

Appendix A5

Relocation of Anna Ritchie School to Peterhead Community Campus

Anna Ritchie School Pupil Engagement

1. Overview

The Anna Ritchie School Head Teacher was asked to liaise with Pupil Council/selection of pupils to discuss the proposal. The questions set out below was provided:

“The current Anna Ritchie School is going to be rebuilt in another part of Peterhead. The new school will open in August 2025 which means that some of you will go to the new school when it is built, and some of you will have already finished education at the school. Even if you will have finished, you have a chance to say what you think the new Anna Ritchie School should be like.

One of the things we have to do when we are thinking about building or moving a school, is to talk to all of the children who will go to the new school to find out what they think about it. We will also ask all the parents/careers what they think too, but this is your chance to tell us about it.

- 1. Do you think that the change suggested for your school is a good idea?*
- 2. Is there anything that excites you about the new school?*
- 3. Is there anything that worries you about the new school?”*

The Head Teacher considered the appropriateness and feasibility of a meaningful engagement with pupils with complex additional support needs. The method on how to engage with the pupils was left to the discretion of the school, as any discussion had to be matched to the abilities of Anna Ritchie pupils, to ensure the emotional and psychological wellbeing of pupils.

2. Summary of responses

The discussions about the proposal were carried out with a selection of pupils, sometimes with their parents' involvement. The outcome of the engagement is presented below.

2.1 Senior class pupils

The following positive points were listed by the senior class pupils:

- everything will be new and working,
- bigger toilet facilities - so more room to get in and move around,
- might get access to more things e.g. science.

The pupils were concerned about:

- access to other classrooms while the academy pupils are in,
- noise.

During the session the pupils raised the following questions:

- Will we have a separate dining area from the Academy?
- Will the classrooms be separate - as in not open plan?
- Will there be different bell times for when the Anna Ritchie pupils are going through the Academy?
- Will all the doors/ramps be big enough for our equipment?
- Will the snoozie be the same as ours?
- Will we have the same size of playground and will we still have the same playground equipment?
- Will the new playground be overlooked by the Academy?
- Why do the pupils from the other schools need to be in the Anna Ritchie?

2.2 S3 & S4 pupils

The pupils were presented with pictures of St Andrew's School with a view that the new Anna Ritchie School would be similar. Comments are listed below:

- nice classrooms with lots of space,
- nice colours,
- good idea of having a hoist in a classroom,
- cool outdoor space with swings that may be used by pupils using wheelchairs,
- therapy pool looks like a hot tub,
- rebound therapy room looks like a trampoline park,
- nice school entrance,
- nice pool.

2.3 Selection of P7-S2 pupils

The children agreed that the change suggested is a good idea, although they were surprised at first and a bit reluctant. They were excited about:

- new sliding doors at the entrance,
- new school building,
- new toilets,
- new technology,
- new playground with a slide,
- more resources for nursery kids.

The children were worried about:

- new science space,
- losing an obstacle course on the playground,
- more and different people on larger campus site,
- losing a zipline at Eden Park next to Anna Ritchie School.

The following questions were raised by the pupils:

- What will our school be called?
- Are we still Anna Ritchie School?
- What colours will our school uniform be?

2.4 S5 pupil

Benefits:

"I think a new school would be good as everything will be new with no leaks and no maintenance. Our current school is very old and has small classrooms in the primary end and not much toileting facilities for physically disabled pupils.

I think it will be easier for pupils in the mainstream settings to access the facilities and provision offered at Anna Ritchie.

It will be beneficial to the very few Anna Ritchie pupils that would be a benefit to them to access mainstream, so they only need to walk through a corridor (at quiet times!). Pupils on split placement would find it less intimidating if there was a closer physical contact between staff and locations. Pupils could access some subjects rather than having to spend half days/days in mainstream due to transport requirements.

Pupils may find visiting the community centre for the theatre or swimming pools out of school hours less intimidating if they are at least used to seeing the buildings."

Suggestions:

"Timetables will have to very well planned, so we do not meet crowded areas within the new academy, primary areas, and community centre as me and a lot of my friends do not like noise and busy areas.

Big classrooms the same size as they are in the senior school at Anna Ritchie as some of the pupils have very large power wheelchairs and equipment (such a standing frames, portable hoists etc) with a large footprint. There is often more than one wheelchair plus equipment in one classroom.

Many therapy rooms for pupils receiving therapy input from multiple staff plus pupils receiving ongoing daily treatments.

Suitable tracking facilities throughout the school plus any area's pupils/public will be visiting within the main complex.

Clear provision made for older children studying at lower level (e.g. S5 pupil studying Nat 4 maths) allowed to access lower age classes in main stream – with support, such as an S5 Anna Ritchie pupil accessing an S4 course.

An outdoor play area equivalent to the area we currently have which is suitable for multiple wheelchairs and is also accessible for all ages and stages.

It would have been nice and very beneficial to see the new school at Inverurie and see a proposed plan/drawing of what the campus will look like before these meetings.

Wide doors within the school to allow easy movement and exit in the event of emergency for pupils in wheelchairs. Older pupils are in full adult size powerchairs and equipment which has a large footprint.

A dedicated lunch hall plus a dedicated large hall for our concerts, assemblies and PE, large enough for a stage, plus whole school pupils and staff and parents/visitors. Minimum of two blue badge spaces.

Lots of digital resources/technology and equipment pupils with limited physical abilities can interact with.”

Concerns:

“I am worried the school is very far out of town and in a built-up residential area with very few shops or cafes for us to learn our life skills. The small shop that will be next to the school is often very busy.

I am not happy with being joined on to the academy and community centre as I did not like the noise and busy crowds when I attended the Peterhead Academy.

I am worried that the children at Anna Ritchie will be laughed at, bullied, or picked on by the academy and mainstream primary children.

I do not like the idea of helping of serving in the proposed community café as this will be embarrassing and the other children may laugh or make fun of the Anna Ritchie pupils. It will be too busy and noisy too.

I do not think the pupils at Anna Ritchie will be welcome in the new academy. I do not think there will be enough timetabled slots for us to use their classrooms such as the science labs or tech rooms.

I am worried Anna Ritchie pupils will be encouraged against their wishes to access mainstream.

After seeing a picture of the raised flower beds in the outdoor space at the Inverurie school I think they were far too high for the younger children and children in a wheelchair could not reach them.”

3. Conclusion

The overall impression is that Anna Ritchie pupils are positive about moving to the new school, which will be in a new and modern building with access to a variety of facilities and equipment.

The main areas of concern raised by the pupils are: too much noise, congestion, sharing facilities with mainstream children, bullying and feeling unwelcome.

Some pupils expressed their wish of visiting the new St Andrew’s School at Inverurie Community Campus. The Council will organise pupils visits when Covid restrictions allows, should this still be the pupils wish.

Questions raised by the pupils during the engagement sessions were verbally answered by the school staff. In addition, the Learning Estates Team will issue a formal response in an appropriate format to address pupils’ concerns.