

## **THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

### **EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**The proposal is to discontinue education provision at Dalwhinnie Primary School and Nursery, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Newtonmore Primary School and Nursery.**

### **PROPOSAL PAPER AND EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT**

#### **THIS IS A PROPOSAL PAPER PREPARED IN TERMS OF THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY'S PROCEDURE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010**

The Highland Council is proposing, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process:

- To discontinue education provision at Dalwhinnie Primary School, which is currently mothballed, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Newtonmore Primary School. (Maps of the current catchment areas are at **Appendices A - Aii**).
- The proposal would apply to both the primary and pre-school stages of education at Dalwhinnie Primary. Nursery classes form an integral part of provision at all 3 schools and for the avoidance of doubt, any reference in this document to Primary Schools at Dalwhinnie, Gergask and Newtonmore should be taken as a reference to both the primary and nursery classes.
- The proposed changes, if approved, will take place immediately after the conclusion of the statutory process relating to school closures.

### **Legislative Background**

- 1.1 The proposal is advanced within the context of all applicable legislation. Amongst other duties, education authorities are required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (S.1 of the Education Act 1980); and to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education in schools that are managed by them (S.3 of The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000).
- 1.2 Dalwhinnie Primary School is a rural school within the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland Act 2010) and the Council has had regard to the provisions of that Act, in particular the heightened consideration to be given to rural school closures.

### **Reason for the Proposal**

- 2.1 This proposal is being advanced for the following reasons:
  - No children have attended Dalwhinnie Primary School since the end of session 2011-12, when the school was mothballed.

- Current population figures within the school catchment indicate a maximum school roll of 5 by 2019-20.
- A school roll of this size provides significant impediments to the successful implementation of a Curriculum for Excellence (details below);
- A school roll of 5 hampers social interaction opportunities for children, who conversely benefit from attending larger schools amongst more children of their own age.
- The Council has explored alternatives in arriving at this proposal, explained further below.

## **Examination of Alternatives**

- 3.1 In bringing forward this proposal for closure, the Council must have special regard to any viable alternatives to closure. The alternatives to closure would be:
- to re-open Dalwhinnie Primary School, either with its current catchment area or an extended catchment area, or;
  - to continue with the current “mothballing” arrangement.
- 3.2 In considering the re-opening of the school, the Council has investigated the long-term roll projections as well as demographic information (See Section 4 below).
- 3.4 Prior to the school being mothballed, an alternative management arrangement was put in place, under which Dalwhinnie Primary School was managed as part of a “cluster” arrangement with Newtonmore Primary School. However, alternative management arrangements are not able to address the wider population issues within the Dalwhinnie area.
- 3.5 There has been no significant rise to the school age population of Dalwhinnie since the school was mothballed in 2012.
- 3.6 The current proposal follows informal discussions between Highland Council officials; local elected members and local representative organisations. Informal meetings with the latter were held as follows:
- Gergask Primary School Parent Council (1 September 2015)
  - Newtonmore Primary School Parent Council (1 September 2015)
  - Laggan Community Association (10 September 2015)
  - Newtonmore and Vicinity Community Council (5 October 2015)
  - Dalwhinnie Community Council (26 October 2015)
- 3.7 In the event of a school closure being approved, consideration is required on the most appropriate way to re-zone the Dalwhinnie catchment. Further discussion on this can be found at Section 16 below.
- 3.8 The detail of the Council’s consideration of the alternatives is set out throughout this proposal paper and its appendices. A brief summary is at **Appendix B**.

## **Re-Opening of Dalwhinnie Primary School with Current Catchment Area**

- 4.1 There are currently (September 2015) four pupils of P1-7 age living within the catchment area of the school. Two of these pupils are in P7 at present and one attends Gàidhlig Medium education. At present (August 2015) there are two children of nursery age within the catchment, both in N4, and an additional two of pre-nursery age.
- 4.2 The above figures suggest that, were Dalwhinnie School to re-open with 100% of catchment pupils attending the school, the roll figures for the forthcoming few years would be:
- 2016-17 - 4  
2017-18 - 4  
2018-19 - 5  
2019-20 - 5
- 4.3 For such a small catchment, the calculation of expected births per year is imprecise. Based on an analysis of the age of females living in the area, the suggested range would be around an average of 0.5 to 0.7 births per year. In practice the number each year will vary with consequent fluctuations in the roll. Six new houses have been built in Dalwhinnie during the last 15 years giving an average of 0.4 per year. The Cairngorm National Park Local Plan has three potential building plots with a capacity of around 20 houses but there is little demand (at least one site has a long history and was granted planning permission in the early 2000s, which has lapsed without any activity).
- 4.4 The population living in the catchment fell by 10% between 2001 and 2011 and the population of the primary catchment is older than the Highland average with 14% aged 16 to 29 and 16% aged 30 to 44 (Highland 15% and 19% respectively).
- 4.5 The long term roll at Dalwhinnie is probably in the region of 4 to 6 pupils albeit with year to year fluctuations around these figures. These roll projections indicate that if Dalwhinnie Primary were re-opened, it would be as a single teacher school with a very small roll. Highland Council considers that these circumstances present significant impediments to learning and teaching. Further detail is provided at Section 11.
- 4.6 As previously stated, the school has not been operational since July 2012. No placing requests in or out of Dalwhinnie Primary School were recorded in the two sessions prior to mothballing (2010-11 and 2011-12).
- 4.7 If the school were to re-open, the four potential pupils would have shorter journey times to school than they do at present. Further details on travel journeys to school are provide at Sections 12 and 16 below.

## **Re-Opening of Dalwhinnie Primary School with Expanded Catchment Area**

- 5.1 Consideration has been given to extending the Dalwhinnie PS catchment areas. However, any proposal to extend the Dalwhinnie PS catchment into the Gergask catchment needs to take account of the fact that Gergask

Primary is itself a rural school located in an area which in recent years has experienced a falling overall population and a falling school roll.

- 5.2 Newtonmore Primary is also a rural school. It has experienced a rising roll in recent years although the projection suggests a fall in the longer term.
- 5.3 Current legislation requires that any consultation on changing the catchment areas of schools requires consultation with the parents of any affected school. Informal consultation with the Parent Councils of Gergask and Newtonmore Primaries suggests that parents at both schools would be strongly opposed to any reduction in the catchment areas of their respective schools.
- 5.4 From the copies of the school catchment areas (Appendix A – Aii) it can be seen that, within the Gergask catchment, the nearest habitation to Dalwhinnie is at Catlodge, 5.7 miles, 9 minutes to Dalwhinnie. Catlodge is however located 2.4 miles and 4 minutes from Gergask Primary. It would be illogical to transfer Catlodge into the Dalwhinnie catchment.
- 5.5 Within the Newtonmore catchment, the nearest communities to Dalwhinnie are at Etteridge, located 4.9 miles/10 minutes from Newtonmore, and 8.8 miles and 14 minutes from Dalwhinnie; and at Crubenmore, located 6 miles/11 minutes from Newtonmore and 5 miles/9 minutes from Dalwhinnie. The respective distances militate against a transfer of Etteridge from Newtonmore to Dalwhinnie. Whilst it would be theoretically possible for transfer Crubenmore to the Dalwhinnie catchment, this would require a public consultation on a recommendation likely to be opposed by Newtonmore parents. Due to the small numbers involved, the change would do nothing to make the roll at Dalwhinnie more viable.
- 5.6 Transferring Etteridge and Catlodge to the Dalwhinnie catchment would result in longer journeys to school for any affected pupils.

### **Continuation of “Mothballing”**

- 6.1 Although it would be possible to continue with the current “mothballing” arrangement, Highland Council does not consider that would represent the best option for the community or the taxpayer. “Mothballing” would mean the continuation of the current lack of clarity regarding the future status of the school. The Council would also be burdened with the costs of maintaining a “mothballed” building.
- 6.2 Scottish Government guidance relating to the mothballing of schools makes it clear that mothballing is a temporary measure and should not be used to undermine the requirements to undertake a statutory school closure consultation.
- 6.3 Current school transport arrangements would not be affected by a continuation of mothballing.
- 6.4 As the Dalwhinnie school building is not currently in use, a continuation of mothballing would have no impact on the community.

## General Background

7.1 Between 2001 and 2011 (Census figures) the population of Highland grew by 11% but the population of the Kingussie High Associated School Group (ASG) area grew by 20%, mainly as a result of economic growth and new house building in Aviemore in the north of the ASG area, which accounts for almost half of the ASG population. During this period the Kingussie High School roll rose from 417 (2001) to 458 (2010) before falling to 379 for the current session. The population of the Kingussie ASG area is slightly older than the Highland average with 10.2% aged 16 to 29 and 19% aged 30 to 44 (Highland 15% and 19% respectively).

The birth rate (the true birth rate measured as births per year per 1,000 women aged X years) tends to be slightly above the Highland average although these figures are dominated by the vibrant population in Aviemore.

7.2 The reference above to "...per 1,000 woman aged X years" is included because there is a different expected birth rate for women depending on their age. For example the expected birth rate for a woman aged 25 is higher than for a women aged 45. The Council has looked at the ages of each woman in the area and applied the expected rate to each before adding them together to come up with the final figure.

7.3 The consultation process for this proposal is set out in detail at **Appendix C**.

## Current Details – Dalwhinnie Primary School

8.1 Dalwhinnie Primary is located in the village of the same name, off the A889 road. The A9 Trunk Road also passes close to the village. The catchment area stretches along the A9 south east to Drumochter Pass and north east to just beyond Cuaich. Along the A889, the catchment extends to just beyond the Allt An't Sluic.

8.2 The school has been mothballed since the end of session 2011-12 when the school roll fell to 2, and the pupils transferred to Newtonmore Primary School.

8.3 The accommodation at Dalwhinnie consists of 1 classroom for school age children & 1 for nursery (the downstairs part of the former old school house was converted for this purpose). There is also a small through area used for eating packed lunches and for small group work, a shared office for the Head Teacher and school clerical assistant, a staffroom and 2 storerooms, (the last being converted bedrooms in the former schoolhouse). The outside areas consisted of a tarmac & grass playground, wildlife/herb garden, and walled grassed with a community playground. PE was taken in the local village hall, 2-3 minutes' walk from the school, or by travel to Newtonmore PS for participation in group/team activities.

8.4 The current and future projected rolls are set out at paragraphs 4.1 - 4.5 above.

8.5 The school has a permanent capacity of 25. Based on the permanent capacity available, the notional 2019-20 roll of 5 pupils would represent 20% use of capacity.

- 8.6 The Highland Council assesses all of its schools for Suitability and Condition, in line with the Scottish Government's School Estate Management guidelines. Schools are assessed on a scale with the ratings "A" (good) "B" (satisfactory), "C" (poor) and "D" (bad). Dalwhinnie Primary School is currently rated as "B" for educational suitability and "B" for building condition.
- 8.7 The number of pupils within the catchment area entitled to free school meals is not broken down to avoid the identification of pupils.
- 8.8 The most recent HMIE report was published in January 2008. **A copy is at Appendix D.**
- 8.9 When the school was last in operation, it was managed as part of a "cluster" arrangement with Newtonmore Primary School. Were the school to re-open with the roll figures indicated, the staffing entitlements, as per the Council's current Devolved School Management policy are as follows;
- Associate (Cluster) Head Teacher – 1.00 FTE shared between 2 schools.  
 Unpromoted Teachers – 1.00 FTE  
 Class Contact Time Teacher 0.1 FTE  
 Clerical Assistant – 16 hours per week
- 8.10 In addition ASN teaching and non-teaching staff would be allocated to the school in accordance with an annual assessment of need.
- 8.11 A Cleaning Operative would also be employed at around 7.5 hours per week.
- 8.12 School meals were not provided at Dalwhinnie School, prior to it being mothballed.
- 8.13 If the school were re-opened none of the current pupils would qualify for school transport.
- 8.14 Annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the Dalwhinnie School building are estimated at 8 tonnes

### **Current Details – Newtonmore Primary**

- 9.1 Newtonmore Primary School is located within the village of the same name. The school offers both English and Gàidhlig Medium education from P1-7, and pre-school education in both languages. The accommodation consists of 5 classrooms for school age children and 1 for nursery, (which has an English session in the morning & Gàidhlig session in the afternoon), a school hall used for PE & school lunches, a kitchen, a General Purpose Room, 2 Tutorial Rooms, Staffroom, Head Teacher Office, School Office, and central resource area. The outside areas consist of a tarmac playground, herb garden, school garden, playing field (only P4-7 pupils are allowed to use this as pupils have to cross a small road to reach it) and cycle shed.
- 9.2 For the 2015-16 school session, the school has 115 pupils in P1-7. There are 84 English Medium pupils in 4 classes, and 31 Gàidhlig Medium pupils in two

classes. The projected roll through to 2029-30 suggests a modest decline, with a total roll of 95 by August 2029.

- 9.3 There are currently 20 children in the English Medium Nursery and 8 in the Gàidhlig Medium nursery.
- 9.4 During the last 5 completed school sessions (2010-11 to 2014-15) there have been nine placing requests for pupils from other areas to join Newtonmore Primary. Eight placing requests have been made for pupils to leave Newtonmore Primary.
- 9.5 The population living in the catchment increased by 10% between 2001 and 2011 and the population of the primary catchment is slightly older than the Highland average, with 14% aged 16 to 29 and 16% aged 30 to 44 (Highland 15% and 19% respectively). Analysis of the age of females living in the area using fertility rates for Badenoch & Strathspey overall suggests that we might expect to see an average of around 9 births per year: the recent historic average has been above this.
- 9.6 The school has a permanent capacity of 122. The August 2015 roll of 115 pupils therefore represents 94% use of capacity.
- 9.7 Newtonmore Primary is currently assessed as “B” for Suitability and “B” for Condition. Future investment need within the school will be assessed as part of the Council’s capital programme and maintenance programmes, and based on the ‘core facts’ of condition, suitability and sufficiency.
- 9.8 The number entitled to free school meals is not broken down to avoid the identification of pupils.
- 9.9 The year group numbers enrolled for English Medium education in August 2015 were as follows:
- N3 - 11
  - N4 - 9
  - P1 – 13
  - P2 – 12
  - P3 – 8
  - P4 – 16
  - P5 – 13
  - P6 – 10
  - P7 – 12
- 9.10 The class structure is P1-2 – 19 pupils, P2-4 - 22 pupils, P4-5, 21 pupils P6-7, 22 pupils, with a single English Medium nursery class.
- 9.11 The year group numbers enrolled for Gàidhlig Medium education in August 2015 were as follows:
- N3 - 1
  - N4 - 7
  - P1 – 4
  - P2 – 8

P3 – 5  
P4 – 4  
P5 – 4  
P6 – 1  
P7 – 5

- 9.12 The class structure is anticipated to be P1-3 – 17 pupils, P4-7 – 14 pupils, with a single Gàidhlig Medium nursery class.
- 9.13 The most recent HMle report was published in February 2010. A copy is at **Appendix E**.
- 9.14 The 2014-15 staffing entitlements, as per the Council's Devolved School Management policy are as follows;
- Head Teacher – 1.00FTE  
Principal Teacher – 1.00FTE  
Unpromoted Teachers – 4.70 FTE  
Class Contact Time Teachers – 0.50 FTE  
Clerical Assistant/General Auxiliary – 20 hours per week
- 9.15 In addition, the school nursery is staffed with four Early Years Practitioners, who are each employed for 23 hours per week.
- 9.16 The Catering and Cleaning Service employs the following staff at the school;
- Cook 3 HC4 - 29.25 hours per week  
2 Cook HC2 posts made up of 1 x 17.5 hours per week and 1 x 16.25 hrs per week
- Cleaning Supervisor HC4 - 15.00 hours per week  
Cleaning Operative HC1 – 10.00 hours per week.
- 9.17 ASN teaching and non-teaching staff are allocated to the school in accordance with an annual assessment of need.
- 9.18 At present, 4 school transport routes operate to Newtonmore Primary School, transporting a total of 10 school pupils. Currently therefore, approximately 9% of the pupil population are in receipt of school transport.
- 9.19 Annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from Newtonmore Primary School building are estimated at 38 tonnes. This figure would not be affected by the formal closure of Dalwhinnie Primary School.
- 9.20 As all of the pupils from the Dalwhinnie catchment area currently attend either Newtonmore or Gergask Primary Schools, no adverse effects for Newtonmore Primary are expected to arise.



## Current Details – Gergask Primary

- 10.1 Gergask Primary School is located within the village of Laggan. The school has three classrooms within the original building. These are used for the Nursery, the P1-7 class and a breakout space/resource area. In addition, there is Spey Lodge (portacabin) housing the school office and dining area. This is also used as a GP room. School lunches are brought in from Newtonmore School kitchen daily. There is no gym hall but the school have use of Laggan Village Hall for PE and other school events. The school is in the process of converting the use of an outbuilding to create a new library. There is a good sized, well equipped playground with picnic benches, Wendy house, sandpit, bird hide, bike shed, shelter and climbing wall. A shed houses the playground toys and the school has use of a container for further storage. In addition, there is also a playing field with a trim trail area. The school also has the use of a field adjacent to the school and has developed this as a croft and wildlife garden
- 10.2 For the 2015-16 school session, the school has 13 pupils in P1-7. Projections suggest the school will experience a gently rising roll through to 2029-30, with a total roll of 24 by August 2029.
- 10.3 There are currently 5 children in the pre-school nursery.
- 10.4 During the last 5 completed school sessions (2010-11 to 2014-15) there have been two placing requests for pupils from other areas to join Gergask Primary. Eight placing requests have been made for pupils to leave Gergask Primary.
- 10.5 The population living in the catchment fell by 15% between 2001 and 2011 and the population of the primary catchment has more people than the Highland average in their 20s, with 23% aged 16 to 29 and 15% aged 30 to 44 (Highland 15% and 19% respectively). Analysis of the age of females living in the area using fertility rates for Badenoch & Strathspey overall suggests that we might expect to see an average of around 2 births per year: the recent historic average has been above this.
- 10.6 The school has a permanent capacity of 25. The August 2015 roll of 13 pupils therefore represents 52% use of capacity.
- 10.7 Gergask Primary is currently assessed as “B” for Suitability and “B” for Condition. Future investment need within the school will be assessed as part of the Council’s capital programme and maintenance programmes, and based on the ‘core facts’ of condition, suitability and sufficiency.
- 10.8 The number entitled to free school meals is not broken down to avoid the identification of pupils.
- 10.9 The year group numbers for August 2015 were as follows:
- N3 - 3
  - N4 - 2
  - P1 – 2
  - P2 – 1
  - P3 – 2
  - P4 – 0

P5 – 2  
P6 – 2  
P7 – 4

- 10.10 The class structure will be P1 to P7 – 13 pupils. The five nursery pupils are organised into a single class.
- 10.11 The most recent HMIe report was published in February 2010. A copy is at **Appendix F**.
- 10.12 The 2014-15 staffing entitlements, as per the Council's Devolved School Management policy are as follows;
- Associate Head Teacher, Gergask and Kingussie Primaries – 1.00FTE  
Unpromoted Teachers – 1.00 FTE  
Class Contact Time Teachers – 0.10 FTE  
Clerical Assistant/General Auxiliary – 17 hours per week  
Early Years Practitioner – 23 hours per week
- 10.13 The Catering and Cleaning Service employs the following staff at the school;
- Cook HC2 - 17.50 hours per week.  
Cleaning Operative HC2 – 11.25 hours per week.
- 10.14 Including the pupils travelling from Dalwhinnie, 2 school transport routes currently operate to Gergask Primary, transporting a total of 6 pupils. Therefore approximately 46% of the pupil population are in receipt of school transport.
- 10.15 Annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from Gergask Primary School building are estimated at just under 32 tonnes. This figure would not be affected by the formal closure of Dalwhinnie Primary School.
- 10.16 As all of the pupils from the Dalwhinnie catchment area currently attend either Gergask or Newtonmore Primary Schools, no adverse effects for Gergask Primary are expected to arise.

### **Educational Benefits**

- 11.1 Highland Council is of the view that the school environment should be of a quality that sustains and improves education provision, pupil performance and outcomes for the young people of Highland.
- 11.2 With the above aim in mind, Highland Council has adopted the following indicators in reviewing its school estate:
- Pupils should be educated in facilities which are rated at least category B for each of Condition and Suitability.
  - Pupils should be members of an age-appropriate peer group.
  - Pupils should have the opportunity to engage in the widest possible range of activities beyond the core curriculum, including music, sports, drama and art.

- Pupils with Additional Support Needs should be educated in the most appropriate local setting.
- Pupils should not ordinarily be required to travel for longer than 30 minutes from the nearest classified road pick-up point to school (primary) although it is recognised that this may not always be possible in a rural Council area such as Highland.
- School facilities should be of a size appropriate to the delineated area that they serve, paying due regard to demographic trends.
- School delineated areas should reflect geography, travel routes and population distribution.
- Safe school transport should be provided and safe traffic management in and around school sites should be implemented.
- Teachers should be members of a professional learning community comprising at least 3 members located in the same facility.
- The implications of school location to local communities should be considered.
- Schools, wherever possible, should be located where there is a recognised village or other built up community.

11.3 In 2009 the Scottish Government also set out its vision for the Future School Estate in Scotland, in 'Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future'. Local Authorities are required to take account of these aspirations in planning changes to their school estate, namely:

- All children and young people will be educated in, and community users will use, schools that are 'fit for purpose' in terms of condition, suitability and sufficiency;
- Schools are well-designed, accessible, inclusive learning environments that inspire and drive new thinking and change and which support the delivery of high quality educational experiences through Curriculum for Excellence;
- Schools are integral parts of the communities they serve, with pupils making use of community facilities and communities accessing school facilities;
- Schools accommodate and provide a range of services, activities and facilities that make a difference to people's health and well-being, to sustaining economic growth and to the strength and vibrancy of communities;
- A sustainable school estate whose design, construction and operation is environmentally and energy efficient; contributes directly to delivering the year-on-year reductions in greenhouse gas emissions introduced by The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, which is resilient to the impact of climate change and which leads by example in matters of environmental performance;
- A school estate that is efficiently run and that maximises value for money;
- A school estate which is flexible and responsive - both to changes in demand for school places and to learners' and teachers' requirements and wishes, and where the beneficial impact of change is maximised by thorough consultation and engagement with users and stakeholders.

11.4 It is Highland Council's view that the pupils from the Dalwhinnie catchment derive educational benefits from their current attendance at the larger neighbouring schools. Formalising the current arrangements would provide a number of such benefits, judged against both the Highland and National criteria set out above.

- 11.5 Pupils at both Newtonmore and Gergask Primary Schools regularly work in co-operative learning groups. Cooperative learning strategy normally involves 4 pupils of roughly the same age group working together. A roll of 4-5, such as that if Dalwhinnie Primary re-opened, would mean that the groups would not only be limited in size but also static, since there would be no possibility of changing the membership of learning groups. A roll of 4-5 would further limit the variety of skills that pupils could bring to the groups, and there would be a smaller range of work to use in terms of sharing standards.
- 11.6 At Newtonmore Primary pupils participate in the Pupil Council; a school Eco-committee; a Charities Committee, and a Rights Respecting School Group; whilst other pupils take roles as Junior Road Safety Officers. Similarly, Gergask Primary has a Pupil Council, an Eco-Committee and a “Fit and Healthy” pupil committee, and as at Newtonmore certain pupils take on the role of Junior Road Safety Officers. It would be very difficult to cover the full range of such activities within the context of a school roll of 4-5 pupils.
- 11.7 The roll out of the 1+2 languages programme over the next 4-5 years requires considerable planning and preparation for delivery in any class setting, but in particular this would prove to be very problematic in a small composite setting. Language learning is by nature a highly interactive activity involving, for example, participatory games, pupils speaking to one another and whole class Q and A sessions. The schools of the Kingussie Associated School Group are adopting French and Mandarin as their two additional languages, whilst Newtonmore also offers Gàidhlig Medium education. Mandarin has been selected because Kingussie High School has been designated as a “Confucius Classroom Hub” as part of an agreement drawn up between the Confucius Institute for Scotland’s Schools in partnership with Tianjin Education Commission. Confucius Hubs are designed to promote the learning and teaching of Chinese language and culture. Delivery of language learning would be very constrained within the context of a school roll of 4 or 5.
- 11.8 It is self-evident that a total school roll of 5 severely restricts opportunities for team sports and other active recreational activities. This applies even to individual sports, where successful learning of skills is helped by talking and sharing of experiences. Creative Dance, performed by pupils at the Badenoch and Strathspey Music Festival, is a particular feature of Gergask Primary, and is an activity where ideas are sought from the children themselves. It further applies to the health and wellbeing element of the curriculum which involves discussion between pupils about health lifestyle choices. Whilst these problems can be overcome by taking the pupils to participate in activities in neighbouring schools, that in itself involves time out of school in travelling to either Newtonmore or Gergask.
- 11.9 Some of the educational benefits arise not just from larger pupil numbers (e.g. to form teams of similar age and size), but also because a larger staff and parent body increases the likelihood of interested adults leading a range of activities. Gergask Primary currently operates after school clubs in shinty, running, cookery and art whilst Newtonmore Primary operates clubs in shinty, hockey, art and Scripture Union.

- 11.10 Other activities such as World Book Day and Book Fairs organised by Scholastic Groups, would be limited in impact within the context of a school roll of 4 or 5.
- 11.11 As with sports, the larger rolls at Newtonmore and Gergask provide a greater likelihood of pupils benefitting from a wider range of solo and group musical and artistic opportunities. Primary schools within the Kingussie ASG host a visiting music specialist and a Kodály Voice Tutor, both of whom engage in whole school and whole class pieces. Pupils at Newtonmore Primary also engage in choral verse.
- 11.12 The proposal would also provide improved opportunities for children to develop skills for learning, life and work e.g. increasing opportunities for working with others of a similar age and stage which are very limited in schools of less than 10 children in a multi-composite setting.
- 11.13 The development of Profiling is a key component for developing the above skills and for children to be able to self-assess and very importantly peer assess these skills as part of ongoing discussion and dialogue with children of the same age/stage.
- 11.14 As part of the Developing Scotland's Young Workforce the aim is to develop increased awareness of the world of work, social skills and employability skills. Such knowledge and understanding and skills acquisition would very much benefit from discussions and dialogue with peers of the same age/stage.
- 11.15 The level to which pupils are able to become skilled in social interaction will depend to an extent on the opportunities afforded to them. The forging of close friendships and the development of self-esteem is enhanced by each pupil being enabled to be part of an age appropriate peer group of a sufficient size to allow a range of interactions and relationships to form and reform.
- 11.16 Staff of partner agencies in Highland have to work across wide geographical areas. A re-opening of Dalwhinnie Primary School would result in re-extending the geographical area that staff from partner agencies would be required to cover, thus decreasing the amount of time available to focus on working with children in the existing operational schools.
- 11.17 In summary, pupils from the community of Dalwhinnie have derived a range of positive educational benefits from the mothballing of Dalwhinnie Primary.
- 11.18 As all of the pupils from the Dalwhinnie catchment currently attend either Gergask or Newtonmore Primaries, no adverse effects for those pupils are expected to arise from the merger.

### **Effects on School Transport**

- 12.1 The table at **Appendix G** shows the school transport routes currently operating to the 2 schools.
- 12.2 During the 2015-16 session, 2 P1-7 pupils will be travelling from the Dalwhinnie catchment to Gergask Primary, with a further three P1-7 pupils

travelling to Newtonmore. Only the pupils travelling to Newtonmore receive funding for transport. Based on current prices and 190 days in the school year, the annual cost is £7,562. This cost would reduce to £1,140 in the event that Dalwhinnie Primary re-opened.

- 12.3 The additional travel time from Dalwhinnie Primary to Newtonmore Primary is approximately 19 minutes in normal conditions.
- 12.4 It is recognised that the larger merged school implies an increase in the number of pupils entitled to school transport compared to the number who can currently walk/cycle to school, should they choose to do so, and the occasional inconvenience for parents who wish to take their child to/from school during the school day, should they require to do so.
- 12.5 The table at **Appendix H** illustrates the additional emissions of greenhouse gases arising from the current transport arrangements from Dalwhinnie Primary to Newtonmore Primary and Gergask Primary. The figures are based on the types of vehicle used and the fuel used by those vehicles and show total CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions, (columns C and D), as well as emissions for CO<sub>2</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions for methane and nitrous oxide.
- 12.6 The table shows that the mothballing, and by extension the formal closure of, Dalwhinnie Primary, has resulted in just over 2 tonnes per annum of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions. The figures can however only be estimates as emissions are affected by the speed at which vehicles are driven and the type of road travelled.
- 12.7 The increased annual CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions from the provision of transport (approximately 2 tonnes) should be set against the approximate annual emissions of 8 tonnes from the Dalwhinnie Primary School building itself (see paragraph 8.14 above), which would be saved in the event of closure.
- 12.8 During the last full school session (2013-14) there were 3 days on which Gergask Primary School did not operate due to bad weather, and 2 days in which this happened at Newtonmore. As Dalwhinnie Primary School was mothballed, we cannot know whether it too would have been closed on the days in question.

### **Effects on Staff and School Management Arrangements**

- 13.1 As the school is already “mothballed” there will be no impact on school management arrangements at Newtonmore or Gergask from a formal closure of Dalwhinnie Primary School.
- 13.2 A continuation of the current mothballing arrangement will have no effect on current staffing arrangements.
- 13.3 The staffing implications of re-opening Dalwhinnie Primary School are set out at Paragraph 8.9 above, whilst the financial implications are set out at Section 15 below, and the associated **Appendix I**.

## **Effect on the Local Community**

- 14.1 There is an existing village hall in Dalwhinnie which provides a public space for the local community.
- 14.2 When the school building at Dalwhinnie was first mothballed, a licence to occupy the building was granted to “Dalwhinnie Past and Present” but this arrangement ceased in May 2014.
- 14.3 In the event of the merger proceeding, and subject to the Council not having any operational need for the building, Highland Council would be keen to work with the local community to see whether at least part of the current school building could be turned over to community use. Any such proposal would however have to be progressed within the terms of the Council’s current asset management policy.
- 14.4 Paragraph 4.6 above explains that the population of the catchment fell by 10% between 2001 and 2011, during a period when the school was open. Past analyses of rural locations in Highland that have experienced school closures has established no clear relationship between school closures and population patterns.

## **Financial Consequences**

- 15.1 The Table at **Appendix I** sets out the Highland Council’s assessment of the Financial Implications of the proposed merger.

## **Catchment Areas**

- 16.1 The distance and driving time between Dalwhinnie Primary School and Newtonmore Primary School is given as 10.9 miles and 19 minutes (source: Google Maps, also AA website) whilst the same source gives the distance and driving time from Dalwhinnie Primary to Gergask Primary as 8.1 miles and 14 minutes. These timings may be regarded as reasonable journey times under normal driving conditions. It is accepted that journey times may be lengthened during periods of adverse weather.
- 16.2 Newtonmore and Gergask Primaries have identical scores for Suitability and Condition.
- 16.3 Although Gergask Primary School is closer to Dalwhinnie than Newtonmore Primary, the school roll is much smaller. The larger pupil and staff numbers at Newtonmore Primary offer more opportunities for pupils to be part of age appropriate peer groups, and for staff to be part of a larger in-school professional network, than would be the case at Gergask Primary.
- 16.4 For the above reasons, Highland Council recommends that the Dalwhinnie PS area is re-assigned to that of Newtonmore Primary School.
- 16.5 Nevertheless, it remains Highland Council’s opinion that both Gergask and Newtonmore Primaries offer educational advantages in comparison with a re-opened Dalwhinnie Primary.

- 16.6 Highland Council would nevertheless welcome the community's views on the best way to re-assign the catchment area of Dalwhinnie Primary School.
- 16.7 Whichever decision is taken with respect to catchment areas, existing pupils will not be required to change schools and will continue to qualify for school transport. This will also apply to any younger siblings of such pupils, provided they remain at the same primary school.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 17.1 A preliminary EQIA assessment is at **Appendix J**.

### **Rural Impact Assessment**

- 18.1 A preliminary Rural Impact Assessment is at **Appendix K**.

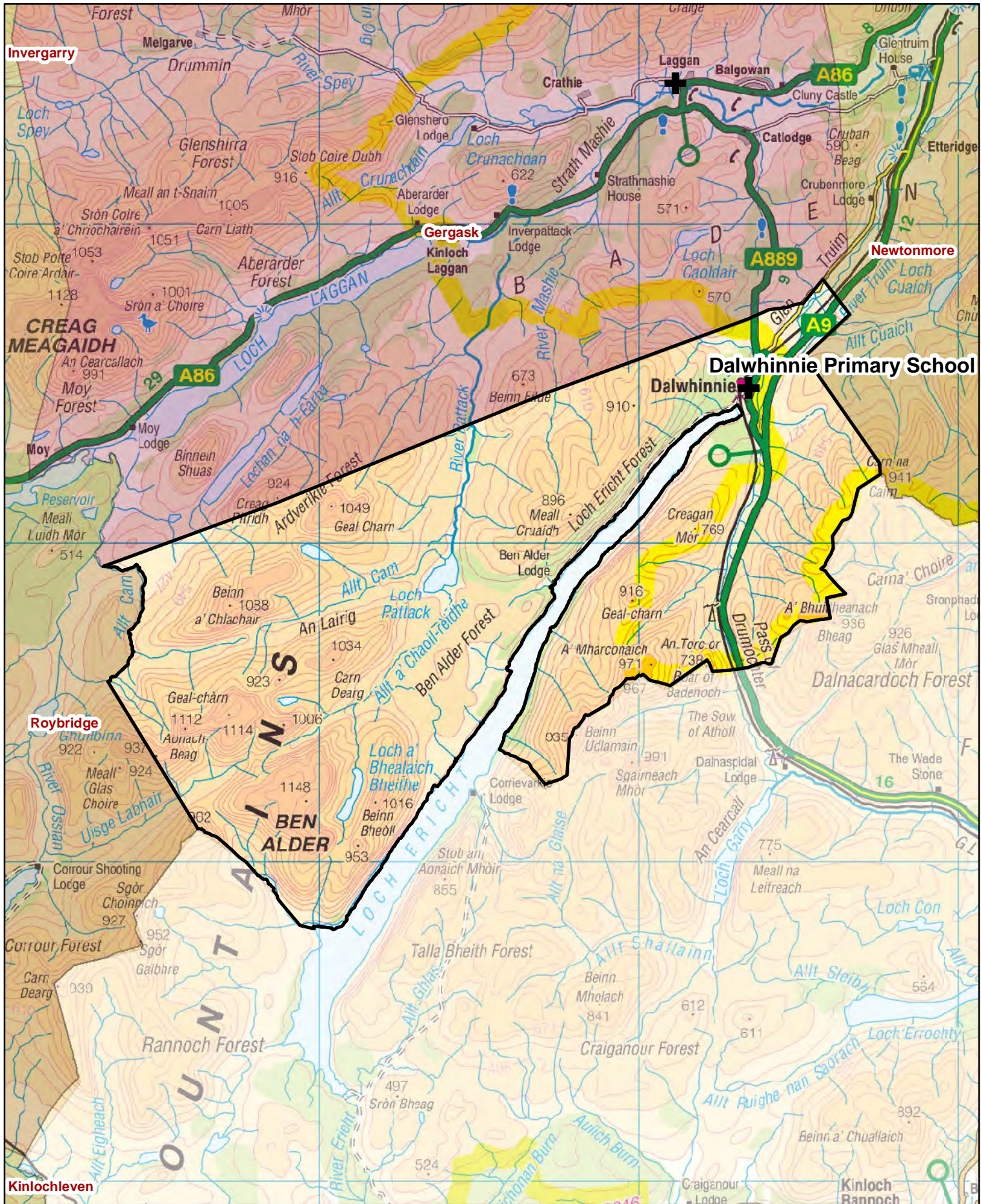
### **Mitigation of Adverse Effects**

- 19.1 The main adverse effect for children in the P1-7 age group is the length of journey from Dalwhinnie to either Gergask or Newtonmore, details of which are provided above. However, as the school has been mothballed since 2012, all the current pupils are already making this journey, or that to Gergask.
- 19.2 Funded school transport will be provided to P1-7 pupils from Dalwhinnie attending Newtonmore Primary.
- 19.3 Although funded transport is not provided for nursery age children, these children have already been attending either Newtonmore or Gergask Primary for their pre-school education. The journey times involved are not lengthy in comparison to those faced by many other primary and nursery age children in Highland.

### **Recommendation**

- 19.1 Taking the above into account Highland Council recommends that Dalwhinnie Primary School, currently "mothballed," is closed and the catchment area re-assigned to that of Newtonmore Primary.
- 19.2 This proposal paper is issued in terms of the authority's procedures to meet the relevant statutory requirements. Following the consultation period, a report and submissions received will be presented to the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee of the Highland Council.





## Dalwhinnie Primary School

**Primary School  
Catchment Boundary  
March 2013**

1:153,000

0 3.25 6.5 Kilometers

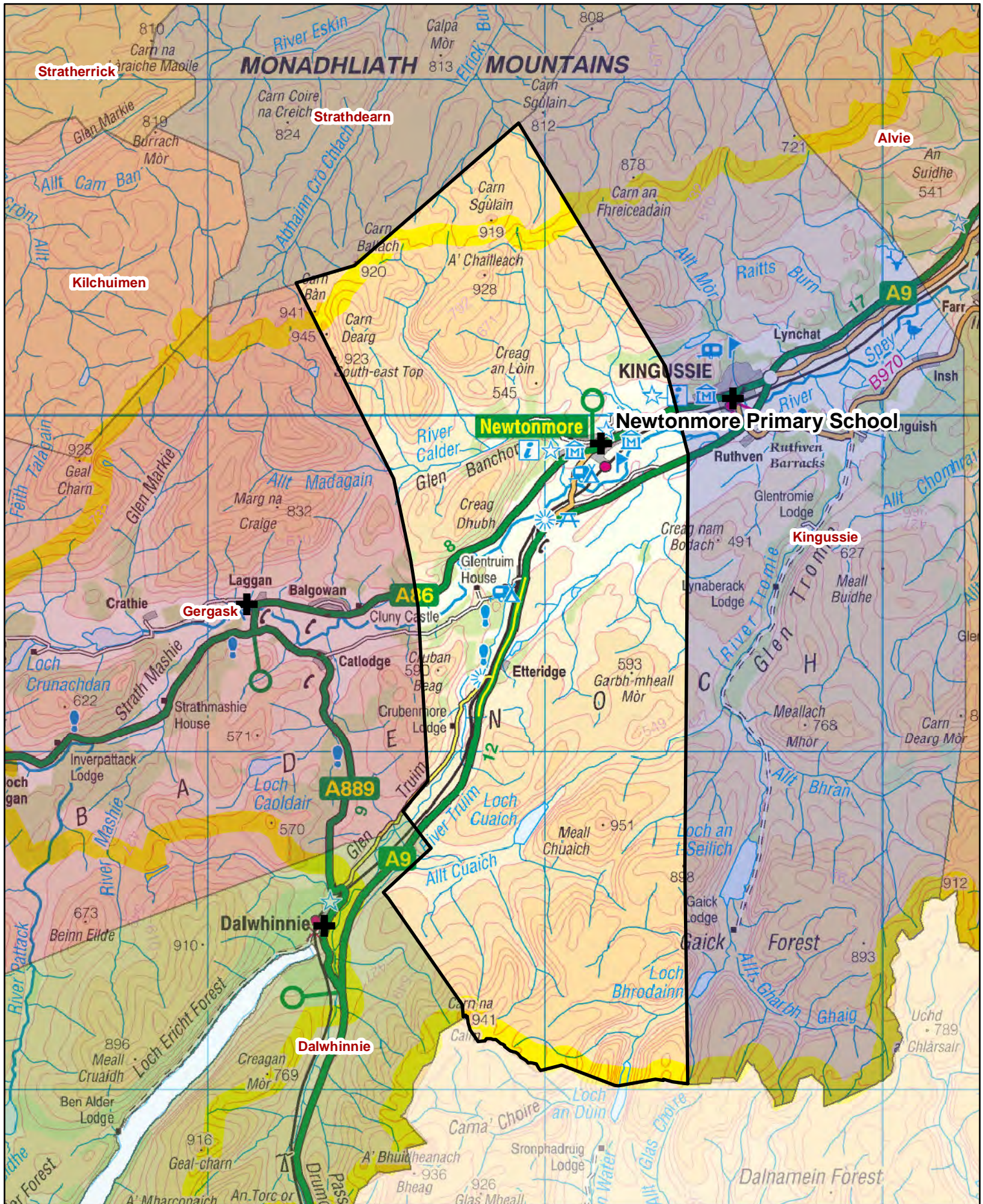
1 cm = 1,530 metres

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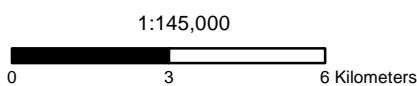


Planning & Development Service



## Newtonmore Primary School

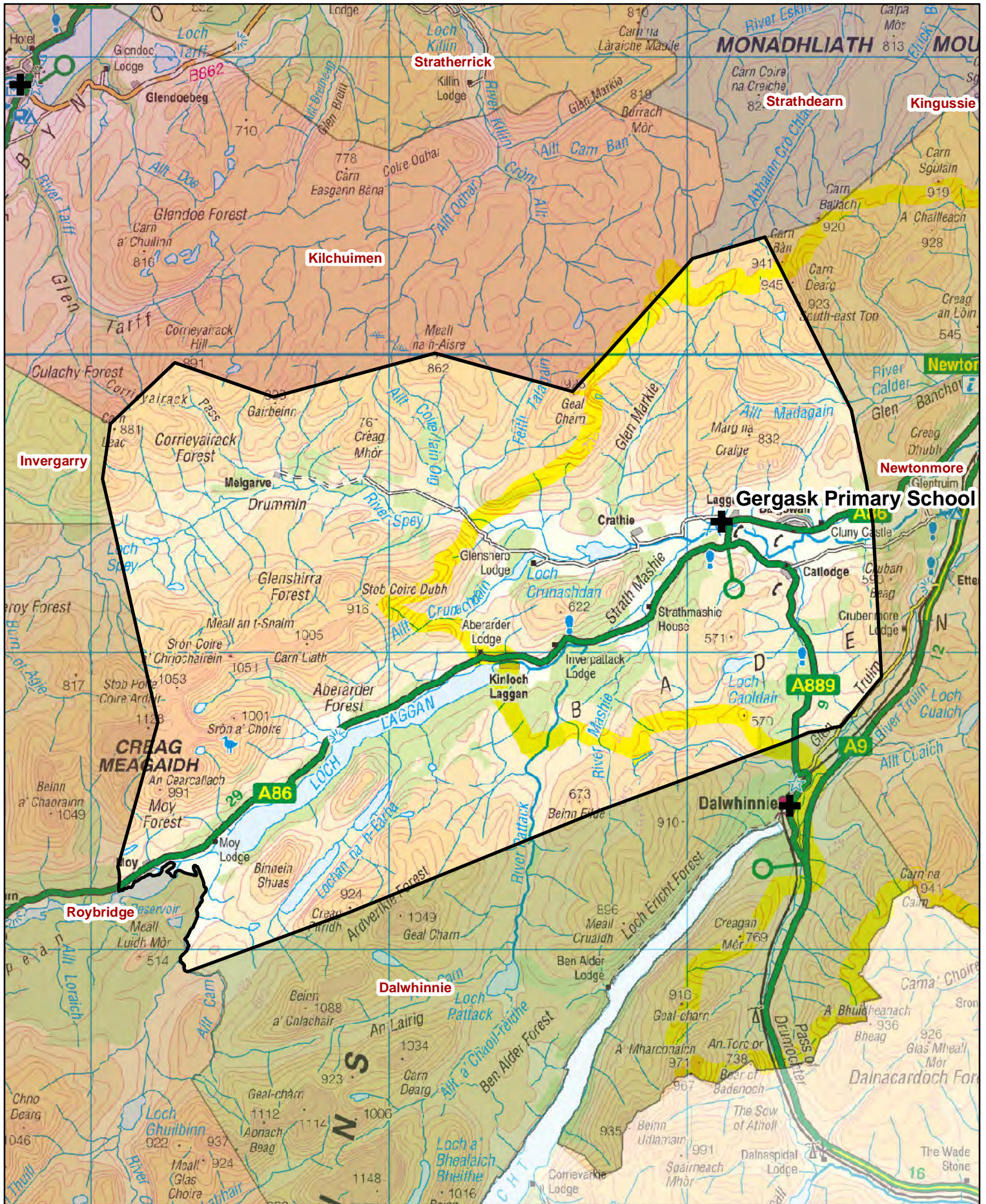
**Primary School  
Catchment Boundary  
March 2013**



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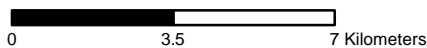
Planning & Development Service



## Gergask Primary School

**Primary School  
Catchment Boundary  
March 2013**

1:164,000



1 cm = 1,640 metres

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Planning & Development Service

Expected Impacts	Formal Closure of Dalwhinnie PS with re-zoning to Gergask	Formal Closure of Dalwhinnie PS with re-zoning to Newtonmore	Continued Mothballing (as a short-term measure only)	Re-Opening of Dalwhinnie PS
Availability of Age-Appropriate Peer Group	Better availability than at Dalwhinnie, but no guarantee of an age appropriate peer group	Would provide for an age-appropriate peer group	Would provide for an age-appropriate peer group	Would not provide for an age-appropriate peer group
Development of Profiling	Sufficient numbers to develop profiling	Sufficient numbers to develop profiling	Sufficient numbers to develop profiling	Self-assessment made more difficult by limited comparisons and lack of peer review
Opportunities for Pupil Participation (Pupil Council etc)	Sufficient numbers for participation	Sufficient numbers for participation	Sufficient numbers for participation	Insufficient numbers for full participation
Access to Music, PE, Drama, Art	Would provide access to specialist teaching for PE, Music	Would provide access to specialist teaching for PE, Music	Would provide access to specialist teaching for PE, Music	Reduced access to specialist teaching for PE, Music
Provision for ASN	Appropriate provision	Appropriate provision	Appropriate provision	Appropriate provision
Provision of 1+2 language programme	Appropriate provision	Appropriate provision	Appropriate provision	Delivery of additional languages hampered by low numbers
Personal, Social, Health Needs	Appropriate provision	Appropriate provision	Appropriate provision	Socialisation would be severely hampered by school roll of 2 or 3
Equality for All	Appropriate provision	Appropriate provision	Appropriate provision	Appropriate provision
Morale and Ethos	As at present	As at present	As at present	Morale and Ethos would have to be created. Low pupil numbers may have a negative impact
Partnership Working	As at present	As at present	As at present	Negative effects arising from spreading existing staff more thinly
Standard of Accommodation	Gergask has ratings of B/B	Newtonmore has ratings of B/B	As at present	Dalwhinnie has ratings of B/B
Availability of Adequate Professional Network	Gergask would not provide adequate professional network	Professional network available at Newtonmore	Professional network available at Newtonmore	Would be a single teacher school with limited professional network
Access to after-school activities	Access as at present	Access as at present	Access as at present	Access as at present although pupils would be less familiar with their peers
Access to school during adverse weather	Access as at present	Access as at present	Access as at present	Improved access due to shorter travel distances.
Location in recognised village	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Travel Times	Maximum additional travel time of 14 minutes	Maximum additional travel time of 19 minutes	Maximum additional travel time of 19 minutes	No travel time required
Provision of funded school transport for primary age pupils	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not Required
Provision of funded transport for nursery age pupils	No	No	No	Not Required
Community impact	Village Hall in Dalwhinnie. Potential to develop school for community use?	Village Hall in Dalwhinnie. Potential to develop school for community use?	Village Hall unaffected. No long term development opportunity for school building.	Village Hall unaffected. No opportunity for school building to be developed for community use.
Best Value	Additional annual costs of £3K above current arrangement, but with opportunity for property cost savings to be achieved from formal closure of Dalwhinnie PS.	As at present, but with opportunity for property cost savings to be achieved from formal closure of Dalwhinnie PS.	As at present	Additional annual revenue costs of c.77K

## **CONSULTATIVE PROCESS - SUMMARY OF PROCESS FOR THIS PROPOSAL DOCUMENT - DALWHINNIE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Consideration by the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee**

The Proposal paper has been issued as a result of a decision approved by the above Committee.

Prior to submission to Committee, pre-consultation discussions took place between Highland Council officials and the Parent Councils of Gergask and Newtonmore Primaries, as well as with Dalwhinnie Community Council, Newtonmore and Vicinity Community Council, and Laggan Community Association.

### **Proposal Document issued to consultees and published on Highland Council Website**

A copy of the Proposal paper will be issued free of charge to the following consultees:

- (i) Parents of pupils in the catchment areas of Dalwhinnie Primary School; Gergask Primary School; and Newtonmore Primary School; including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (ii) All P4-7 pupils attending Gergask and Newtonmore Primary Schools.
- (iii) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;
- (iv) The Parent Councils of Gergask and Newtonmore Primary Schools, plus the local Comann nam Pàrant
- (v) Staff of Gergask and Newtonmore Primary Schools.
- (vi) Trade union representatives;
- (vii) The community councils for for the areas covered by the 3 schools;
- (viii) Education Scotland;
- (ix) Highland Youth Convenor
- (x) Bòrd na Gàidhlig
- (xi) Dalwhinnie Past and Present
- (xii) Laggan Community Association
- (xiii) Members of the Highland Community Planning Partnership

and will be published on the Council website.

### **Publication in local newspapers**

A notice announcing the public meeting will be placed in the Strathspey and Badenoch Herald and on the Highland Council's Facebook page.

### **Length of Consultation period**

The consultation period will begin on 1 February 2016. The consultation will thereafter run until close of business on 18 March 2016 which includes a period of 32 school days.

## **Public meeting**

A public meeting will be held at 7.00pm on 23 February at Dalwhinnie Primary School. Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting is invited to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Council, will be chaired by a senior elected councillor, and will be addressed by officers of the Care and Learning Service.

The meeting will be an opportunity for the public to hear more about the proposal; to ask questions about the proposal; and to have the views of all stakeholders recorded so that they can be taken into account. A note will be taken at the meeting of questions asked and views expressed. This note will be published on the Council website. The meeting will also be recorded.

## **Involvement of HMI/Education Scotland**

When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will also be sent to Education Scotland (HMIE) by the Council. HMIE will also be sent, by 11 April 2016, a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period. HMIE will also receive the summary note of the public meeting that will be held and so far as is practicable a copy of any other relevant documentation. HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 29 April 2016. In preparing their report, HMIE may visit the affected schools and make such enquiries of people there as they consider appropriate.

## **Preparation of Consultation Report**

Highland Council will review the proposal having regard to the HMI Report, written representations that it has received, and oral representations made at the public meeting. It will then prepare a Consultation Report. This Report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be sent to anyone who submitted a written representation during consultation. It will be available on the Council website as well as at the affected schools and local libraries, free of charge. The Report will include a summary of the written and oral representations made during consultation and a copy of the HMI Report, together with the Council's considered response to the issues raised. The Report will include details of details of any alleged inaccuracies and/or omissions and how these have been handled. The Consultation Report will be published at least 3 weeks prior to being submitted to the Education, Children and Adult Services (ECAS) Committee, who will make a recommendation to the full Highland Council.

In publishing the report the Council will invite any person or party to make further representations to the Committee prior to its meeting. A notice to this effect will also be published on the Highland Council website.

At the present time the Council intends to publish its Report on 3 August 2016, prior to submission to the ECAS Committee on 25 August 2016. However, this timescale may change depending on the nature of issues raised during consultation, and the need to give these full consideration. In the latter event, the Report may not be submitted until a later Committee meeting.

Any closure proposal approved at ECAS Committee in August 2016 would require to be confirmed by the full Highland Council on 8 September 2016.

### **Scottish Ministers Call-in**

In the event that the Council decides to close the school at that stage, it is required to notify the Scottish Ministers of that decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Document and Consultation Report in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, within 6 working days of the decision being made, and to publish on its website a notice that it has done so, detailing the opportunity to make further representations within 3 weeks. The Scottish Ministers have an 8-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal, it will be referred to a School Closure Review Panel. Within the first 3 weeks of the 8-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the 8-week call-in process has been notified to the Council, the Council will not proceed to implement the proposal.

### **Note on Corrections**

If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this Proposal paper, either by the Council or any other person, the Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or, if the paper contains an inaccuracy. The Council will then take appropriate action, which may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of the Proposal or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period, if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and HMI will be advised.

**Dalwhinnie Primary School  
and Nursery Class  
The Highland Council  
29 January 2008**



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## 1. Background

Dalwhinnie Primary School and nursery class was inspected in November 2007 as part of a national sample of primary and nursery education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated nursery children's and pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined the quality of the children's experience in the nursery, pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the Parent Council, and a group of parents<sup>1</sup>.

The school serves the village of Dalwhinnie and the surrounding rural area. At the time of the inspection the roll was eight, including a nursery class. There were no pupils at the P1-P3 stages. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well below the national average. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average.

As part of a cluster arrangement, the headteacher shared the leadership of both Dalwhinnie Primary School and Newtonmore Primary School.

## 2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- A wide range of activities which encouraged pupils' creativity.
- The quality of teaching, and of pupils' learning experiences.
- Friendly, courteous pupils who were keen to learn.
- High quality relationships between pupils and staff and the very positive partnerships with parents and the wider community.
- Leadership of the headteacher.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

### **3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?**

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to all parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

Parents, pupils and staff were very positive about all aspects of the school. Parents thought that teachers set high standards for pupils' work and encouraged pupils to work hard. They felt that their children enjoyed being at school and that the school was well led. Pupils were proud of their school and felt safe and well looked after there. They thought that teachers explained work clearly to them and helped them when they had difficulty with their learning. All staff enjoyed working in the school. They thought that pupils were enthusiastic about their learning and that the school was well led.

### **4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?**

#### **Pupils' learning experiences and achievements**

In the nursery class, children were encouraged to choose from an interesting range of learning opportunities. At the primary stages, the overall structure of the curriculum was very good. Teachers ensured that pupils developed a wide range of skills. Staff used science and technology lessons well to develop pupils' skills in carrying out investigations and practical activities. Recent improvements in the literacy programme had improved pupils' motivation to read more readily. Staff made very effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) to develop pupils' skills in a range of areas. At P6 and P7, pupils were learning French and all pupils were learning Gaelic. All pupils benefited from two hours of physical activity each week, in line with national recommendations. In the nursery class, staff used praise very well to encourage children and help them feel secure. Staff made effective use of questions and talked with children skilfully to develop their confidence. At the primary stages, the quality of teaching was very good. Teachers were very well organised and planned carefully what they wanted pupils to learn. They made very good use of a range of assessment strategies to help pupils' with their learning. They shared with pupils what they needed to do to achieve success and used praise effectively. Staff set an appropriate variety of homework tasks to support pupils' learning.

Children in the nursery class were making very good progress. They were developing their observation skills well by planting bulbs outdoors in the garden soil and comparing how they grow outside to others which were grown in clear containers filled with water. Children printed with vegetables and expressed their own ideas creatively using art and craft materials. They were developing very good hand and finger control, but did not have sufficient opportunities for energetic physical activity. At the primary stages, the quality of pupils' learning was very good. All pupils were well motivated, hard working and keen to learn. Pupils listened well to teachers' instructions and responded well to all activities. They cooperated effectively with one another in pairs, trios and class groups. This included designing and making objects which included light, sound and movement as part of the design. Pupils also worked together to create and present music using percussion. Pupils made effective use of computers for a range of purposes, including compiling a local guide book, maintaining contact with

pupils in a neighbouring school, and collecting and displaying information. They had used a range of skills to gather information for their guide book, including life drawings, mapping skills, research, writing and ICT.

The school had taken some very effective steps to promote pupils' personal and social development and to help pupils develop their wider achievements. Pupils were developing their awareness of what it means to be a responsible citizen by participating in a range of activities. These included working on the pupil council, developing and maintaining the school garden and involvement in planting projects in Cairngorm National Park. Pupils benefited from a range of successful enterprise education projects. They had worked effectively alongside pupils in neighbouring schools at their joint annual sports day and mini Highland games. At P7, pupils developed effective personal and social skills as a result of their annual residential experience. Those at P6 and P7 also benefited from a range of outdoor physical activities including skiing and snow boarding. The school had been successful in gaining a health promoting school award and pupils were knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles and healthy eating. On a monthly basis they organised a healthy 'Munch Bunch Lunch' for all pupils and staff.

### **English language**

Children in the nursery were making good progress in communication and language. They enjoyed listening to stories and rhymes and were developing their skills in talking confidently with adults. Children's early writing skills were developing appropriately. Their skills in looking at books independently and recognising their names in print were not yet sufficiently well developed. The overall quality of attainment in English language at the primary stages, was good. Pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in reading, writing, listening and talking. In reading, several pupils were achieving these national levels earlier than might normally be expected. Pupils with additional support needs were making appropriate progress with their learning. With greater challenge, pupils were capable of higher levels of attainment. Pupils listened well to instructions and spoke confidently about their personal experiences. Most read fluently and with good expression. They could confidently discuss their favourite books and a range of authors. They understood the main ideas in texts they read. Pupils wrote well for a range of different purposes. Their written work was normally well presented. At the upper stages, there was scope to improve the length and quality of writing produced and to give further opportunities for extended writing pieces.

### **Mathematics**

Children in the nursery class were making good progress in developing their early mathematics. They enjoyed solving problems and discussing numbers in play situations. At the primary stages, the quality of attainment in mathematics was good. Pupils were attaining appropriate national levels of attainment. Almost half were attaining these levels earlier than might normally be expected. Pupils with additional support needs were making appropriate progress with their learning. At all stages, pupils could interpret information from graphs. Pupils at P6 and P7 were confident in using ICT to organise and present information. Most pupils carried out written calculations with accuracy. Pupils were not sufficiently secure in mental calculations. They had appropriate knowledge of simple fractions and shape but were less confident

with aspects of measurement, including estimating length. Pupils had a good knowledge of problem solving strategies and could apply these with confidence.

## 5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

In the nursery class, children's needs were well met. Staff were very responsive to individual children. They made appropriate observations of children at play and used this information effectively to identify the next steps in their learning. Planning for learning did not always respond effectively enough to meet the needs of all children. At the primary stages, approaches to meeting pupils' needs were good. Teachers provided a good range of tasks and activities. Teaching and support staff provided helpful assistance to pupils with additional support needs. Individualised educational programmes, with appropriate learning targets, were in place. The support for learning teacher gave appropriate and helpful advice to staff.

## 6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Pastoral care	The school provided pupils with high quality pastoral support. Staff knew their pupils very well and effectively ensured that their social, emotional and physical needs were met. The school had appropriate procedures in place to ensure the care, welfare and protection of children. All staff were trained in current child protection procedures and knew how to implement these. All pupils and children were involved in a daily teeth brushing programme. Pupils responded well to a range of activities which improved their health and wellbeing. Nursery children were provided with a healthy snack. Effective transition arrangements were in place to support children as they moved from nursery to P1 and from P7 to Kingussie High School.
Quality of accommodation and facilities	The quality of accommodation was good and included an appropriate secure entry system. The school was well maintained and clean. Classrooms were bright and provided a stimulating environment for learning. Computing facilities in the classroom were good. Access to parts of the building was difficult for those with restricted mobility. There was appropriate outdoor space and staff used the school garden well to promote pupils' learning. The school did not provide meals at lunchtime. There was no dedicated space for dining arrangements. Although there was appropriate outdoor space, there were drainage problems in the grassed area.

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>Parents, pupils and staff had a strong sense of identity and pride in the school. Staff had created a very welcoming environment. Staff and pupil morale was high. Relationships between pupils and staff were of a high standard. Staff worked well as a team. Pupils were polite and courteous and standards of behaviour were high. Staff had high expectations of pupils' attendance and behaviour, but they needed to raise further their expectations of pupils' attainment. Staff recognised and celebrated pupils' achievements. The school chaplain gave helpful support to the school and regular assemblies provided appropriate opportunities for religious observance. Staff treated pupils fairly and ensured that all were included in the life and work of the school. Staff did not yet promote racial and cultural diversity sufficiently enough through the curriculum.</p>
Partnership with parents and the community	<p>The school's partnership with parents and the local community was very good. Parents actively contributed to school events. Parents and members of the wider community had been involved in designing, creating and building the school garden. Regular and informative newsletters kept parents up to date with the life of the school. Parents received a helpful annual written pupil report and had regular opportunities to meet with teachers. They were suitably consulted about sensitive aspects of the school's health programme. The school made effective use of partnerships in the wider community, including those with the Active Schools Coordinator, the community police officer and the school nurse.</p>

## 7. Leading and improving the school

Appendix 1 provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

Dalwhinnie Primary School provided a high standard of education for pupils within a caring environment. There was a climate of mutual respect and trust where pupils and staff felt valued. A wide range of effective learning experiences were being delivered. Pupils were motivated and keen to learn and were given a range of opportunities to be creative and think for themselves. They were achieving good standards of attainment in English language and mathematics.

The experienced headteacher provided very good leadership. She had a clear vision for the school and ensured that this was reflected in the activities provided. She enjoyed the strong support of parents and staff. The headteacher was highly regarded by

parents, pupils and staff and had established a strong sense of teamwork across the school. Her teaching was of a high quality and she had been successful in improving aspects of the school's work, including reading, science and ICT. Effective arrangements were in place for the day to day management of the school when the headteacher attended her other school. With the continuing support of the education authority the headteacher and staff had the clear capacity to improve the school further. The school's approaches to self-evaluation were good. A number of effective systems were in place to monitor aspects of the school's work. This included monitoring of teachers' plans, sampling pupils' work and observing classroom practice. The class teacher had visited teachers from a neighbouring school to share and observe practice. The headteacher had not yet used attainment data rigorously or consistently enough to ensure that all pupils made appropriate progress. There was no specific development plan for the nursery class which was reinstated in August 2007. Nursery staff were aware of the Scottish Services Council's Codes of Practice.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were two recommendations which had been addressed.

#### **Main points for action**

The school and education authority should continue to provide high quality and improving education. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- improve pupils' attainment in mental calculation and writing; and
- improve approaches to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

#### **What happens next?**

As a result of the high performance, the strong record of improvement and the very effective leadership of this school, HM Inspectors will make no further reports in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. Within two years of the publication of this report the education authority, working with the school, will provide a progress report to parents.

Isabel Robb  
HM Inspector

29 January 2008

## Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

<b>How good are learning, teaching and achievement?</b>	
Structure of the curriculum	very good
The teaching process	very good
Pupils' learning experiences	very good
Pupils' attainment in English language	good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	good

<b>How well are pupils' learning needs met?</b>	
Meeting pupils' needs	good

<b>How good is the environment for learning?</b>	
Pastoral care	very good
Accommodation and facilities	good
Climate and relationships	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	good
Equality and fairness	good
Partnership with parents, the Parent Council, and the community	very good

<b>Leading and improving the school</b>	
Leadership of the headteacher	very good
Self-evaluation	good

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses



## Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below. Where any one group had five or less respondees then, in order to maintain confidentiality, the analysis is not provided.

<b>What pupils thought the school did well</b>	<b>What pupils think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pupils were very positive about all aspects of the school's work.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There were no significant issues.</li></ul>

## **How can you contact us?**

### **If you would like an additional copy of this report**

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Longman House, 28 Longman Road, Inverness, IV1 1SF or by telephoning 01463 253115. Copies are also available on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

### **HMIE Feedback and Complaints Procedure**

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of primary inspections, you should write in the first instance to Chris McIlroy, HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail [HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk). A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: [ask@sps.org.uk](mailto:ask@sps.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.sps.org.uk](http://www.sps.org.uk).

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**Newtonmore Primary  
School and Nursery Class  
The Highland Council  
9 February 2010**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents<sup>1</sup>, children and the local community know whether their school<sup>2</sup> provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which children are involved. We also gather the views of children, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well children are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support children. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from children, parents and staff. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

## **Contents**

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. How well do children learn and achieve?
4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?
6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?
7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
8. What happens next?

### **1. The school**

Newtonmore Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the village of Newtonmore. The roll was 80, including 24 in the two Gaelic medium classes, 17 in the English speaking nursery class, and two in the Gaelic medium nursery class when the inspection was carried out in December 2009. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2007/2008.

## **2. Particular strengths of the school**

- Children's learning experiences and wider achievements.
- Staff teamwork and the very good ethos in the school.
- Progress of children's learning through the medium of Gaelic.
- Confident, well-behaved children who contribute well to their community.
- Success of the headteacher in involving children, staff and parents in improving the school.

## **3. How well do children learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

Across the school, children are confident and active learners. In the nursery classes, children are familiar with daily routines and are becoming increasingly independent and confident in their learning. They are able to make their own choices and are learning to share and cooperate with each other. Children in the Gaelic nursery class are beginning to become involved in planning their learning. In the primary classes, children show very good skills in working on their own and as part of a small group. Children in the Gaelic speaking classes, and in the senior stages of the English speaking classes, work together on tasks, many of which they have designed for themselves. Staff are beginning to provide helpful feedback to children on their work. This helps children to know their own strengths and what they need to do to improve. Children at all stages feel safe, valued and included.

Children in the nursery and primary classes are developing effective citizenship and enterprise skills across a variety of activities. Children are enthusiastic about protecting the environment. They have worked hard with staff, parents and members of the village community to achieve an Eco-schools Scotland green flag. At all primary stages, children use mathematical language and skills very well in a range of real-life contexts. For example, their surveys of local opinion added strength to their appeal for a mobile cinema in the village. Children perform confidently in assemblies, concerts and local events such as the Badenoch and Strathspey music festival. Many enjoy taking part in a wide range of sporting, musical and cultural activities within school and out of school hours. Children from the Gaelic speaking classes play an active part in activities run by Gaelic cultural organisations. Children have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy.

In the nursery class, children are making very good progress in developing skills in early literacy and numeracy. Across the school, children use a range of information and communications technology (ICT) confidently. Several use the webcam effectively to share ideas with children from other local schools. In the primary classes, almost all children achieve appropriate national levels of attainment in reading and most achieve these in writing. Almost all achieve appropriate levels in mathematics. At almost all stages, a significant number of children achieve appropriate levels earlier than might be expected. Across the school, children take an active part in class and group discussions. They can present and defend a point of view very effectively. Almost all children enjoy reading a wide range of books by different authors. At all stages, children write well for a range of purposes across different curricular areas. They take pride in their written work. Children in the Gaelic medium classes are making very good progress in listening, speaking, reading and writing in Gaelic. In mathematics, children at all stages are learning to handle and display information successfully, often in connection with their topic work. Most can calculate quickly and accurately and have a good understanding of time and money.

Across the school, children are good at solving real life mathematical problems. In the English speaking classes, there is scope for children to use ICT more effectively to develop their skills in mathematics.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

In the nursery classes, staff are at the early stages of implementing *Curriculum for Excellence*. Staff take good account of children's interests in planning activities. In the primary classes, staff have made a very good start to implementing *Curriculum for Excellence*. The well-planned curriculum is helping children to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills. Staff are beginning to use the experiences and outcomes from *Curriculum for Excellence* very effectively. Together, they plan relevant and motivating tasks and activities which develop children's skills in literacy and numeracy very well across other areas of their learning. Staff provide children with a good range of interesting and stimulating activities which include learning about enterprise, sustainability and citizenship. Staff place an appropriately strong emphasis on Scottish language and culture. In the English speaking classes, children receive high quality learning experiences in French and Gaelic. The time allocated to learning these languages is not sufficient to enable them to develop their skills, particularly in writing, well enough. Staff take account of children's interests when planning their learning. The school provides children with two hours of high-quality physical education each week and offers additional opportunities to develop skills in a range of sports including swimming and skiing.

In the English speaking nursery class, staff meet children's needs very effectively. They know the children very well and plan a well-judged range of tasks and activities to hold children's interest and generate curiosity. Staff gather helpful information about what children are learning and use it when planning future learning and development. The balance between activities which children choose for themselves and the activities led by adults is appropriate. In the Gaelic speaking nursery class, children need more opportunities to explore and investigate in their play. In the primary classes, staff plan carefully and



reflect regularly on children's progress. They are taking effective steps to make learning more active for children. Homework is regular and often interesting and challenging. It supports children's learning in class. Staff give clear explanations and share the purpose of lessons with children. Almost all are good at explaining what they expect children to learn and many use questioning well to check for understanding. A few tasks are not closely enough matched to children's learning needs. All children who need additional support are well supported and making good progress in their learning. Children benefit from very good help from support staff and voluntary helpers.

#### **4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?**

Staff have developed highly effective partnerships with a range of agencies and individuals, including the community police and local businesses. These help children progress in their learning. The school communicates very effectively with parents through newsletters, parents' evenings and written progress reports. In response to parental requests, the school organised a series of well-attended workshops on aspects of the school's work, including sensitive health issues and the work of visiting teachers. At all stages, staff help parents support their child's learning. The effective Parent Council provides very good support for the school, for example in helping re-establish swimming lessons for children. The school deals appropriately with any parental concerns and complaints. There are well planned arrangements in place to support children moving from nursery to P1 and from P7 to Kingussie High School.

#### **5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?**

At all stages, children are successful in developing their personal and social skills and are gaining confidence in all they do. Older children act as buddies for younger children by helping them and including

them in all aspects of school life. The pupil council, eco-committee members and junior road safety officers make important decisions about what happens in school. This has led to improvements in the playground, and to aspects of learning. Members of the steering group set up to develop the Rights Respecting School initiative are leading learning about children's rights and responsibilities. All support staff play a significant role in the life of the school. Staff are reflective and regularly discuss and share best practice. They should now continue to develop further their approaches to evaluating learning and classroom practice. This would enable them to improve further the learning opportunities they offer children. The headteacher is successful in involving all members of the school community in improving children's experiences. She has introduced a range of strategies to monitor the work of the school. These have improved aspects of children's learning experiences. There is scope to improve further the tracking of children's progress to help staff in setting learning targets.

## **6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?**

Children are proud to attend Newtonmore Primary School and welcome visitors into their school. Relationships across the school are positive and young people's behaviour is very good. Children are confident that adults will act promptly and effectively if they report a concern. Staff teamwork is very effective and the ethos in the school is outstanding. Across the school, there is a very strong emphasis on respect and care for others. Children consider they are treated fairly. They are clear about what they would do to challenge discrimination or prejudice. All staff are highly committed to the wellbeing of all children. They know what to do to keep children safe. The school takes prompt, appropriate action if children are absent from school without explanation. Children's many achievements are celebrated in high-quality wall displays, through newsletters and at assemblies. The school provides good opportunities for religious observance.

## **7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?**

All staff share the vision to ensure that every child is included in the work of the school and receives a high quality learning experience. Communication is effective at all levels. Parents are fully supportive of the direction in which the school is moving. In building the school's ethos, the headteacher has gained the respect of staff, children, parents and the wider community. She is supported effectively by the principal teacher, who leads curricular developments very well. With continuing strong leadership, the school is very well placed to continue to improve.

## **8. What happens next?**

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the school, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The education authority will inform parents about the school's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its school.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Improve self-evaluation, including tracking of children's progress, to ensure that the learning needs of all children are met.
- Continue to improve learning and teaching approaches in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery classes there were no requirements or recommendations.

Quality indicators help schools and nursery classes, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a school and a nursery class. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publications *How good is our school?* and *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools and nursery classes are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Newtonmore Primary School and Nursery Classes.

#### Primary school

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

#### Nursery classes

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>very good</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery classes.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>good</b>

**HM Inspector:** Anne McGachey  
9 February 2010

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

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Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation, or if you wish to comment about any aspect of our inspections. You can contact us at [HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk) or write to us at BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Text phone users can contact us on 01506 600 236. This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as the line will not connect you to a member of staff.

You can find our complaints procedure on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk) or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

Where the school has a nursery class, you can contact the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY, telephone 0845 603 0890.

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**Gergask Primary School  
and Nursery Class  
Laggan  
The Highland Council  
24 August 2010**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents<sup>1</sup>, children and the local community know whether their school<sup>2</sup> provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which children are involved. We also gather the views of children, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well children are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support children. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from children, parents and staff. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

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1. The school.
2. Particular strengths of the school.
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6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?
7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
8. What happens next?

### **1. The school**

Gergask Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the community of Laggan and the surrounding area. An acting headteacher has been in post since February 2010. The roll was 29, including five children in the nursery when the inspection was carried out in May 2010. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009.



## **2. Particular strengths of the school**

- Polite, friendly and well behaved children.
- Children's learning in the nursery class and P1-P3 class.
- The care and commitment of the acting headteacher and all staff.

## **3. How well do children learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

Across the school, children cooperate well with staff and are keen to learn. In the nursery class, children play well together, take turns and share materials. They are appropriately aware of the nursery's routines and respond well. Children are developing effective independence skills, including making choices and dressing for outdoor play. In the primary classes, most children are motivated well and respond effectively to teachers and support staff. Children learn through an appropriate range of practical activities and are becoming more confident in thinking for themselves. Children could now take more responsibility for carrying out tasks effectively, to improve their skills in independent learning.

Across the nursery and primary classes, most children are achieving well. In the nursery class, children are developing their balancing and catching skills effectively. They learn about volcanoes through simple science experiments and talk confidently about changes in the weather. There is scope to develop children's skills in investigating and solving problems. In the primary classes, children gain confidence and develop appropriate performance skills through taking part in musical activities and school shows. Children recently achieved success in a range of categories at the Badenoch and Strathspey Music Festival. The school has an Eco-Schools Scotland silver award

as a result of children's awareness of caring for the environment. Children are developing their citizenship skills effectively. They serve on the pupil council and work with members of the local community to raise funds for a range of charities. Children know the benefits of healthy eating and regular physical activity. As a result, the school has Health Promoting School status. Children are developing their knowledge and understanding appropriately through studying a range of topics. At the middle and upper stages, children are responding well in learning about simple electrical circuits and how to classify animals.

In the nursery class, children talk confidently to adults and to each other and express their ideas appropriately. Children recognise their own names in print and their early number skills are developing well. They listen well to stories and discuss aspects of their work with adults. There is scope to develop children's early writing skills. In the primary classes, early stages children are making effective progress in developing their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. There is scope in the middle and upper stages to build more effectively on this good start. In English language, at all stages, most children talk well in groups and the majority listen attentively. Children read with appropriate fluency and expression. Children in the middle and upper stages read for information effectively. Their skills in using the Internet for research are developing well. In the early stages, children are producing a range of effective written accounts and stories. At the middle and upper stages, more needs to be done to improve children's written work. Children at these stages do not yet write at sufficient length for a wide enough range of purposes. Standards of neatness and presentation in their written work are not yet high enough. In mathematics, most children are developing appropriate skills in written calculation. At all stages, children show an appropriate awareness of the properties of a range of shapes. At the middle and upper stages, children's skills in using computers to handle and display information are developing well. Their skills in mental calculation are not yet sufficiently quick and accurate. At all stages, children are developing appropriate skills in problem solving, using an effective range of strategies.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

The curriculum is appropriately broad and includes opportunities for children to use their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of contexts. Staff across the school have made a useful start to improving children's experiences, taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Teachers recognise the need to develop programmes which build more effectively on children's prior learning in areas such as social subjects and science. Teachers plan activities which enable children to make links across their learning, for example in their *Crofting Connections* and *Tropical Rainforest* topics. Children benefit from two hours each week of high-quality physical education in accordance with national guidance. In the early stages, children respond well to appropriate opportunities to learn through play. Children in the middle and upper stages are developing their skills in French. Visiting specialist teachers enhance children's learning experiences in art and design, music and physical education.

Across the school, teachers and support staff give children helpful individual support which assists them in their learning. Staff mostly set tasks and activities at an appropriate level of difficulty for children. At times, the pace of progress in learning is too slow. There is scope to deploy support staff more effectively, to ensure that children with identified needs receive further help. Most children are aware of their strengths and what they need to do to improve their work. Homework is appropriately frequent and varied.

### **4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?**

There are very effective partnerships with parents and the wider community, which support children's learning well. The acting headteacher works well with the supportive Parent Council. She keeps parents informed appropriately about school events and relevant aspects of children's learning. Parents assist the school in a range of ways, including improving the playing areas, helping on

outing and running a shinty club. Teachers produce helpful and informative annual written reports to parents on children's progress. The acting headteacher consults appropriately about sensitive health issues. She records concerns and complaints effectively and ensures that actions taken are noted appropriately. Children's learning benefits from the school's strong links with the wider community. These include work with the local branch of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and a visit from a local beekeeper. School staff have strong links with staff in other local schools. There are effective procedures to support children entering P1 and children transferring from P7 to Kingussie High School.

## **5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?**

The acting headteacher and staff are very committed to improving the school. They meet to discuss how to improve aspects of their work. Working together in this way, they have recently identified some appropriate areas for improvement. Teachers track children's progress in reading, writing and mathematics and predict when children will achieve the next stage in their learning. These arrangements are not yet sufficiently systematic and rigorous to ensure that all children make appropriate progress. The school needs to do more to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching and to assess children's progress in written work. The school takes account of parents' and children's views through written surveys and the pupil council. There is scope to involve parents and children more in evaluating the school's work and in identifying areas for improvement.

## **6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?**

All staff treat children fairly and equally and have appropriately high expectations of children's behaviour. Children respond well. Across the school, children are caring, polite and well behaved. Teachers encourage children to achieve their best and celebrate children's

achievements. Staff's expectations of children's progress and standards of work are not always high enough. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, are very caring and committed. They provide children with a very supportive environment in which children feel safe and secure. There is an appropriate policy for child protection and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in this area. Children know how to obtain help and support if necessary. Staff prepare children well for life in a multi-ethnic society. The school provides appropriately frequent opportunities for religious observance.

## **7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?**

The acting headteacher has a clear vision for improving the school. She is taking some early steps to address long standing weaknesses in the school's arrangements for self-evaluation. In her brief time in post, she has developed effectively aspects of the school's work, including the promotion of children's active learning. She is well supported by staff who are responding effectively to her encouragement. With the continuing support of the education authority, the school has the capacity to improve further.

## **8. What happens next?**

We are confident that, with support from the education authority, the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority will inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education. Our District Inspector will maintain contact with the education authority to monitor improvements in the arrangements for self-evaluation.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Improve attainment in the middle and upper stages in writing and mental calculation.
- Improve the school's arrangements for monitoring the quality of learning, teaching and attainment to ensure that all children make appropriate progress.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements and no recommendations.

Quality indicators help schools and nursery classes, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a school and a nursery class. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publications *How good is our school?* and *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools and nursery classes are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Gergask Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

Nursery class

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery class.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>weak</b>

**HM Inspector:** Robert Barfoot  
24 August 2010

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excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

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Where the school has a nursery class, you can contact the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY, telephone 0845 603 0890.

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## Appendix G

Route-desc	DESCRIPTION	Route-qty	Earliest Pick-up Time	Longest Journey	Cost	Cost if Dalwhinnie PS re-opened	Movement
2104/2	Strathmashie, A889 and Cluny to Gergask Primary	4	840		£10,548.80	£0.00	£0.00
n/a	Dalwhinnie to Gergask Primary	2			£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
2106/2g	Rothiemurchus, Insh, Kingussie and Glentruim to Newtonmore PS	6	750	40 minutes	£18,466.10	£0.00	£0.00
2106/4p	Dalwhinnie to Newtonmore Primary	1			£4,940.00	£0.00	(£4,940.00)
2106/5p	Nuide to Newtonmore Primary	1			£1,748.00	£0.00	£0.00
2106/6p	Drumochter to Newtonmore Primary	2			£2,622.00	£1,140.00	(£1,482.00)
	<b>Total 16</b>				<b>£38,324.90</b>	<b>£1,140.00</b>	<b>(£6,422.00)</b>

## Appendix H

Route	Daily Mileage	CO <sub>2</sub> e (kg per day)	CO <sub>2</sub> e (kg per annum)	CO <sub>2</sub> (kg per day)	CO <sub>2</sub> (kg per annum)	CH <sub>4</sub> (kg per day)	CH <sub>4</sub> (kg per annum)	N <sub>2</sub> O (kg per day)	N <sub>2</sub> O (kg per annum)
Dalwhinnie PS - Newtonmore PS	10.9	3.9504216	750.580104	3.9197272	744.748168	0.0014061	0.267159	0.0292992	5.566848
Dalwhinnie PS - Gergask PS	8.1	2.9356344	557.770536	2.9128248	553.436712	0.0010449	0.198531	0.0217728	4.136832
Dalwhinnie - Newtonmore	10.9	3.9504216	750.580104	3.9197272	744.748168	0.0014061	0.267159	0.0292992	5.566848
Totals	29.9	10.8364776	2058.930744	10.7522792	2042.933048	0.0038571	0.732849	0.0803712	15.270528

## Financial Template- Dalwhinnie PS closure

Table 1	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
<b>Forecast revenue costs for Dalwhinnie PS</b>			
	<b>Costs for full financial year (projected annual costs)</b>	<b>Additional financial impact on receiving schools</b>	<b>Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)</b>
DALWHINNIE PRIMARY SCHOOL			
<b>School costs</b>			
<i>Employee costs</i>			
teaching staff	62,489	0	62,489
support staff	8,217	0	8,217
teaching staff training (CPD etc)	0	0	0
support staff training	0	0	0
Supply costs	2,287	0	2,287
<i>Building costs:</i>			
property insurance	154	0	154
non domestic rates	0	0	0
water & sewerage charges	579	0	579
energy costs	4,346	0	4,346
cleaning (contract or inhouse)	2,904	0	2,904
building repair & maintenance	242	0	242
grounds maintenance	0	0	0
facilities management costs	0	0	0
revenue costs arising from capital	0	0	0
other	0	0	0
<i>School operational costs:</i>			
learning materials	1,571	210	1,361
catering (contract or inhouse)	1,311	599	713
SQA costs	0	0	0
other school operational costs (e.g. licences)	0	0	0
<i>Transport costs:</i>			
home to school	1,140	7,562	-6,422
other pupil transport costs	0	0	0
staff travel	0	0	0
<b>SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>85,241</b>	<b>8,371</b>	<b>76,871</b>
<i>Income:</i>			
Sale of meals	0	0	0
Lets	0	0	0
External care provider	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
<b>SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL</b>	<b>85,241</b>	<b>8,371</b>	<b>76,871</b>
<b>UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR</b>	<b>28,414</b>	<b>2,790</b>	<b>25,624</b>

Table 2

Capital costs	School proposed for closure	Receiving school
Capital Life Cycle cost		
Third party contributions to capital costs		

Table 3

Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal	
property insurance	154
non domestic rates	0
water & sewerage charges	371
energy costs	1706
cleaning (contract or inhouse)	0
security costs	0
building repair & maintenance	0
grounds maintenance	0
facilities management costs	0
other	0
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL</b>	<b>2231</b>

Table 4

Non-recurring revenue costs	
none	0
<b>TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS</b>	<b>0</b>

Table 5

Impact on GAE	
Primary school teaching staff line- GAE reduction	-9,165
<b>GAE IMPACT</b>	<b>-9,165</b>

Note: As Dalwhinnie PS is currently mothballed the costs in column 1 of table 1 above reflect the estimated costs of running the school if it were to reopen. If the school were then to close the additional costs at the receiving schools, Gergask and Newtonmore, are shown in column 2. The net savings from the closure can be seen in column 3. As the school is currently mothballed these savings are already being realised.

HIGHLAND COUNCIL  
CARE AND LEARNING SERVICE  
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared on a proposal:

- To discontinue education provision at Dalwhinnie Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Newtonmore Primary School.

**Details of Consultation To Be Carried Out:**

The Proposal will be the subject of statutory consultation from under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

In accordance with statutory requirements, the following will be consulted:

- (i) Parents of pupils in the catchment areas of Dalwhinnie Primary School, Gergask Primary School and Newtonmore Primary School, including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (ii) All P4-7 pupils attending Gergask and Newtonmore Primary Schools.
- (iii) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;
- (iv) The Parent Councils of Gergask and Newtonmore Primary Schools, and the local Comann nam Pàrant.
- (v) Staff of Gergask and Newtonmore Primary Schools.
- (vi) Trade Union representatives;
- (vii) The community councils for the areas covered by the 3 schools;
- (viii) Education Scotland;
- (ix) Highland Youth Convenor.
- (x) Bòrd Na Gàidhlig
- (xi) Dalwhinnie Past and Present
- (xii) Laggan Community Association
- (xiii) Members of the Highland Community Planning Partnership

The proposal document will also be advertised in the local press and on the Highland Council website.

A public meeting will be held in Dalwhinnie on 23 February 2016. This meeting will be advertised in advance in the local press and on the Highland Council Facebook page.

**IDENTIFIED IMPACTS**

Equality Category	Impact	Evidence
AGE	Neutral.	The proposal relates to 3 primary schools and as such primarily affects children in the 3-12

		<p>age group, and their parents. The proposal is advanced on the basis of educational benefit to the children in the area concerned.</p> <p>No negative age related effects arise.</p> <p>Age is not a protected characteristic for the purposes of schools provision.</p>
DISABILITY	Neutral, but with some positive benefits.	As there are currently no pupils attending Dalwhinnie School, the proposal will not have any adverse effects on disabled children. In principle, the integration of disabled pupils within the larger peer group in the alternative schools promotes integration.
GENDER	Neutral	The proposal will have no effect on gender equality issues.
PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY	Neutral	There would be no direct impact on pregnancy and maternity issues.
GENDER REASSIGNMENT	Neutral	The proposal will have no impact on gender reassignment equality.
MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	Neutral	The proposal will have no impact on equality issues around marriage and civil partnership.
MINORITY LANGUAGES	Neutral	There would be no impact on minority languages.
RACE	Neutral	The proposal will have no impact on race equality.
RELIGION OR BELIEF	Neutral	None of the schools affected are denominational. The proposal will have no impact on religious equality.
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Neutral	The proposal will have no impact on equality around sexual orientation.
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN	Neutral.	There would be no direct impacts on Looked After Children.
YOUNG CARERS	Neutral	There would be no impacts on Young Carers.
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN DEPRIVATION	Neutral	The proposal is being advanced on the basis of educational benefit for all children, although not specifically those living in deprivation.

## **RURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

This Rural Impact Assessment has been prepared on a proposal to discontinue education provision at Dalwhinnie Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Newtonmore Primary School.

### **Details of Consultation to be Carried Out:**

The Proposal will be the subject of statutory consultation from under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

In accordance with statutory requirements, the following will be consulted:

- (i) Parents of pupils in the catchment areas of Dalwhinnie Primary School, Gergask Primary School and Newtonmore Primary School, including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (ii) All P4-7 pupils attending Gergask and Newtonmore Primary Schools.
- (iii) Members of Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament for the area affected by the proposal;
- (iv) The Parent Councils of Gergask and Newtonmore Primary Schools, and the local Comann nam Pàrant.
- (v) Staff of Gergask and Newtonmore Primary Schools.
- (vi) Trade union representatives;
- (vii) The community councils for the areas covered by the 3 schools;
- (viii) Education Scotland;
- (ix) Highland Youth Convenor
- (x) Bòrd Na Gàidhlig
- (xi) Dalwhinnie Past and Present
- (xii) Laggan Community Association.
- (xiii) Members of the Highland Community Planning Partnership

The proposal document will also be advertised on the Highland Council website.

A public meeting will be held in Dalwhinnie on 23 February 2016. This meeting will be advertised in advance in the local press and on the Highland Council Facebook page.

### **Describe what the change will mean in rural communities**

Although the proposal involves a formal closure of service, the service itself has not operated since the summer of 2012. In practical terms the proposal will not change the current position.

The relocation of service (which in practical terms has already taken place) involves moving local school provision from Dalwhinnie to Newtonmore.

Dalwhinnie School was mothballed when the pupil roll fell to 2. The Highland Council believes that educational benefits arise when schools have a sufficient number of children to allow pupils to work collaboratively and participate in team sports and wider activities; and where there are age appropriate peer groups of a sufficient size to allow a range of interactions and relationships to form and reform.

### **How will people in rural communities be affected?**

**Accessibility of service** – since the “mothballing” of Dalwhinnie Primary School pupils of P1-7 age from the Dalwhinnie catchment have been provided with free school transport to Newtonmore Primary School. The “mothballing” has meant reduced accessibility of service for parents of pre-school children, who are required to transport their children to Newtonmore or Gergask. It is also recognised that pupils from Dalwhinnie have less opportunity to walk or cycle to school than when the village school was in operation, and that there is occasional inconvenience for parents who wish to take their child to or from school during the school day.

Travel time to the service – The additional travel time for school pupils is 19 minutes to Newtonmore - 10.9 miles or 14 minutes to Gergask – 8.1 miles.

Cost to access the service – Parents of children aged 3 and 4 years have additional costs to access pre-school education and childcare, although this has been the case since the school was mothballed in 2012. These costs must be set against the educational benefits that would accrue from the merger.

**Fuel poverty** – The proposal will not have any impact on fuel poverty.

**Economic impact** – As the school has been mothballed since 2012, formal closure will not affect local employment patterns. The building is not currently used by the community.

**Partner service delivery** – the concentration of service in Newtonmore provides opportunities for improved partner service delivery to children, through reduced duplication of work and time spent travelling, and reduced costs. Since the change has in practical terms already been implemented, there is no need to consult other partners.

### **Other options or adjustments**

The above do not apply in the circumstances of a change already implemented for practical purposes.