



HIGHLAND COUNCIL

CARE AND LEARNING SERVICE

REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE PROVISION OF EDUCATION AT DALWHINNIE PRIMARY SCHOOL, REASSIGNING ITS CATCHMENT AREA TO THAT OF NEWTONMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL.

This report has been prepared following a review of the proposal:

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

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period.
- Oral representations made to it (by any persons) at the public meeting held at Dalwhinnie Village Hall on 23rd February 2016.
- The report from Education Scotland.

This document has been issued by the Highland Council under the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Adult Services Committee (ECAS), at its meeting on 20 January 2016, agreed that a statutory consultation be undertaken on the proposal to discontinue the provision of education at Dalwhinnie Primary School, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Newtonmore Primary School.
- 1.2 **Appendix 1** is the original consultative paper and provides full details of the above proposal. **Appendices A - K** are the appendices to the original proposal.
- 1.3 Dalwhinnie Primary School has been “mothballed” since the end of session 2011-12, and current population figures within the school catchment indicate a maximum school roll of 5 by 2019-20. A roll of this size impedes the successful delivery of the curriculum and hampers social interaction opportunities for children.
- 1.4 Since July 2012 pupils from the Dalwhinnie Primary catchment have attended either Newtonmore Primary, 11 miles from Dalwhinnie Primary or Gergask

Primary, 8 miles from Dalwhinnie Primary. These arrangements have been of benefit to the pupils at all 3 schools.

- 1.5 During last session there were 4 children within the P1-7 age in the Dalwhinnie catchment. Three attended Newtonmore Primary (one on Gàidhlig Medium) and one attended Gergask Primary. Two of the children were in P7 and there were a further two in nursery. In the coming session, it is anticipated that all the children from the Dalwhinnie catchment will attend Newtonmore School
- 1.6 The school has a planning capacity of 25. The notional school roll of 5 by 2019-20 would therefore represent 20% use of capacity.
- 1.7 Dalwhinnie Primary School is designated as a rural school under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. In that context, the Council has given special regard to:
 - any viable alternative to the closure proposal; alternatives were considered at Sections 3-6 of the Proposal Paper (**Appendix 1**) and have been reconsidered again in the light of responses received to consultation – see Sections 5 and 9 below.
 - the likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal (if implemented), with reference in particular to (a) the sustainability of the community, (b) the availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community. The effect on the local community was considered at Section 14 of the Proposal Paper (**Appendix 1**) and is further considered at Section 7 below, taking into account representations received during consultation.
 - the likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the proposal (if implemented) with reference in particular to;
 - the effect caused by such travelling arrangements including (in particular), (i) that on the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities, (ii) any environmental impact; effects on school transport were considered at Section 12 of the Proposal Paper. (**Appendix 1**).

2.0 Consultation process

2.1 The formal consultation period ran from Monday 1 February 2016 to Friday 18 March 2016. Written representations on the proposal were sought from interested parties as defined within the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

2.2 In accordance with statutory requirements, the following were consulted:

- (i) Parents of pupils in the catchment area of Dalwhinnie Primary School, and parents of pupils attending Newtonmore and Gergask Primary Schools, including parents of pre-school pupils;
- (ii) All P4-7 pupils attending Newtonmore and Gergask Primary schools.
- (iii) Members of the UK and Scottish Parliaments for the area affected by the proposal;

- (iv) The Parent Councils of Newtonmore and Gergask Primary Schools.
- (v) Staff of Newtonmore and Gergask Primary Schools.
- (vi) Trade union representatives;
- (vii) Newtonmore Community Council, and Dalwhinnie Community Council;
- (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

2.3 The proposal document was also advertised on the Highland Council website.

2.4 A public meeting was held in Dalwhinnie on the 23 February 2016. The meeting was advertised in advance on the Highland Council website and Facebook page, and in the *Strathspey and Badenoch Herald*. The minute of the meeting is at **Appendix 2**.

3.0 Review of proposals following the consultation period

3.1 Following receipt of written representations received by Highland Council and consideration of oral representations made at the public meeting, officials reviewed the proposals.

3.2 The feedback from the consultation was considered by a range of Council officials. This ensured that the Council met the requirements of the 2010 Act.

3.3 The outcome of this review process is reflected in the response, conclusion and recommendations outlined below.

4.0 Responses received

4.1 The views of pupils at Newtonmore and Gergask Primary School (which included pupils living within the Dalwhinnie catchment area) were sought by means of an age adapted questionnaire completed by the pupils. Copies of the questionnaires returned are at **Appendix 3**.

4.2 A list of others who responded in writing during the public consultation is also at **Appendix 3**, along with copies of these responses

5.0 Issues raised during the consultation period

5.1 There were a total of 71 pupil responses, 64 from Newtonmore Primary and 7 from Gergask Primary. Pupils were given 3 options, i. Close Dalwhinnie, ii. Re-open Dalwhinnie, or iii. Keep Dalwhinnie mothballed. Pupils were also asked an additional question about which school they thought the Dalwhinnie pupils should attend if the school was closed.

5.2 Of the total pupil responses, 31 pupils were in favour of closure, with 20 suggesting keeping the status quo for longer. A further 20 pupils indicated a

preference to reopen Dalwhinnie school. All of the responses in the latter two categories came from Newtonmore Primary.

5.3 All 7 of the Gergask pupils who responded thought that the Dalwhinnie catchment should be re-zoned to the Gergask catchment. Of the 64 responses from Newtonmore, 41 thought the Dalwhinnie catchment should be re-zoned to the Newtonmore catchment; 22 thought the Dalwhinnie catchment should be re-zoned to the Gergask catchment, and one pupil responded by commenting that pupils should have the choice of either school.

5.4 Arguments put forward by pupils supporting the closure were:

- There are not enough children in Dalwhinnie. The school would be too small.
- Dalwhinnie will probably never get enough children.
- It would be better for the Dalwhinnie children to come to a school where they have more children to work and play with.
- It would be very boring if you were the only pupil in school.
- Dalwhinnie Primary would be so small that pupils would not get a chance to mix with and meet new people.
- Closure of Dalwhinnie could help Gergask, which has only 11 pupils left.
- There is a lot of wildlife and countryside at Gergask.
- It would cost more money to reopen Dalwhinnie.
- Re-opening Dalwhinnie would be a waste of money.
- More pupils means more friends.
- The paint is coming off the walls of Dalwhinnie Primary.
- It would be the best thing for Dalwhinnie.
- There is no-one in Dalwhinnie.

5.5 The arguments put forward by pupils who supported keeping the school mothballed are summarised below together with the responses from the Council. Individual issues raised that are similar to one another have been “grouped.”

Issue 1

Whilst there are not enough pupils to re-open Dalwhinnie at the moment, the village might get more families/children in the future. If we kept the school mothballed and the village did get more children, then they could be offered a school closer to home.

If Dalwhinnie re-opened now it would just have to shut again, but it could be re-opened when there are at least 10 pupils for the school.

Response 1

In drawing up its original proposals, the Council calculated estimates of the future roll, taking into account the number of pupils currently within the catchment, the local birth rate, and potential housebuilding. As set out in Section 4 of the Proposal Paper, projections indicate that if Dalwhinnie

Primary were re-opened, it would be as a single teacher school with a very small roll.

Issue 2

There is more chance of an accident because children have to travel by road to get to school.

Response 2

All Highland Council school transport contractors must meet set contractual standards, which include rigorous safety standards. Highland school transport operators have an excellent safety record.

It may be that children from Dalwhinnie are taken to school by their own parents, under contract to Highland Council. It is to be expected that parents transporting their own children will exercise appropriate care in doing so.

Issue 3

If the school is closed the teachers would have to find a new job.

Response 3

As Dalwhinnie Primary is already mothballed, there would no impact on current employment.

Issue 4

Pupils should be able to choose which school to go to.

Response 4

Highland Council places all its communities within designated school catchments. Pupils enrol into the designated school for their home address, at both primary and secondary level. This system is necessary for the efficient planning of educational provision. If parents choose another school, then this must be by means of what we term a placing request. These are normally granted but can be refused where acceptance of the request would result in additional expenditure. Transport is not provided for children attending a school other than their catchment school.

Highland Council will apply the same principles to pupils from the Dalwhinnie, Gergask, and Newtonmore catchments as to other schools in Highland.

Issue 5

We should take more time to think about closing Dalwhinnie. It should not be shut or re-opened at present, but given more time.

Response 5

Dalwhinnie Primary has been mothballed since the end of the 2011-12 session, since when there has been no significant rise in the potential pupil population. The Proposal Paper set out the demographic projections for the catchment area, and concluded there was no realistic prospect of a significant increase to the number of children in the foreseeable future. This view has been supported by parents from Dalwhinnie itself.

- 5.6 The arguments put forward by pupils who supported re-opening the school are summarised below. Individual issues raised that are similar to one another have been “grouped.”

Issue 6

Dalwhinnie should have a school, and people in the village would not like it to be closed. Every school should have a chance.

Response 6

The low population density of Highland means that schools cannot be located in every community. The proposal is being advanced on the basis of educational benefit for children in Dalwhinnie, and the response to the consultation exercise would suggest the proposal has the support of the community.

Issue 7

Pupils in Dalwhinnie would miss their friends and miss their school.

Response 7

As Dalwhinnie Primary has been mothballed since 2012, the children have adjusted to attending either Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary. Re-opening Dalwhinnie might actually cause them to miss the friends they have made in the other two schools.

Issue 8

It would be a waste of money to close Dalwhinnie School.

Response 8

The Highland Council has analysed the financial impact of the proposal. That analysis (Appendix I to the original Proposal Paper) suggested that re-opening Dalwhinnie Primary would result in an additional cost to the taxpayer of just under £77,000 per year.

Issue 9

If Dalwhinnie re-opened, the pupils would not have so far to travel to school. In the winter it is dangerous to travel from Dalwhinnie to either Newtonmore or Gergask.

Response 9

The original Proposal Paper acknowledged that the main adverse effect for children is the length of journey from Dalwhinnie to either Gergask or Newtonmore, details of which were provided. However, as the school has been mothballed since 2012, all the current pupils are already making these journeys. The journey times involved are not lengthy in comparison to those faced by many other primary and nursery age children in Highland. Whilst the potential impact of winter weather cannot be ignored, these adverse effects must be set against the educational benefits that the proposal could deliver.

Issue 10

If Dalwhinnie closes then some families may not want to move to the village, because Newtonmore and Gergask might be too far for them, especially if they didn't have a car.

Response 10

The population living in the Dalwhinnie 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. Additionally, the Report of the Scottish Government's Commission on Rural Education, published in 2013, found a number of examples of communities which continued to depopulate despite the presence of a school. The Commission's review of the scientific and other literature on school closures found there was a lack of robust evidence on how pre-school, childcare and school proximity (and freedom from threat of closure) links to the sustainability of communities.

Any child living in the Dalwhinnie catchment would qualify for funded school transport to whichever school was designated for the area in future.

Issue 11

If families moved to Dalwhinnie and the school closed, then the families might have to move again.

Response 11

This scenario will not arise because Dalwhinnie School is already mothballed.

Issue 12

Why was Dalwhinnie Primary closed in the first place?

Response 12

The school was mothballed for educational reasons in 2012, when the pupil roll fell to 2.

- 5.7 Pupils were also asked which school they thought the Dalwhinnie children should attend (Newtonmore or Gergask), in the event that Dalwhinnie Primary was closed.
- 5.8 Of the 71 pupil responses, 41 thought the Dalwhinnie children should come to Newtonmore Primary in the event of Dalwhinnie closing, whilst 29 thought pupils should go to Gergask Primary. One pupil responded by saying that pupils from Dalwhinnie should be able to choose either school. (This had not been offered as an option, but he or she recorded it as their view anyway).
- 5.9 All 7 of the Gergask pupils who responded voted for Gergask to be the receiving school. The 64 responses from Newtonmore comprised 41 votes for Newtonmore, 22 for Gergask, and the 1 who opted for pupils to have a choice.
- 5.10 The arguments put forward by the Gergask pupils, as to why pupils from Dalwhinnie should attend their school, are summarised below, with the Council's responses:

Issue 13

Gergask needs more pupils.

Response 13

Highland Council agrees that Gergask Primary could benefit from gaining more pupils. However, the proposal has been drawn up on the basis of maximising the educational benefit to the pupils currently at Dalwhinnie, rather than the potential benefit to Gergask School.

Issue 14

Gergask has after-school clubs and great facilities. It is an eco-friendly school. The pupils would welcome the Dalwhinnie children and would be good friends to them. There is no fighting or arguing between the children at Gergask and the children are all well-behaved. Gergask pupils make regular trips to Kingussie Primary so can make more friends there. There are also great school trips. All the parents at Gergask come to help out. Gergask is a great school with great teachers.

Response 14

Highland Council is clear that there would be educational benefits for the Dalwhinnie pupils in attending either Gergask or Newtonmore Primary Schools. However, the Proposal Paper set out the case that the larger pupil numbers at Newtonmore Primary offer more opportunities for pupils to be part of age appropriate peer groups.

- 5.11 The summarised arguments put forward by those Newtonmore pupils who supported reassigning the Dalwhinnie catchment to Gergask, were as follows:

Issue 15

Newtonmore already has a lot of pupils, and Gergask needs more.

Response 15

See response 13.

Issue 16

Gergask is closer to Dalwhinnie than Newtonmore, and requires less driving.

Response 16

The Proposal Paper acknowledged that Gergask Primary is around 8 miles from Dalwhinnie Primary, whilst Newtonmore Primary is approximately 11 miles away. The difference in distance between the options is not considered significant. The population in Dalwhinnie is adjusted to the need to travel to Newtonmore to access local services.

- 5.12 The summarised arguments put forward by those Newtonmore pupils who supported reassigning the Dalwhinnie catchment to their own school, were as follows:

Issue 17

The Dalwhinnie pupils could make many more new friends if they came to Newtonmore. Newtonmore is a happy school, and a better school than Gergask. There are too few pupils in Gergask, and the number is still going down.

Response 17

See Response 14.

Issue 18

Newtonmore Primary rarely closes in bad weather.

Response 18

The Proposal paper identified that neither Gergask nor Newtonmore schools are particularly badly affected by weather related closures.

Issue 19

The road to from Dalwhinnie to Newtonmore is safer than the road from Dalwhinnie to Laggan, especially in winter.

Response 19

The Council has examined accident data for the relevant section of the A9 and for the A889, from the 2012 to the present. A total of 66 accidents were recorded for the A9, compared with 10 for the A889. This information does of course need to be considered in the context of much greater traffic flows on the A9.

Issue 20

Gergask is a very small school, and it would be a big shock to go to High School from a school that size.

Response 20

This may be true in some cases, but as the pupils from Gergask have also pointed out that they receive frequent opportunities to visit Kingussie Primary for joint activities, so they also have opportunities to mix with larger numbers of children.

- 5.13 There were a total of 7 written responses received from parents and other stakeholders, although only 5 of these raised any substantive issues. None of the written responses in this category opposed the closure of Dalwhinnie. In general the comments made concerned the reassignment of the Dalwhinnie catchment following closure. Four of the five written responses disagreed with the proposal that, following closure, the Dalwhinnie catchment should be reassigned to that of Newtonmore Primary.
- 5.14 As can be seen from **Appendix 2**, no person who attended the public meeting spoke at the meeting to oppose the proposed closure, although there was again debate about the reassignment of the Dalwhinnie catchment. One additional person (i.e. someone who did not also respond in writing) spoke against the proposed reassignment of the catchment to Newtonmore. However two others argued in favour of the proposal that the Dalwhinnie catchment should be reassigned to Newtonmore. One speaker also thought there should be investment in Newtonmore and Gergask schools, as well as in children's play facilities in Dalwhinnie, to compensate the area for the loss of a school.

5.15 The main arguments advanced by respondents who favoured the reassignment of the Dalwhinnie catchment to Gergask are summarised below, together with the Council's response to each:

Issue 21

Small schools are capable of providing an excellent education. Historically the education provided at Gergask Primary has been second to none.

Response 21

See Response 14.

Issue 22

Gergask has an excellent teacher to pupil ratio.

Response 22

For the forthcoming school session Gergask Primary is expected to have 12 pupils in a single P1-7 class. Newtonmore Primary is expected to have 4 English Medium and 2 Gàidhlig Medium classes, with a teacher to pupil ratio ranging from 1:14 to 1:24. Both schools have teacher to pupils ratios within guideline figures.

Issue 23

Dalwhinnie and Laggan are both rural communities whereas Newtonmore is suburban. Children from Dalwhinnie are more likely to have shared interests with the children from Laggan.

Response 23

Clearly Newtonmore is a larger community than either Laggan or Dalwhinnie. However the total population of the Newtonmore datazone, identified in the 2011 census, is 1,094. Taken together with its location in the Badenoch countryside, it is reasonable to describe Newtonmore as a large village in a rural setting, rather than as a suburban community. Nor it is unreasonable to suppose that there are children attending Newtonmore from families in traditional rural occupations.

There may in fact be some benefits in children being able to attend a school where they can mix with other children from a range of social backgrounds.

Issue 24

The distance between Dalwhinnie and Laggan is shorter.

Response 24

See response 16.

Issue 25

Over the next 8-9 years the dualling of the A9 will affect almost the entire length of the route from Dalwhinnie to Newtonmore. This could well double the average journey time.

Response 25

The above comment relates to the part of the overall programme of works to upgrade the A9 between Perth and Inverness, expected to be complete by 2025.

The section of the A9 relevant to this proposal is that between Glengarry and Kincaig. The upgrading encompasses 3 projects as follows:

- Project 7 – Glen Garry to Dalwhinnie
- Project 8 - Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore
- Project 9 - Crubenmore to Kincaig

The route for primary school transport between Dalwhinnie and Newtonmore lies partially within both Project 8 and Project 9. These construction projects are likely to be implemented within 2 separate construction periods. The timing of these projects will be subject to the completion of statutory processes through Trunk Road Orders and Compulsory Purchase Orders.

Project 8 (Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore) - During the upgrade of this section there will be a period of around 24 months when the A9 is expected to be subject to a 40 mph speed restriction to protect the workforce. The length of road that would be covered by the speed restriction is some 9.75 km (6.06 miles). At 40 mph the journey time over this section is in the order of 9 mins. Any increase in journey time in this section will be in the order of 3 minutes. Timings are approximate but provide an order of magnitude.

Project 9 (Crubenmore to Kincaig) - This section of the A9 is likely to be upgraded to dual carriageway over a period of around 30 months but within a different timeframe to Project 8. There is a short length at the southern end of this project which will be within the route of any school transport trip between Dalwhinnie and Newtonmore. This section of road during construction is also likely to be covered by a 40 mph speed restriction to protect the workforce. The length of road that would be covered (between the north end of the Crubenmore dual carriageway and the Newtonmore Junction) is 2.2 km (1.3 miles). At 40 mph the journey time over this section is in the order of 2 mins. Any increase in journey time in this section will be in the order of ½ min. Again timings are approximate but provide an order of magnitude.

The scenario above is considered the most likely for delivery of the A9

upgrade along this particular stretch, but the project is at the design stage and the methodology is subject to change. The contractor may introduce some temporary traffic management over a short period to facilitate construction but if so this is likely to be over a short length and within a short timeframe.

The decision on the future of the Dalwhinnie catchment would be intended as a permanent decision (and once taken it could not be changed without a statutory consultation under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010). In considering the decision, it is therefore important to look at the most appropriate long term arrangement, irrespective of any time limited traffic management arrangements associated with carriageway upgrading.

Issue 26

The children from Laggan and Dalwhinnie know and socialise with each other.

Response 26

Currently all but one of the school age children from Dalwhinnie attend Newtonmore Primary, and it is understood the remaining pupil will transfer to that school in August.

Issue 27

A few extra children could make a significant difference to Gergask School, whilst having minimal impact on Newtonmore. Reassigning the Dalwhinnie catchment to Gergask would help secure the future of Gergask Primary, which has low numbers. This would be in line with the Scottish Government's wish to support rural life and rural communities.

Response 27

See Response 13.

Issue 28

It has been suggested that the A889 Dalwhinnie – Laggan road is closed a lot in the winter. This is not so and the A889 is normally only closed when the A9 is also closed.

Response 28

The suggestion referred to above was not made by Highland Council. As mentioned elsewhere, we see no significant differences between the two schools in terms of weather related travel problems or weather related closures.

Issue 29

It is misleading to suggest that Gergask Primary might not provide an appropriate peer group for pupils or a suitable professional network for teachers. The cluster arrangement between Gergask and Kingussie Primaries provides every opportunity for both.

Response 29

As mentioned at Response 14 above, Highland Council is clear that there would be educational benefits for the Dalwhinnie pupils in attending either Gergask or Newtonmore Primary Schools. The Council agrees that the cluster arrangements implemented for Gergask and Kingussie have provided more opportunities for staff and pupils at Gergask to work with their respective peers. However, it remains our view that the Proposal Paper set out the case that the larger pupil numbers at Newtonmore Primary offer more opportunities for pupils to be part of age appropriate peer groups.

- 5.16 It was also suggested that the Council should consider splitting the current Dalwhinnie catchment, or offer families in Dalwhinnie a choice of either Gergask or Newtonmore Primaries.

Issue 30

It would be sensible for the Council to split the Dalwhinnie catchment following closure, with Dalwhinnie itself being rezoned to Gergask and Cuaich being rezoned to Newtonmore.

Response 30

Highland Council recognises this is a thoughtful response that takes local geography into account. However on balance the educational benefit to pupils still supports the argument that the whole Dalwhinnie catchment should be re-allocated to Newtonmore. This also seems to be the firm preference of parents in Dalwhinnie.

Issue 31

Parents from the Dalwhinnie catchment should be given the choice of sending their children to either Gergask or Newtonmore

Response 31

See Response 4.

- 5.17 The main arguments advanced by respondents who favoured the reassignment of the Dalwhinnie catchment to Newtonmore are summarised below, together with the Council's response to each:

Issue 32

There are children from Dalwhinnie who are already attending Newtonmore Primary. It would be very disruptive to those pupils and families if those children had to move to Gergask.

Response 32

Highland Council agrees with this view.

Issue 33

Parents from Dalwhinnie are more likely to travel to Newtonmore for work or shopping, than they would travel to Laggan. The majority of Dalwhinnie parents would find it more convenient to place their children in Newtonmore.

Response 33

The above is an impression and not something for which there is hard evidence, but the impression may nevertheless have some merit.

6.0 Summary of the issues raised by Education Scotland

- 6.1 In line with legislative requirements, Education Scotland was invited to submit comments on the Council's proposals. A copy of the report from Education Scotland is appended – **Appendix 4**.
- 6.2 In their report, Education Scotland recognise that the proposal offers the prospect of clear educational benefits to the children affected. Future pupils will have access to almost all of the curriculum in the same school whereas previously, they travelled between their own school and their partnership school, Newtonmore Primary School, for some of their learning. Currently, children from the Dalwhinnie Primary School catchment area attend either Gergask or Newtonmore Primary Schools. Children attending both schools would continue to have a larger group of peers with which to engage, both in and beyond the classroom. There would be continued opportunities to participate in team activities including sports and also music and drama. This would have the potential to contribute positively to children's social and emotional development. Suitable arrangements would continue to be available to support children who need additional help with their learning.
- 6.3 HM Inspectors further note that stakeholders are strongly supportive of the aspect of the proposal to close Dalwhinnie Primary School and Nursery, and that the proposal will also help The Highland Council to address capacity issues in its school estate and secure best value. They additionally comment the Council has given due consideration to reasonable alternatives to closure. HM Inspectors are of the view that a sufficient range of alternatives has been considered and that the council's proposal to close Dalwhinnie Primary School is reasonable and fair.

- 6.4 Several issues were identified for further consideration by the Council. HM Inspectors noted that, whilst there was a consensus about the closure of Dalwhinnie Primary, the parents, staff and children of Gergask Primary were strongly of the view that the Dalwhinnie catchment should be reassigned to that of Gergask. A few parents at Newtonmore Primary were also concerned about pressure on the space available at Newtonmore. HM Inspectors suggested the council will need to ensure that it continues to engage with stakeholders where further consideration and clarification is required, such as the re-assignment of the catchment area, arrangements for travel and the play facilities within the school grounds. They also commented that the Council's final consultation report will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies and omissions notified to it.
- 6.5 The issues raised around the reassignment of catchment in Section 6.4 above are addressed at Responses 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 30 in Section 5 above. The issue of the play facilities in the school grounds is addressed in Section 7 below, whilst omissions and inaccuracies are addressed in Section 8.

7.0 Effects on the Community

- 7.1 Paragraphs 14.1 to 14.4 of the Proposal Paper (**Appendix 1**) sets out the Council's assessment of the effects of closure on the local community. The assessment was not challenged during consultation, although one additional issue was raised, that of investment in play facilities for children in Dalwhinnie.
- 7.2 The Dalwhinnie Primary School playground has a range of play equipment. Should the closure proposal be implemented, the future use of the site would be considered in accordance with the terms of the Council's current asset management policy. Highland Council would be open to the possibility of the entire school and site being taken over by community, who could consider how they wish to use the site, including the play equipment.

8.0 Alleged omissions or inaccuracies

- 8.1 Two alleged inaccuracies were raised in consultation, both in Response 68 (Appendix 3G). It is suggested that paragraph 10.3 of the Proposal Paper was incorrect in stating that only 5 children attended the pre-school nursery in Gergask when there were in fact 7. The figure of 5 was however correct at the time of drafting. Roll figures cannot ever be anything other than a snapshot at a particular point in time. Whilst Highland Council is happy to acknowledge that the nursery roll at Gergask did subsequently rise to 7, the Council does not accept there was an inaccuracy in the original paper. The nursery roll will of course be different again by August 2016. It should be noted that the Proposal Paper gave a figure of 13 for the P1-7 roll at Gergask PS, a figure which dropped to 11 soon after publication.
- 8.2 It is suggested that paragraph 10.4 of the Proposal Paper was also inaccurate, in that it suggested only two pupils had made placing requests to join Gergask

Primary between 2010-11 and 2014-15, whereas the actual figure was eleven, comprising 3 pupils from Dalwhinnie and 8 from Gergask.

- 8.3 The two pupils recorded as placing requests were both from Dalwhinnie. It appears that the third pupil from that community was not classed as a placing request as the child was placed subsequent to the mothballing of Dalwhinnie Primary. As Dalwhinnie Primary was not accepting pupils during this period, the parent was not opting for a school other than the designated school for the address.
- 8.4 The placing request figures quoted came from data supplied by schools and collated centrally with Highland Council. The 8 other children referred to were mostly foster children from a family within the Newtonmore catchment. The family are a well-established part of the Laggan community and it appears the school did not appreciate the children should have been treated as placing request. This was incorrect and Highland Council acknowledges this error. The figure for placing requests into Gergask Primary should have been ten.
- 8.5 The Council has carefully considered the impact of this inaccuracy on the Proposal but has concluded it does not represent a material consideration relevant to the Authority's decision as to implementation of the proposal. The variation on data relating to placing requests does not alter the options for consideration, i.e. it does not introduce a new option, nor fundamentally rule out an existing option. Since the children concerned attended Gergask Primary, they have been included in the past data for enrolments at that school, used to inform future roll projections, and therefore the educational benefit arguments which favour the reassignment of the Dalwhinnie catchment to that of Newtonmore Primary.

9.0 Further Review of Alternatives to Closure

9.1 Throughout the consultation the Council has had special regard to the provision for rural schools within Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. In particular, the Council has had special regard to the following:

- any viable alternative to the closure proposal;

Alternatives to closure were reviewed at Section 2 of the original proposal paper (**Appendix 1**). The consultation exercise did not identify any new alternatives for consideration. Having reconsidered each of the alternatives identified at Section 2 of **Appendix 1**, the Highland Council has concluded that the alternatives to closure would not deliver the educational benefits of the proposal. This view has been endorsed by HM Inspectors. The detailed reasons for the Council's view are set out in Section 11 of **Appendix 1** and in **Appendix 4**.

- the likely effect on the local community in consequence of the proposal (if implemented), with reference in particular to; (a) the sustainability of the

community, (b) the availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community;

The potential community impact of the proposal was considered at Section 14 of the Proposal and is further considered at Section 7 above. Taking into account the existence of a village hall in Dalwhinnie, the Council's conclusion is that the main potential adverse effect of closure would be the potential loss of play facilities in Dalwhinnie. As mentioned at paragraph 7.2 above, Highland Council would be open to the possibility of the entire school and site being taken over by community, who could consider how they wish to use the site, including the play equipment. Proposals for future use of the school would be subject to the Council's asset management policy.

- the likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the proposal (if implemented) with reference in particular to (a) the effect caused by such travelling arrangements including (in particular), (i) that on the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities, (ii) any environmental impact, (b) the travelling arrangements are those to and from the school of (and for) the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities.

The impact of the proposal on travel time was considered at Section 5 of the original proposal paper and again at Responses 2 and 9 above. Since Dalwhinnie School has been mothballed since 2012, implementation of the proposal would not require the introduction of any different travelling arrangements for pupils or staff. The travelling arrangements that have applied since 2012 have worked well and overall travel times for all pupils are within the guideline figure adopted by Highland Council for the purposes of reviewing the school estate.

10.0 Further Review of Catchment Issues

- 10.1 The Council has carefully the arguments put forward in favour of re-assigning the Dalwhinnie catchment to that of Gergask Primary School. The issue is covered above at Responses 4, 13, 14, 15, 16, 22, 23, 25, 26, 38, 29 and 30.
- 10.2 Having weighed the arguments, the Council's view remains that reassigning the Dalwhinnie catchment to Newtonmore Primary offers the best opportunities to maximise the educational and community benefits of the proposal. Whilst agreeing that Gergask Primary could benefit from more pupils, the overriding consideration must be the educational benefits arising for children living in Dalwhinnie. In coming to its conclusion, the Council has taken into account the fact that Newtonmore Primary seems to be the preferred option for parents from the Dalwhinnie catchment. In terms of the wider community, people in Dalwhinnie are more likely to work or shop in Newtonmore than in Laggan, and travel there is likely to be more convenient for parents.

11.0 Procedure for Call-in by the Scottish Ministers

- 11.1 As set out in The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Highland Council is required to notify the Scottish Ministers of its decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Paper and Consultation Report. The Scottish Ministers have an eight-week period from the date of that final decision on 8 September 2016 to decide if they will call-in the proposal. Within the first three weeks of that eight-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Therefore, anyone who wishes to make representations to the Scottish Ministers can do so until 29 September 2016. The Scottish Ministers will have until 3 November 2016 to take a decision on the call-in of the Closure Proposal.
- 11.2 Anyone wishing to make a representation to the Scottish Ministers requesting them to call-in a local authority decision to close a school is asked to email schoolclosures@gov.scot or to write to **School Infrastructure Unit, Learning Directorate, The Scottish Government, Area 2A South, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ by 7 January 2015.**
- 11.3 Until the outcome of the eight week call-in process has been notified to Highland Council, it will not proceed to implement the Proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal, it will be referred to a School Closure Review Panel.

12.0 Legal issues

- 12.1 Throughout this statutory consultation Highland Council has complied in full with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.
- 12.2 As provided for in section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, it is the duty of the Council to ensure adequate and efficient provision of school education within Highland, such education to be directed towards the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of children or young persons to their fullest potential (Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000). As with all Council duties, the Council also has a duty to make arrangements to secure best value, and in securing best value the Council is required to maintain an appropriate balance between, inter alia, the quality of its performance of its functions and the cost to the authority of that performance (Local Government in Scotland Act 2002, section 1). Each of the above, and all other legislative requirements, have been taken into account in the preparation of this Report.

13. Financial Implications

- 13.1 Advice on the financial implications of the proposal was issued with the Proposal Paper and can be found at **Appendix H** to the Proposal Paper.

14.0 Equality Impact Assessment

- 14.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was issued with the proposal paper and can be found at **Appendix J** to the Proposal Paper.

15.0 Conclusion

- 15.1 The consultation process has complied fully with legislative requirements and has provided an opportunity for all parties to identify key issues of concern. These issues have been fully considered and the Council's response detailed in sections 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 above.
- 15.2 Education Scotland staff visited Gergask and Newtonmore Schools to speak to parents, pupils and staff. They also had the opportunity to review in detail the proposal document and all written responses.
- 15.3 The Director of Care and Learning, on reviewing all of the submissions, the note of the meeting, and the Education Scotland report; and having had special regard to alternatives to closure, to the community impact and to the impact of travelling arrangements; concludes that the proposal offers educational benefits and should be implemented without amendment.

16 Recommendation

- 16.1 It is therefore recommended that Highland Council approves the proposal to discontinue education provision at Dalwhinnie Primary School and re-assign its catchment area to that of Newtonmore Primary School.

Bill Alexander
Director of Care and Learning
28 July 2016

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 CO₂ 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 CO₂ 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 CO₂ 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 CO₂ equivalent emissions, (columns C and D), as well as emissions for CO₂ and CO₂ 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 CO₂ 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 CO₂ 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

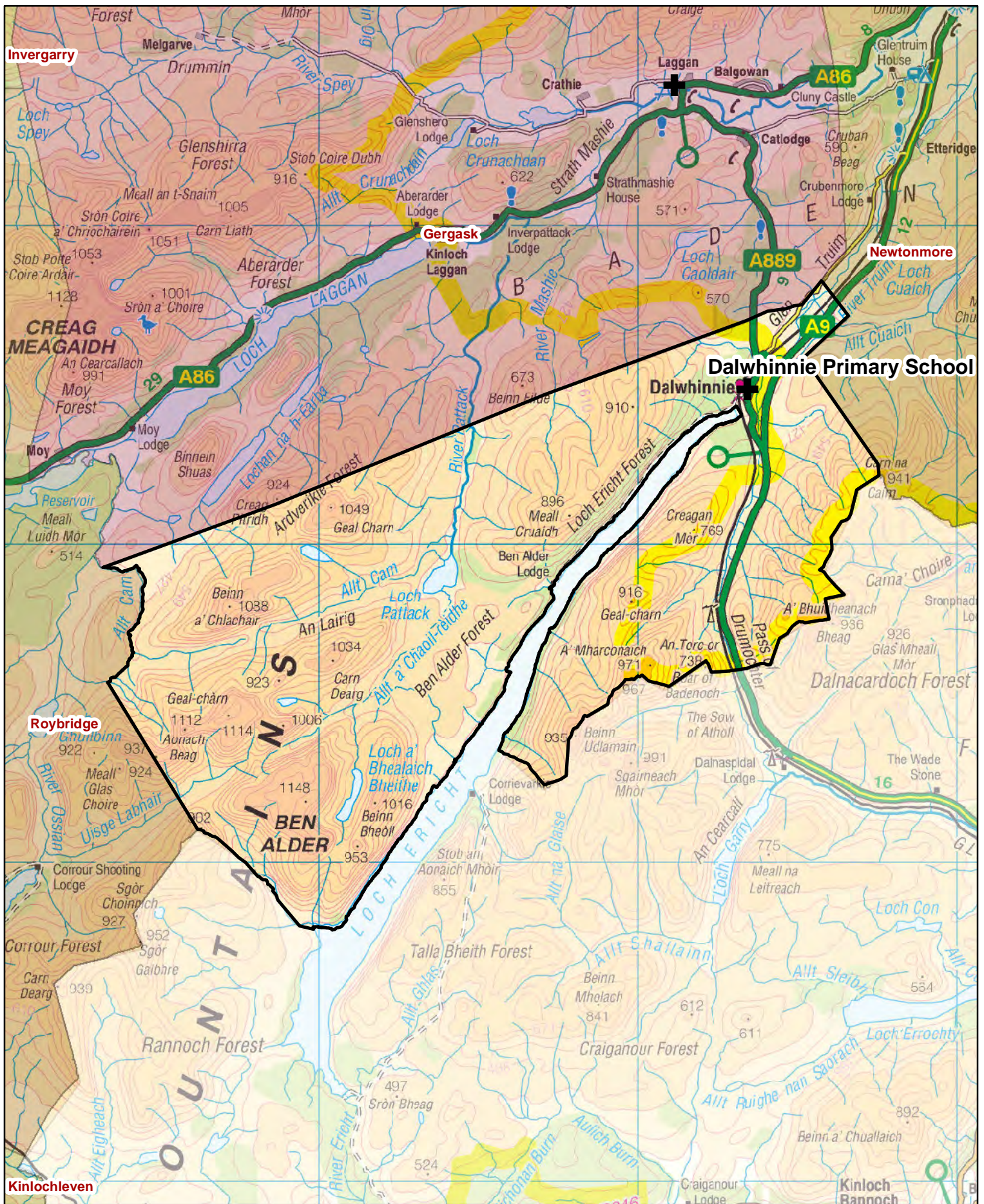
- 18.1 A preliminary Rural Impact Assessment is at **Appendix K**.

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

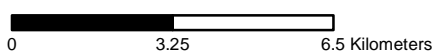
- 19.1 Taking the above into account Highland Council recommends that Dalwhinnie Primary School, currently "mothballed," is closed and the catchment area re-assigned to that of Newtonmore Primary.
- 19.2 This proposal paper is issued in terms of the authority's procedures to meet the relevant statutory 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



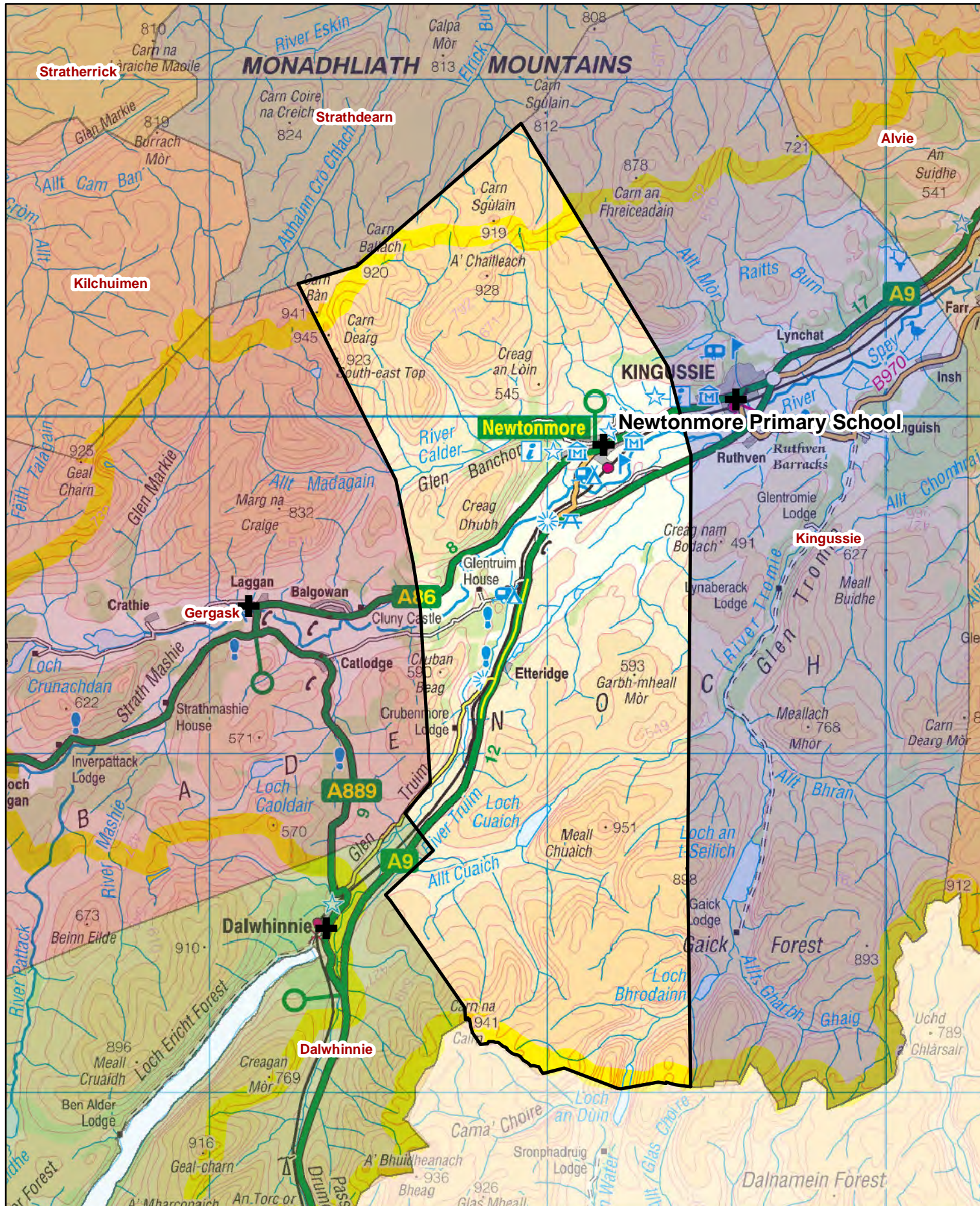
1 cm = 1,530 metres

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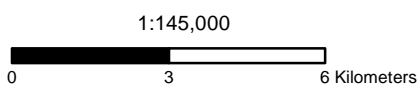


Planning & Development Service



Newtonmore Primary School

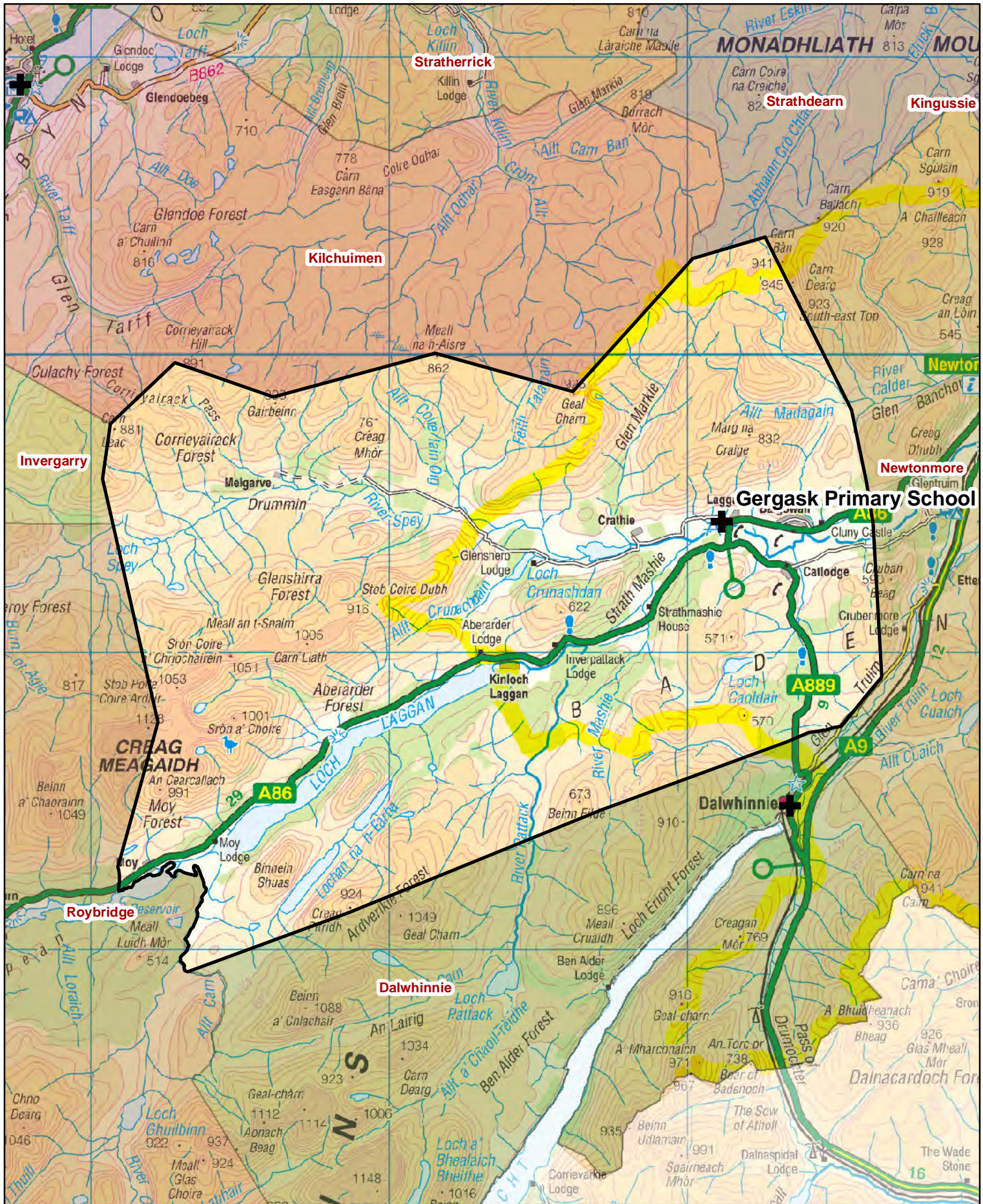
**Primary School
Catchment Boundary
March 2013**



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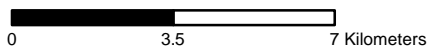
Planning & Development Service



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 <u>guarantee of an age appropriate peer group</u>	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 <u>comparisons and lack of peer review</u>
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 <u>network</u>	Professional network available at Newtonmore	Professional network available at Newtonmore	Would be a single teacher school with limited <u>professional network</u>
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 <u>less familiar with their peers</u>
Access to school during adverse weather	Access as at present	Access as at present	Access as at present	Improved access due to shorter travel <u>distances.</u>
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 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.

ADDENDUM TO APPENDIX C - CONSULTATIVE PROCESS - SUMMARY OF PROCESS FOR THIS PROPOSAL DOCUMENT - DALWHINNIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

At Page 2 of Appendix C, in the section entitled "**Public Meeting**", the location of the meeting should read "Dalwhinnie Village Hall."

Also on page 2, in the section entitled "**Involvement of Education Scotland/HMIE**" the second sentence should read "HMIE will also be sent, by 18 April 2016, a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period." The fourth sentence should read "HMIE will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal not later than 6 May 2016."

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

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4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	2
5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?	4
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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 parents¹.

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.

¹ 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.

How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	
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

How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
Meeting pupils' needs	good

How good is the environment for learning?	
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

Leading and improving the school	
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.

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

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.

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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. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at 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@spso.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.spso.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 parents¹, children and the local community know whether their school² 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. 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.

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

² The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

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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

Improvements in performance	very good
Learners' experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	good

Nursery classes

Improvements in performance	good
Children's experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	very good

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

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

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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You can find our complaints procedure on our website 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 parents¹, children and the local community know whether their school² 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. 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.

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

² The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

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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

Improvements in performance	satisfactory
Learners' experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	satisfactory

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	good
Children's experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	good

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	weak

HM Inspector: Robert Barfoot
24 August 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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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 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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HM Inspectorate of Education

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)
	Total 16				£38,324.90	£1,140.00	(£6,422.00)

Appendix H

Route	Daily Mileage	CO ₂ e (kg per day)	CO ₂ e (kg per annum)	CO ₂ (kg per day)	CO ₂ (kg per annum)	CH ₄ (kg per day)	CH ₄ (kg per annum)	N ₂ O (kg per day)	N ₂ 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
Forecast revenue costs for Dalwhinnie PS			
	Costs for full financial year (projected annual costs)	Additional financial impact on receiving schools	Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)
DALWHINNIE PRIMARY SCHOOL			
School costs			
<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
SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL	85,241	8,371	76,871
<i>Income:</i>			
Sale of meals	0	0	0
Lets	0	0	0
External care provider	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL	0	0	0
TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL	85,241	8,371	76,871
UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR	28,414	2,790	25,624

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
TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL	2231

Table 4

Non-recurring revenue costs	
none	0
TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS	0

Table 5

Impact on GAE	
Primary school teaching staff line- GAE reduction	-9,165
GAE IMPACT	-9,165

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) 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 age group, and their parents. The proposal is

		<p>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) 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.

MINUTE OF PUBLIC MEETING HELD AT DALWHINNIE VILLAGE HALL
23 FEBRUARY 2016

**CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE THE PROVISION OF
EDUCATION AT DALWHINNIE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Panel

Drew Millar, Councillor (Chair)

Brian Porter, Head of Resources, Highland Council

Callum Mackintosh, Area Care and Learning Manager, Highland Council

Ian Jackson, Education Officer, Highland Council

10 people attended the meeting, including the Head Teacher of Newtonmore Primary, the Head Teacher of Gergask/Kingussie Primaries, a representative of HMIE, and a journalist from the Strathspey and Badenoch Herald. There were 6 parents/members of the public.

The Chairperson began by welcoming everyone to the meeting and by introducing those on the Panel. He advised that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposal to formally close Dalwhinnie Primary School, (as set out in the recommendation to the Proposal Paper). The proposed change, if approved, will take place immediately after the conclusion of the statutory process relating to school closures. Other options identified in the proposal paper are re-opening the school, or continuing to “mothball” it. The Chairperson explained that we could also discuss any other options or alternatives to closure which those present would like to raise. We would also welcome the community’s views on the best way to re-assign the catchment area of Dalwhinnie Primary School in the event that a closure is approved.

The Chairperson then asked Brian Porter, Head of Resources for Care and Learning, to describe the consultation process.

Mr Porter explained that the meeting was part of the statutory procedure relating to a school closure. The Council always undertook informal discussion about such proposals in advance of that statutory process and had held a series of informal discussions prior to embarking on the statutory process. He emphasised that we were at the start of the formal process rather than at the end of it, and that the process was designed to gather the views of those affected. The school has been mothballed since the end the 2011/12 session and we are obligated to keep mothballed schools under review. Guidance relating to the relevant legislation makes it clear that mothballing is a temporary measure.

The formal process is outlined in Appendix 3. It has a number of stages and gives ample opportunity for views to be expressed to the Council before any final decision

is made. The consultation period itself runs up to 18 March, and the Council is looking for views to be submitted before that date. Once the public consultation ends on 18 March, Education Scotland become involved. They will look at the Proposal Paper and the note of the meeting tonight, and will form a view on the educational benefits of the proposal. The Council has to take account of Education Scotland's view on the educational benefits as well as any representations received as a result of the consultation process. There is a very clear obligation on the Council to consider each and every one of the comments received, including those made at the meeting tonight. Thereafter, the Council will form a Final Report, which will be submitted to Committee. Currently, we anticipate the Final Report will be submitted to our August Committee, although that might change depending on how much time we require to consider the comments received as a result of consultation. We have to publish the report at least 3 weeks before it is submitted to Committee, to allow for further representations, so again there are many checks and balances built into the process. Ultimately, Scottish Ministers have a right of call-in for any school closures proposals, so even after the Council has made its decision there is a further period in which people can raise concerns with the Scottish Government, and any such representations might lead to Scottish Ministers calling-in the proposal. All told, we expect the process to take at least 12 months. We will responding direct to relevant consultees.

The Proposal Paper sets out a proposal to close the school, but clearly there are other options and these are identified in the paper. People are entitled to express their views on those other options, or indeed any others that the Council should be considering.

The Chairperson then asked Callum Mackintosh, Area Care and Learning Manager to explain the educational aspects of the proposal.

Mr Mackintosh explained that his role was to focus on the young people, and the educational benefits of the proposal. Highland Council is of the opinion that educational accommodation should be of a standard that sustains educational performance. As well as that, children should have the opportunity for interaction with their peers, and it is felt that, due to the small numbers of children in the Dalwhinnie catchment, pupils would be benefit from being with larger peer groups in other schools. As well as the social benefits, the Curriculum for Excellence places a high value on interaction between children and on pupils being able to work in groups to self-assess. The main consideration is ensuring that the children benefit from these opportunities.

Mr Jackson commented that Section 11 of the paper contained further detail on the educational aspects of the proposal.

The Chairperson then opened the meeting to the Q and A session.

Mr Robert Cumming, Chairperson of the Gergask PS Parent Council, commented that, from the perspective of people in Laggan, there was an acceptance that Dalwhinnie PS should close, not least because of the need to support Gergask Primary, a school that is itself at risk due to its small roll.

Mrs Sue Phillips, a parent at Newtonmore PS, commented that she is a resident of Dalwhinnie and that her son used to attend Dalwhinnie Primary. She agreed that the school should close. Three or four children is not enough to provide an adequate school experience; even 10 is not enough, and there would be no prospect of a re-opened Dalwhinnie School getting even 10 pupils. She preferred Newtonmore to Gergask as prior to mothballing, Dalwhinnie had been clustered with Newtonmore, and her son was well-integrated with the Newtonmore PS pupils. She also prefers the road to Newtonmore, in comparison to the road to Laggan. She has a daughter due to start P1 at Newtonmore in August, although she can't say whether other people might prefer Gergask.

The Chairman commented that part of tonight's meeting was to gauge local opinion about the re-allocation of the catchment.

Mr Porter commented that, without wishing to over-generalise, the feedback from the informal consultation had suggested a general acceptance of the need to close Dalwhinnie PS. The main question that arose was around the most appropriate receiving school. The paper does make clear that either of the receiving schools, Gergask or Newtonmore, would offer educational benefits compared to Dalwhinnie.

Mrs Phillips asked whether, on that basis, parents could have a choice of school following the closure of Dalwhinnie.

Mr Porter advised that we would have to define a catchment area for the Dalwhinnie community, within either Gergask or Newtonmore.

Mr Cumming commented that the view of the Gergask parents was slightly more nuanced, in that they argued the catchment could be split. Clearly if someone was located at Etteridge they would not want to go to Gergask, but if someone was located in Dalwhinnie itself they might wish to, particularly in light of an anticipated 10 years of roadworks on the A9.

Mr Jackson commented that the debate arose from the fact the two schools were nearly equidistant from Dalwhinnie, and that parents will have their own preferences. Highland Council has to come down with a recommendation in the paper and our normal policy is that transport arrangements follow the catchment designation. There are arguments in favour of either school being designated as the receiving school, and we would have to see what comes out of the consultation.

Mr Andrew Harper, Chairperson of Newtonmore Primary School Parent Council, commented that he felt parents of school age children would tend to have more business in the Newtonmore direction, and so Newtonmore PS might be more

convenient. He asked at what age children qualified for school transport rather than parents undertaking

Mr Jackson advised that children qualify for school transport from P1 onwards, provided they live beyond what is termed the “statutory walking distance”, which is defined as 2 miles for children aged below eight and 3 miles for children aged 8 and above. Obviously therefore children from Dalwhinnie would qualify for school transport to either Gergask or Newtonmore. The Council has a transport unit which organises the logistics of the transport, which can be organised several ways. The most efficient way is by school bus, although if there are children who live in particularly remote locations then we sometimes organise “parent contracts” under which parents are paid to transport their children. The Council doesn’t normally allow parent contracts on the same route as a bus route, as that would represent a “double whammy” for the taxpayer. Funded transport from Dalwhinnie would be on offer, but the form that transport takes would be decided by Highland Council’s Transport Unit.

Mr Harper asked whether a children’s play area could be provided for Dalwhinnie in the event the school were closed, and whether there could be some investment in the accommodation at Newtonmore and Gergask schools, as recompense to the area for losing the school at Dalwhinnie.

Mr Jackson commented that there was an excellent play area within the grounds of the primary school, and that Mr Harper’s suggestion was something that might be looked at in the context of disposal of the property after a closure had been confirmed.

Mr Porter commented that we could not provide a definitive answer at this stage, but that it was a very valid point that would be considered.

Mr Harper commented that if children were not going to benefit from a school in Dalwhinnie, then they should benefit in some other way.

Mrs Fiona Docker, a parent and resident of Dalwhinnie, commented that her children attend Gergask Primary. Would Dalwhinnie have to be in the Gergask catchment for her to qualify for school transport?

Mr Jackson commented that Highland Council operates a policy of having a designated school for each address. If we decide that Dalwhinnie is to come within the Newtonmore catchment, then funded transport would only be provided to Newtonmore. If the decision was to allocate Dalwhinnie to the Gergask catchment, it would be the opposite position. Because different families have different preferences, somebody would lose out.

Mr Cumming asked whether there were ever any exceptions to the Policy. Mr Jackson replied that exceptions were rare but did exist.

Mrs Phillips commented that she could not afford to take her children to either school unless the transport was funded. Her daughter was about to start P1 but it would be inappropriate to put her onto a bus with secondary school pupils.

The Chairperson commented that this does happen in other areas.

There being no other comments, the Chairperson reminded those present of the closing date for responses – 18 March – and of where responses should be sent, either via letter or via email. A record of this meeting would be made available at least 3 weeks before the meeting of the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee on 25 August 2016, as well as all the submissions. The members of the Committee would have a chance to see the note and all other representations before the meeting.

MEETING CLOSED.

**List of Respondents to Statutory Consultation Exercise – Closure of
Dalwhinnie Primary School**

1. Mrs S Phillips
2. Sheena and Campbell Slimon
3. Questionnaires Newtonmore Primary School pupils P2-4EM (numbers 3-30)
4. Questionnaires Newtonmore Primary School pupils P4-7GM (numbers 31-45)
5. Questionnaires Newtonmore Primary School pupils P5-7EM (numbers 46-66)
6. Mrs J Urquhart
7. Mr R Cumming o/b of Gergask Primary School Parent Council
8. Mrs C Slimon
9. Mr A Sellar o/b Laggan Community Association
10. Questionnaires Gergask Primary School Pupils (numbers 71-77)
11. Cover email from Mr A McLean

22. 2. 16

Mr B Porter
Head of Resources
Care + Learning
Highland Council

Dear Mr Porter,

Sadly I have to agree with the closure of Dalwhinnie Primary school. I have lived in the village for 8 years and as far as I know only one other family with children have moved here which would make a school roll of 4 or 5. My son [redacted] attended Dalwhinnie PS for 4 years and the level of education and nearly one to one tuition from Mrs Webster and a few others was of a very high standard and for this period of time [redacted] and myself were happy with the situation. Unfortunately when the roll fell down to just two pupils I felt [redacted] would benefit from being at a larger school.

With larger classes and more pupils [redacted] has a lot more social interaction with other children and staff members which obviously helps him for future schooling. He gets to participate in school committees such as pupil council and Charities committee where as a small

school roll cannot cover these groups
[REDACTED] is also learning French at
Newtonmoore so having a larger group
to share conversations is a definite
help to him. Having a small school
roll restricts team sports and other
activities, such as drama + gym which
[REDACTED] really enjoys being involved in
[REDACTED] has definitely benefited from
moving to Newtonmoore school and my
daughter [REDACTED] is currently at NIMORE
nursery and is looking forward to moving
up to P1 in August.

Yours Sincerely

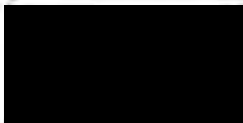
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RECEIVED

29 FEB 2016

HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CARE & LEARNING SERVICE



24 February 2016,

Dear Sir/Madam,

Dalwhinnie Primary School.

I was educated at Glentruim Primary before it closed in 1958 because of lack of numbers. Our four children went to Gergask as well as our four grandchildren.

So I speak from experience when I say that small schools give an excellent education and Gergask historically has been recognized as producing pupils who were well ahead of their classmates when they got to Kingussie.

Laggan and Dalwhinnie are 'rural' communities compared with 'suburban' Newtonmore and the children therefore are more likely to have shared interests like farming and gamekeeping.

The distance to Laggan is shorter which for small children is of great importance at the end of the day.

There are stronger outside links between the two communities from the 'post' to the Church, so the parents and therefore children, tend to know and socialise with each other.

For events such as sport and music festival, an extra pupil or two can make the difference between entering a competition or not, whereas it will be of no consequence to Newtonmore.

For all these reasons we think it is only right that the Dalwhinnie residents should be given the option of sending their children to Gergask Primary and Nursery.

Yours sincerely




S.D.

Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

For a while Highland Council has been trying out an idea for pupils from Dalwhinnie to go to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary, instead of Dalkwhinnie Primary.

Now we have to decide what to do for the future. We have 3 choices:

- 1. Close Dalwhinnie Primary for good, with the pupils going to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary instead.**
- 2. Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary, so pupils from there would go to that school and not to Newtonmore or Gergask.**
- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Why did you give the answer above?

because they could
make new friends

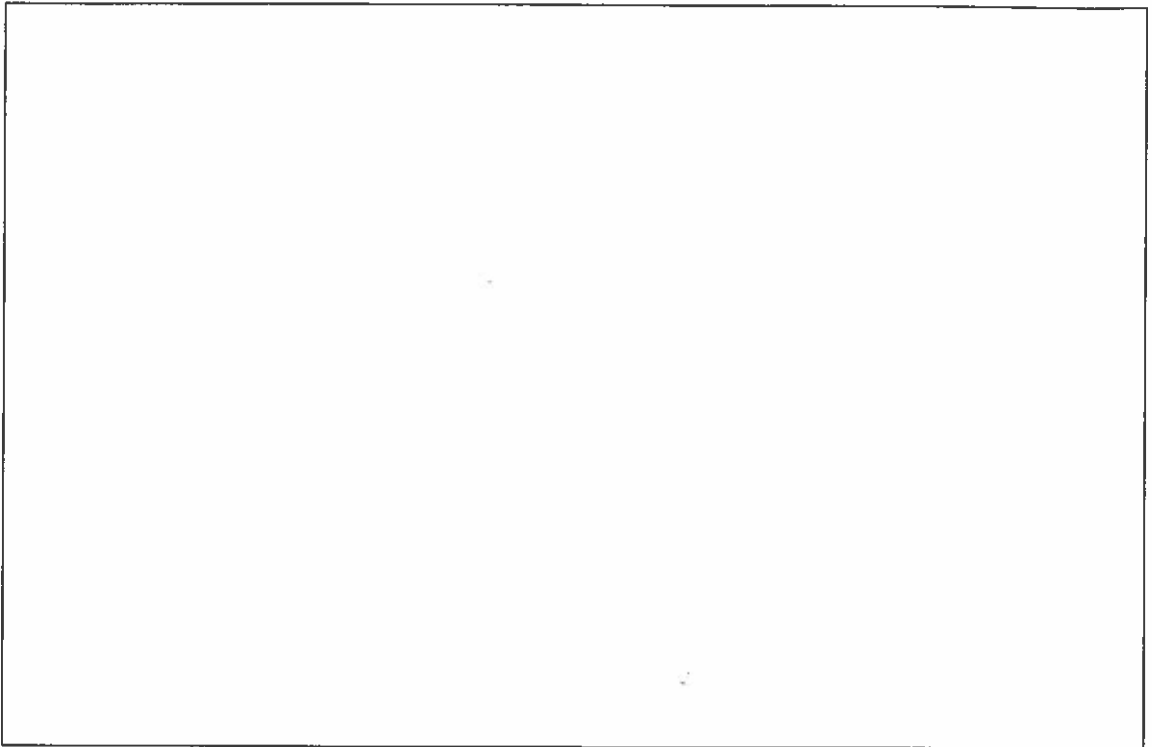
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because in a class
They could lots of
friends.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide their answer to question 5. The box is currently blank.

Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

For a while Highland Council has been trying out an idea for pupils from Dalwhinnie to go to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary, instead of Dalkwhinnie Primary.

Now we have to decide what to do for the future. We have 3 choices:

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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	✓
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

it is so they still
have a school

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

So we make
new freinds

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

no

JJ

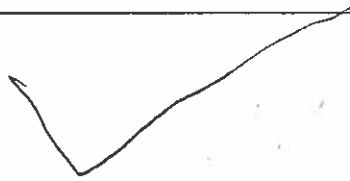
Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

For a while Highland Council has been trying out an idea for pupils from Dalwhinnie to go to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary, instead of Dalkwhinnie Primary.

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- 1. Close Dalwhinnie Primary for good, with the pupils going to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary instead.**
- 2. Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary, so pupils from there would go to that school and not to Newtonmore or Gergask.**
- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

because every other
School has to keep on working

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	X
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because its ^a way better
School!!!!

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

NO THANK YOU!!!

Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

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Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
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Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

It would be a huge waste of money.

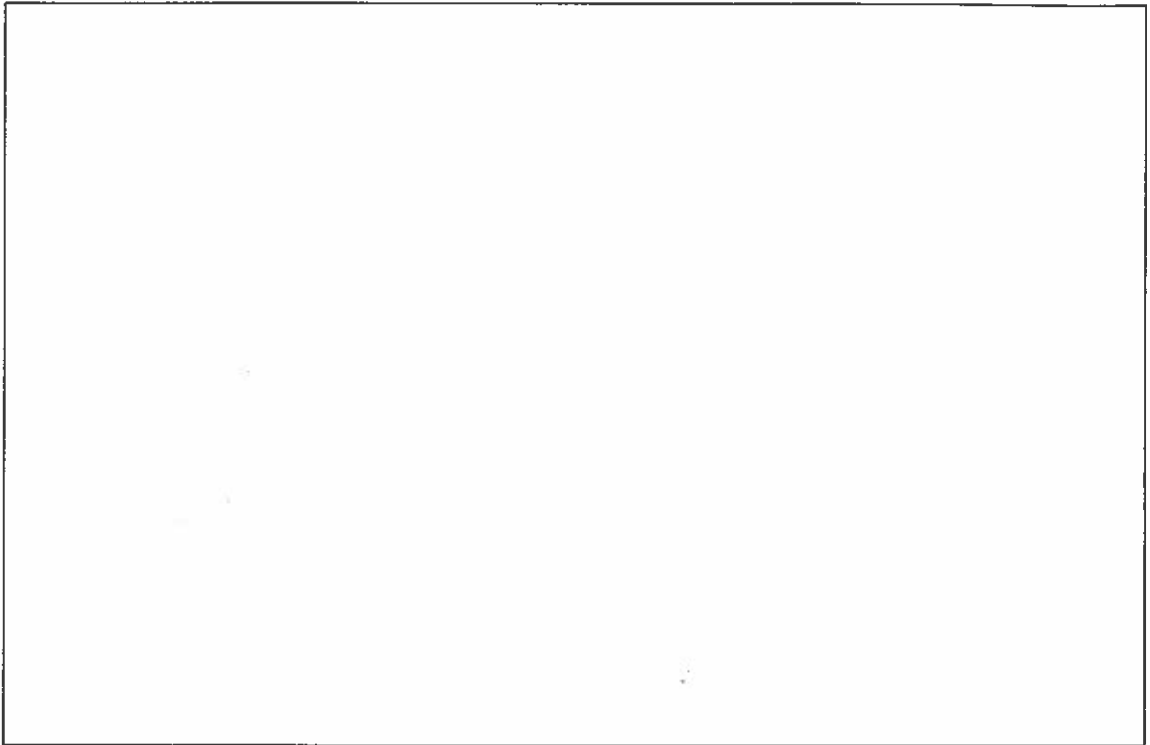
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary X	
Newtonmore Primary ✓	

4. Why did you give the answer above?

I chose Newtonmore school because we could make some new friends

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide additional information or comments to Highland Council.

KW

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Why did you give the answer above?

"Because it is a waste of money."

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	X
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

"Because it is better here"

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

no


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2. Why did you give the answer above?

"I thought that people in Dalwhinnie would not like that."

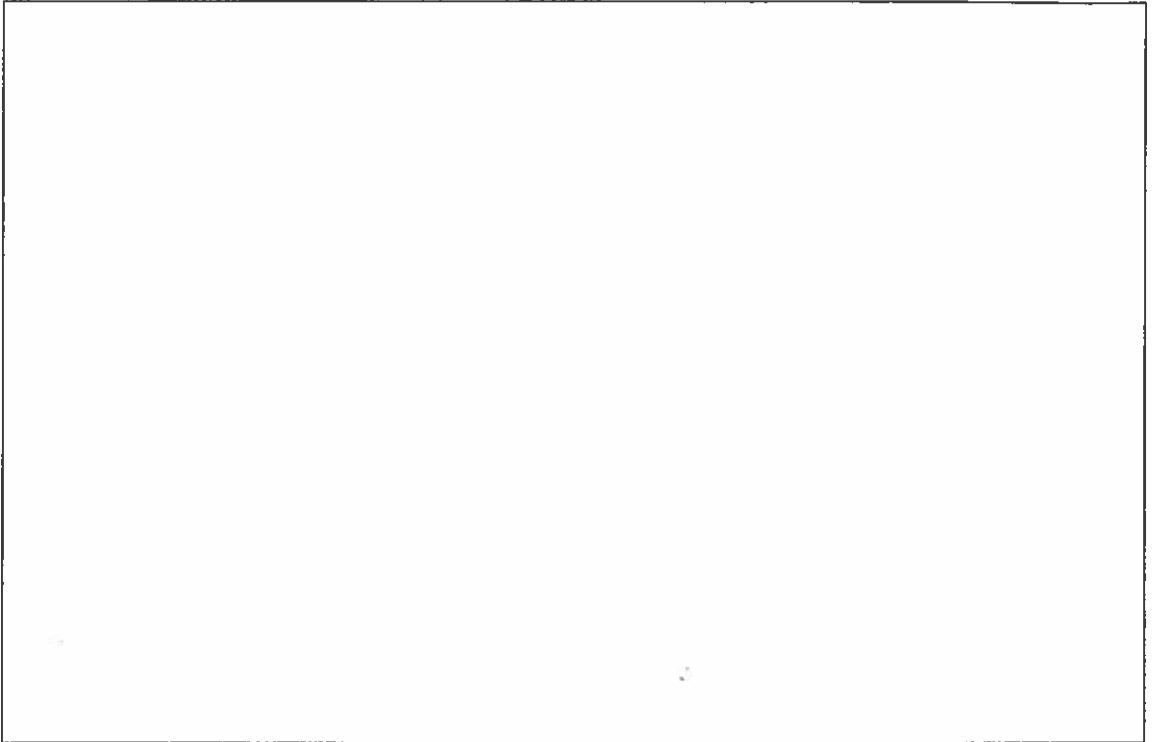
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary ✓	

4. Why did you give the answer above?

"So people could make friends with me."

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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CM

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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Why did you give the answer above?

"Because they might miss friends at their school."

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

"Because you can make new friends."

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

"Why did you close it in the first place?"

F B

Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

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Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Because it would mean paying more munny.

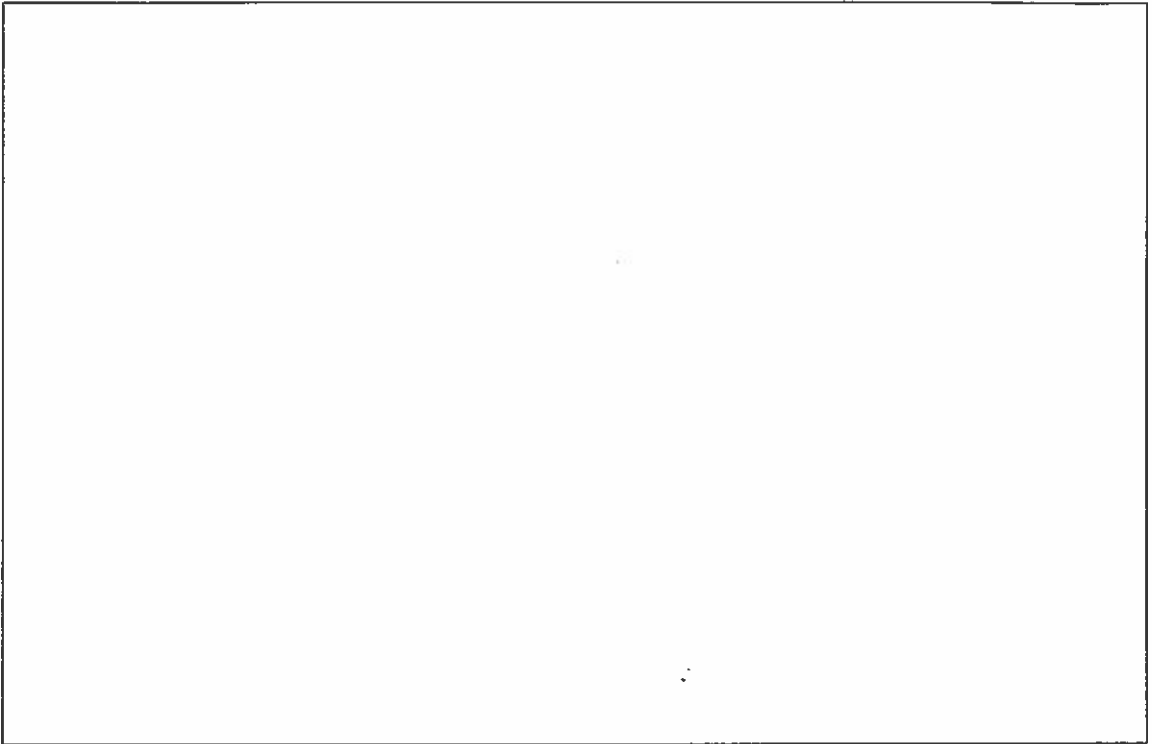
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	X
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

To make the school bigger.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Because more people have
more friends

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Because Gergask doesn't
have many pupils

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

Nope ü


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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Beacuse there is not
any Pupils

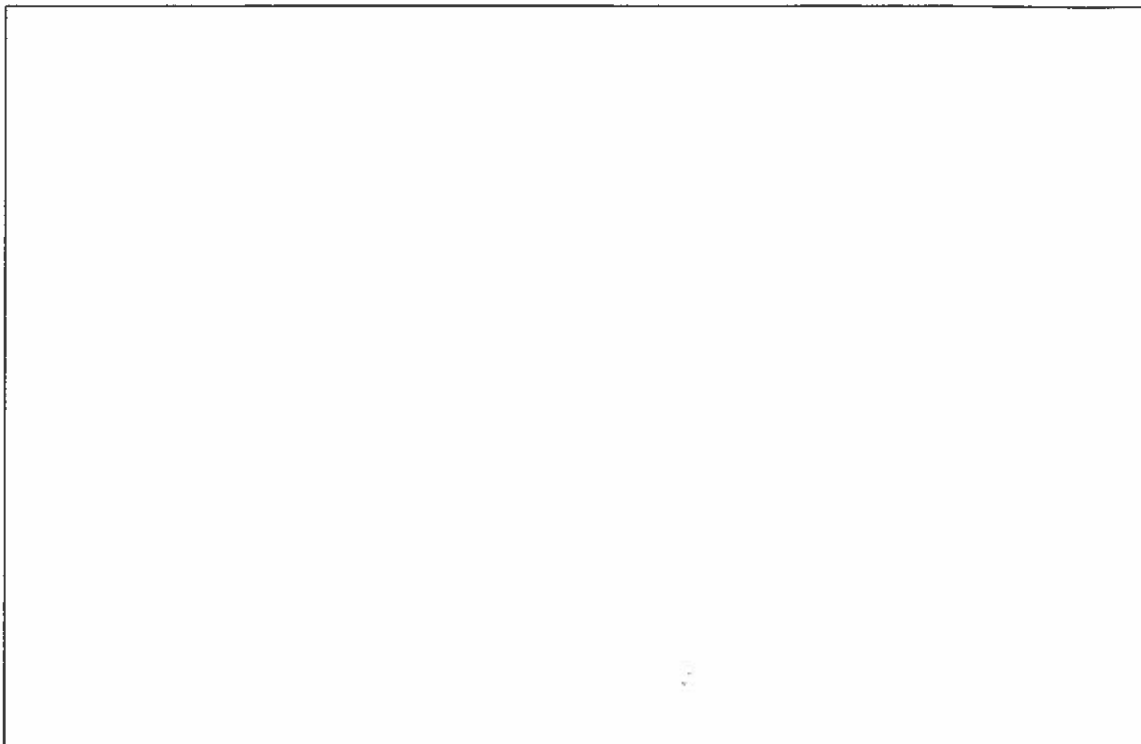
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Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

there is more Pupils

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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2. Why did you give the answer above?

because so math people come.

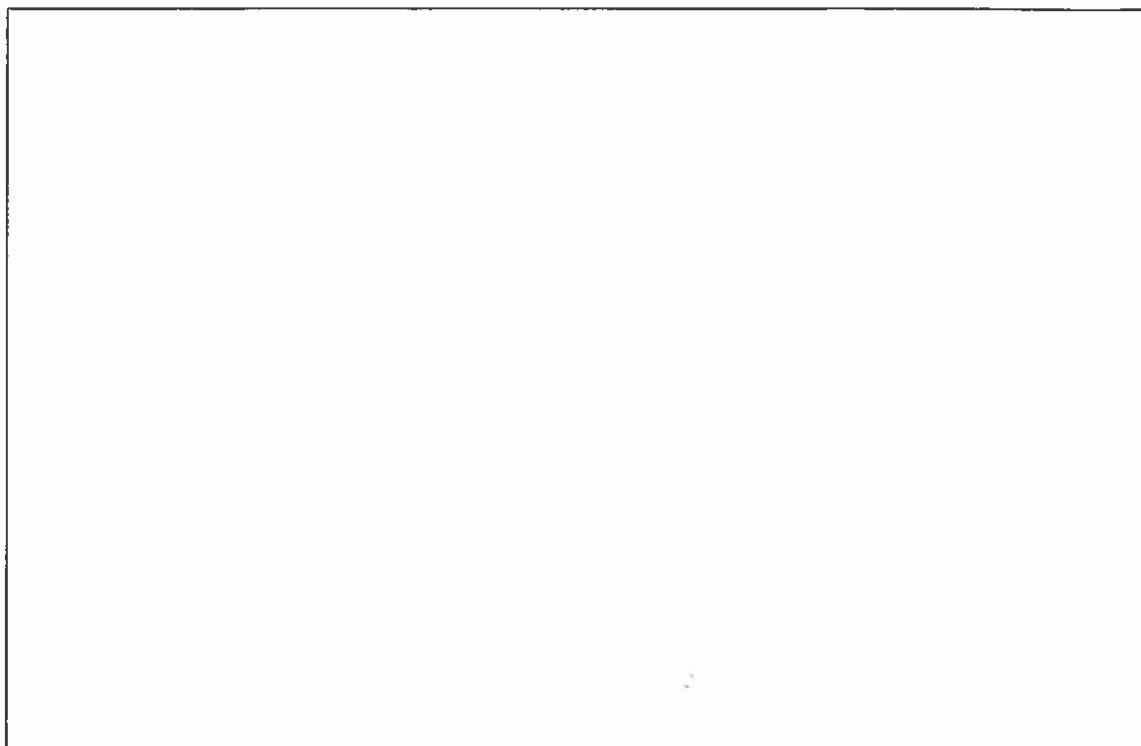
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

they would have more friends.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Beccause I think it's a good idet.

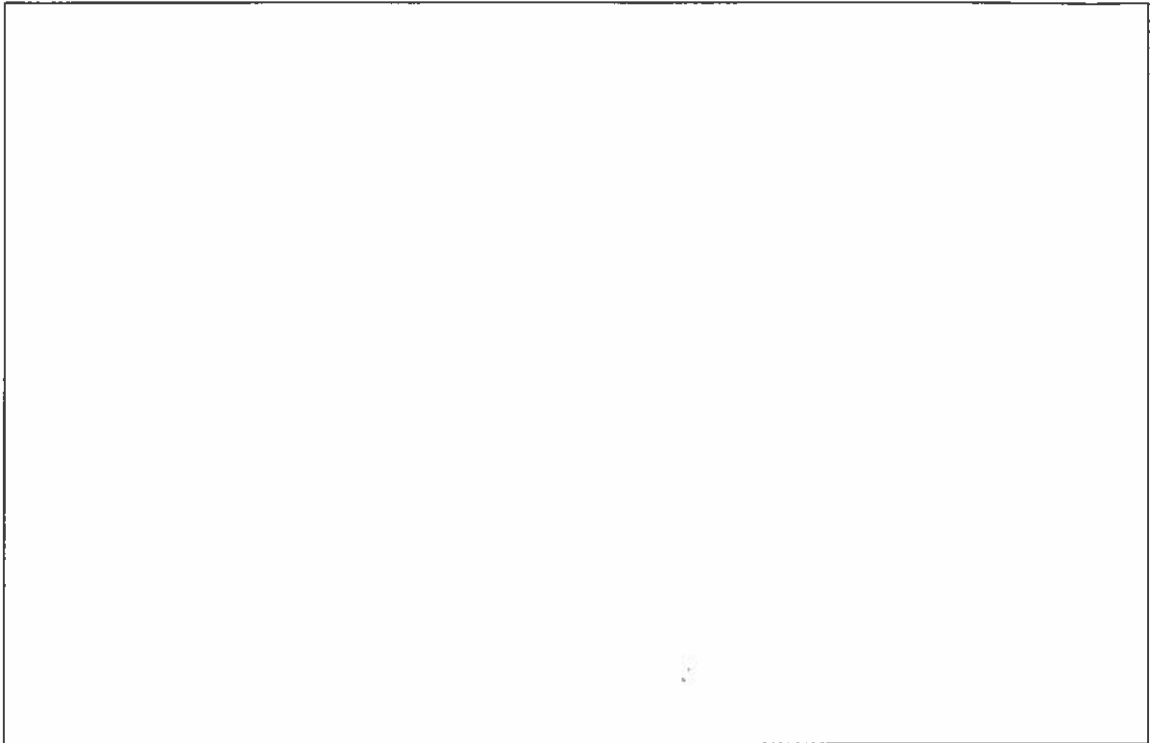
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Beccause we will get more friends.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Because if the school
the teachers would have
to find a new job.

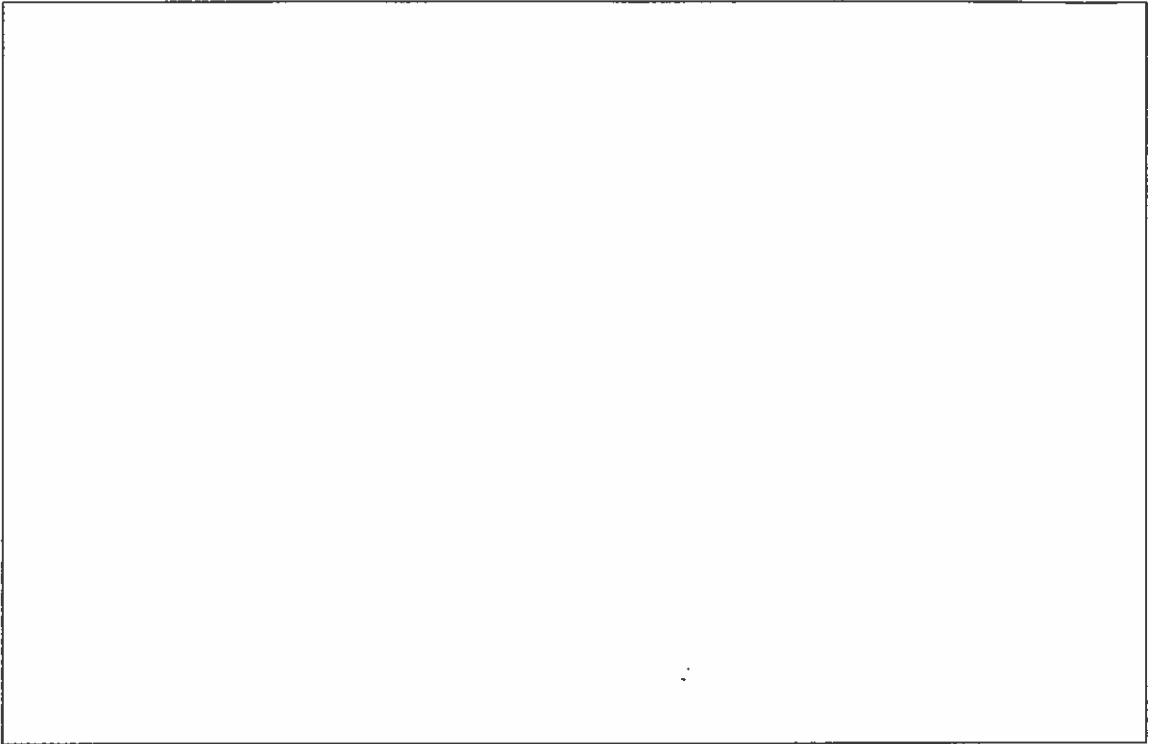
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because Newtonmore
School rarely closes
for bad weather.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Because I think They could choose what school to go to

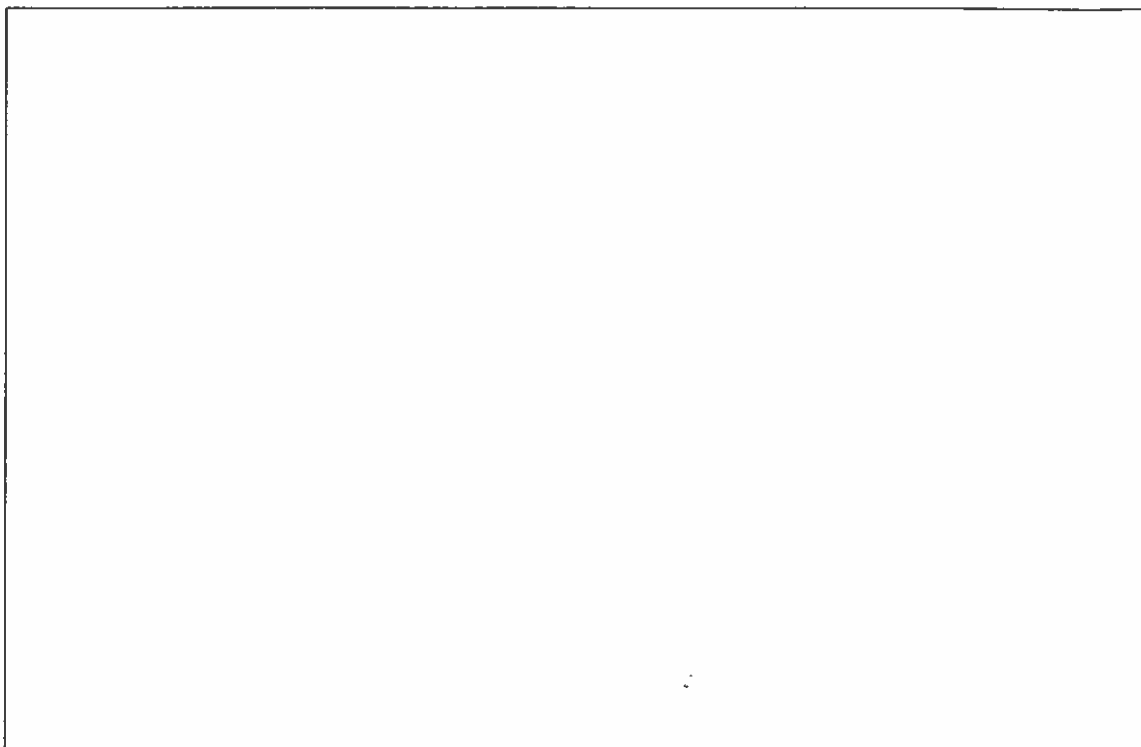
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Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because where kind could to give them more friend

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary. ✓	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

So pupils could have more fun
with

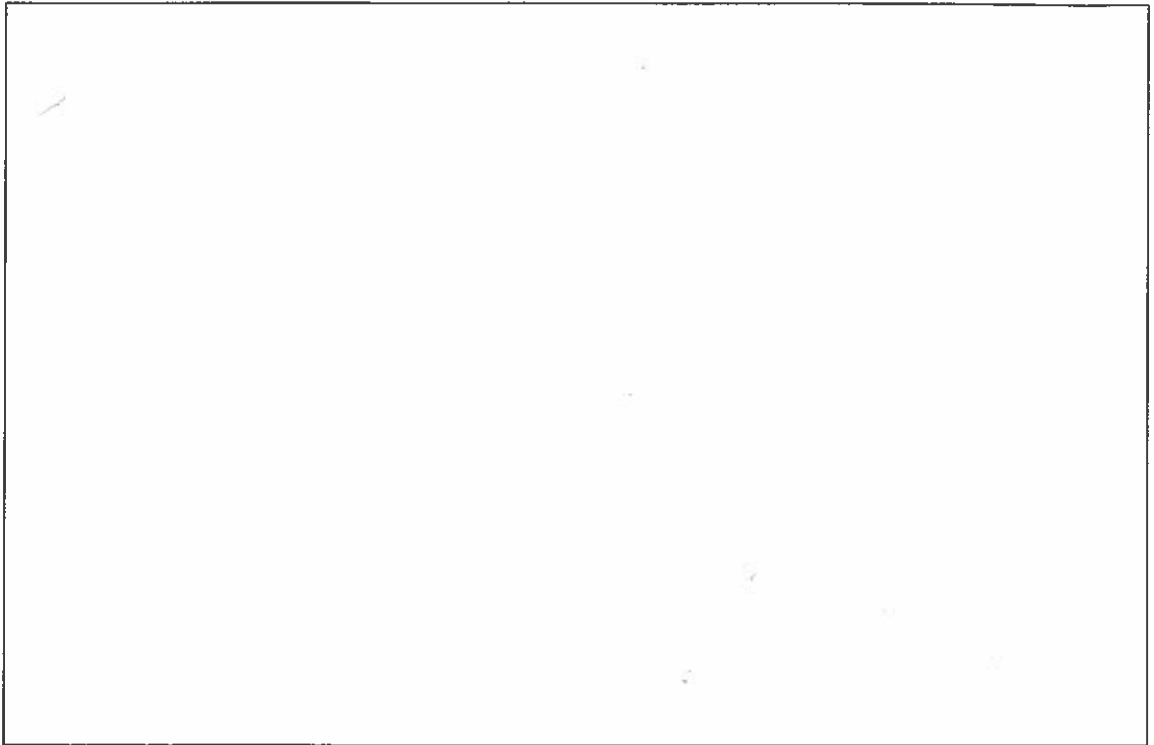
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Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

theres loads of pupils in newtonmore
and not as many pupils in gergask

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

So theres more time to
tinge about it.

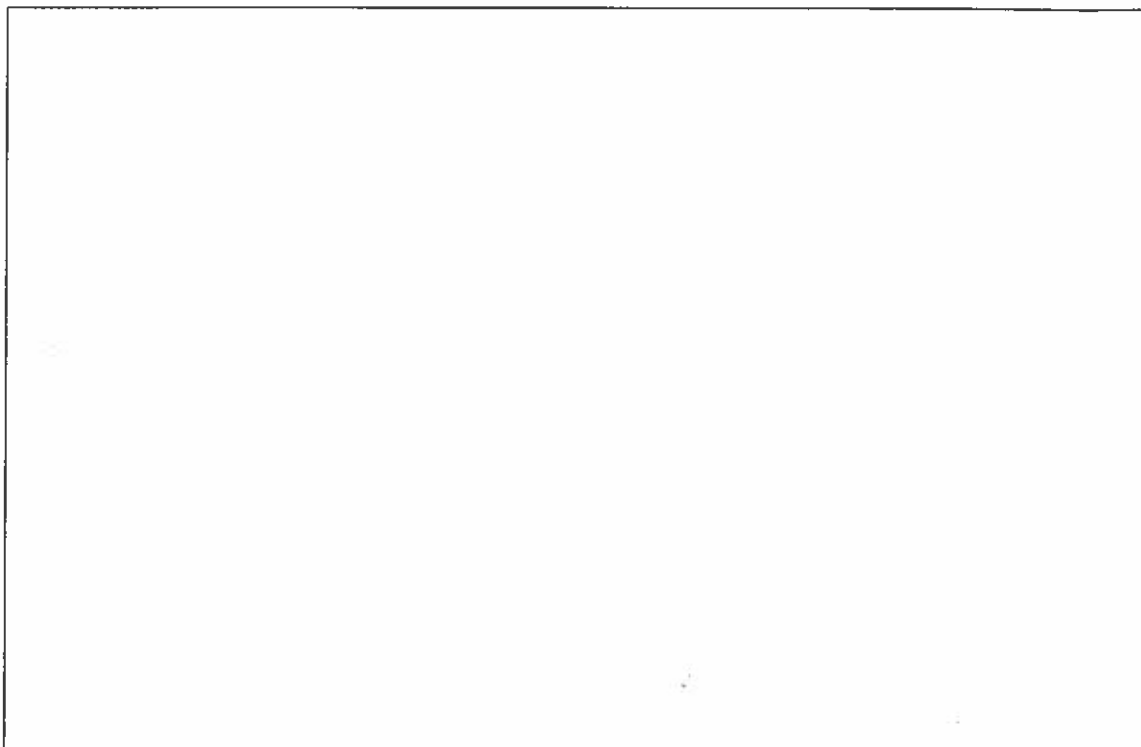
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	✓
Newtonmore Primary	

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Gergask is a small school
so it duseht close

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Why did you give the answer above?

So that the children are in a bigger class.

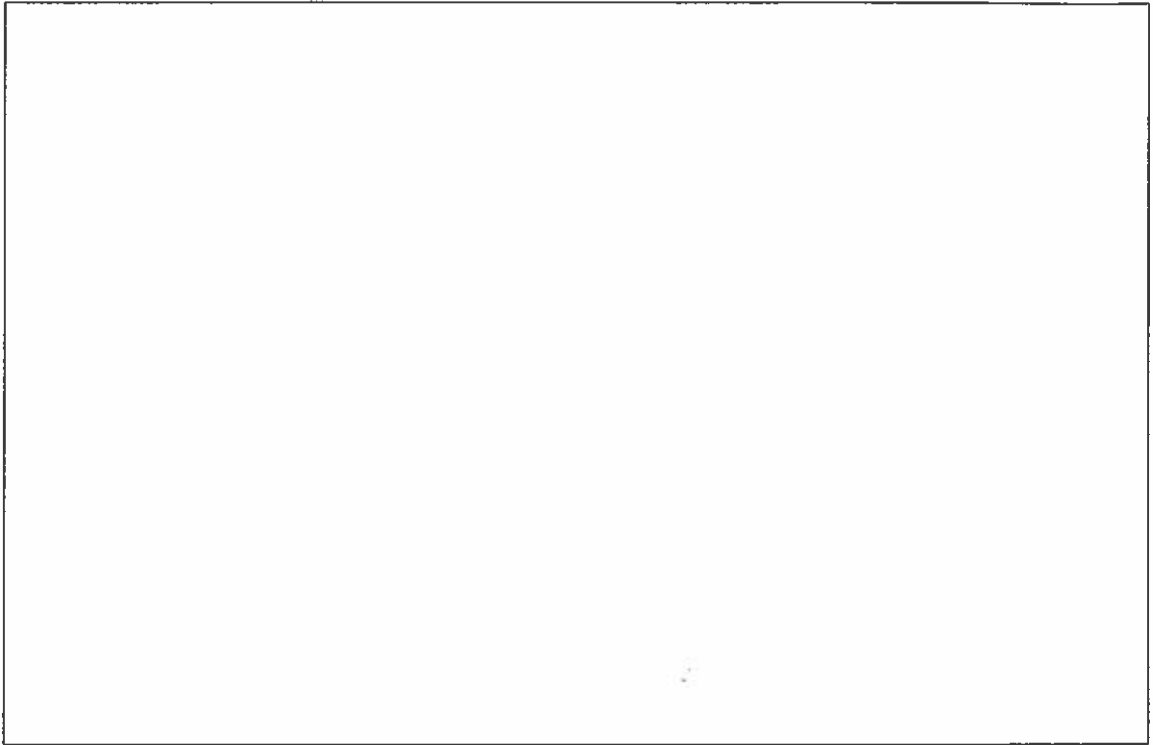
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Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

--

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

So they can play with

the children

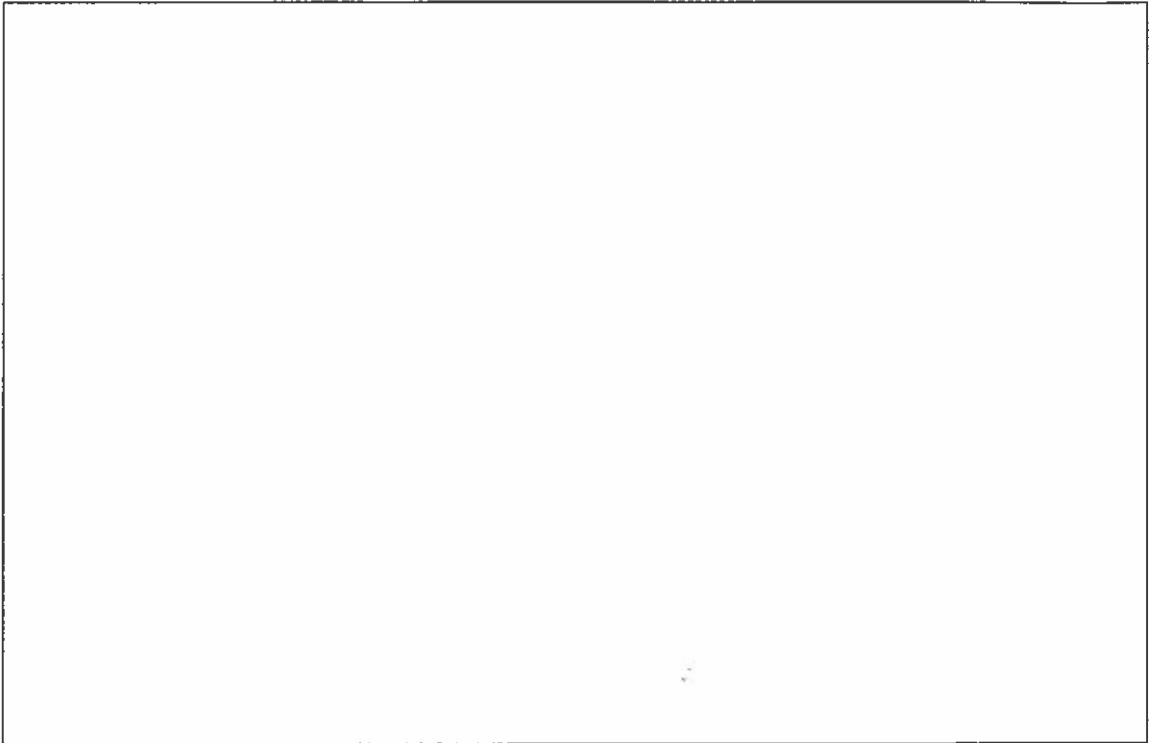
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

its closure

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

So that ^{more} PEOPLe go there

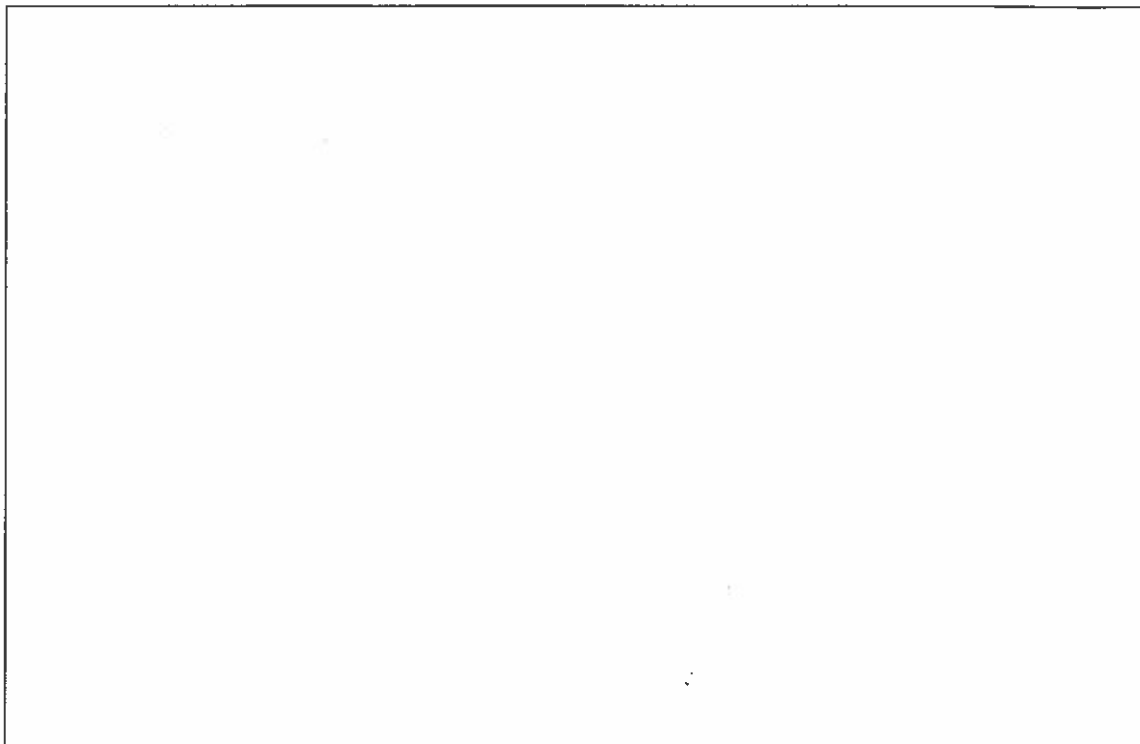
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Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

there's a lot of PEOPLe
in Newtonmore primary

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

So that the kids in dalwhinnie primary
have a big class.

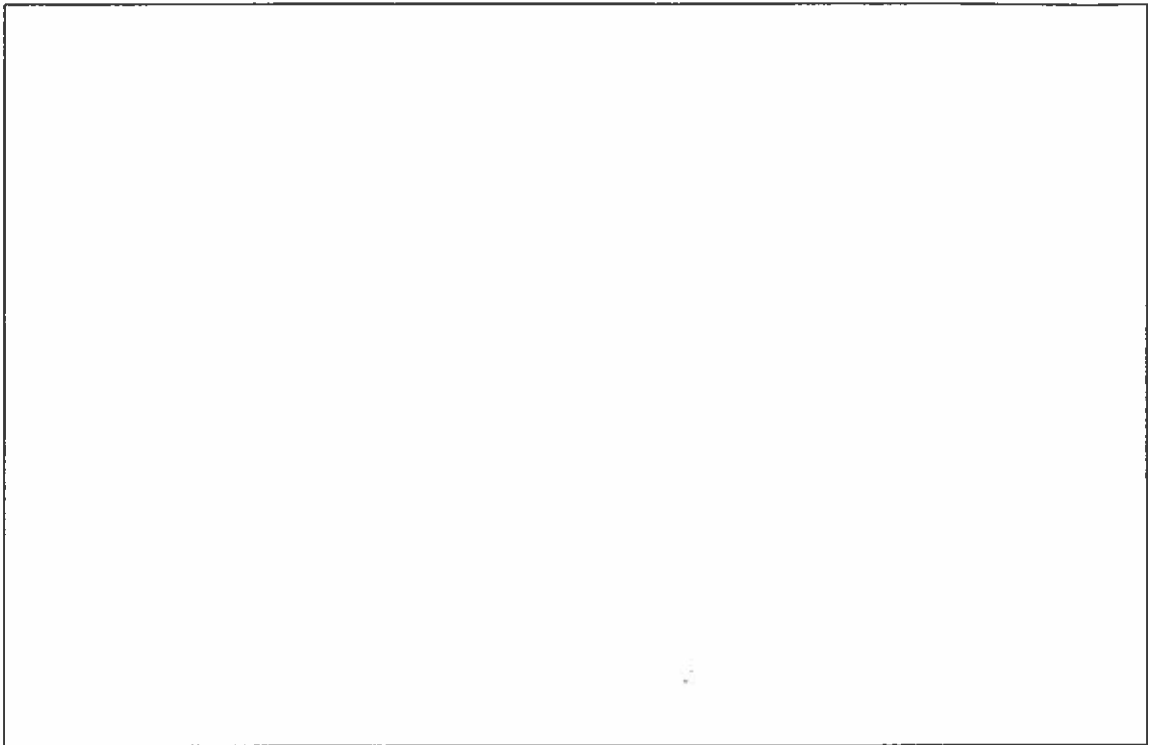
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Because Newtonmore is a happy school.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Because I dont want to close Dalwhinnie,

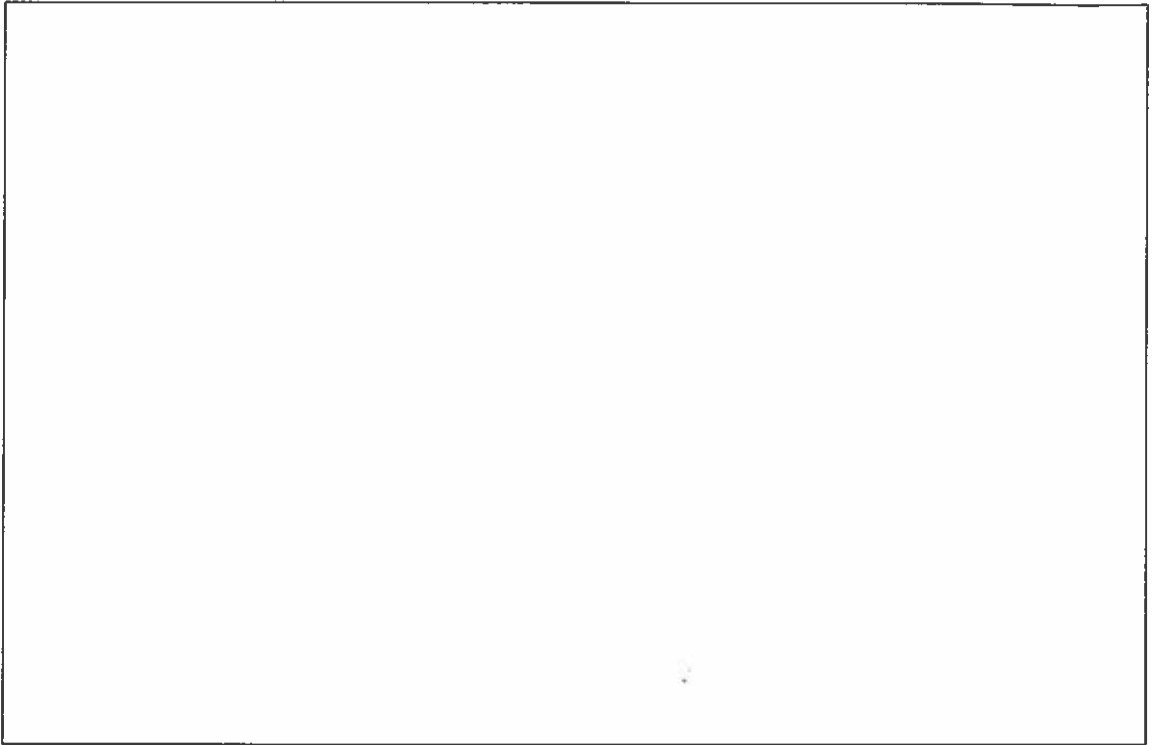
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Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Because I would like some more friends

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

give little more space.

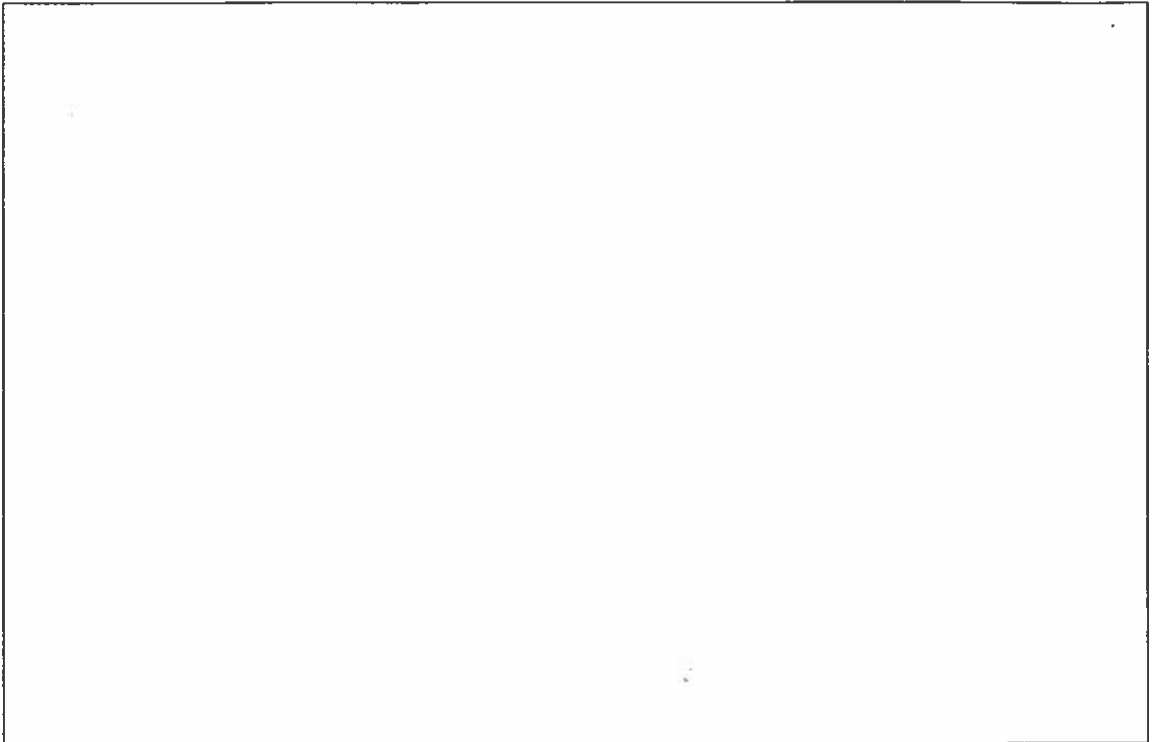
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Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

get new friends

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	✓
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

because I want to go to
the school

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because I think
newtonmore

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

30 1st Floor 1-1-EN

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary. ✓	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

because I want to keep
Dalwhinnie open

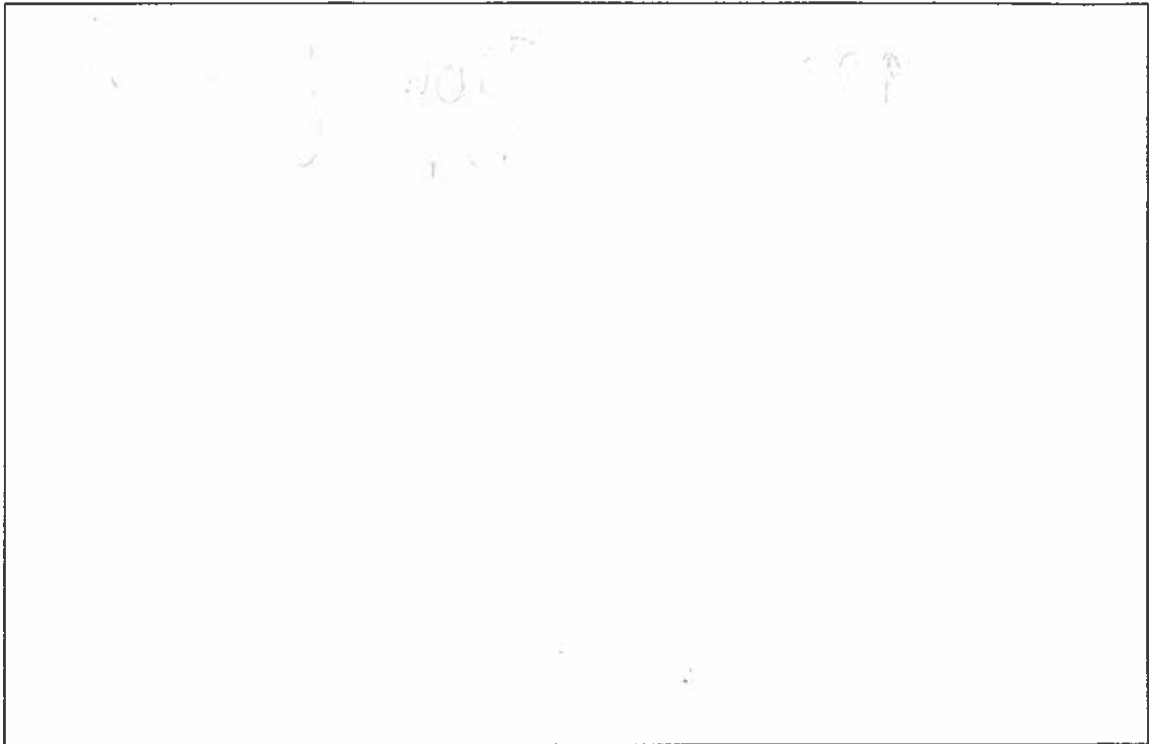
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Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary ✓	

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because it is a good
school

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

because the dalwhinnie Pupils
Might MISS there old school

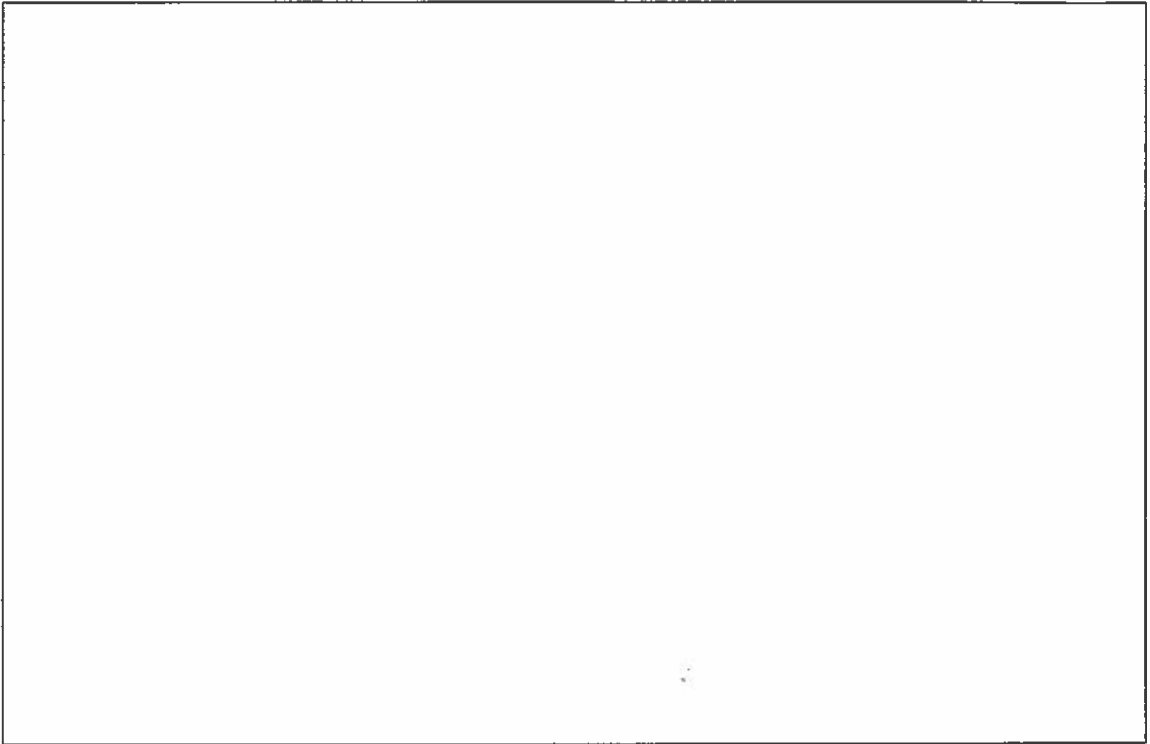
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Gergask Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because Newtonmore Pupils
will then have New friends

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	✓
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

So people that live in Dalwhinnie
don't have to travel far to get
to school

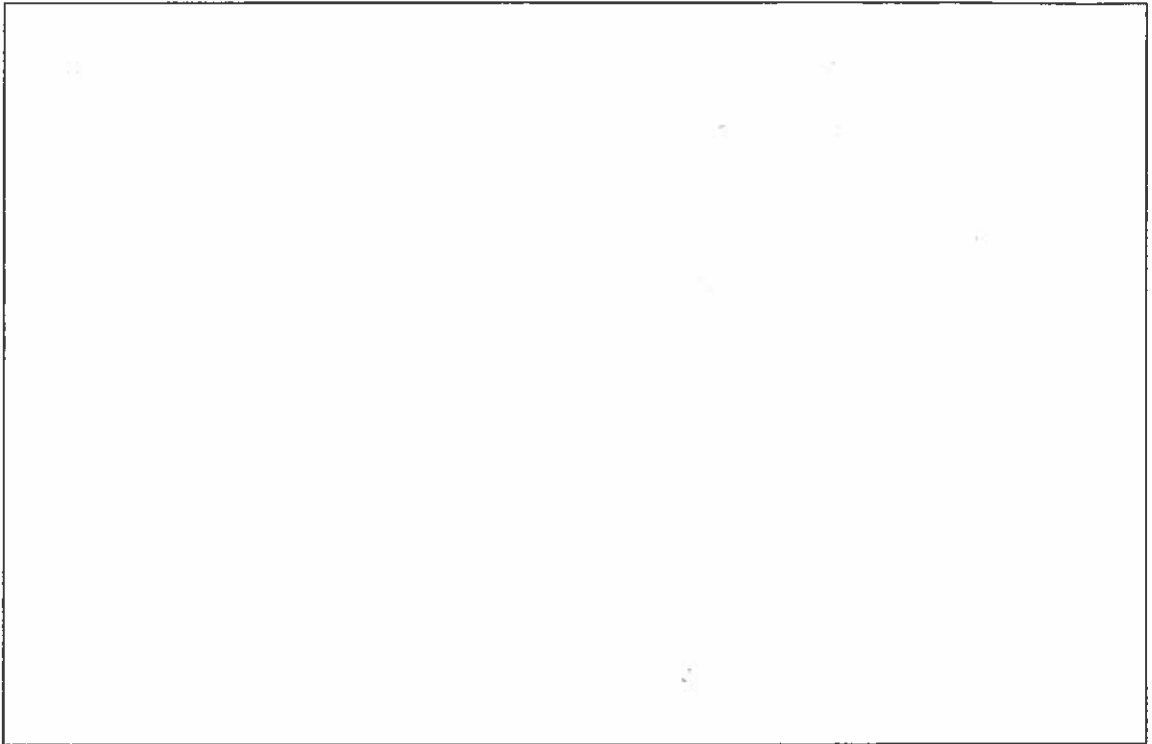
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Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because so they can
be with their friends

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Because it

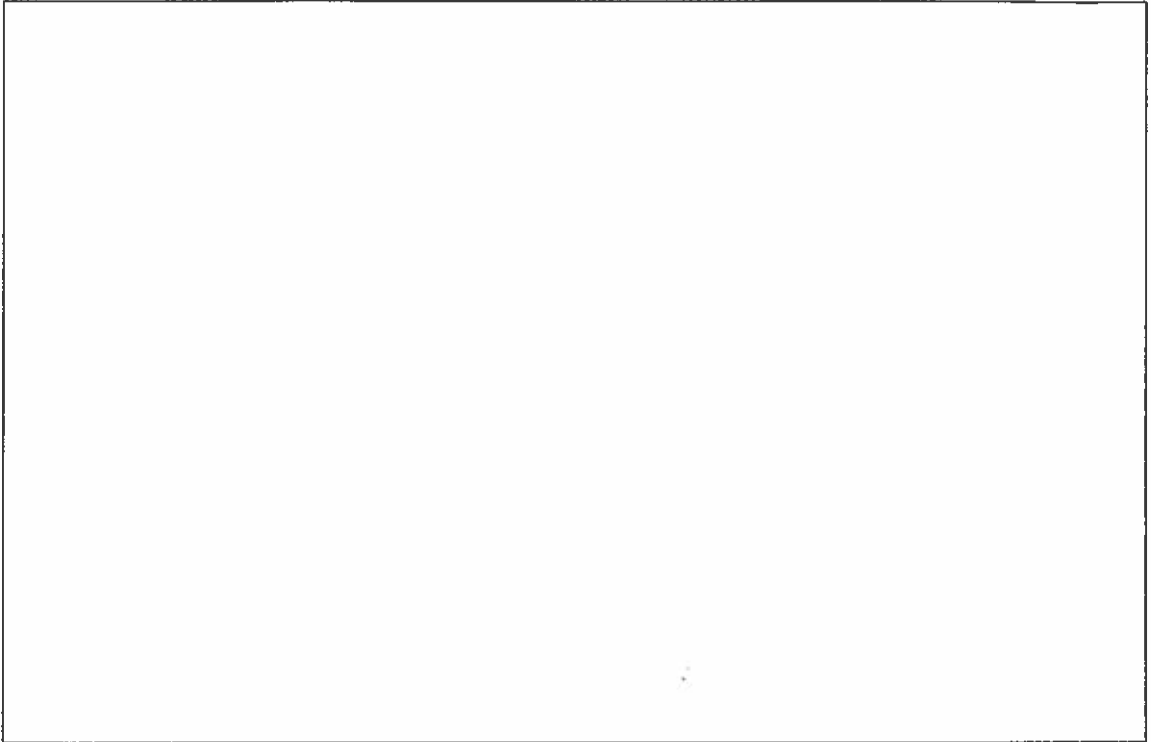
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Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because their are nice teachers

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Why did you give the answer above?

so the pupils in Dalwhinnie can play with other pupils.

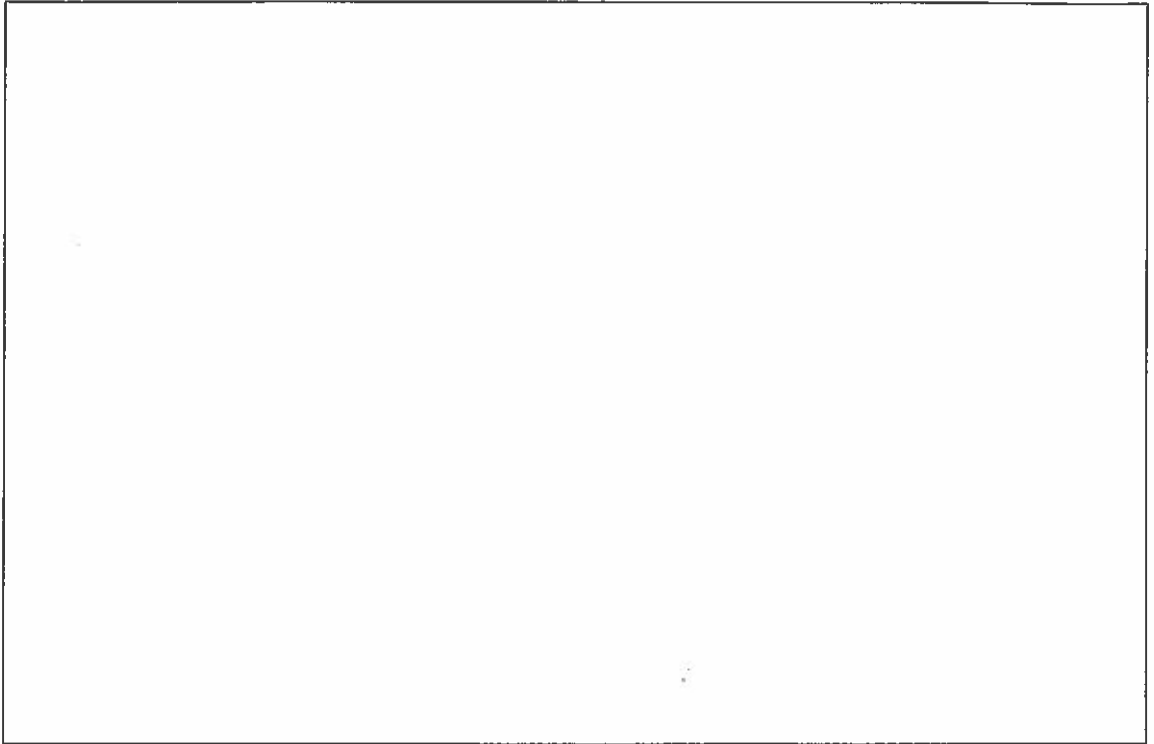
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Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because it is closer

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

• Because the paint is coming off the walls.
• The teacher.

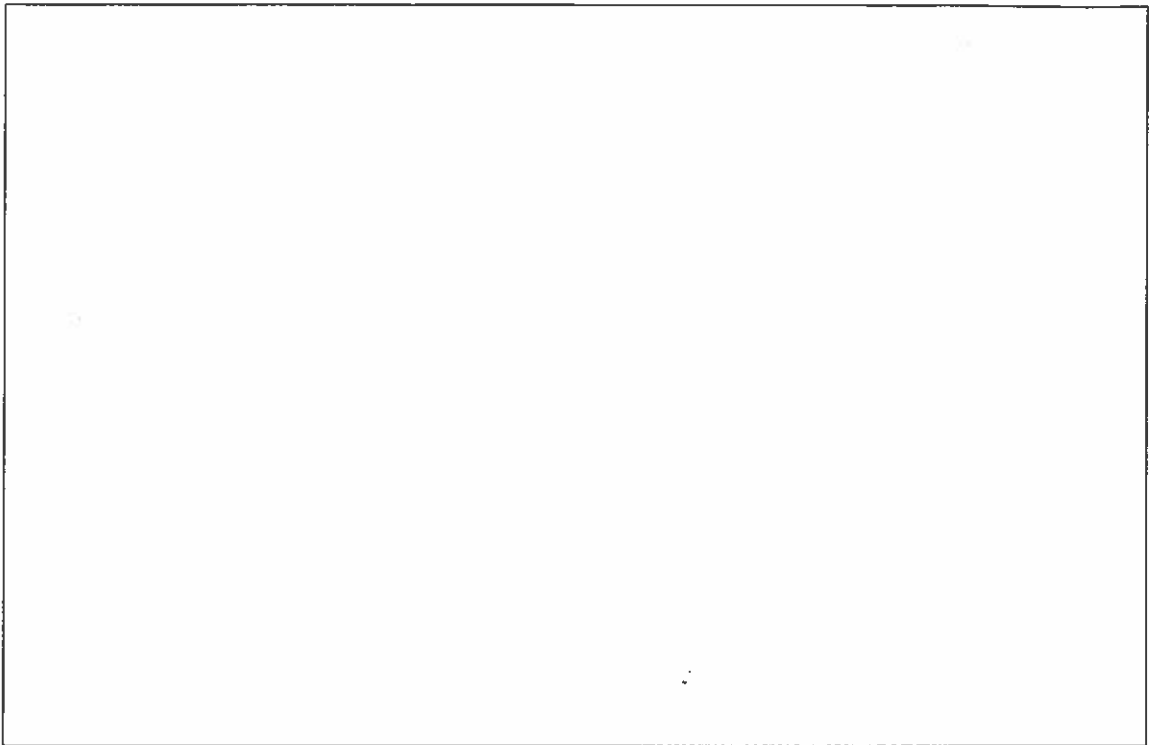
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

• There would be more people to play with.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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2. Why did you give the answer above?

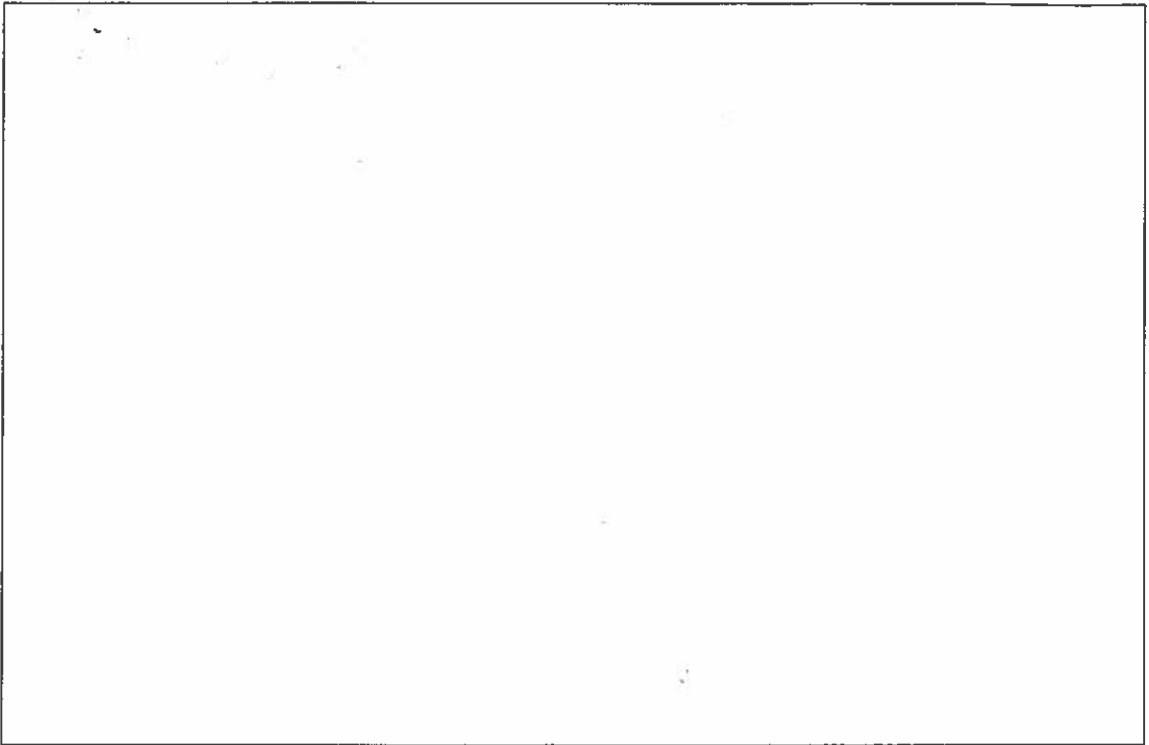
I find that after opening
the sheds all people would
come to the other school
and with the emphasis on
tuitionless people an
guilt in more.

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

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2. Why did you give the answer above?

pipell ari Meibi still
highcigh abarvt it

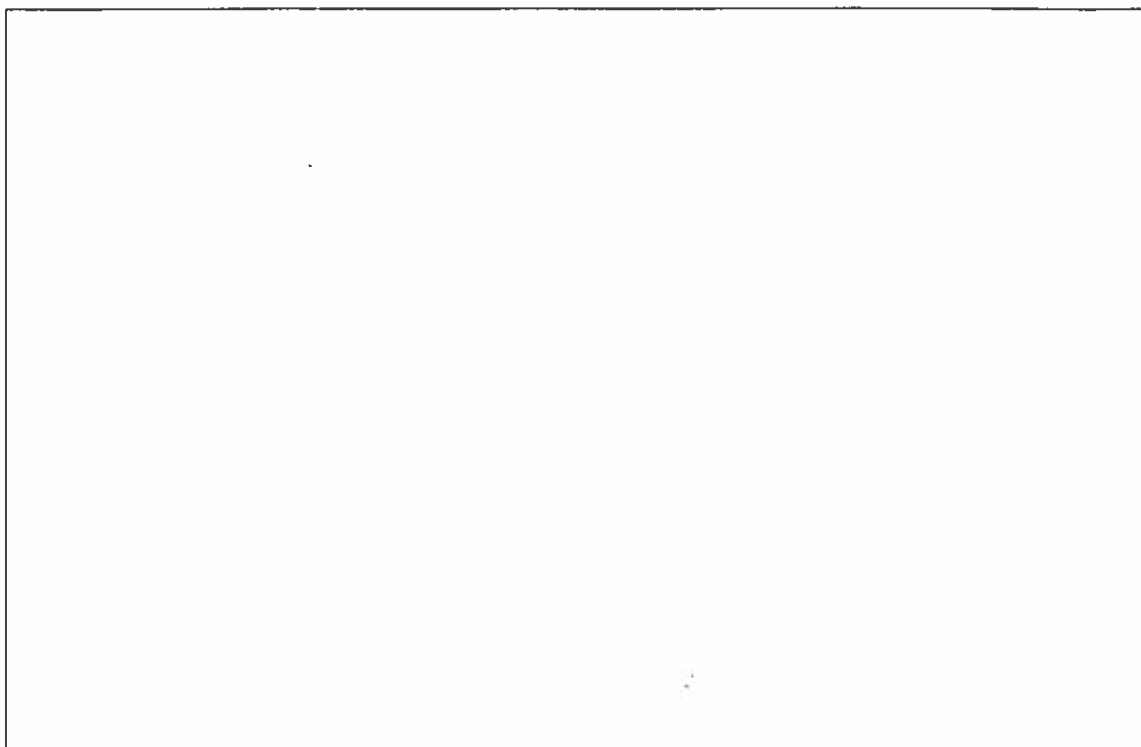
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Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

thees school is good

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	✓
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

BECAUSE IF DALWHINNE SCHOOL
MOVED TO HER OR GERGASK
THEY WOULDN'T HAVE THERE
SAME FRIENDS

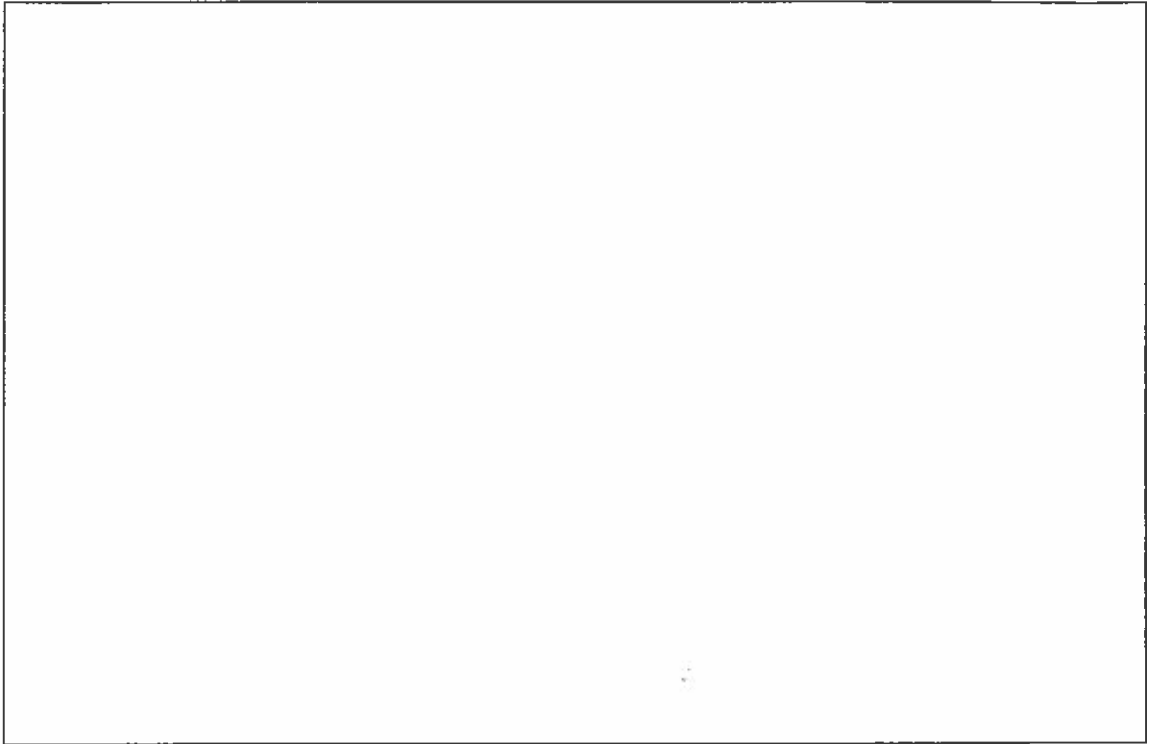
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Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because they have less
pupils.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

In case we come up with a better idea

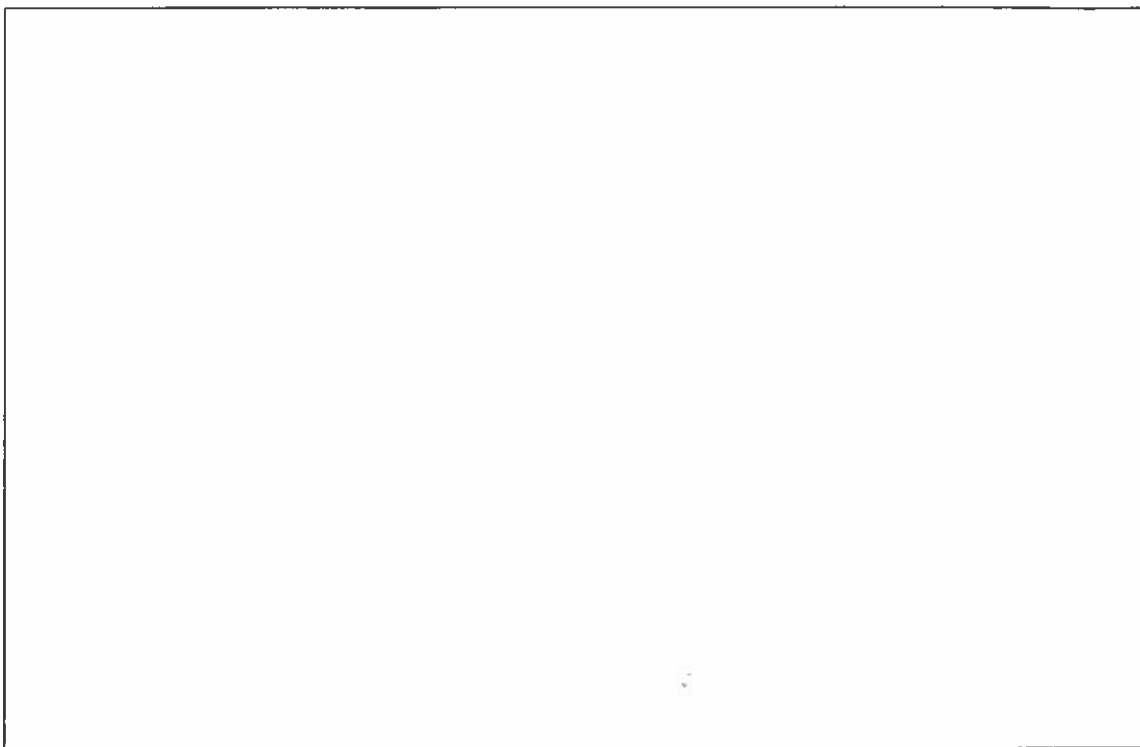
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Newtonmore Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

I think the pupils choice

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

• because there is no one in it

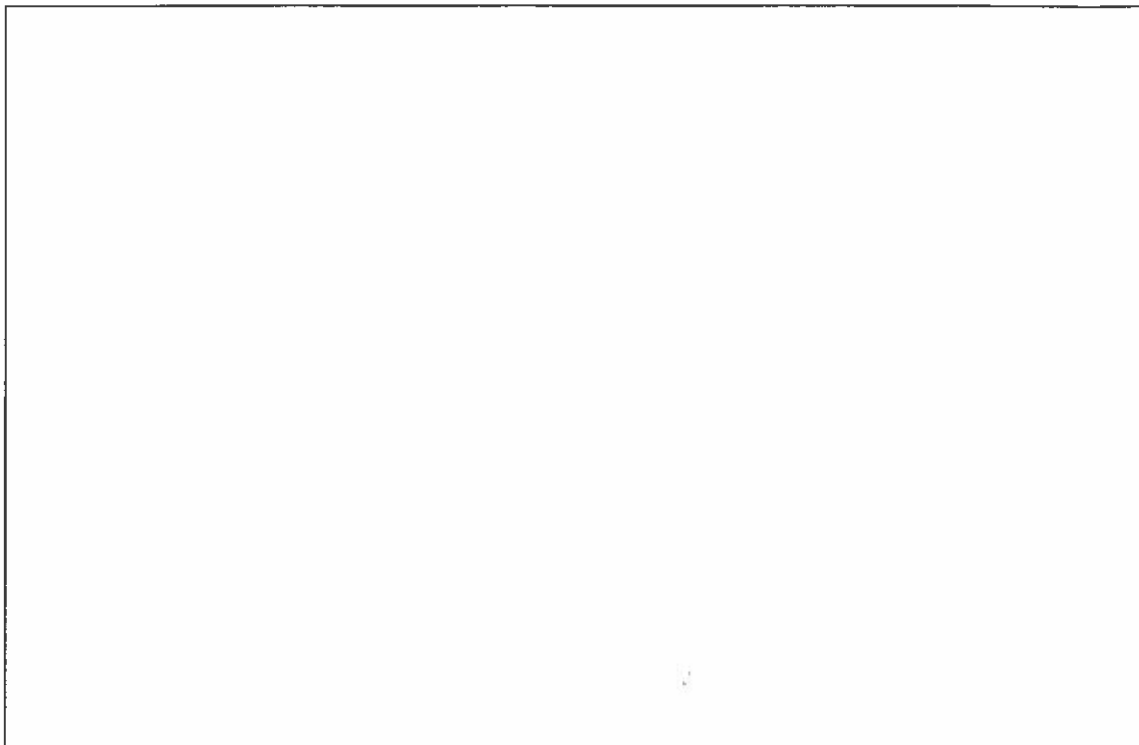
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Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

• because there is 14 kids!

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

• because they would be alone.

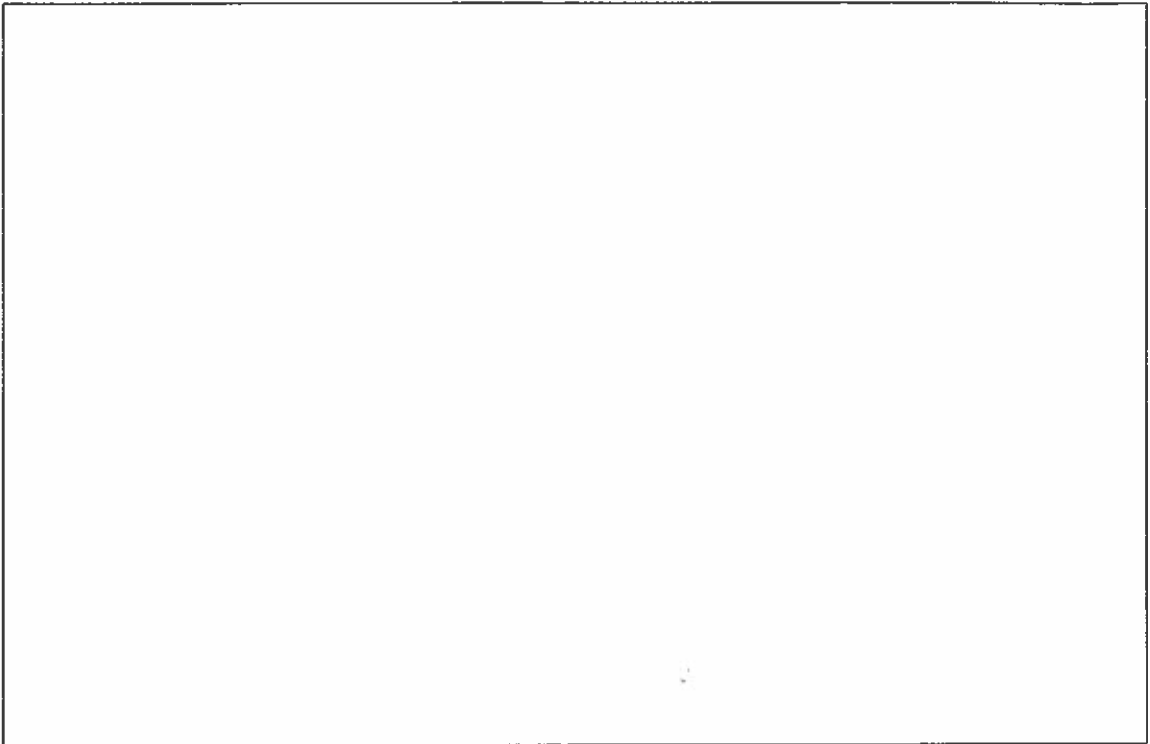
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Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

• because there aren't that many pupils in Gergask.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	✓
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

because every school should have a chance

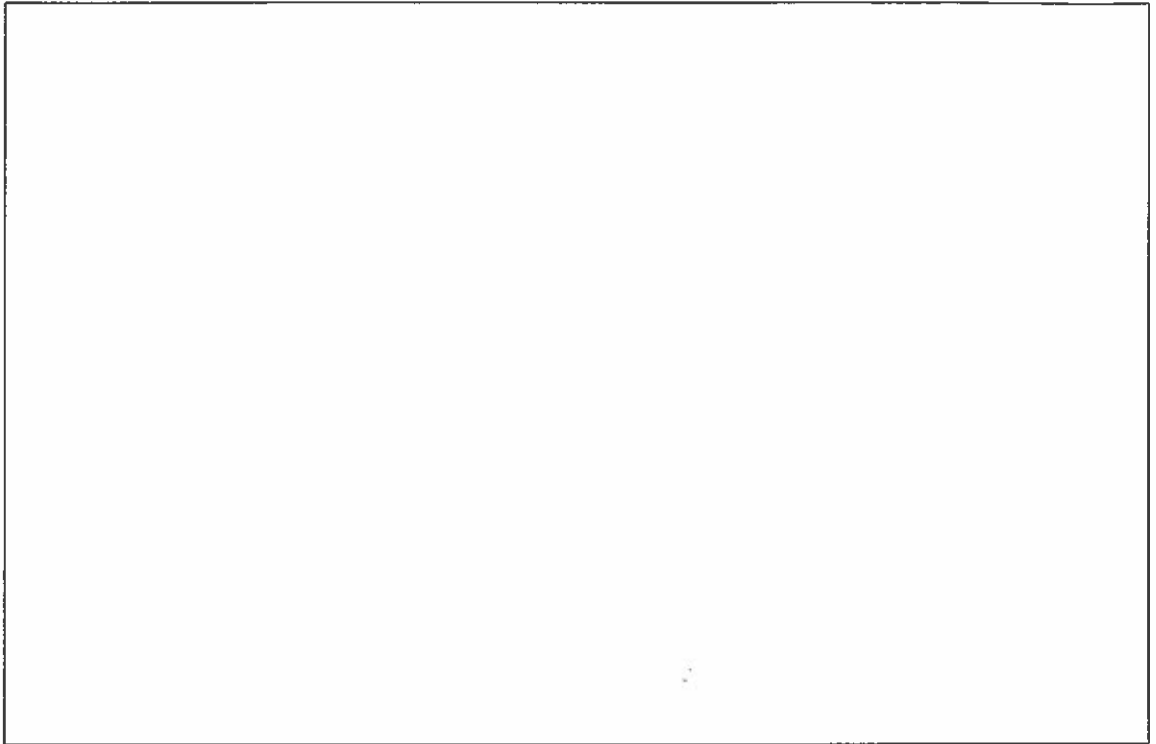
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Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because they need more pupils

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Why did you give the answer above?

• There's not enough pupils

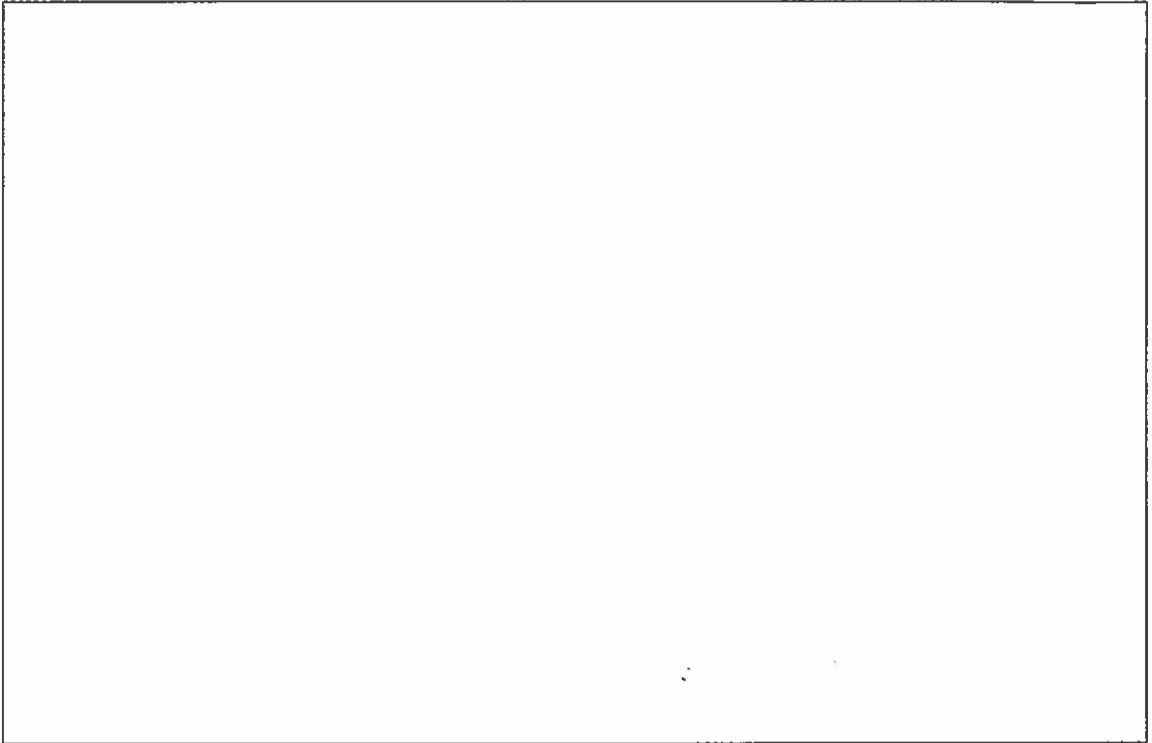
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

• There are not much pupils in Gergask

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide their answer to question 5. The box is currently blank.

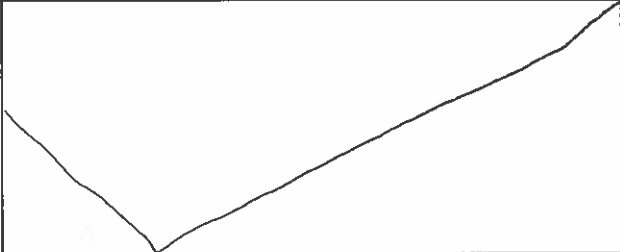
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- 1. Close Dalwhinnie Primary for good, with the pupils going to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary instead.**
- 2. Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary, so pupils from there would go to that school and not to Newtonmore or Gergask.**
- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

• Because there are no pupils there
• Because if someone moves there they wouldn't have anyone to play with

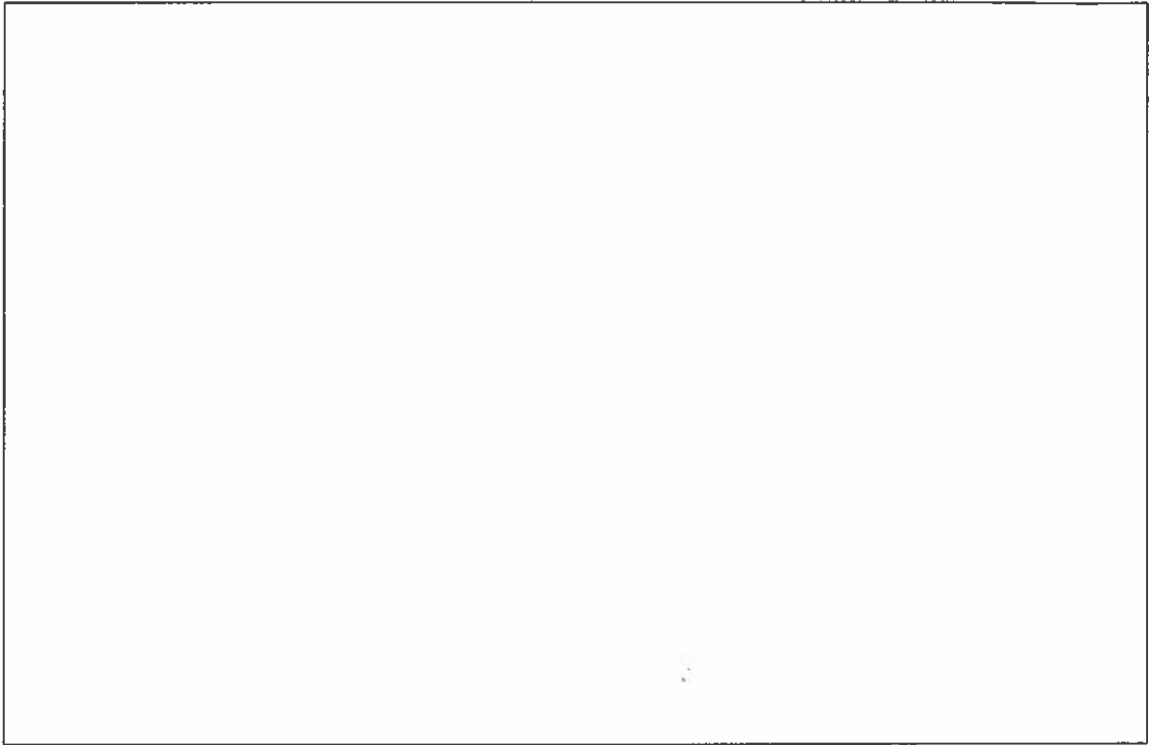
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Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Because Gergask is closer

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

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- 1. Close Dalwhinnie Primary for good, with the pupils going to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary instead.**
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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	✓
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

because peopl
might want to
live there.

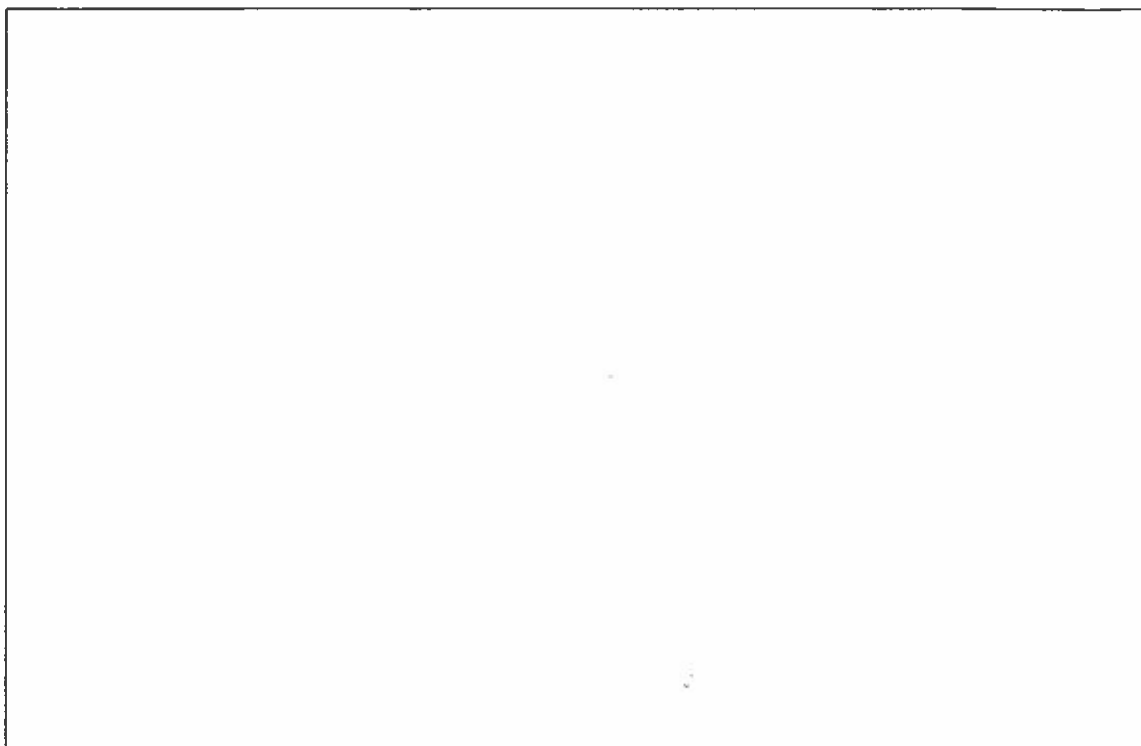
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because I would
like peopl to
be in are clas

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

<p>. Their is no pupils in Dalwhinnie,</p> <p>. You could make a new house</p>
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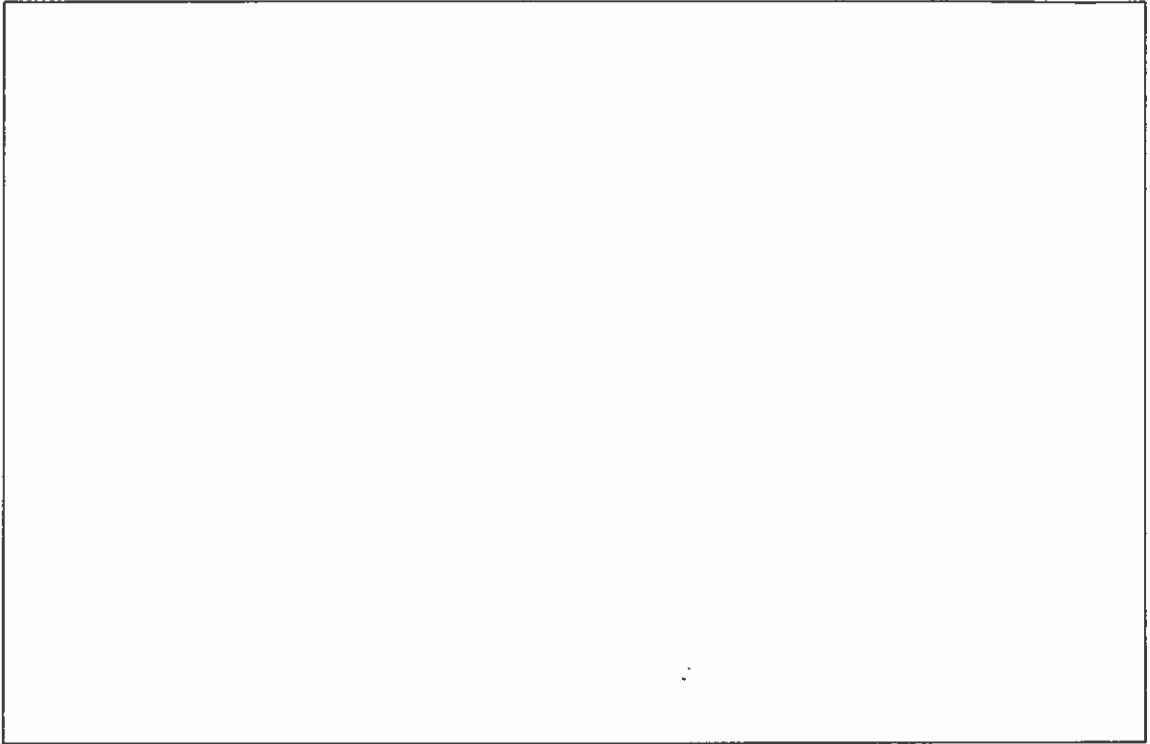
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Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

<p>if all the school gets more pupils</p> <p>- less driving</p>

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

There won't be anyone for them to play/work
with

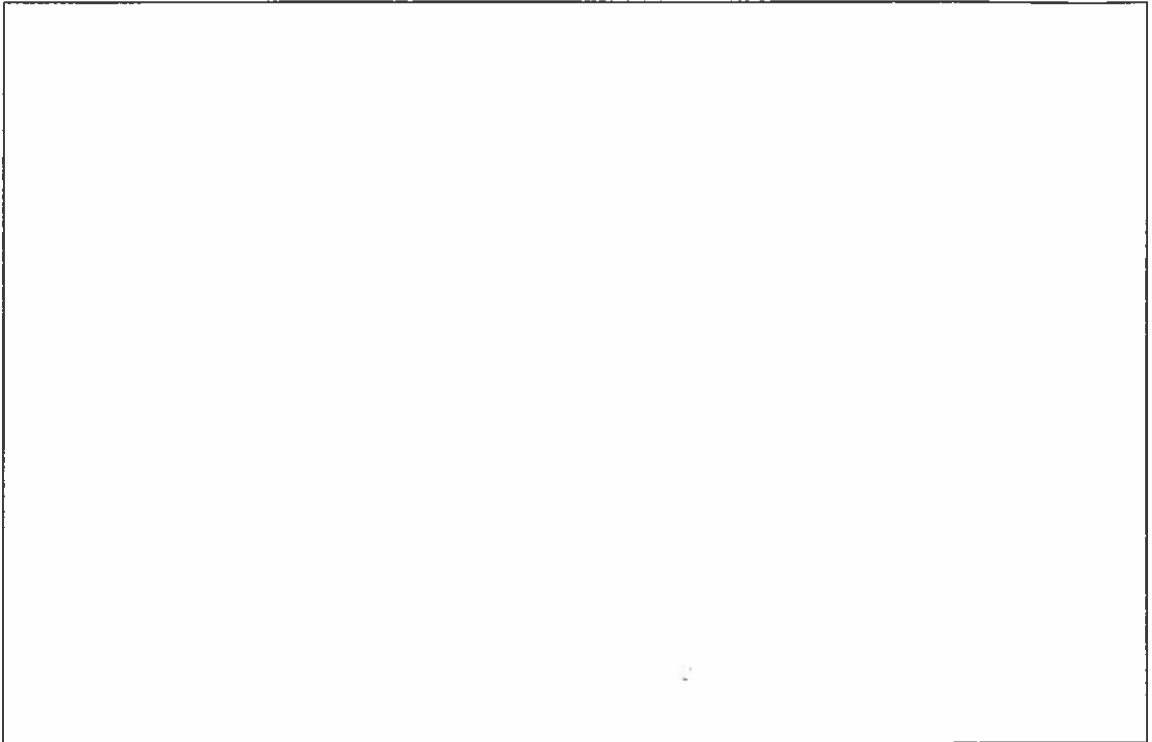
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because Gergask primary school is
closer to Dalwhinnie

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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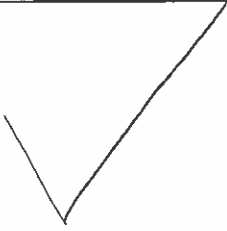
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- 2. Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary, so pupils from there would go to that school and not to Newtonmore or Gergask.**
- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

because if someone moves there then there would be nobody to play with

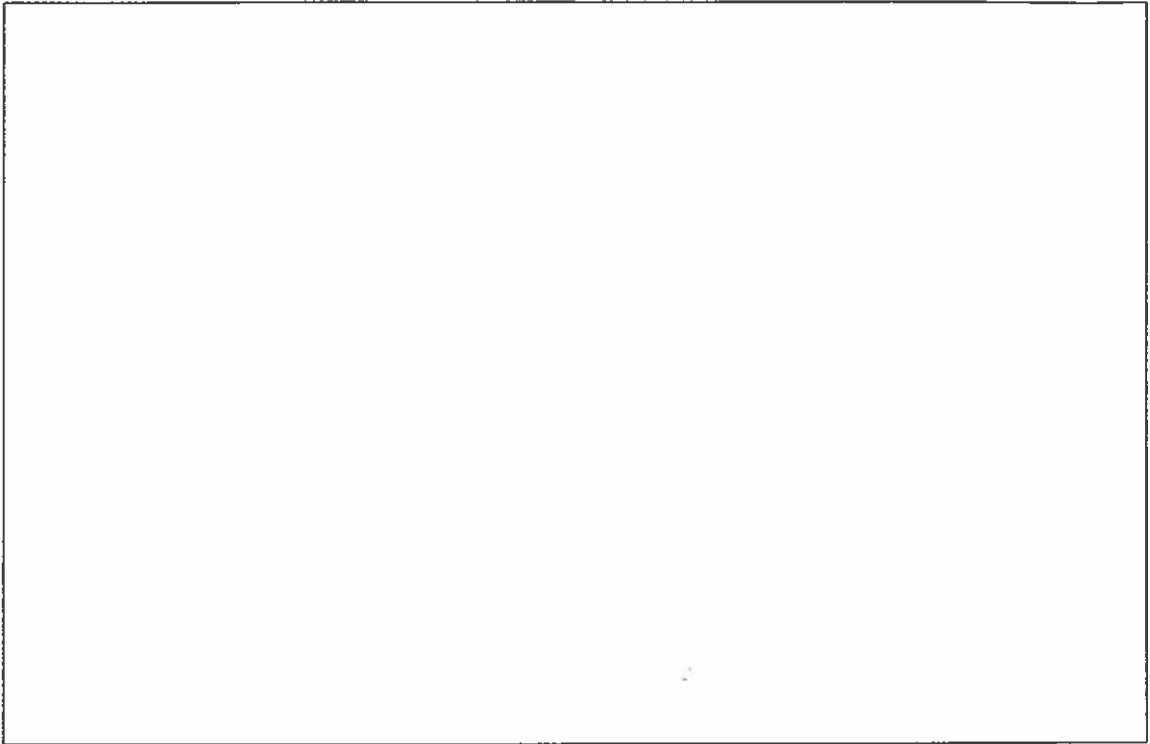
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Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because there are not as much pupils to play

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	X
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	✓
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	X

2. Why did you give the answer above?

BeCuase I want
them to make
them happy

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

t o mit them

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

No

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Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Because Newtonmore is a bigger school than Dalwhinnie and it is better to get used to a bigger school and you also get to work together a lot more than at Dalwhinnie

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Because Newtonmore has more pupils than Gergask and it is a safer journey to Newtonmore from Dalwhinnie than from Gergask

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

No thanks.

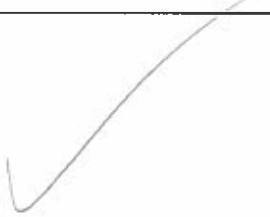
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Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Because I don't ever think that they
will ever get match pupils.

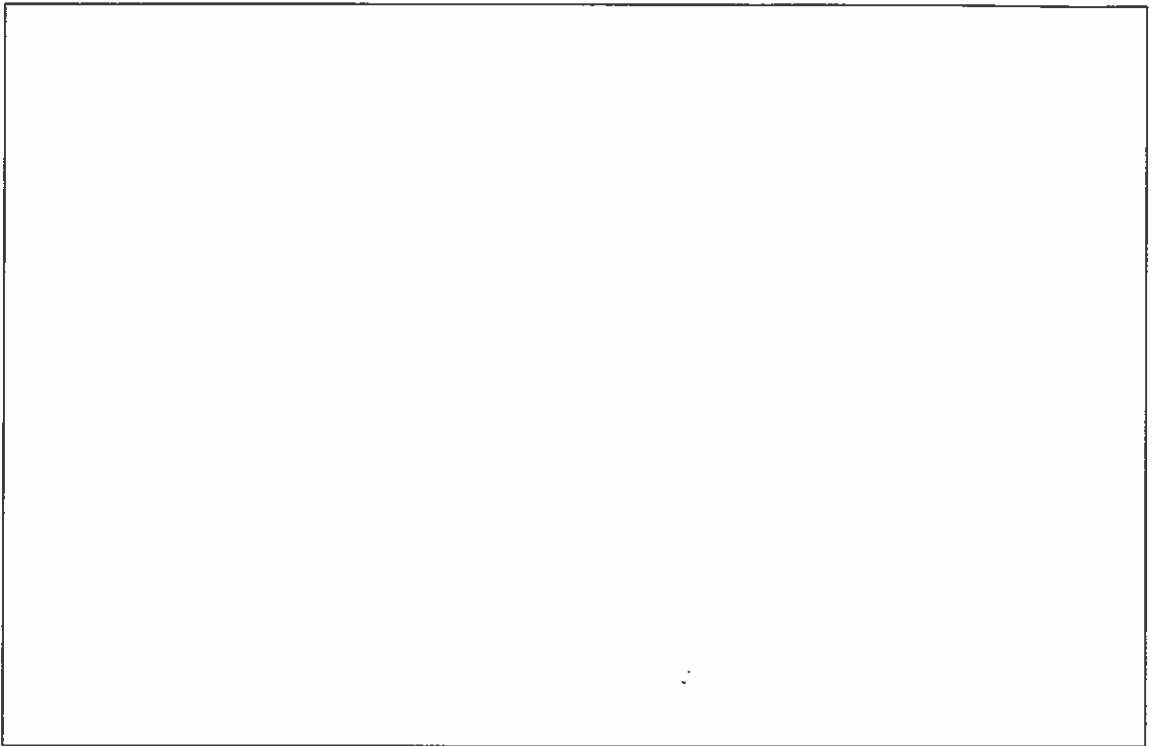
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Because Gergask primary is also low in
numbers and still going down

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

I would keep on trying the idea because more familys might move to Dalwhinnie.

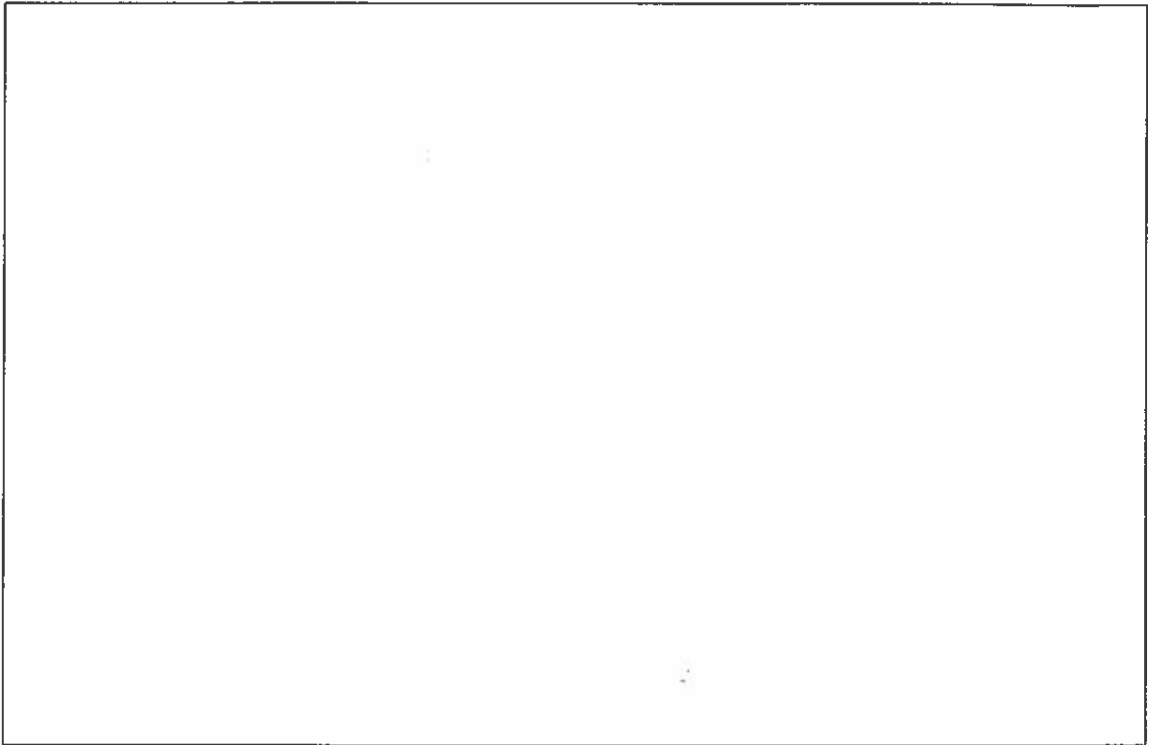
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Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

I would say Gergask Primary because is quite small and Newtonmore has already got a lot of pupils.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary. 	<i>I think you should close it because more people to play with funer to get educate with friend.</i>
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

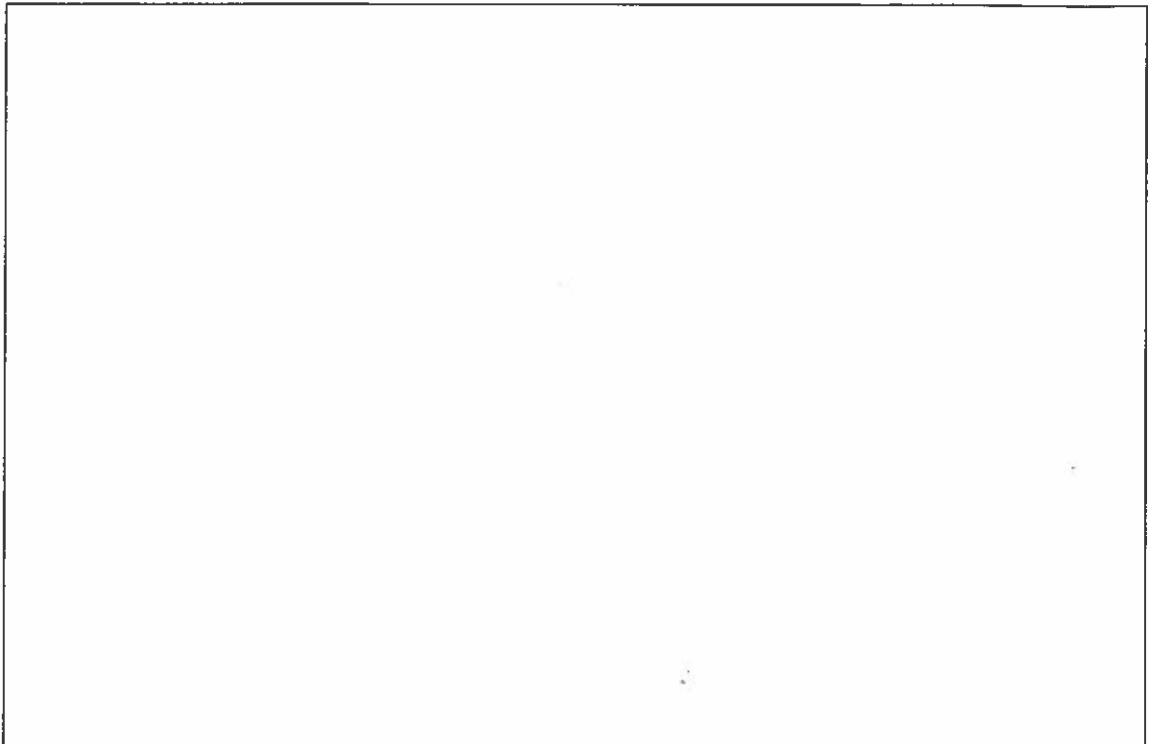
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Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Because to more children in Gergask

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer. ✓	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Because the village might get more crowded so closing the Primary won't be a good idea, but it could stay the same so sticking with the same idea will be best.

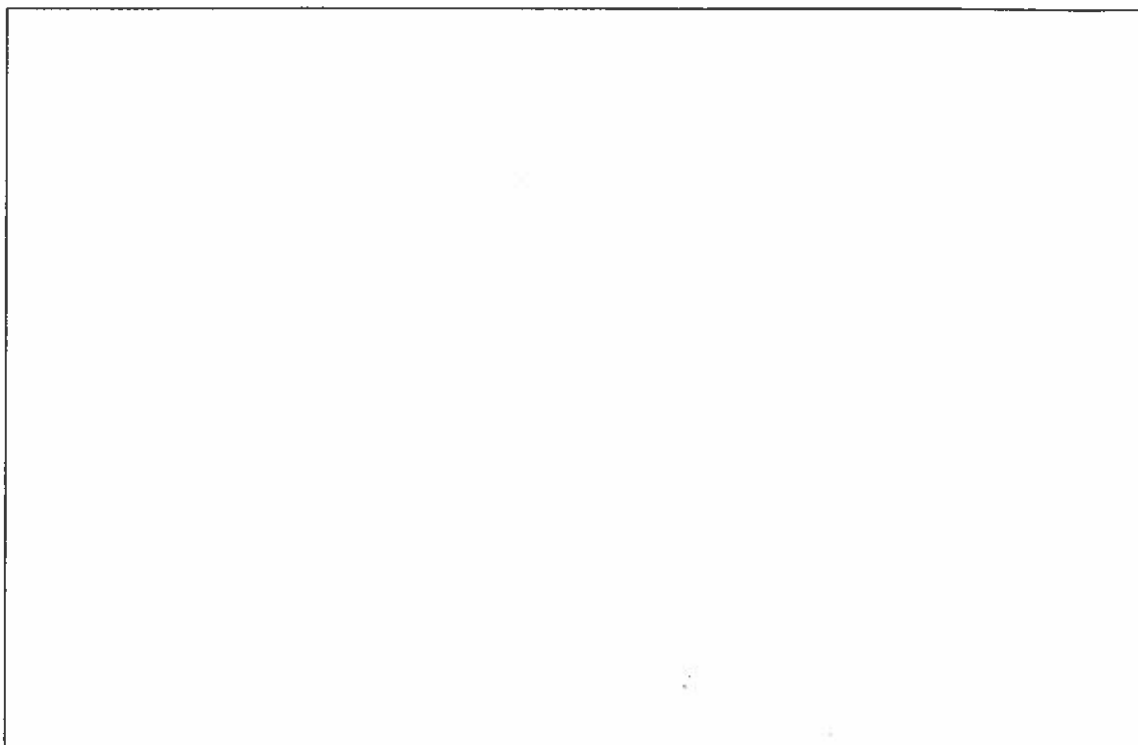
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary ✓	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Even though Gergask is closer it has more dangerous roads to drive. Even though Newtonmore is a longer drive it is safer and has more shelter.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Why did you give the answer above?

So that People don't have Walk or
Drive as far and they can get to School
in winter more easily.

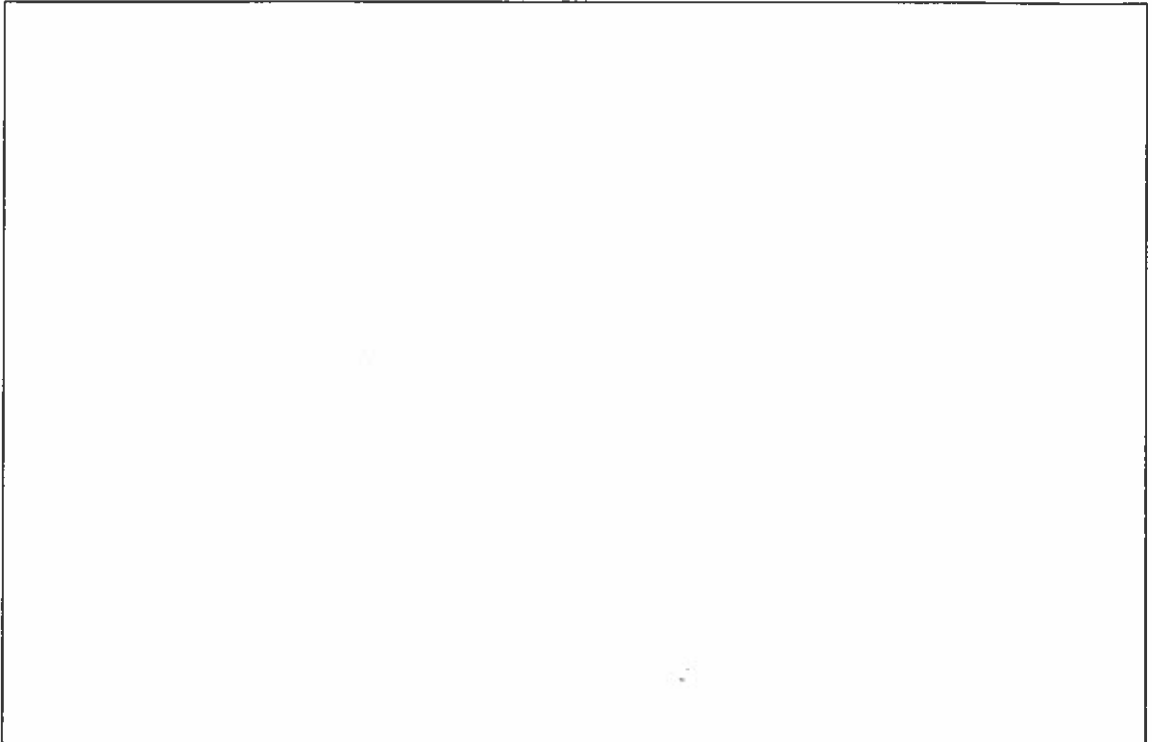
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because the road from Dalwhinnie to
newtonmore is safer.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	✓
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

I think if Dalwhinnie primary closes for good that some familys wont move to Dalwhinnie because Gergask and Newtonmore primary are maybe to far for them. like what is they have no car.

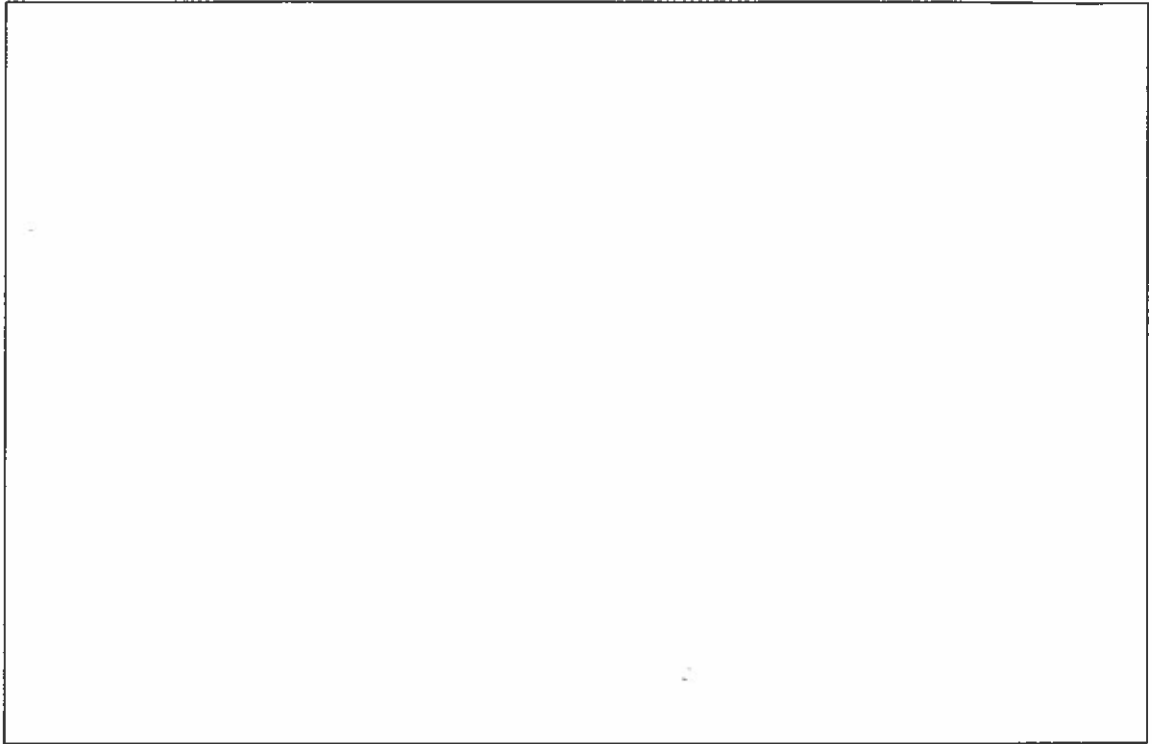
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

I think Dalwhinnie primarys pupils should go to Gergask primary because Gergask primary is quicker to get to and needs more pupils.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	✓
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Because people have to travel in the winter to newtonmore or gergask and thats really dangeres.

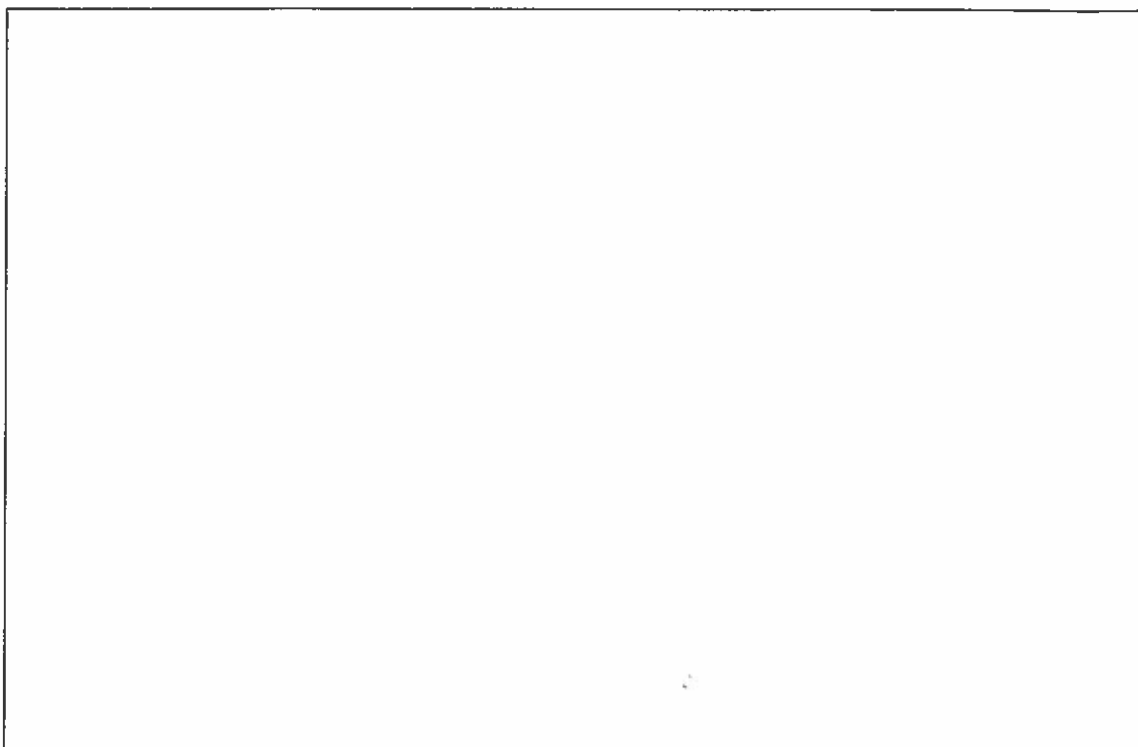
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Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Because then gergask get more pupils to.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

because if you were the only person in school you would have no one else to play with and the same if there was only two because you might get bored.

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

The road is safer in the winter.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

?

No

Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

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Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

more
more people might go to Dalwhinnie

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because the A9 is safer.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

No

Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

For a while Highland Council has been trying out an idea for pupils from Dalwhinnie to go to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary, instead of Dalkwhinnie Primary.

Now we have to decide what to do for the future. We have 3 choices:

- 1. Close Dalwhinnie Primary for good, with the pupils going to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary instead.**
- 2. Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary, so pupils from there would go to that school and not to Newtonmore or Gergask.**
- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Because you never know, children might be still
going to Dalwhinnie Primary.

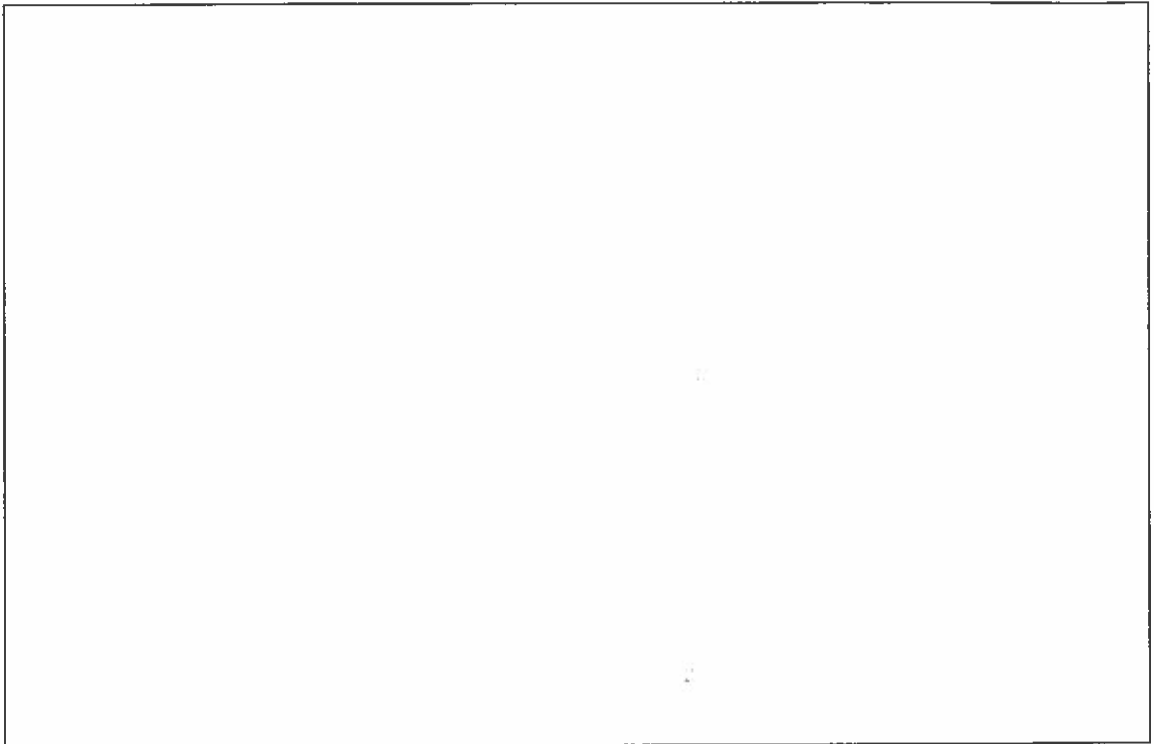
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Because there is already a lot of children
in Newtonmore Primary.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide additional information or comments to the Highland Council.

Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	✓
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

I thought the answer would be to choose the middle one because what if people want to move to Dalwhinnie if the school closes they will have to move again.

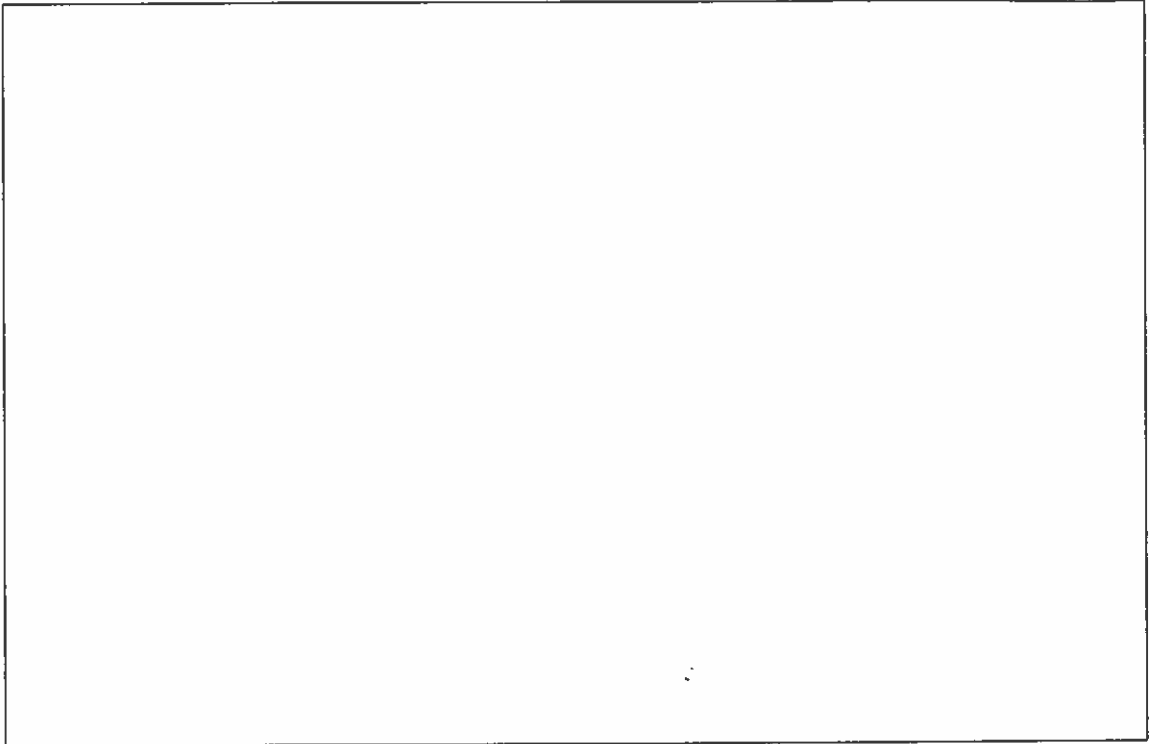
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Then Gergask Primary will have more pupils in the school.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

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- 2. Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary, so pupils from there would go to that school and not to Newtonmore or Gergask.**
- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

So pupils can have more friends for high school
but if lots of people move to Dalwhinnie they can
go to a closer school.

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because they could have more friends

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

If there is more people that move to Dalwhinnie
open the school again.

Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

For a while Highland Council has been trying out an idea for pupils from Dalwhinnie to go to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary, instead of Dalkwhinnie Primary.

Now we have to decide what to do for the future. We have 3 choices:

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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Why did you give the answer above?

because thier might not be
alot of people go to the school
because they would have none
to play with.

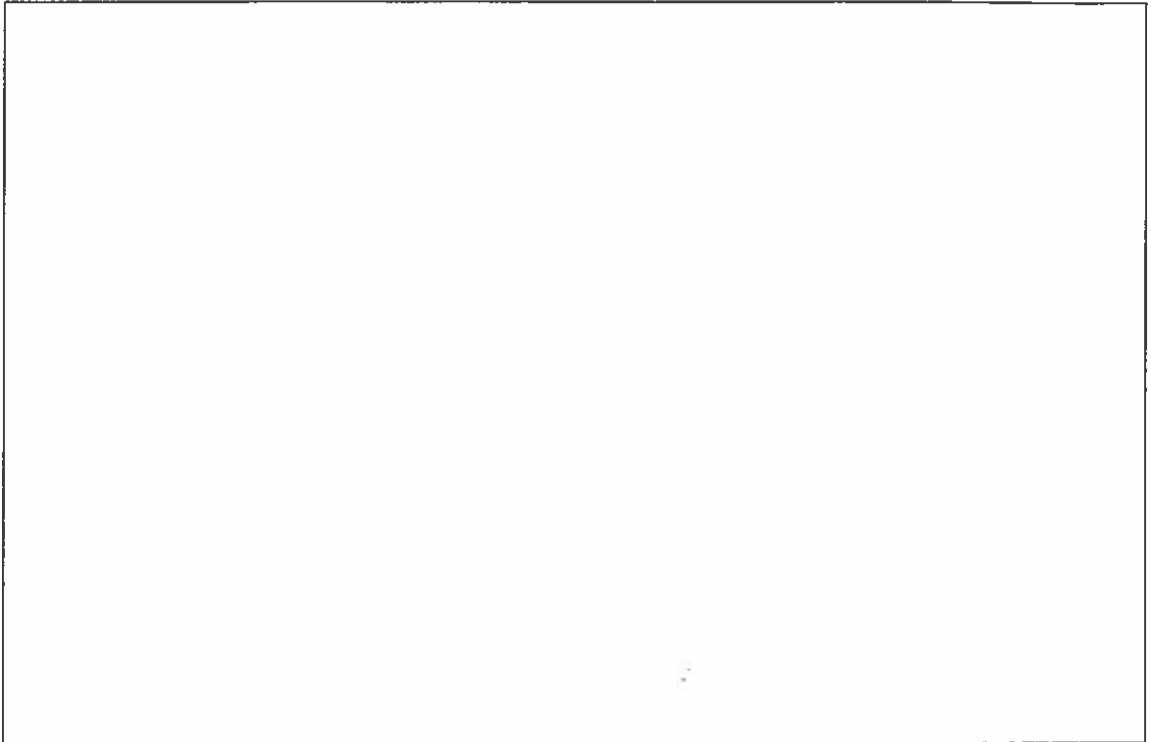
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because it would be fun
for them and they will make
alot of friends

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide their answer to question 5. The box is currently blank.


Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

For a while Highland Council has been trying out an idea for pupils from Dalwhinnie to go to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary, instead of Dalkwhinnie Primary.

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- 2. Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary, so pupils from there would go to that school and not to Newtonmore or Gergask.**
- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Because I think it has been so small for so long and I think that if you went to Dalwhinnie you would not get a chance to mix and meet with new people because it so small.

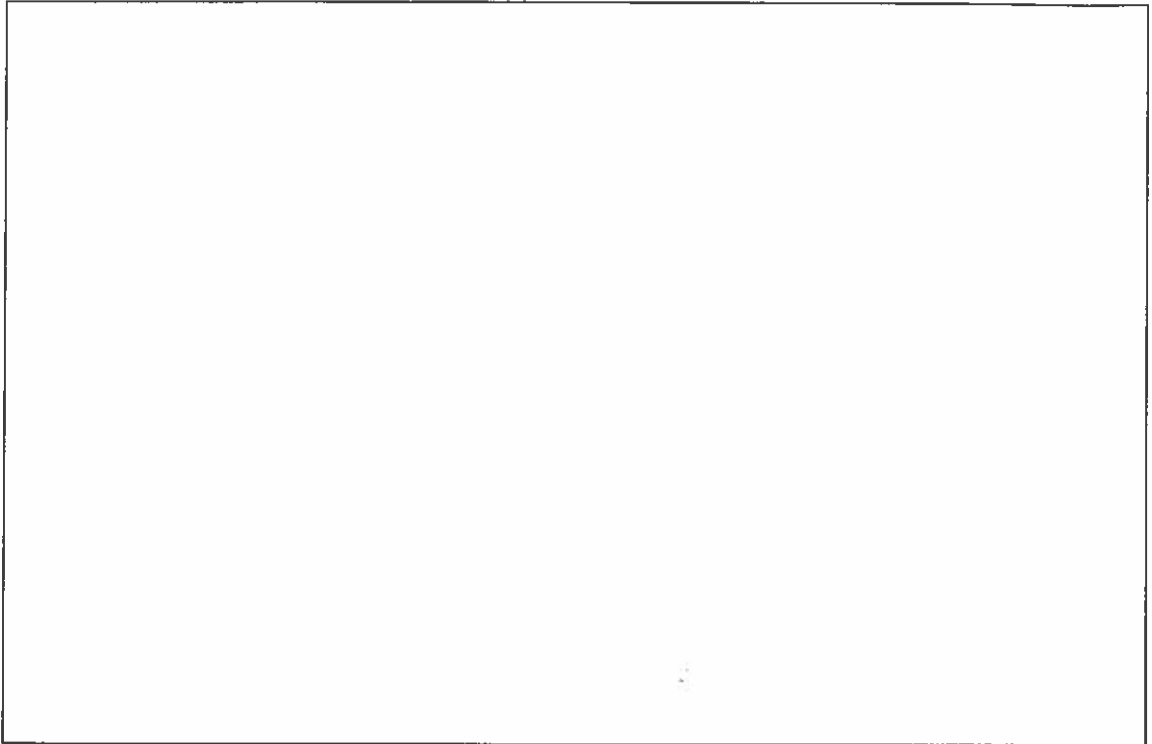
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because Laggan is quite small and from going such a small school to high school would be quite a shock

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Because I think it would be the best thing for Dalwhinnie.

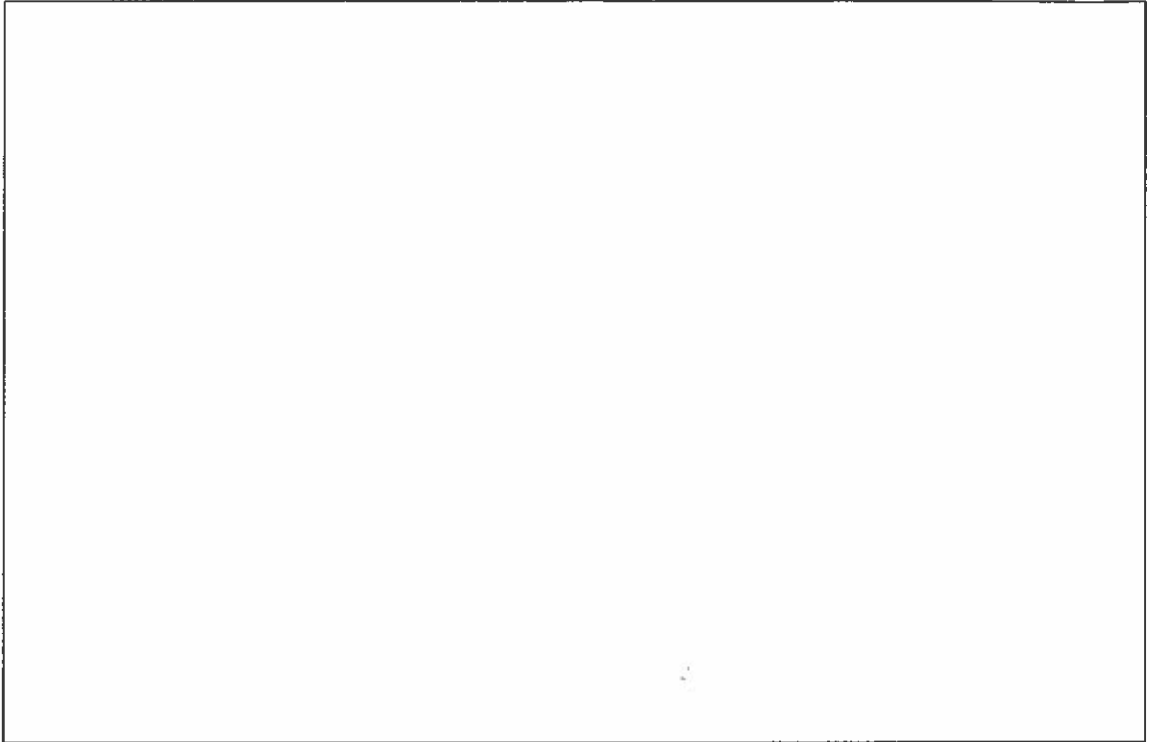
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Better education and safer roads in the winter. Meet more people

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Because if more people come
you could re open the school

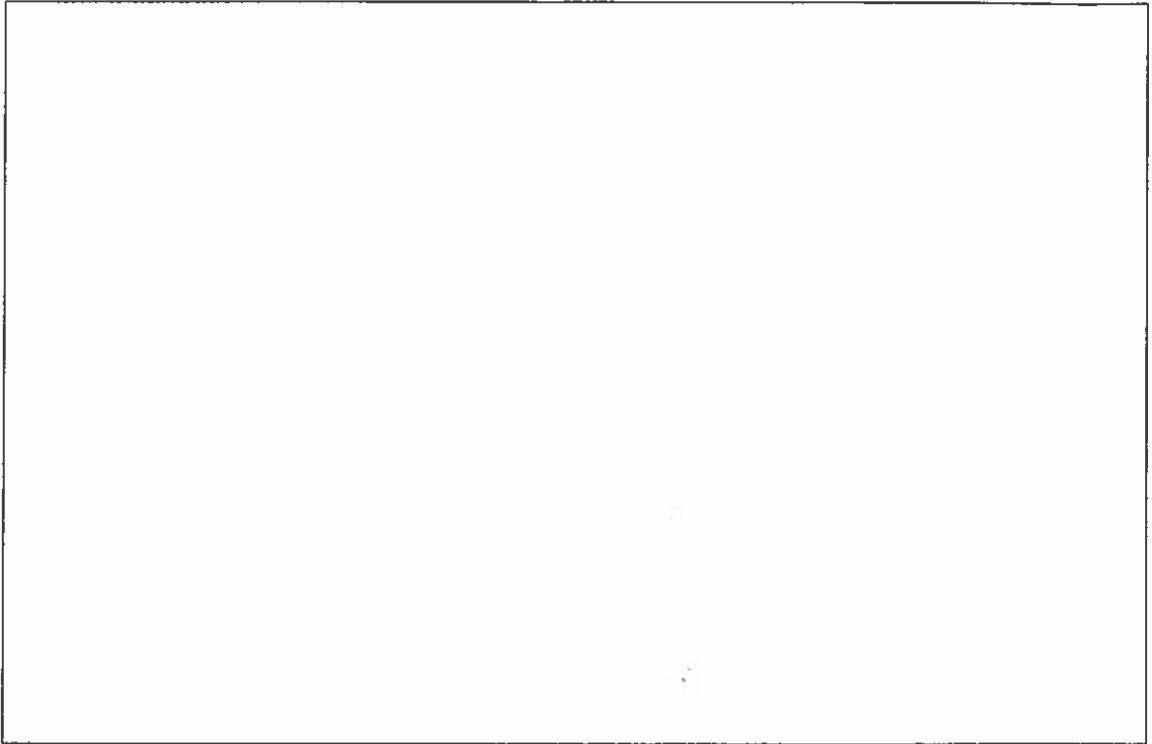
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Because the roads are better

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide additional information or comments to Highland Council.

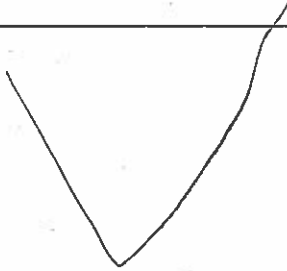
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Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

because if you close Dalwhinnie Primary
People might move in depends how good
Dalwhinnie is and if you re-open it
straight away maybe no people may move in.

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

because in the winter the road from
Dalwhinnie to Newtonmore is the safer way
even though it may be longer its safer.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

Don't just re-open it or shut it straight away just give it a bit more time.

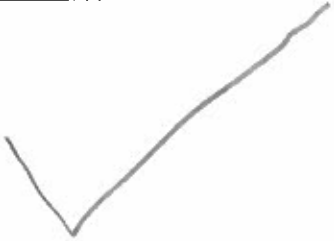
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- 3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.**

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

I gave the answer because I dont think that more Pupils will come.

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Newtonmore Primary has lots more Pupils than Gergask

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

No.

Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

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Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Beacause if the school . reopens it will just be shut down again. and the more people that come to Dalwhinnie whilst the school is closed and then reopen when there's at least 10 people there.

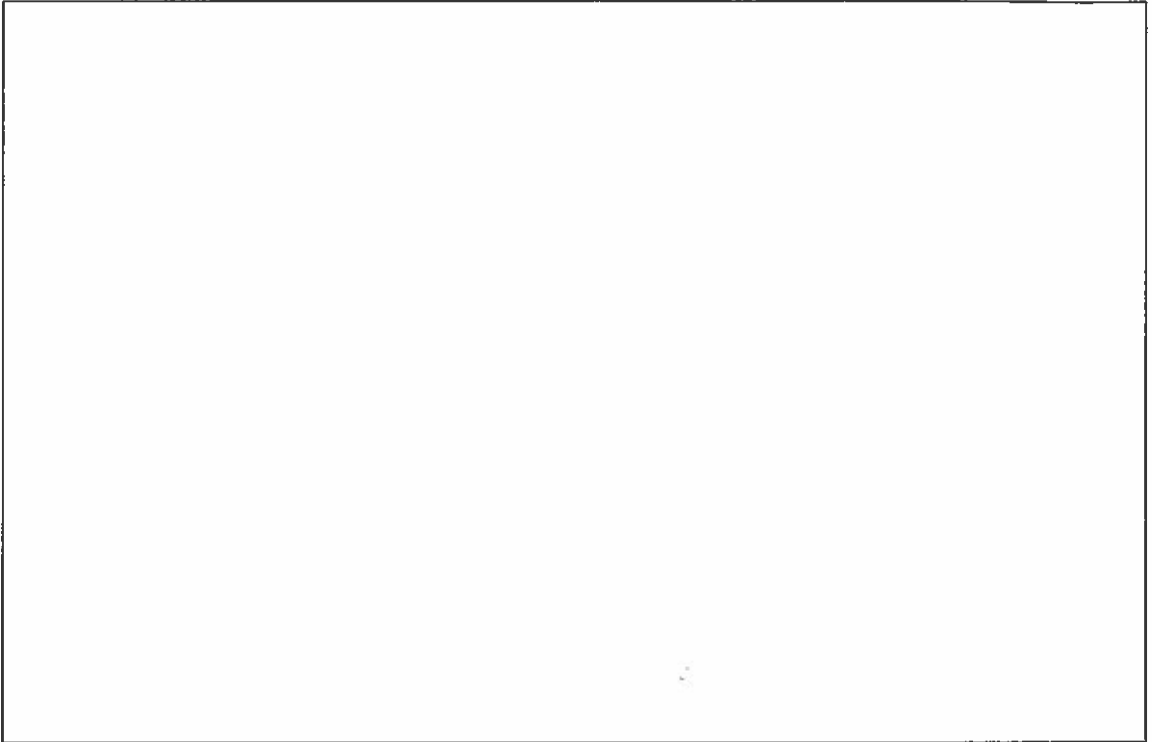
3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	✓

4. Why did you give the answer above?

beacause i know the road from Newtonmore to Dalwhinnie up down it every Saturday

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide their answer to question 5. The box is currently blank.

Explain Proposals to Pupils as follows:

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Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	✓

2. Why did you give the answer above?

because more family's mybye move to Dalwhinnie and more pupl's might want there education and get a good job. If pupls came to Newtonmore or Gergask in the winter there is more likly of being an accident and if there parents go to work early they could be very tired

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	
Newtonmore Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

It is a safer route and not a big of a chance of a accident. There is not such a long Journey.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

If no more pupl's come in like 9-12
month's Shut the School for Good.

From: [Urquhart J \(Jean\), MSP](#)
To: [Sandra Breach](#)
Subject: RE: PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE EDUCATION PROVISION AT DALWHINNIE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Date: 08 February 2016 17:12:31

Hello Sandra,

Many thanks for your email. I have read with interest the proposals and looked at the website. Please would you be good enough to give my apologies to the meeting scheduled for Tuesday 23rd of February; it is a parliamentary day and I have commitments that prevent me attending.

All the best,
Jean

Jean Urquhart MSP
Room 3 – 20
Scottish Parliament
Holyrood Road
Edinburgh EH1 1SP

0131 348 5052

From: Sandra Breach [mailto:sandra.breach@highland.gov.uk]
Sent: 08 February 2016 09:35
Subject: PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE EDUCATION PROVISION AT DALWHINNIE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Importance: High

SENT ON BEHALF OF CALLUM MACKINTOSH

Good morning

Please see attached.

Kind regards.

Callum Mackintosh
Area Care and Learning Manager – South
The Highland Council
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness
IV3 5NX

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Listening * Open * Valuing * Improving * Supporting * Partnering * Delivering
Èisteachd * Fosgailte * Luach * Leasachadh * Taic * Com-pàirteachas * Libhrigeadh

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Faodar pàirt a ghabhail ann am Pàrlamaid na h-Alba tron Ghàidhlig. Tha barrachd fiosrachaidh ri fhaighinn sa phlana Ghàidhlig againn aig www.scottish.parliament.uk/PlanaGaidhlig

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11th March 2016

Dear Sirs,

The Parent Council at Gergask Primary School wish to give our views on the closure of Dalwhinnie Primary.

In our view, it is unfortunately right that Dalwhinnie Primary should close, as there does not seem to be a realistic prospect of a viable number of children living within its catchment in the foreseeable future.

We would like to disagree however with the recommendation that the Dalwhinnie Primary catchment should be moved to Newtonmore Primary, and instead feel it should move to Gergask Primary.

It is not clear that the recommendation in the consultation document logically follows from the Educational Benefit Statement. As it stands at the moment, both Newtonmore Primary and Gergask Primary come out more or less equal in terms of what they can offer pupils from Dalwhinnie and so it would seem that the obvious solution would be to move the catchment to the school that is closest, which is Gergask Primary. There are also points raised in the proposal that are inaccurate and there are significant issues that are not addressed at all.

The "*Effects on Transport*" section, and the travel times suggested in 16.1 of the proposal are misleading. Taken at face value, they may be accurate today, however no account is taken at all of the fact that between Dalwhinnie and Newtonmore Primary, over the next 8 or 9 years there are going to be two separate major sets of roadworks on the A9 (Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore and Crubenmore to Kincaig). Both these roadworks are multi-year projects that will see the speed limit on the A9 reduced to 40mph for the duration of each project, and will cover almost the entire distance between Dalwhinnie and Newtonmore Primary. Travel times between Dalwhinnie and Newtonmore Primary are likely to be further aggravated by the

increased volume of seasonal traffic travelling through the roadworks. We feel that this should be considered as a major reason to move the Dalwhinnie Primary catchment to Gergask Primary. If the Dalwhinnie Primary catchment is moved to Newtonmore Primary, it is probably that a Dalwhinnie child starting primary school in the next few years will spend their entire primary education travelling through major roadworks to and from school. We think that a more realistic estimate of travel times between Dalwhinnie and Newtonmore Primary will be 30 - 35 minutes each way, which is more than double the travel time to Gergask Primary. Of course, as anyone who regularly travels the A9 will know, in the event that they put up temporary traffic lights, the travel times could easily turn into hours, not minutes. This issue will be entirely mitigated by moving the Dalwhinnie Primary catchment to Gergask Primary, since that route does not include the A9 at all.

It is misleading to say that there is *"no guarantee of an age appropriate peer group"* at Gergask Primary, as stated in Appendix B of the proposal. The considerations about where to move the Dalwhinnie Primary catchment make barely any mention of the fact that Gergask Primary currently operates in, and derives considerable benefit from, a cluster arrangement with Kingussie Primary. This means that the pupils at both Gergask Primary and Kingussie Primary have ample opportunity to socialise and to partake in activities together. There are regular occasions when pupils from the two schools do things together and visit each other. For example, Gergask Primary and Kingussie Primary pupils have 'cluster days' together, and enjoy out of school activities together, such as Altnacriche and skiing at Cairngorm. In reality, the children at Gergask Primary benefit enormously from doing things together as a school, with the big ones learning to help the little ones, and the little ones benefitting from positive older role models. It is unquestionably the case that the children at Gergask Primary benefit from peer support across a much wider age range than would be the case in most other schools. Taken along with the excellent relationships the children at Gergask Primary have with the children at Kingussie Primary, not to mention the close relationships with children at Newtonmore Primary through numerous after school activities, it is more accurate to say that the

Gergask Primary children enjoy the best of all worlds, which is something that the children from Dalwhinnie will also benefit from.

In Appendix B, it states that "*Gergask would not provide adequate professional network*" in the event that the Dalwhinnie Primary catchment is moved to Gergask Primary. Presumably, this is meant to imply that the professional network at Newtonmore Primary is superior to that of Gergask Primary. However, it is not at all clear from reading the proposal what impact the relative lack, or otherwise, of an "adequate professional network" will have on an enlarged Gergask Primary catchment that will, at most, include a small handful of additional children a year. In formulating our response to these proposals, the parent council has consulted with the head teacher at Gergask Primary, and learned that; to the contrary, the teachers at Gergask Primary are part of an excellent professional network and benefit greatly from the clustering arrangement between Gergask Primary and Kingussie Primary. We are aware that the staff, and in particular Alan Mclean (teacher), frequently take part in professional development sessions along with other professionals from the area. We therefore feel that that the statement in Appendix B that "Gergask would not provide adequate professional network" should either be properly justified, removed or amended. In any regard, we consider that the quality of teaching at Gergask Primary is easily comparable to that of any other school in the area.

There is a factual error in the proposal paper. In section 10.4 it states that there have only been two placing requests from other catchments to join Gergask Primary. This is not correct. In fact, between 2009 and 2016 there have been eleven children at Gergask Primary from out with the catchment, comprising three from the catchment of Dalwhinnie Primary and eight from the catchment of Newtonmore Primary. Additionally, there have been seven children (in addition to the eleven mentioned above) enrolled at Gergask Nursery from out with the Gergask Primary catchment. Currently, there are 7 children in pre-school nursery, not 5, as stated in 10.3. At the time of writing (March 2016), there are 5 children at Gergask Primary who live outwith the catchment, comprising 3 in the school (2 from Dalwhinnie, 1 from

Newtonmore Primary catchment), and 2 in the nursery, both from the Newtonmore catchment. It is important that section 10.4 is corrected because as stated it might give the impression that there are a disproportionate number of placing requests from pupils moving away from Gergask Primary than for pupils wishing to join, which is simply not true. In fact, Gergask Primary pupil numbers have historically always tended to fluctuate between the low teens and mid to high twenties, and this has always been caused by the normal ebb and flow of families moving into and out of the area.

The Scottish Government has a clear duty to support rural schools and keep them open when possible. It is never the less unfortunate that Dalwhinnie Primary probably needs to close. The parent council at Gergask Primary would like to make it known that in our view the best outcome for primary age children living in Dalwhinnie will be for them to attend Gergask Primary, because they will benefit from greatly reduced and more reliable travel times, and from the very positive and vibrant setup at Gergask Primary where they will benefit from the cluster arrangement with Kingussie Primary. Additionally, the best way to help secure Gergask Primary's future will be to move the Dalwhinnie Primary catchment to Gergask Primary.

Yours faithfully

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.A black rectangular redaction box covering the name of the sender.

RECEIVED
 - 3 MAR 2016
 HIGHLAND COUNCIL
 CARE & LEARNING SERVICE

[REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

Dear sir/madam.

I am writing to you regarding the closure of Dalwhinnie Primary school and the reallocation of the catchment area.

The closure of the school unfortunately is the only way forward as the numbers of children in Dalwhinnie at the moment is so small. This is a massive blow for such a small community. When the school goes the heart of the community has gone.

The catchment covers a large area with many out laying settlements. As a parent of Gergask primary school I think the catchment should either be split allowing Dalwhinnie itself to come to Gergask and places such as Cuaich and Drummochter to go to Newtonmore, or let the families choose where they send there children. This could help both schools.

Dalwhinnie has a number of estates that employ a large number of staff. If one family should move in that could make a significant difference to Gergask. Newtonmore primary is currently full so this solution should help both schools.

I have had four Children, my two boys have now moved to Kingussie High and getting on really well. Your report highlights the fact that small peer groups is not a good thing. James went from primary one to primary five on his own and then one boy moved in, as they were not at the same level James always had his own work set by the teacher. He is now in the top maths and English set. It cant get better than that. The ratio of teachers to pupils is fantastic and there is no chance of a child that is struggling being left behind or slipping through the system.

The opportunities the children at Gergask has is second to none. They take part in the Badenoch music festival , winning on several occasions. They have a cross country team and children have represented there school in district and national levels, bringing home several different medals. They have a strong shinty club with most of the school attending training, they join with Newtonmore for big competitions. Gergask has in the past won the Williamson cup with a Gergask team. The school has a croft attached where children can grow and eat there own vegetables. They work with a local farmer to see the livestock side of the croft and have several visits during the year.

The children have a great experience and from nursery age they learn to play and join in with the older pupils. I think our children benefit greatly from this it helps them to interact with others. We also do alot of events which involve the wider community. We recently had a burns ceilidh, as well as the older members of the community we had several ex pupils either performing or enjoying the evening, which was really nice to see.

Travel from Dalwhinnie to Gergask is along the A889 a distance of eight miles. Dalwhinnie to Newtonmore is ten miles. There has been suggestions that the A889 is closed alot in the winter due to snow. As I am sure you are aware the road has only been closed once in the last two years. The road is usually closed because the A9 is closed. When this happens Gergask can

be reached by the Glentruim Road.

I ask that you think very carefully about changing the Dalwhinnie catchment area. This could have big implications for both primary schools.

Yours sincerely,



[REDACTED]

7th March 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

We write on behalf of the [REDACTED] with regards to the change of Dalwhinnie Primary school catchment to Newtonmore Primary, this we are strongly opposed to.

We believe that the best option is to incorporate the catchment into Gergask Primary School.

This is for the following reasons:

Dalwhinnie is closer to Laggan than Newtonmore therefore less travel time and less costs involved for school transport. This will be especially true for the 10 years expected of A9 dueling.

Gergask Primary is already clustered with Kingussie allowing for opportunity to be part of age appropriate peer groups. It also has regular joint events with Newtonmore fulfilling this requirement.

It is beneficial to the pupils of Gergask Primary to have more attend for the very reason it is suggested in the report that the catchment should go to Newtonmore, using it as the main reason to choose Newtonmore over Gergask is to disadvantage the pupils at Gergask while not affecting those at Newtonmore.

The Scottish Government is committed to supporting rural life, rural communities and the rural economy so it is in the Highland Council interest to fulfil this by increasing the Gergask school catchment area, it is already disadvantaged through its situ we would ask that you don't make it further so.

We would draw your attention to the following comment in the proposed submission "Newtonmore and Gergask Primaries have identical scores for Suitability and Condition." and ask that you support our primary school and our community by recommending Dalwhinnie catchment area is merged with Gergask's.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RECEIVED

16 MAR 2016

HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CARE & LEARNING SERVICE

Melanie Murray

From: Alan McLean
Sent: 18 March 2016 15:24
To: Ian Jackson
Cc: Alda Munro
Subject: Dalwhinnie School Closure Consultation- submission from Gergask school pupils.
Attachments: Gergask pupils' submissions - Dalwhinnie Closure.pdf; gergask waves winter 15-16 pages 1-4.pdf; gergask waves spring 16 pages 1-4.pdf

Dear Mr Jackson

The attached PDF contains submissions from the senior pupils at Gergask towards the Dalwhinnie School Closure Consultation.

I have also attached the two most recent editions of the 'Gergask Waves', a four page, quarterly insert we produce for the local community magazine. I hope this will give a flavour of our vibrant school and varied curriculum.

Regards


Alan McLean Class Teacher, Gergask Primary School

For a while Highland Council has been trying out an idea for pupils from Dalwhinnie to go to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary, instead of Dalwhinnie Primary.

Now we have to decide what to do for the future. We have 3 choices:

1. Close Dalwhinnie Primary for good, with the pupils going to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary instead.
2. Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary, so pupils from there would go to that school and not to Newtonmore or Gergask.
3. Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer before we decide for good.

Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Gergask - Dalwhinnie pupils
It would be a small school if it reopened and it would be better to go to a school with more pupils to work and play with.

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Gergask needs more pupils we have after school clubs like cookery club.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

We have a croft with a pond and a
firepit which we sometimes cook on.
We have a football pitch with posts
and a great playground.
We get to go to Kingussie and make
friends with the people there.
We welcome people and are good friends




For a while Highland Council has been trying out an idea for pupils from Dalwhinnie to go to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary, instead of Dalwhinnie Primary.

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Which idea do you think is best? In the table below, place a tick next to which one you think is best.

Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

I'm from Dalwhinnie.
I wanted to stay at
Gergask because
there is a lot of
wild life and country
-side

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Gergask is running
low on pupils.
we have a lovely croft
and a pond full of life.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

We get to go on lots of school trips like Glasgow and Allnachie centre. There is no fighting or arguing because our school is small and we have to get on together

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Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Dalwhinnie would not have that many people so it would be better for to come to are school

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Gergask has a croft and we made a pond and a camp fire also everyones friends

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?


There are opportunities to go to
other schools like Kingussie all the
All the parents come into help
i

For a while Highland Council has been trying out an idea for pupils from Dalwhinnie to go to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary, instead of Dalwhinnie Primary.

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

If Dalwhinnie shuts then we might be able to get the catchment and our numbers might rise a bit for we only have 41 pupils left.

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

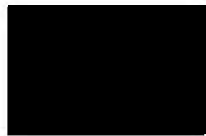
4. Why did you give the answer above?

Gergask's numbers are down and we need to keep our numbers high.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

We have a croft on our doorstep. We can go for Nature walks. Whenever we want. We get the chance to see other schools. We are friendly and would welcome anybody from Dalwhinnie. Gergask is a great school.

All the parents help with something whether its after school clubs or the parent council. Our three clubs Art, Cookery and Shinty are very popular and would love anybody from Dalwhinnie joining.




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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

We only have eleven Pupils in
the whole School.

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

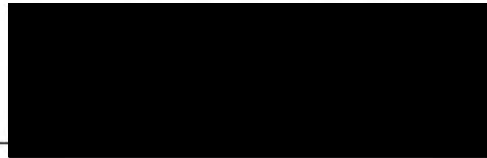
Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Our numbers are going Low
So we need more Pupils

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

We have a croft on our doorstep and a pond to learn more about wild life. Gergask is a great school and we get the chance to go and see other schools and meet other people in different schools.



For a while Highland Council has been trying out an idea for pupils from Dalwhinnie to go to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary, instead of Dalwhinnie Primary.

Now we have to decide what to do for the future. We have 3 choices:

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Idea No. 1 – Close Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Why did you give the answer above?

close Dalwhinnie so they could come here and have more children to play and work with.

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

Our numbers are down.
• We are a good wee schools.
• We go to other schools like Kingussie.
• We are friendly.

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

- Gergask has a croft and a camp fire.
- Most of the time we all get along really well.
- We have lots of trips and playground equipment.
- The pupils are well behaved.
- The teachers are amazing.




For a while Highland Council has been trying out an idea for pupils from Dalwhinnie to go to Newtonmore Primary or Gergask Primary, instead of Dalwhinnie Primary.

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Idea No. 2 – Re-open Dalwhinnie Primary.	
Idea No.3 – Keep trying out the idea for a bit longer.	

2. Why did you give the answer above?

Dalwhinnie is too small

3. If the Council did close Dalwhinnie Primary, which school do you think the Dalwhinnie pupils should go to? Place a tick next to the school you think we should choose

Gergask Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Newtonmore Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Why did you give the answer above?

our numbers are down

5. Is there anything else you want to tell Highland Council about, that would help us make the right choice?

- we have ~~no~~ primary 5our's and only one primary three.
- we have a crost.
- we have a sire pit.
- we have a eco-friendly School.
- we have healthy food.
- we grow our own veggies.



Gergask Waves

news from...

Winter 2015/16

Gergask Primary School
at the heart of Laggan community



Helping our Heroes

In November we held a community soup and scone lunch to raise money for Poppy Scotland.



(left) We made soup and scones with the help of Mrs Docker and her after-school cookery club.

There was a great turnout from the community and we raised almost £90

(below) The pupils led the guests in singing a medley of songs from the war era.



Gergask Primary School at the heart of Laggan community



P7 Residential Outdoor Activity Week

(left and below) Our P7s amazed even themselves with new-found confidence and skills developed at our recent trip to Alltnacriche Outdoor Activity Centre. The boys made new friends and had opportunities to try activities such as zipwire, archery and ropes course.



Book Week

(right) to celebrate 'Book week Scotland' we dressed as characters from our favourite books. P1s were presented with 'Bookbug Sacks' by Jeremy from Highland Libraries. *(below)*



Boom Bang Fizzle Pop By Remy Cain

Boom! Bang! Fizzle! Pop! Fireworks are whizzing
 Boom! Bang! Fizzle! Pop! Sausages are sizzling
 Flames of colour fill the sky
 We forgot the hot chocolate. My Oh My!
 Boom! Bang! Fizzle! Pop! Sparklers are alight.
 Boom! Bang! Fizzle! Pop! What a beautiful sight
 Boom! Bang! Fizzle! Pop!



Gergask Primary School at the heart of Laggan community



Harvest Open Morning

(left and below) At the end of our 'Eco Week' we held an open morning on 'Bumblebee Farm. We served our guests round the camp fire with soup and tattie scones made from our home-grown vegetables and sold sample packs of heritage potatoes.



Litter-picking

(right) Once again as part of our Eco week, we scoured the village for litter and were surprised at how much we collected.



(left)

Our P7s proudly assisted with the laying of the wreath at the Remembrance Day ceremony in November.



'Circle Time' on Bumblebee Farm

It is thanks to the generosity of Mr Hamish Hardie that we are able to use this wonderful facility

Gergask Primary School at the heart of Laggan community



Adopt-a-sheep

(left) Mrs and Mrs Slimon at Breakachy farm have kindly invited us, again, to follow a flock of sheep throughout the year. Each of us has 'adopted' our own sheep. Here we are sorting and selecting the sheep.



Scots Wha Hae!

(right) St Andrews Day gave us another opportunity to entertain the community with songs, fiddle, poetry, baking and a game of "Ca' ma bluff!"



Cross Country

(left) Our cross country team once again performed very well and did the school credit at a recent event in Grantown.



Nursery News



Let it Snow

Snow has arrived and Gergask Nursey have wasted no time in getting busy building!



Jurassic Playpark!

The Nursery boys enjoying finding out about dinosaurs.

Gergask Waves

news from...

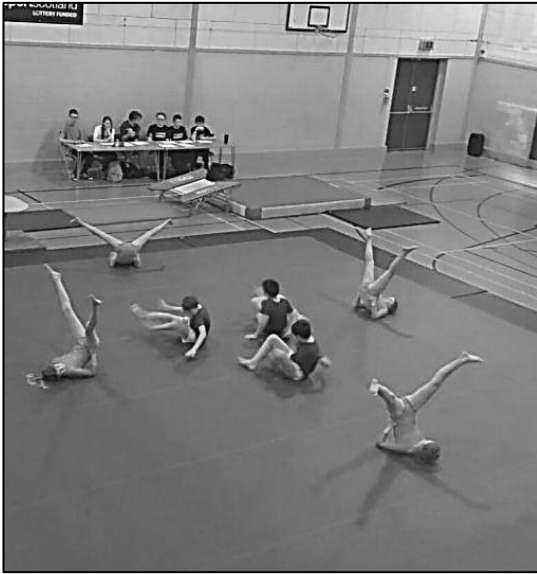
Spring 2016



Gergask Primary School
at the heart of Laggan community



We like to move it!



(far left) In February Our senior pupils took part in a 'Team Gym' gymnastics festival at the Badenoch Centre.

(Above left)

Commonwealth gold medallist, Steve Frew, gave a demonstration.



(Below left) Our younger pupils who came along to watch were so impressed that they demonstrated some clever balances themselves.



(left) We recently enjoyed some Scottish Country Dance tuition from Mrs Sheena Slimon. We are very lucky to receive so much support at our wee school from family members and members of the wider community.

Our School was one of only two schools in Highland to successfully apply for funding for our 'Gym for All' Project.



This allowed us to purchase some fantastic new equipment including mats, boxes, A frames and connectors. It was thanks to this that we were able to prepare for the event *(left)*

Out of Africa...

We had a very informative and interesting talk from Miss Michie about her visit to Malawi with Kingussie High School.

She had many interesting photos and artefacts to show us

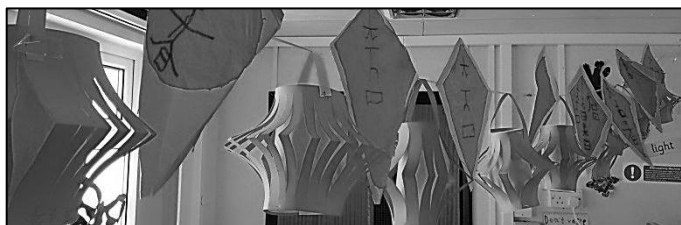
Gergask School is still in the process of twinning with a Malawian School.



... into China...

新年好

(below right) We made use of our 'Panda Box' and follow-up workshop from the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland to learn a lot about these fascinating creatures. Our senior pupils have been receiving lessons in Chinese language from Ms Zhang (below left). She has also been helping us to learn about Chinese traditions such as Chinese New Year (bottom left)



At our Burns Supper (left), former pupil, Michael Slimon piped in the Haggis which was addressed by Mr Donald Barr.

(above) Our Parent Council Ceilidh gave parents and friends an opportunity to show off their dance moves. It was very well supported despite the wild weather and those attending were very generous in their support of the school. Our pupils sang and provided instrumental entertainment.

SPINNING A YARN



As a participating school, we are very fortunate to have received a spinning wheel and a loom from the 'Crofting Connections' project. Both were rather complicated to put together (*far left*) but we have got them working and are looking forward to putting them to good use. Mr and Mrs Slimon have kindly donated a fleece for spinning.



Oh Yes We Did!

Our busy Christmas period included a number of community events and exciting entertainments. (*clockwise from above left*) Switching on of the Christmas lights was followed by community carol singing. After that we got together for hot chocolate. This year's Panto was 'Peter Pan at Eden Court. Our own performance of the Christmas Story was a great success.





Brainy Ones!

We knew this. Do *you*?

- 1 'Where was the first atomic bomb detonated?'
- 2 'Where was Oliver Twist set?'
- 3 'What is 0.25 as a vulgar fraction?'
- 4 'Who wrote "Tracey Beaker"?''
- 5 How many players in a rugby union team?

Answers: 1 Hiroshima 2 London 3 1/4 4 Jacqueline Wilson 5 15

(above) All our P6 and P7 pupils participated very well in the Rotary Club Quiz against select teams from larger schools.



(left) At Kingussie Primary, we enjoyed a performance by Hopscotch Theatre about the life of Robert Burns.

(right) P6 and 7 enjoyed the opportunity to participate in snowsports sessions on Cairngorm Mountain.



Nursery News



Stay and Play

Parents joining in the fun at Nursery.



We love books.

Nursery made their first visit to the library van.

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The Highland Council to discontinue education provision at Dalwhinnie Primary School and Nursery, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Newtonmore Primary School and Nursery.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments contained in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of The Highland Council's proposal to discontinue education provision at Dalwhinnie Primary School and Nursery, re-assigning its catchment area to that of Newtonmore Primary School and Nursery. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include a copy of this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all legislative obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of Dalwhinnie Primary School and Nursery; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 23 February 2016 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related

consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and

- visits to the sites of Dalwhinnie, Newtonmore and Gergask Primary Schools, including discussion with relevant consultees.

1.4 As the proposal will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of any reasonable alternatives to the closure of Dalwhinnie Primary School and Nursery, the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements of the proposed closure.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 The Highland Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

2.2 The formal consultation ran from 1 February 2016 until 18 March 2016. The council posted the consultation document on its website. It issued copies of the document to all parents of pupils in the catchment areas of Newtonmore and Gergask Primary Schools and Nurseries and the Parent Councils of both schools. Further copies were made available to local community groups. The council made suitable arrangements to gather the views of children currently attending Newtonmore and Gergask Primary Schools about the proposal. The council placed advance notice of a public meeting in the local newspaper. The meeting on 23 February 2016 was attended by nine stakeholders who were all supportive of the proposal. Less than ten written communications were received in response to the consultation.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 The proposal has clear educational benefits to children and The Highland Council has the confidence of stakeholders with regard to the closure of Dalwhinnie Primary School. No children have attended Dalwhinnie Primary School since the end of session 2011-12, when the school was 'mothballed'. If the proposal goes ahead, children living in the current Dalwhinnie Primary School catchment area would receive almost all of their curriculum in the same school. Previously, they travelled between their own school and their partnership school, Newtonmore Primary School, for some of their learning. Currently, children from the Dalwhinnie Primary School catchment area attend either Gergask or Newtonmore Primary Schools. Children attending both schools would continue to have a larger group of peers with which to engage, both in and beyond the classroom. There would be continued opportunities to participate in team activities including sports and also music and drama. This would have the potential to contribute positively to children's social and emotional development. Suitable arrangements would continue to be available to support children who need additional help with their learning.

3.2 All stakeholders, including parents, children and staff who responded to the consultation and met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the aspect of the proposal relating to the closure of Dalwhinnie Primary School. Stakeholders had been kept well-informed and consulted about the proposal. All parents and children who met HM Inspectors expressed their appreciation for the benefits of learning in a larger school as afforded by Gergask and Newtonmore Primary Schools. The proposal will assist The Highland Council to make effective and efficient use of its resources by addressing capacity issues within its school estate.

3.3 Whilst there was a clear consensus over the aspect of the proposal to close Dalwhinnie Primary School, the parent body, staff and children of Gergask Primary School and the Laggan community were strongly of the view that the catchment area of Dalwhinnie Primary School should be re-assigned to Gergask Primary School rather than Newtonmore Primary School. They felt that the shorter travel time from Dalwhinnie to Gergask combined with existing closer links between the Dalwhinnie and Laggan communities provided a strong argument for this. Gergask stakeholders acknowledged that the numbers of children affected by the closure of Dalwhinnie Primary School now and in the future is likely to be relatively small, but felt that an increased roll at Gergask would help to sustain and support their school moving forward. They were concerned about the impact of re-zoning children to Newtonmore Primary School where there have already been pressures on accommodation and places. Overall, the small number of parents of children attending Newtonmore Primary School who expressed their view was in favour of the proposal. However, a few stakeholders raised the issue of further pressure on space within the school with additional children coming from the Dalwhinnie catchment area.

3.4 During the consultation period the council was notified of alleged inaccuracies and omissions in the proposal. Gergask Parent Council has provided information to the council and HM Inspectors which suggests that the data outlined by The Highland Council in section 10.4 of its proposal underestimates the number of placing requests into Gergask Primary School in the timeframe outlined. In its final consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies and omissions notified to it.

3.5 The Highland Council has given due consideration to reasonable alternatives to closure. These include: considerations on re-opening Dalwhinnie Primary School and Nursery with an increased catchment area; or continuing with mothballing the school building. Parents of pupils at both Gergask and Newtonmore Primary Schools have significant concerns over any suggestion that the Dalwhinnie catchment area could be enlarged because of the negative impact it might have on the viability of their children's school in the future. HM Inspectors are of the view that a sufficient range of alternatives has been considered and that the council's proposal to close Dalwhinnie Primary School is reasonable and fair.

3.6 An assessment of rural and economic issues associated with the closure has been carried out by The Highland Council. It has not identified any negative impact of the proposed closure.

3.7 A small minority of stakeholders has requested more clarity on how the council's policy on school transport will be applied to children currently living in the Dalwhinnie catchment area should the proposal go ahead. The council will need to address this request in its final report.

3.8 The community of Dalwhinnie village does not make use of the school building for events and gatherings. Instead, the community makes use of the village hall. The Highland Council has indicated that it would be keen to explore with the local community whether all or part of the school could be turned over to community use. For example, the play facilities in the school playground.

3.9 As the proposal will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of The Highland Council's consideration of the factors to which it should have special regard.

- As outlined above, The Highland Council considered carefully whether there were any reasonable alternatives to closure of the school including re-opening Dalwhinnie Primary School, enlarging its catchment area or continuing to mothball the school before it consulted on the proposal.
- It is the view of HM Inspectors that The Highland Council has appropriately assessed the likely educational benefits of the proposal and the alternatives to it.
- Dalwhinnie Village Hall is a focal point for community events and meetings and stakeholders interviewed by HM Inspectors agreed that Dalwhinnie Primary School did not have a crucial community role.
- The council also looked at travel arrangements and the possible impact on children and families and the environment. The council considered travel routes including the likelihood of road closures due to bad weather. However, Gergask parents consider the long term and significant road works over stretches of the A9 were not factored into the council's analysis when recommending the catchment area is re-assigned to Newtonmore Primary School. The council should address this concern in its final report. Overall, the council concluded that the proposal would not impact negatively on the environment.

4. Summary

The proposal to close Dalwhinnie Primary School and Nursery has clear educational benefits for children. Stakeholders are strongly supportive of the aspect of the proposal to close Dalwhinnie Primary School and Nursery. Future pupils will have access to almost all of their curriculum in the same school and benefit from interacting with more children. The proposal will also help The Highland Council to address capacity issues in its school estate and secure best value. However, Gergask stakeholders and Laggan Community disagree strongly with the council's plans to re-assign the Dalwhinnie Primary School catchment to Newtonmore Primary School. The council will need to ensure that it continues to engage with stakeholders where further consideration and clarification is required, such as the

re-assignment of the catchment area, arrangements for travel and the play facilities within the school grounds. In its final consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies and omissions notified to it.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
April 2016**