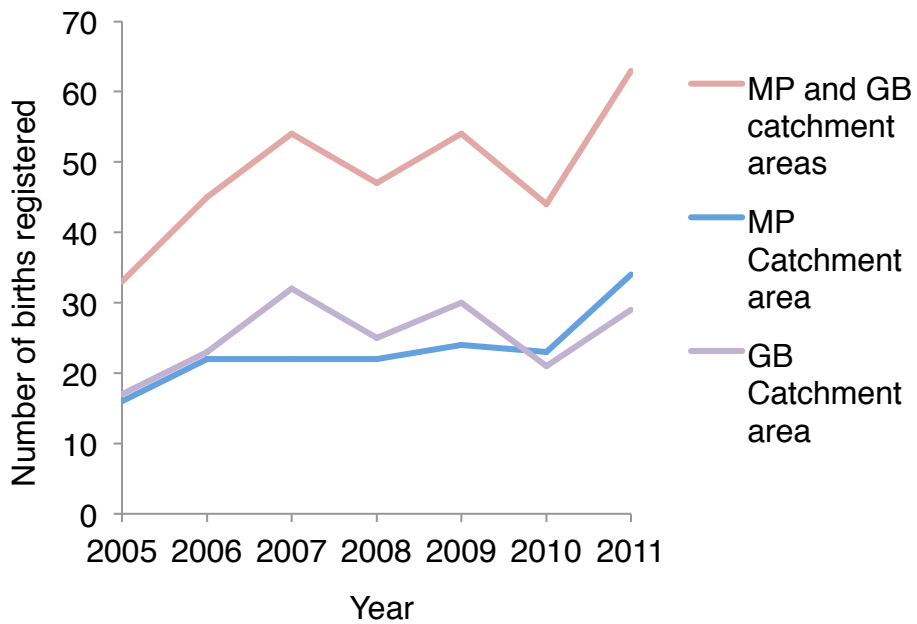


Figure 2 Number of births registered in Middleton Park and Glashieburn catchment areas by year.

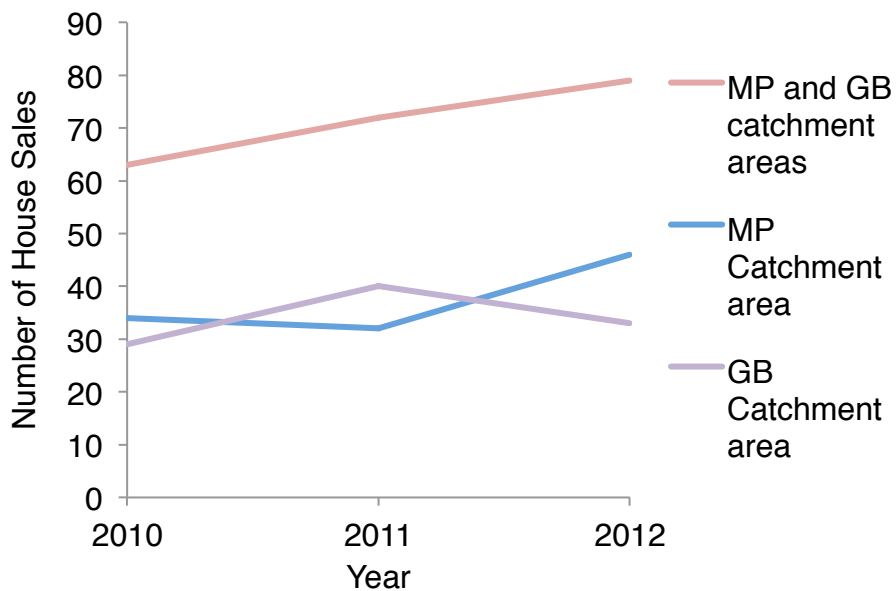


Figure 3 Number of house sales in Middleton Park and Glashieburn catchment areas by year.

Middleton Park with Grandhome

Section 5.2.9 of the consultation document shows the 2012-based school roll forecast for Middleton Park, including pupils from the Grandhome development. That forecast assumes 0.35 pupils/household for the Grandhome development, a figure consistently used in all Middleton Park forecasts since 2002. Yet in trying to decide when the Grandhome developer should deliver their first primary school the council has agreed a figure of only 0.25 pupils/household with the developer⁴². This change is apparently linked only to the school receiving the Grandhome pupils; it is not linked with a change in the composition of housing e.g. more single bedroom dwellings. Using the lower figure conveniently allows the conclusion that Danestone Primary will have sufficient capacity for pupils from Grandhome.

Using the lower number of pupils per household, and the council’s own spreadsheets provided to us during the consultation period, we have generated two Middleton Park roll forecasts, to compare with the official 2012-based forecast in Figure 4:

- using 0.25 pupils/household;
- using 0.25 pupils/household and delaying the Grandhome development by 2 years.

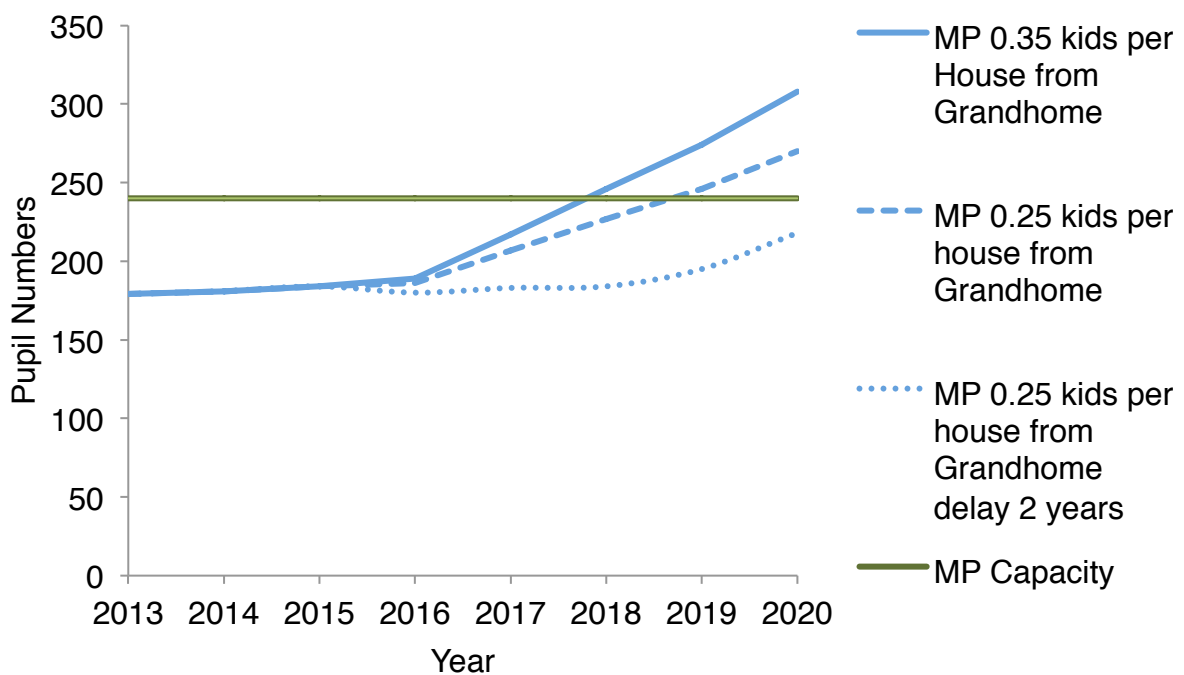


Figure 4 Comparison of Middleton Park school roll forecasts using different assumptions of pupil/household and start dates for Grandhome

With 0.25 pupils/household Middleton Park is forecasted to exceed capacity by only 6 pupils in 2019 then 30 in 2020. This is significantly less than suggested in the consultation

⁴² FOI 13-0445: Correspondence –Educational Provision

document, and in particular the number of pupils listed in Table 8. The numbers shown in that table are only approximations and do not reflect the details used in the school roll forecast.

If we assume that the Grandhome development is delayed by two years then Middleton Park's roll is not forecast to exceed capacity. It is worth noting that the start of house-building at Grandhome is slipping later and later as evidenced in three different documents ^{43 44 45}.

If the consultation document is accurate and the Grandhome developer delivers a new school by 2016, there is no need for the council to do anything other than part (b) of this proposal to prevent Middleton Park roll exceeding capacity. However, the rhetorical tautology, "The proposal is the proposal", used by Gayle Gorman at a public consultation meeting means we can only respond to both parts of the proposal.

The school roll forecasts seem to be being used by the council to suit their arguments rather than inform them. A falling school roll forecast in 2008 resulted in plans to close Middleton Park. A rising school roll forecast is now being used as a reason to close Middleton Park. Even a steady roll does not avoid closure; it is instead interpreted as a falling roll and hence necessitates closing Middleton Park.

The proposal is based on 0.35 pupils/household in the Grandhome development. Council officers have agreed 0.25 pupils/household with the Grandhome developer in deciding how many houses can be built prior to the first primary school in Grandhome. This creates the impression that the Middleton Park capacity is exceeded while allowing council officers to claim there is sufficient space at Danestone.

The proposal does not provide any information regarding uncertainty in school rolls. A conservative lower estimate on uncertainty would appear to be +/- 6%. Past inaccuracies in Middleton Park's school roll forecasts have been as high as 34%. Without Grandhome, and using these measures of uncertainty, the 2012 Middleton Park school roll forecast can be assessed as steady, not falling. Birth rates and house sales in the locality may also indicate a natural trend towards an increasing roll.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE IS NOT SUPPORTED BY THE SCHOOL ROLL FORECASTS (Section 2.2).

⁴³ 2010based school roll forecast, Aberdeen City Council

⁴⁴ 2012-based school roll forecast, Aberdeen City Council

⁴⁵ Land Audit January 2013

Suitability

Middleton Park parents continue to question how the officers can demonstrate educational benefit from sending our children to a school where the building and grounds are far less suitable to deliver A Curriculum for Excellence compared to the school they currently attend.

Schools are assessed and rated for suitability to deliver A Curriculum for Excellence. The guidance⁴⁶ states that “the Headteacher is best placed to bring the assessment together, taking account as appropriate of the views of others, principally pupils and staff”.

The frequency of the assessment is left to the individual authorities. At the public consultation meetings Charlie Penman indicated that normal practice for Aberdeen City Council would be to reassess the suitability of schools every 18 months.

Suitability ratings were performed in August/September 2012 in preparation for the report to the Education Culture and Sport Committee on 7th February 2013. Even at that meeting there was confusion over the suitability requiring a recess in the committee proceedings.

The overall rating for Middleton Park was ‘B’ (Satisfactory) for a full capacity of 240 compared to ‘C’ (poor) for Glashieburn School for a full capacity of 420.

Suitability Assessment - Overall Rating Matrix

This sheet is intended to allow authorities to look at the significance of factors across the whole school, and therefore to make troubleshooting more straightforward.

School: **Glashieburn School**

Weighting 50% 15% 15% 10% 10%
Score out of 20 12 13 13 10 7 11.6

	General Learning & Teaching	Internal Social Areas	Internal Facilities	External Social Areas	External Facilities	Total:
Functionality	B	B	B	C	D	B
Accessibility	B	B	B	C	D	B
Environmental Conditions	C	C	C	C	D	C
Safety & Security	C	B	C	B	D	C
Fixed Furniture & Fittings	C	C	B	D	B	C
Total:	C	B	B	C	D	C

Range	Rating
5.0 - 7.5	D
7.5 - 12.5	C
12.5 - 17.5	B
17.5 - 20.0	A

Overall Suitability Rating = **C**

Suitability Assessment - Overall Rating Matrix

This sheet is intended to allow authorities to look at the significance of factors across the whole school, and therefore to make troubleshooting more straightforward.

School: **Middleton Park Nursery/Primary**

Weighting 50% 15% 15% 10% 10%
Score out of 20 17 17 16 18 16 16.9

	General Learning & Teaching	Internal Social Areas	Internal Facilities	External Social Areas	External Facilities	Total:
Functionality	B	B	B	A	B	B
Accessibility	A	A	A	A	A	A
Environmental Conditions	B	B	B	A	B	B
Safety & Security	A	A	B	B	B	A
Fixed Furniture & Fittings	B	B	B	B	B	B
Total:	B	B	B	A	B	B

Range	Rating
5.0 - 7.5	D
7.5 - 12.5	C
12.5 - 17.5	B
17.5 - 20.0	A

Overall Suitability Rating = **B**

⁴⁶ The Suitability Core Fact: Scotland's School Estate. Scottish Government 2008.

As a whole, the results showed that Middleton Park School buildings and grounds were performing well with minor problems and were supporting the delivery of A Curriculum for Excellence.

As far as Glashieburn School was concerned, the results clearly showed that at capacity the external facilities didn't support the delivery of A Curriculum for Excellence. (the grounds in that case were assessed as seriously impeding the delivery of activities that were needed for children and communities in the school). It showed a very concerning lack of external facilities which clearly wouldn't be suitable for an increase in the pupil numbers! There were also concerns for the general learning and teaching, internal social areas, internal facilities as well as external social areas, with most of them rated as 'C' (poor).

However, the public consultation document contains very different suitability assessments despite there being no significant works to either school. The consultation proposal (section 5.1.22) refers to these new assessments as "moderated". There was no need to reassess the suitability as it had been assessed only 11 months earlier. It was moderated by the Officers, with minimal, if any consultation with the key stakeholders as is noted to be best practise in the Suitability Core Facts document. The facility proposed to accommodate the amalgamated school has been "moderated" in its suitability to a 'B' (satisfactory) compared to a 'C' (poor) in the last survey with all previous concerning areas rated as 'D' (bad) now rated as 'C' (poor). To achieve a 'B' rating a school must score between 12.5 and 17.5. Glashieburn scored 12.7. **Barely scraping a 'B'**.

Suitability Assessment - Overall Rating Matrix

This sheet is intended to allow authorities to look at the significance of factors across the whole school, and therefore to make troubleshooting more straightforward.

School: **Glashieburn School**

Weighting 50% 15% 15% 10% 10%
Score out of 20 13 13 13 12 11 12.7

	General Learning & Teaching	Internal Social Areas	Internal Facilities	External Social Areas	External Facilities	Total:
Functionality	B	B	B	C	C	B
Accessibility	B	B	B	B	C	B
Environmental Conditions	C	C	C	C	C	C
Safety & Security	B	B	C	B	C	B
Fixed Furniture & Fittings	C	C	B	C	B	C
Total:	B	B	B	C	C	B

Range	Rating
5.0 - 7.5	D
7.5 - 12.5	C
12.5 - 17.5	B
17.5 - 20.0	A

Overall Suitability Rating = **B**

The facility that is proposed for closure has been "moderated" in its suitability. Although the overall suitability rating for Middleton Park School remained as 'B' (satisfactory), some of the ratings have been changed from 'A' (good) to 'B' (satisfactory).

Suitability Assessment - Overall Rating Matrix

This sheet is intended to allow authorities to look at the significance of factors across the whole school, and therefore to make troubleshooting more straightforward.

School: Middleton Park Nursery/Primary

Weighting 50% 15% 15% 10% 10%
 Score out of 20 15 15 15 18 16 15.4

	General Learning & Teaching	Internal Social Areas	Internal Facilities	External Social Areas	External Facilities	Total:
Functionality	B	B	B	A	B	B
Accessibility	B	B	B	A	A	B
Environmental Conditions	B	B	B	A	B	B
Safety & Security	B	B	B	B	B	B
Fixed Furniture & Fittings	B	B	B	B	B	B
Total:	B	B	B	A	B	B

Range	Rating
5.0 - 7.5	D
7.5 - 12.5	C
12.5 - 17.5	B
17.5 - 20.0	A

Overall Suitability Rating = B

The relationship between the commencement of the Statutory Consultation Process and the “moderation” of the suitability assessments seems very convenient.

The suitability assessments from 2012 were carried out by those who know the schools best.

No work or alterations has been carried out at either school.

We would therefore dispute the validity of this moderation.

Even the August 2013 ‘moderated’ suitability only just escaped a ‘C’ rating.

Glashieburn School was rated as “Poor” in 2012 and that is the most accurate assessment of it’s suitability. The proposed amalgamated school would have school buildings and grounds which impede the delivery of A Curriculum for Excellence.

The Route to School

Currently the majority of children walk to and from Middleton Park School. For those children who do travel by car, there is off-road parking just across the road at Asda and a safe pelican crossing. Additionally the Mains of Scotstown car park and footpaths away from traffic lead to a gate into the playground at the rear of the school.

The proposed amalgamated school lies at the edge of its catchment area forcing a greater proportion of children to travel a longer distance to school.

Practically, this will mean that many children who currently walk to school will be driven. Walking from the periphery of the zone in Valentine Drive to Glashieburn takes over half an hour, a total of 3 hours per day would be required to take a nursery and primary aged child to and from school. This is not practical. While it must be expected that some children will have further to walk to school than others living nearer, the position of the school at the edge of the catchment means a greater number of children live an impractical distance away from the proposed amalgamated.

The proposal will increase congestion and pollute our environment

There is currently congestion in the streets around Glashieburn at school drop-off and pick-up times. This can only get worse when up to 460 primary pupils and 60 nursery pupils arrive at the same time, particularly as a greater proportion are being driven.

There are already complaints from residents around Glashieburn School.

"I can't get out of my driveway at school start and finish times at the moment, never mind adding another 200 kids!" Local Resident

The proposal will put children's safety at risk

For children being driven, there is no safe drop-off and pick-up zone unlike other Aberdeen schools with similarly large pupil numbers.

Jesmond Drive is the main access road in the area and we are aware of children who have been hospitalised after being knocked down outside Glashieburn School. We are concerned that creating a school with hugely increased numbers of pupils travelling by car would only make serious accidents more likely. Information obtained under the Freedom of Information Act has indicated an increased number of accident incidents in the area⁴⁷. The three schools on Jesmond Drive currently stagger their start and finish times to ease congestion but this would not be practical to do at one large school with siblings of different ages.

⁴⁷ IM-FOI-2013-0996 Police Scotland

The proposal will be bad for children’s health

Fewer children (and adults) will walk to the proposed amalgamated school. A travel survey of Middleton Park School parents indicated that the number of children travelling to school by car will increase by 169% as detailed in Appendix II Traffic Survey Results.

The health benefits of being more active are well-known – reduction in obesity, reduction in development of diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer. Walking is good for mental wellbeing too with children arriving at school refreshed and ready to learn.

The council and Scottish Government have clear policies on improving health and wellbeing including

- Scottish Government National Indicators⁴⁸ to Increase Physical Activity and Increase the Proportion of Healthy Weight Children and the council’s
- Aberdeen City Council – “A Guide to School Travel Plans”⁴⁹ which aims to increase levels of walking and cycling.



The Safe Walk Home

⁴⁸ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Performance/scotPerforms/indicator>

⁴⁹ A Guide to School Travel Plans. Aberdeen City Council, May 2012

The proposal will mean loss of independence and opportunity to play

The majority of children in P4-7 currently walk without adults to and from school. Living Streets⁵⁰ says “Walking to school can help your child build independence, road safety and social skills.” In a study by Living Streets, 84 per cent of the children who walked to school often meet up with classmates on the way to school⁵¹. The route to the proposed amalgamated school would be longer and would include crossing a congested Jesmond Drive. Many parents would not be comfortable allowing primary aged children to walk alone.

The proposal will cause difficulties for before and after school clubs

There has been no mention of arrangements for before and after school clubs in the public consultation document. The Glashieburn children currently use the Braehead club, being driven by minibus to and from school. The club has no spaces at present for either breakfast or after school. The Middleton Park children are walked to and from school from the Oldmachar Out of School Club based at Forehill School. The club have already indicated to parents that should the proposed amalgamated school go ahead, children will have to walk to and from their Forehill base to Glashieburn daily.

The proposal will disrupt childcare arrangements for some parents

The two schools currently start and finish at different times to ease congestion on Jesmond Drive. Timings of school start and finish will disrupt existing childcare arrangements of some working parents.

The suggested walking times in the public consultation document are inaccurate

The table of travel distances and walking times in appendix 1 of the public consultation document suggest a walking pace of 25 minutes per mile. Whilst we would agree this is a reasonable walking pace, it allows no stopping time to embrace outdoor learning on the way to school. The public consultation document wrongly states it would take an extra 7 minutes to walk half a mile. Clearly at the recommended walking pace it would take 12.5 minutes to walk half a mile.

This proposal has no benefits for children’s health and is in direct conflict with local and national initiatives encouraging walking for health and the environment. It puts them at increased road traffic accident risk and causes disruption to local residents and childcare arrangements.

⁵⁰ <http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/>

⁵¹ Backseat Children: How our Car Dependent Culture Compromises Safety on our Streets. Living Streets May 2008

A 25 year plan?

In February 2013 Aberdeen City Council's Convener of Education, Culture and Sport Committee Councillor Jenny Laing said: "We have to ensure that the educational provision within the city is the best it can possibly be. In order to achieve this it is essential that we draw up a strategy that provides clear direction and vision for the next 20 to 25 years.

"We have to make important decisions that will affect education in the city for many years to come. That is why it is vital that we make the right decisions and, by working together, ensure we get the best educational outcomes for this and future generations."

This proposal is not the promised 25 year plan. It not only provides NO educational benefit for our children now but will cause us huge problems in the very near future.

Aberdeen city council is clear in its aim to have a maximum of 18 children in Primary 1-3 classes. The plan of possible reconfiguration only has 16 classroom spaces. We need all 16 to fit in kids at MAXIMUM CLASS SIZES. Remember the nursery and ASN base will have minimal space as well. To achieve the aims we would need 18 classrooms (with our current combined roll). There is no possibility of achieving this aim within the Glashieburn building.

Kingswells School has very similar pupil numbers to the proposed amalgamated school although more space per pupil than the proposed amalgamated school. It is currently dealing with the problem of having no space left and is roll capped. Why, when the problems of being at/over capacity are so clear would you purposefully create a "new" school with the same issues? We can only accurately predict the next 4-5 years. What is the contingency plan if your roll predictions are wrong? We should remember that the 2008 roll predictions were out by 34% based on the 2012 actual roll.

If, as is likely, the amalgamated school will be roll capped, will that mean siblings can't attend the same school as each other? Where will the 'extra' children go?

The number of pupils in the combined zones is more likely to rise not fall in the next 25 years as detailed. Where will these 'extra' children go?

A housing development, as is likely, on the Middleton Park site would result in more children. They are not accounted for in the roll projections. Where will these 'extra' children go?

There is no possibility for extension on the Glashieburn site as there is already limited outside space. The council officers could not tell us the lifespan of this building or what would happen when the building reaches the end of its life?. Assuming the Middleton Park site will be used for other things there would be NO space left in the zone for a new/bigger school.

If this proposal goes ahead there will be no option to build a facility fit for the 21st century in the future. There will be NO suitable site in the zone or local area.

So what is a 25 year plan?

We are not against change. We are not against the possibility of a bigger school. We are against badly thought out change that will result in a detriment to our children's education. The children in the current Bridge of Don deserve the best education and facilities are a crucial element in achieving that⁵². Our schools aren't up to 3Rs standard but this proposal lowers the current standard and takes away the possibility of improvement in the future. Why are we not implementing a true staged 25 year plan to allow us to aim for 3Rs or even better!

If we cannot improve on standards now, at least let us not lower them. Let's give due consideration to the uncertainties in roll predictions, especially with so much change planned in housing and road infrastructure in the area.

Let's plan for when there can have a new build, where it will be and who it will be for. But until then the status quo is the best option.

We must not waste money now on a very short-term solution which will create long term problems. There must be resilience built into any plan.

We believe that by working together as parents and carers, with children, communities and the Education authority, we can make the school estate in the Oldmachar ASG innovative, award winning and successful with the necessary resilience to cope with future change, leading the way for educational facilities in Scotland.

⁵² Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future. Scottish Government 2009

This Proposal Won't Work Because YOU SAID SO BEFORE!

In 2008, in a report of informal consultations on the school estate strategy, the joining of Middleton Park and Glashieburn Schools into the existing Glashieburn building was considered⁵³.

Education Officers put the following points forward for consideration.

1. The Glashieburn building could accommodate the combined rolls with some internal reconfiguration. **BUT**;
 - a. There is significant concern that there will be loss of designated areas including ICT, Additional Support Needs (ASN) Base and library.
 - b. There is significant concern the teaching areas will be cramped for the delivery of a modern curriculum in a school fit for the 21st century.
 - c. The management of other aspects of an enlarged school would also be affected such as dining arrangements, playground provision.
 - d. Work would be required outside the school in order to provide access for parents and staff.
 - e. Work may be required to provide sufficient accommodation for the nursery.
2. By reducing the number of schools, there would be significant budget savings in terms of the running and maintaining of a school building. There is also a potential source of financial income should there be disposal of the vacated site.

They also acknowledged

1. An impact on children's performance
2. Disruption for children and staff
3. Travel difficulties for some pupils
4. Loss of individual school identity/ethos

In 2008 the proposal, almost identical to the one we are now considering, was **REJECTED**. It is clear from their words above why. Nothing has changed. The building has not been extended. We still require space for a double ASN base and a larger nursery. A Curriculum for Excellence requires significant internal and external space. Parking and traffic congestion around the site remain a huge concern for the local community.

It is clear that, despite the officers' protestations, the only reason we are considering this previously rejected poor proposal again is not educational benefit but financial savings.

⁵³ School Estate Strategy – report on informal consultation of medium term options. September 2008

Financial Implications

The main driver for this proposal appears to be financial, not the required educational benefit. We appreciate the council does not have unlimited financial resources but this proposal does not document the true cost implications of the proposal.

The consultation document states both schools are already below the City average cost per pupil even if they exclude the expensive 3R's schools. The cost per pupil per year is £3,479 at Middleton Park compared with £3,943 City average, excluding 3R's.

There is no sense in closing a high-attaining successful school, which is already good value for money.

There is no **equality of provision** in a proposal which lowers the quality of educational experience for children whose education already costs less per pupil than average.

No consideration has been made of the costs of the internal reconfiguration works required to fit all the children in. It has now been acknowledged that these are not as minor as first proposed, with consideration of roofing over the courtyards, a need for more toilet provision and walls needing knocked down and built.

No consideration has been made of potential costs or indeed whether there is any possibility of buying adjacent land to extend the inadequate playground or parking facilities.

With insufficient space for a dedicated ICT room or space for desktop computers in each classroom, the costs of installing wireless internet and buying portable devices have not been taken into consideration.

No costs have been estimated for adding another pedestrian crossing on Jesmond Drive or creating a pick up and drop off zone, which the initial travel assessment appendix states may be needed.

This proposal has not been costed properly and does not represent good value for money.

Educational Detriment Statement

The implications of the proposal are so significant that rather than be of education benefit or even of educational equivalence, they represent significant educational detriment.

The following Educational Detriment Statement details the detriments to each affected group and is evidenced from the contents of this submission.

Current and future pupils of the proposed amalgamated school

The cramped conditions of the proposed amalgamated school, along with fewer flexible learning spaces, inadequate gym space and classrooms situated in thoroughfares will provide a worse learning environment for pupils and working environment for staff.

Small classrooms and fewer flexible learning spaces per child in the proposed amalgamated school will result in teachers having to use fewer approaches to learning and teaching. Space constraints will mean less active teaching, less paired and group work, less independent learning and less personalisation of the curriculum for the pupils.

A Curriculum for Excellence will be harder to implement and excel at in the proposed amalgamated school. This is mainly due to interior space constraints, lack of outdoor space and larger classes.

Staff will become demotivated and discouraged in the proposed amalgamated school as they will find themselves teaching in small cramped classrooms, some situated in corridors, with larger class sizes and more classes trying to use a fewer number of flexible areas. New initiatives will become harder to implement as space will be at a premium and required for basic curriculum activities. The time taken in teaching and marking work for larger classes will reduce time available to meet with other teachers and share ideas.

A severe lack of outdoor space, and the probable loss of the external courtyards at the proposed amalgamated school will impair delivery of A Curriculum for Excellence through outdoor learning. This will affect children's learning journeys as well as their physical, mental and emotional health.

A merger to the proposed amalgamated school will result in lower attainment levels (than if the status quo remains) for most children.

The smaller number of teaching staff in the proposed amalgamated school (compared to the current situation) will result in the overall loss of some experienced and specialist teachers.

A small playing field and pressure on time available in the gym hall in the proposed amalgamated school will result in the government targets for PE not being met. Lack of space means no possibility of sports facilities improving in the future, causing a higher proportion of our children to become obese and inactive.

An inadequately sized playground will result in fewer opportunities for play, negatively affecting the physical, emotional and mental health of our children.

Fewer children will be able to walk to school independently. This will prevent the free play which occurs when children “set their own agenda, making decisions along the way, setting the pace, observing, interacting and reacting as they travel”⁵⁴ and remove an opportunity to learn to be responsible, learn about time management and form relationships with friends.

The larger class sizes will result in less individual attention from teachers.

Current and future nursery pupils.

There will be no space for free flow learning. The loss of space will prevent the staff from providing a range of activities for the children to choose from. Activities will be by necessity much more teacher led.

The ability of nursery staff to effectively deliver A Curriculum for Excellence through outdoor learning will be reduced because of the loss of the outdoor courtyard and the loss of easy access to a dedicated nursery space.

It will become more difficult for the nursery children to have the opportunity for the recommended daily active and energetic play. The loss of indoor physical play space, the loss of easy access to a dedicated nursery outdoor area and the increased pressure on the gym hall space will all contribute to this.

The educational detriments outlined within this document for current and future pupils of the proposed amalgamated school, and current and future nursery pupils of the proposed amalgamated school will greatly diminish the educational experience of our children and disadvantage them in the increasingly competitive market place.

⁵⁴ Getting it Right for Play. The Power of Play. Play Scotland 2012

Conclusion

This document clearly demonstrates Middleton Park is a vibrant, innovative school that is delivering high quality 21st century education.

The close collaboration between home and school is demonstrated by the strong Parent Council, the high levels of parental involvement in the school and is evidenced throughout this submission.

The school is thriving in local and educational communities.

Conversely this document demonstrates that the proposed amalgamated school would struggle to deliver A Curriculum for Excellence. The teachers would become demotivated and the children confined by the drastically reduced space.

There would be no educational benefit to any child. This proposal is to their detriment with:

- The lowest internal floor space per pupil of any school in Aberdeen
- 75% reduction in playing field space per pupil
- ASN base teaching space drastically reduced
- Nursery space significantly reduced despite an additional class
- Class sizes increased in small classrooms
- Loss of valuable outdoor learning areas

Roll forecasts over the years have repeatedly grossly underestimated the actual roll of Middleton Park School. The birth rates and housing sales indicate that our school will continue to thrive without children from the Grandhome development.

A simple rezoning of the Grandhome development would have alleviated any need for change at Middleton Park School.

The proposal details financial savings that do not include key costs. Our school, per pupil, costs well below the Aberdeen average. Financial savings cannot be used to justify closing our schools.

This proposal does not make the school estate more efficient. It simply creates the most cramped school in Aberdeen with no flexibility for an increase in roll or scope for improvement. It removes any possibility for future planning in the school zone.

The only conclusion based on the Public Consultation Document and supplementary material provided by the Council Officers is that this proposal must be rejected.

Appendix I: The Consultation Document – Not fit for Purpose.

Please find below lists of just some of the **errors** in the Public Consultation Document. The factual errors, omissions and misleading statements have prevented a fair consultation process and made it impossible for anyone to make a decision based on the information contained within it.

The Public Consultation Document contains factual errors. These are detailed below;

Page of Public Consultation Document where error can be found.	Information in Public Consultation Document.	The correct information.
18	“first school ... likely to be August 2016”	emails with Turnberry Planning put this at 2020 “at the earliest”
27	Referring to Glashieburn School. “surrounding two internal courtyards”	Glashieburn school has THREE courtyards.
27	Referring to Glashieburn School. “24 Areas identified as teaching spaces”.	In an email from January 2013,(FOI-13-0728). Derek Samson states there are 21 teaching areas. The Schedule of Accommodation for Glashieburn indicates there are 18 teaching spaces. Nothing has been done to modify the building in that time to facilitate the additional teaching areas the proposal document suggests.
33	“a moderated suitability survey of Glashieburn School was undertaken”	In fact Officers admitted at a consultation meeting that a previous suitability survey (which rated it C) was moderated. A subtle but very important difference.
33	Referring to elements in the suitability survey of Glashieburn School. “several of these were better (than a grade B)”	In fact NONE were better and it only just scraped a B grading overall.
36	Referring to Middleton Park School. Two P6 classes are listed.	There is one P6 and one P7
36	Referring to Middleton Park School. “of the 156 pupils living in the Middleton Park Zone 115 attended Middleton Park School”	This would suggest there were 62 out of zone pupils at Middleton Park School. To our best knowledge there were only 43.
37	Referring to Middleton Park School. “In session 2012-13, of the 156 pupils attending”	In session 2012-2013 there were 177 pupils.
37	Referring to Middleton Park School. “74% were in zone and 36% were out of zone”.	These do not add up to 100%.
46	Referring to the Grandhome development. “The agreed rate of new pupils will be 0.35	FOI 13-0445 clearly states that this is assumed to be 0.25 per house and this figure is used to assess Danestone’s

	pupils per unit (all types)."	ability to accommodate Grandhome children.
Page of Public Consultation Document where error can be found.	Information in Public Consultation Document.	The correct information.
49	Table 12 calls the schools Academies.	They are clearly primary schools.
50	"no evidence to suggest that attainment or achievement would be adversely affected"	This is not true. There is evidence in the educational literature that it can be adversely affected.
51	Referring to the Informal Consultation in 2012. "a summary of submissions can be found at"	No it can't.
64	"The housing development at Grandhome will require provision of up to three new primary schools. The first of these is to be delivered in the early phases of the development, likely to be in session 2015 - 16. "	Emails with Turnberry Planning suggest 2020 at the earliest
72/73/75	It is stated that "the average walking pace with children is 25 minutes per mile." Yet claims are made that walking an extra half mile "equates to an extra 7 minutes". See Tables 2.1 and 2.2. and page 75.	Walking an extra half mile at 25 minutes per mile would take 12 ½ minutes.
75	"Glashieburn Primary school has 242 pupils including nursery".	It has 321 pupils. The margin of error is 49% (111 pupils)

The Public Consultation Document contains many misleading statements. A number of these are detailed below;

Page of Public Consultation Document where error can be found.	Information in Public Consultation Document.	The correct information.
28	The site map of Glashieburn does not show the boundary of Glashieburn.	If it did it would reveal only a tiny part of the green space surrounding the school is actually the school playing field.
29	Graph 2. Y axis starts at 200 not 0. This grossly exaggerates a projected fall in pupil numbers.	
33	Referring to the cost of bringing Glashieburn school up to a 3Rs standard. "£2.5million ... this would require to be invested in the school."	The information available on the website http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=52958&SID=23570 states that in fact the majority of the £2.5 million (£2.4million) does not need to be taken into consideration.
38	"This would result in a significant decrease in the projected roll for Middleton Park".	They provide no statistics to back up the use of the word significant. What they claim is a significant decrease is only a projected decrease of 10 pupils. The projections were 10 out for this year alone.
38	Graph 4. Y axis starts at 100 not 0. This grossly exaggerates a projected fall in numbers.	It is in fact only a projected fall of 10 pupils over 7 years.
40	"Middleton Park School most recently evaluated itself on the Key Quality Indicators as:"	FOI-13-0999 clearly indicates this is not the most recent evaluation.
41	Referring to the cost of bringing Middleton Park school up to a 3Rs standard. "£1.2million ... this would require to be invested in the	Again as above the website states that the majority of the £1.2 million (£0.9million) does not need to be taken into consideration.

	school.”	
Page of Public Consultation Document where error can be found.	Information in Public Consultation Document.	The correct information.
50	Referring to the cost of bringing Middleton Park and Glashieburn school up to a 3Rs standard. “£3.7million ... this would require to be invested in the school.”	Again as above the majority of this sum of money does not, according to the website, need to be invested.
51	Referring to the informal consultation meeting in 2012. “some support for amalgamating ... into single new school”.	What was meant (we were at the meeting) was a single NEW BUILD school.
68	There will be provision for “Specialised area for pupils with additional support needs, not currently provided at Middleton Park”	This implies that Middleton Park does not currently support pupils with additional needs. Glashieburn is the location of the ASN base for the Associated Schools Group. Children from Middleton Park who require more support than can be provided at Middleton Park attend Glashieburn. Middleton Park does not need to provide this support.

There are many omissions in the Public Consultation Document. A number of these (that are not already documented in the main text of this submission) are detailed below;

Page of Public Consultation Document where error can be found.	Omission
1	No mention of changing the delineated area for Oldmachar Academy.
38	<p>Statistics - "This would result in a significant decrease in the projected roll for Middleton Park"</p> <p>To use the word significant in this context requires statistical analysis. There are no statistics e.g. confidence intervals in the document.</p>
49	<p>The table of potential savings does not include a breakdown of the costs.</p> <p>It does not include the cost of the reconfiguration now acknowledged to be required.</p> <p>With no ICT room it would be important to include costs for ensuring each classroom has adequate ICT equipment/network points.</p>
51	No evidence for this statement "Currently, most pupils at Glashieburn and Middleton Park School walk to school, although many pupils are transported to and from school by car"
51	No evidence for this statement "it is likely that existing arrangements will continue ... such as the current practice of parents/carers parking in a local supermarket car park."
Throughout	No referenced evidence for any statement of fact.

There are many examples in the Public Consultation Document where projections or possibilities are stated as fact. These are extremely misleading. A number of these are detailed below;

Page of Public Consultation Document where statement can be found.	Quote from Public Consultation Document	Our concern
11	<i>"This is proposed as the roll at Middleton Park will fall when the new schools at Grandhome begin to be delivered"</i>	We do not know for certain the roll will fall. This is only a projection. This reads as a statement of fact yet it clearly cannot be.
48	<i>"provide more than ample spaces for general purpose use"</i>	This statement is not factual as "more than ample" is not defined.
48	<i>"thereafter the number of pupils falls year on year"</i>	We do not know this. Roll figures are projections.
54	<i>"The amalgamated school will be able to offer more flexibility in terms of class configuration."</i>	The officers did not provide examples of different ways of configuring the classes. This is because there is no flexibility as there must be the minimum number of classes (with the maximum number of children) in order for there to be enough classroom space.
55	<i>"The more widespread and flexible learning spaces"</i>	No evidence was provided in the Public Consultation Document to prove there will be more widespread and flexible learning spaces.
63	<i>"All the current staff will have the opportunity to transfer to the amalgamated school"</i>	This is not true. We have been told at consultation meetings there will be less staff overall.

Some paragraphs in the Public Consultation Document simply do not make sense. We can accept that these may be “typos”. However they all contribute to the sense that no time or effort has been put into the production of this document. The communities involved, and members of the Education, Culture and Sport committee deserve better.

Page of Public Consultation Document where statement can be found.	Nonsensical statement
23	<i>“Detailed design of these enabling works at the amalgamated school would take place once a final decision on the proposal is taken. the outcome of the statutory consultation has been decided.”</i>
26	<i>“The catchment area is bounded by adjacent school zones, including Middleton Park, part of which, to the north is open countryside.”</i>
39	<i>“In common with all other schools in Aberdeen, Middleton Park School is currently its approaches to implementing the 3-18 curriculum.”</i>
47	<i>“This can be achieved by implementing a number of alternative options will be identified and these shared with parents/carers and staff if the proposal progresses.”</i>
48	<i>“The school will be able to identify the number of estimated under this proposal”</i>
57	<i>“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”</i>

Appendix II Traffic Survey Results

September 2013

The parents of Middleton Park School were surveyed regarding their current travel to school and how they would travel to the proposed amalgamated school.

101 replies were received

Q1. How do you normally take your child to school now?

Walk	76
Car	24
Bus	1

Of those who walked, 60 indicated they would drive in some circumstances such as late, bad weather, going to work or somewhere else after, music lessons, tired.

The majority, 59 indicated they currently park in Asda. Of the remaining, 5 parked in the Mains of Scotstown, and 4 on Whitestripes Way.

Q2. How would you normally take your child to school if we move to the Glashieburn site?

Walk	41
Car	59
Bus	1

No-one indicated they would continue to park in Asda and walk to the Glashieburn site. Jesmond Drive, Newburgh Estate, or “surrounding” roads were listed as locations where parents would park.

Appendix III Copy and Paste

The Consultation Document – Copied and Pasted

The Public Consultation Document is clearly very similar to the Public Consultation Document for the Torry and Kincorth Academy consultation held earlier this year. The Director of Education, when questioned, said they used a “template” for these documents and that is why it is so similar. That would suggest the chapter and section headings would be the same, but the content would have been written specifically for this consultation. The information below taken from the Educational Benefit Statement is a small example of the “copied and pasted” sections and clearly shows that the content is also the same.

Glashieburn/Middleton Park Educational Benefit Statement	Torry/Kincorth Academy Educational Benefit Statement
“A school of the size proposed will enable the Headteacher to plan a curriculum that offers breadth, depth, coherence, relevance, challenge and enjoyment”	“A school of the size proposed will enable managers to plan a curriculum that offers breadth, depth, coherence, relevance, challenge and enjoyment .”
“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 st century learning experience.”	“The new 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 st century learning experience.”
“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.”	“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.”

It is worth noting that this phrase is almost a direct quote from the Scottish Government document “Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland’s future”.

“The emphasis must be on innovation and personalisation rather than on standardisation, on presenting learners, teachers and schools with the continuing challenge and inspiration of flexible and sometimes non-standard spaces of different dimensions and configuration to explore”.

This is accompanied by pictures illustrating the potential for non-standard spaces as shown. We certainly do not see any spaces like this detailed on the plans for potential reconfiguration!



© Peter the Apollo High School - West Dunbartonshire Council

Glashieburn/Middleton Park Educational Benefit Statement	Torry/Kincorth Academy Educational Benefit Statement
<p>“The range of extracurricular 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”</p>	<p>“The range of extracurricular 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. 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”</p>

Glashieburn/Middleton Park Educational Benefit Statement	Torry/Kincorth Academy Educational Benefit Statement
<p>“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.”</p>	<p>“Provision to access these extra-curricular activities, particularly those after school, will have to be better 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.”</p>

We could list many examples throughout the document. The final example is perhaps the most critical. The conclusion to the Educational Benefit Statement.

Glashieburn/Middleton Park Educational Benefit Statement	Torry/Kincorth Academy Educational Benefit Statement
“There are educational benefits for current and future pupils within the catchments of Glashieburn and Middleton Park Schools being educated in a single, amalgamated school.	“There are clear educational benefits for current and future pupils within the catchments of Glashieburn and Middleton Park Schools being educated in a single, amalgamated school.
An opportunity will be available to build upon established links which already existed between the two schools.	It will be readily possible to build upon established links which already existed between the two schools.
The amalgamated school will provide a better learning environment for pupils and working environment for staff.	A new school will provide a far 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.	There will be significantly enhanced curricular opportunities in the amalgamated school, giving pupils a range of subject and course choice
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.	Pupils will be able to undertake more relevant and appropriate courses, increasing their motivation and the chances of likelihood positive outcomes for learners, including educational attainment and broader achievement.
There will be the potential for changes in ethos within an amalgamated school and enhanced leadership opportunities for pupils.	There will be the potential for changes in ethos within a new school and enhanced leadership opportunities for pupils.
A wider range of extra curricular opportunities will be available to more pupils.	A wider range of extra curricular opportunities will also be possible.
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.”	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.”

There are two obvious points to be made from this final example.

The officers themselves do not think there is any clear educational benefit in this proposal.

How can the educational benefit for these very different situations – primary vs academy, existing building vs new build, different socio-economic area – be so similar?