

## **Merger of Dales Park and Meethill Schools Online Survey Results**

### **Introduction**

The statutory consultation period regarding the Merger of Dales Park and Meethill Schools ran between 7 December 2021 and 26 February 2021. During the consultation period parents/carers, stakeholders and community members were invited to participate in an online survey to express their opinion on the proposal.

The survey provided a summary of the proposal to close the current Dales Park School and Meethill School and merge into one new primary school within the new Peterhead Community Campus at Kinmundy Road, Peterhead. The survey was open for all stakeholders to complete for the duration of the consultation period.

A letter containing the link to the survey was sent to all stakeholders from Dales Park and Meethill Schools, all Early Years Partner Providers within Peterhead, as well as the Peterhead Community Council and local Councillors. The survey was also available on the Aberdeenshire Council website.

A total of 554 people took part in the survey with 327 (59%) leaving comments regarding the proposal. Thirty two participants have navigated their way through the survey leaving all the fields blank, these surveys have not been included within the report. The remaining 522 completed surveys have been analysed and are summarised below.

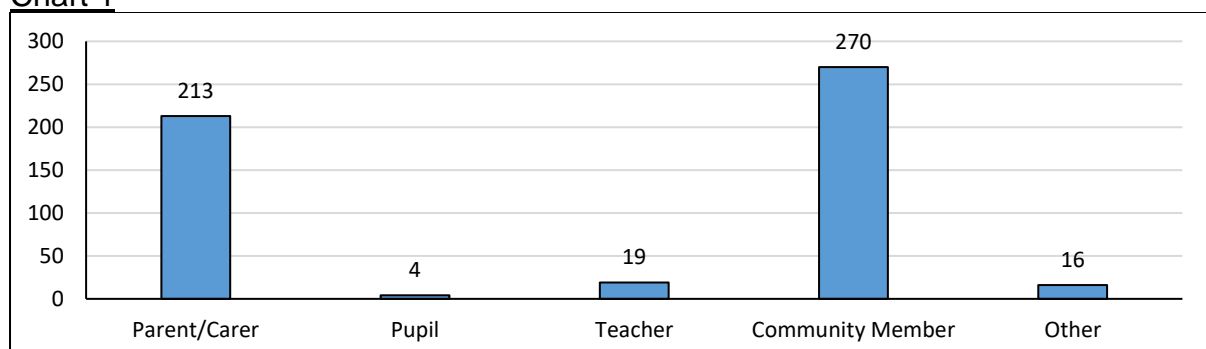
It is recognised that parent/carers may have more than one child, therefore more than one answer has been provided for some of the questions.

### **Question 1**

The participants were asked if they are a Parent, Pupil, Teacher/Member of Staff at either Dales Park or Meethill School, Member of the Community or Other

Chart 1 below shows the results from question one. All 522 participants choose to answer this question. A total of 213 (41%) parent/carers took part in the survey. The participants that chose 'other' are Grandparents and former pupils of the schools.

**Chart 1**

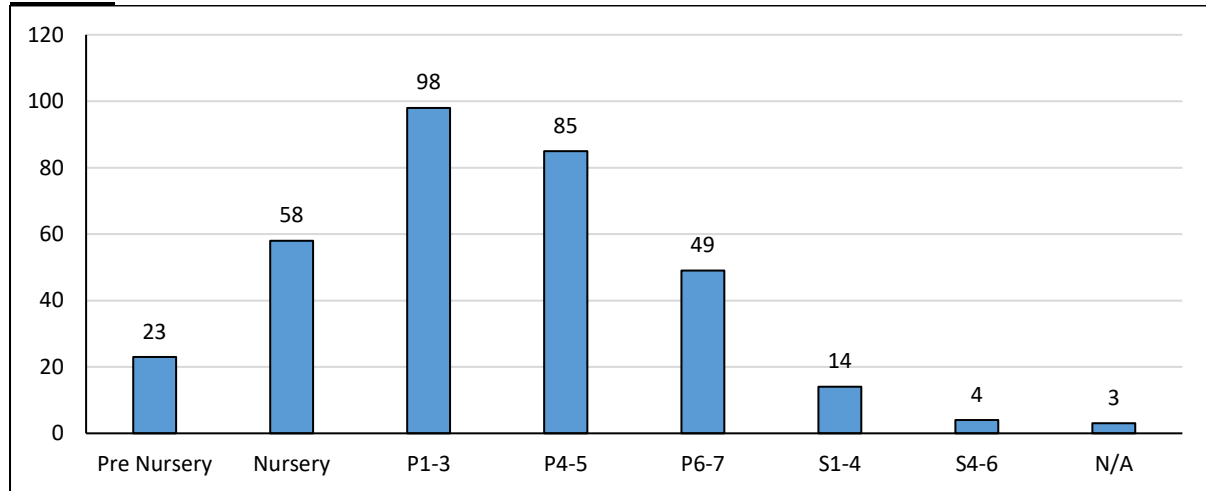


## Question 2

The participants were asked what year group(s) their children are currently within. Of the participants who chose parent/carer for the previous question, this was analysed further to established which year groups their children are within.

Chart 2 below shows that the highest number of parents that participated in the survey have children currently attending P1-3. More than half of the participants 179 (54%) have children ranging from Pre Nursery to P3.

**Chart 2**

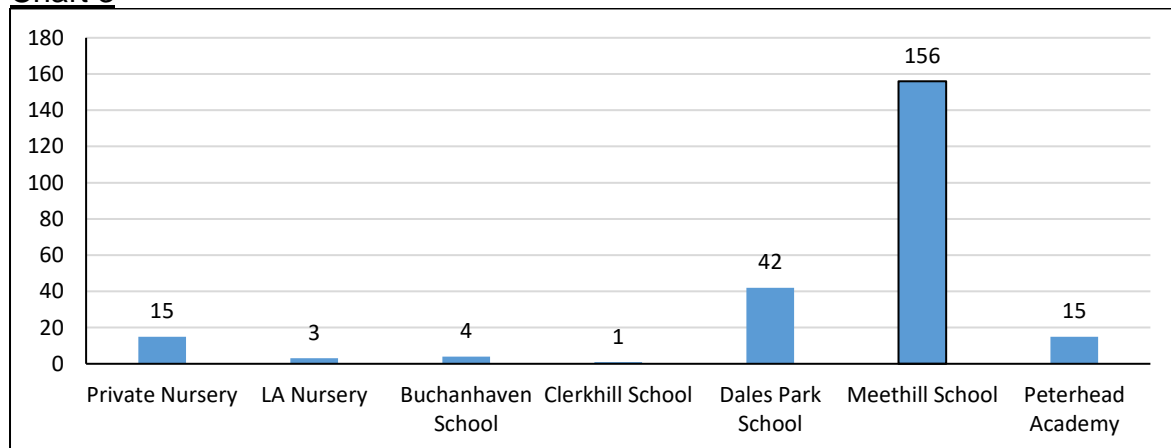


## Question 3

The participants were asked which nursery or school their children currently attended.

Chart 3 below shows the highest number of parent/carers 156 (66%) were from Meethill School, compared with 42 (18%) of parent/carers from Dales Park School. The remainder 16% have children that attend nursery, Buchanhaven School, Clerkhill School and Peterhead Academy.

**Chart 3**

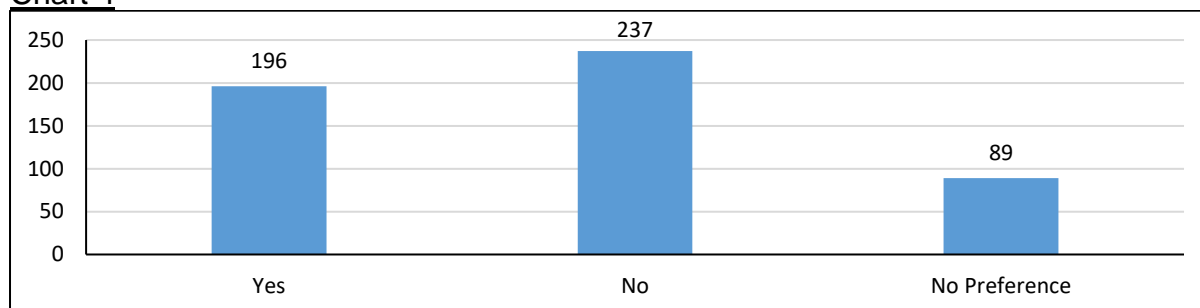


#### **Question 4**

The participants were asked if they supported Dales Park School moving to the new Community Campus at Kinmundy.

Overall as shown in Chart 4, 237 (45%) participants do not support the move, 196 (38%) support the move and 89 (17%) have no preference if Dales Park School moves to the new Community Campus.

**Chart 4**



Further analysis of the 213 responses from the parent/carers show that 85 (40%) support the move, 82 (39%) do not support the move and 46 (21%) have no preference whether Dales Park School moves to the new Community Campus.

There were 149 responses from parents/carers who currently have children attending nursery through to Primary 3. Analysis of these responses indicate that 64 are supportive of the proposal, 53 are not supportive and 32 have no preference on whether Dales Park School moves to the new Community Campus.

A total of 42 parents from Dales Park School answered the question, of these 31 support the move, 10 do not support and one has no preference.

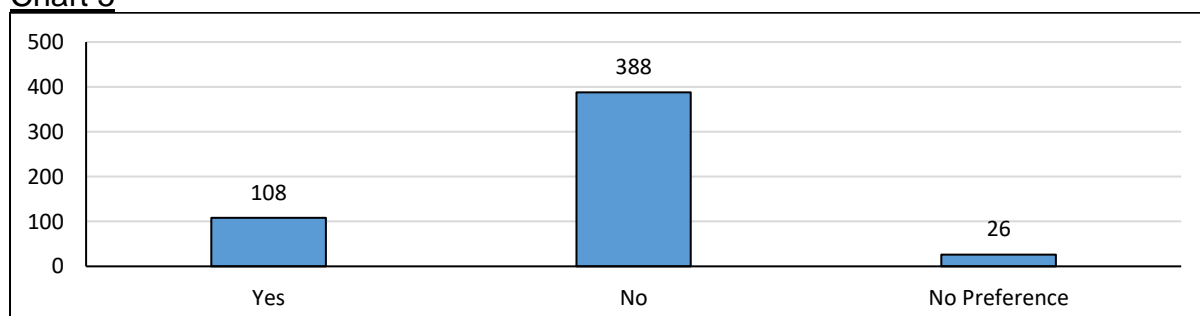
A total of 156 parents from Meethill School answered the question, of these 64 do not support the move, 47 support the move and 45 have no preference.

#### **Question 5**

The participants were asked if they supported Meethill School moving to the new Community Campus at Kinmundy.

Overall as shown in Chart 5, 388 (74%) of the participants do not support the move, 108 (21%) do support the move and 26 (5%) have no preference if Meethill School moves to the new Community Campus.

**Chart 5**



Further analysis of the 213 responses from the parent/carers shows that 150 (70%) do not support the move, 50 (24%) do support the move and 13 (6%) have no preference whether Meethill Schools moves to the new Community Campus.

There were 149 responses from parents/cares who currently have children attending nursery through to Primary 3. Analysis of these responses indicate that 101 are not supportive of the proposal, 38 are supportive of the proposal and 11 have no preference on whether Meethill School moves to the new Community Campus.

A total of 42 parents from Dales Park School answered the question, of those 19 support the move, 14 do not support the move and 9 have no preference

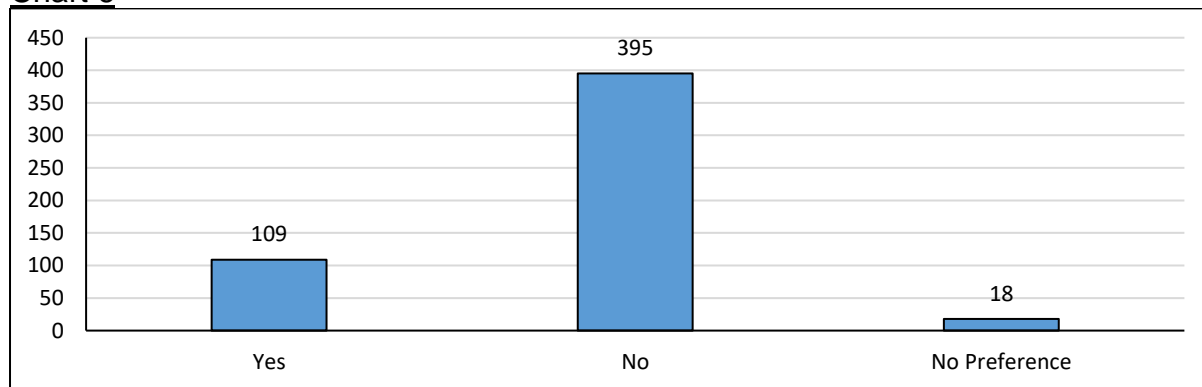
A total of 156 parents from Meethill School answered the question, of those 127 do not support the move, 25 support the move and four have no preference.

### **Question 6**

The participants were asked if they supported the merger of Dales Park and Meethill Schools at the new Community Campus at Kinmundy.

Overall as shown in Chart 6, 395 (76%) do not support the merger, 109 (21%) support the merger and 18 (3%) have no preference whether Dales Park and Meethill Schools merge at the new Community Campus.

**Chart 6**



Further analysis of the 213 responses received from parent/carers show that 154 (72%) do not support the merger, 51 (24%) support the merger and 8 (4%) have no preference whether the schools are merged at the new Community Campus.

There were 149 responses from parents/cares who currently have children attending nursery through to Primary 3. Analysis of these responses indicate that 104 are not supportive of the merger, 39 are supportive of the merger and 6 have no preference on whether the Schools are merger into one school at the new Community Campus.

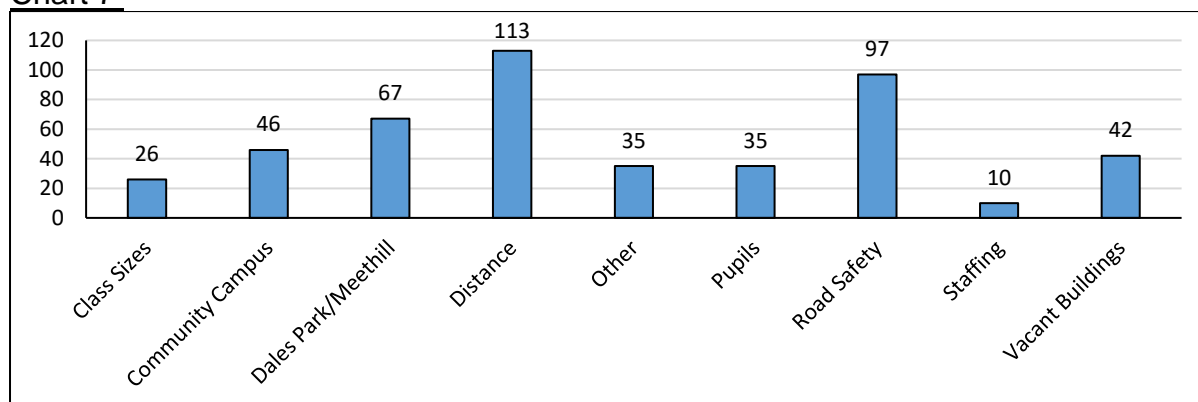
A total of 42 parents from Dales Park School answered the question, of those, 24 support the merger, 17 do not support the merger and one has no preference.

A total of 156 parents from Meethill School answered the question, of those 127 do not support the merger, 22 support the merger and seven have no preference.

## Comments

Participants were given the opportunity to leave any comments or feedback for officers to consider. A total of 326 comments were received, many of the participants covered more than one topic, they have been categorised and displayed in Chart 7 below.

Chart 7



### Distance

- Too far to travel
- Kinmundy site is too far away to be considered for Meethill catchment
- Longer journey for children to walk home themselves in the dark during winter
- Travel, all areas in Peterhead should have a local primary
- Don't drive and Kinmundy is too far to walk
- Travelling to the campus causes too much disruption for pupils in the Meethill area
- Parents without cars will struggle to get their children to school.
- Further to travel to school.
- Meethill pupils live too far away from the Kinmundy, they would not be able to have home lunches.
- Meethill School is close to my house.
- Meethill School is a few minutes walk from my house

### Road Safety

- Traffic Control
- Too many busy roads to cross
- Traffic on Meethill Road
- Road Safety implications
- Busier road
- No infrastructure in place
- Crossing Meethill Road
- No public transport

### Dales Park School

- Both will lose their identity
- Both schools have an established community and should remain
- Money should be invested in the current schools, this is an investment in Meethill
- Both Dales Park and Meethill Schools should be made fit for purpose
- It would be more beneficial if these schools were upgraded and extended.

## **Meethill School**

- Leave Meethill School it is the heart of the community
- Brilliant School shame to see it unused
- Meethill School is a tight knit school
- Would not like Meethill to move
- Don't want things to change, Meethill is a brilliant school
- Size of Meethill School is to its benefit
- Don't fix what isn't broken
- Unsure why there is a need to move Meethill
- Meethill has been there for over 40 years and should stay
- Meethill has an established community and should remain
- Meethill School is an excellent school run well
- No need for the schools to move
- Both will lose their identity
- Both schools have an established community and should remain
- Money should be invested in the current schools, this is an investment in Meethill
- Both Dales Park and Meethill Schools should be made fit for purpose
- It would be more beneficial if these schools were upgraded and extended.
- Would prefer if Meethill was upgraded but it comes down to costs versus benefit
- Invest in the current school
- Funding should be spent on refurbishing the school rather than relocating

## **Pupils**

- Not safe to have primary school next to the Academy
- Primary children subject to the behaviour of secondary children
- Do not agree with Primary and Secondary pupils mixing
- Young children shouldn't see what secondary children get up to (language, smoking, fighting, drug taking and drug dealing)
- Intimidation of younger children by secondary
- Primary school should be separate from secondary
- Might get bullied at the campus by academy pupils
- Is it safe to have 3-18 year olds mixing?
- Secondary schools are not an appropriate place for primary school pupils.
- Primary and Secondary should not be on the same campus
- Unsettling for pupils who have behavioural issues to be moved to a new environment
- Moving to a new campus would bring extra stress to the children.
- Too much change for children who find change difficult.
- Some children don't respond well to change.
- Children are settled and happy in the school, merging will create confusion
- Moving to a large school could have a detrimental effect on learning
- Far too much disruption for pupils at a young age.

### **Class Sizes**

- If the schools are merging together how would it work for classes
- Will Dales Park and Meethill pupils be mixed.
- At primary level there is no requirement for larger classes.
- To move to bigger classes, they might not get the right help
- More children assigned to one teacher, meaning less support provided resulting in lower quality education
- Biggar class size
- Lack of support to pupils in big classes
- Class sizes are at bursting point at the moment
- Bigger classes less individual time for pupils
- Classes are already overcrowded

### **Community Campus**

- Too big of a school for pupils to attend
- Too many children in one place
- Overcrowding
- Far too big of a school merging them all
- Primary School will be too big
- Big school would be overwhelming
- A large school is not beneficial to children's education
- Can't possibly be enough space for this monstrous building as well as parking
- Every school that has been merged or relocated is never big enough
- Alford campus is too small, so merging schools into a campus will be worse.
- Too long for children to be based at one campus

### **Staffing**

- Merge will mean some staff will probably lose their jobs
- Current staff applied to work in an 8-9 class school and not a school of potentially 20 classes which is very different
- Will there be two Head Teachers for the merger? If not, what will happen to the other position
- What incentives will be on offer to attract new teachers to the area?
- Aberdeenshire already has a shortage of teachers, so will a shiny new building be enough incentive

### **Vacant Buildings**

- What would happen to the existing buildings
- Schools lying empty for years and antisocial behaviour
- What is going into the empty site
- Will the school lie derelict like many other council buildings in the town
- Vacant building will become an eye sore in the town

### **Other Comments**

- Effect the housing around schools
- Merge with Burnhaven, Clerkhill or Buchanhaven
- Loosing greenspace.
- Additional primary is needed within Peterhead
- Campus is a waste of money
- The school isn't big enough to merge and support the expansion of Peterhead

- Better to do all years at new venue, not move schools midway through.

## **Conclusion**

On the whole participants of the survey do not support Dales Park or Meethill Schools moving to the new Community Campus at Kinmundy, or to the schools merging together. However, almost half of the parent/carers who have children at pre nursery to P3, support Dales Park School moving to the campus, and are against Meethill School moving to the campus.

The biggest concern to participants of the survey is the distance from the Meethill School catchment area to the new Community Campus at Kinmundy. Although the distance to the Kinmundy site is approximately one mile from Meethill School, they feel this is too far for children to walk, especially in inclement weather.

They are also concerned about pupils crossing Meethill Road. It is thought that many pupils that attend Meethill School independently walk to school, if the school moved to the Kinmundy site they would have to cross Meethill Road. At present there are no crossings or alternative traffic calming measures in place on Meethill Road.

Meethill School opened in 1973 and there is a clear emotional attachment to the school with many parents and grandparents having attended the school over the years. It appears to be a tight knit community and not open to change.

Comments have been made that the current Dales Park and Meethill School have their own communities and investment should be made in upgrading both schools rather than closing them.

Concern has also been expressed regarding primary and secondary pupils within the same building. They feel that the primary pupils would be exposed to unsuitable behaviour and could be subjected to bullying.

It is also thought that the number of pupils per class will increase resulting in less individual time and pupils will not receive the required support. Further comments suggest that classes within the current schools are already overcrowded.

There are conflicting comments regarding staffing, comments have been made that the merger of the two schools will require less staff expressing concern that some staff may not be required. Other comments intimate there is a staff shortage and are unsure if the merge of the schools and a new building would be an incentive to attract new staff.

If the merge of the schools was successful residents are unclear what would happen to the existing buildings, they are concerned that the current Dales Park and Meethill Schools would be left to deteriorate, becoming an eye sore and attract antisocial behaviour.