

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Lothian Council to re-locate the existing four Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN) primary special classes from Ogilvie School Campus, Knightsridge, Livingston to Connolly School Campus, Blackburn by August 2015.**

## **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 West Lothian Council's proposal to relocate the existing four SEBN primary special classes from Ogilvie School Campus, Knightsridge, Livingston to Connolly School Campus, Blackburn by August 2015. 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 the school; 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 public meetings held on 4 and 6 November 2014 in connection with the council's proposal;

- 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;
- consideration of further representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal;
- visits to the sites of Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, the proposed Connolly School Campus, Ogilvie School Campus and Hopefield Nursery, including discussion with relevant consultees; and
- discussion with the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh.

## **2. Consultation Process**

2.1 West Lothian 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 on the proposal under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* ran from 16 October 2014 to 18 December 2014. Details of the formal consultation were notified directly to parents and known interested parties, in the local press and on the council's website. As part of the consultation arrangements for all four proposals, three public meetings were held on 4, 6 and 12 November 2014. The council took appropriate steps to consult with children about the proposal. The consultation paper included a section outlining arrangements for gathering stakeholders' views, including details of a dedicated electronic mailbox. The council received fewer than ten written responses related to this proposal.

2.3 Prior to running the formal consultation under the Act, the council consulted with a range of stakeholders, including individual parents over its vision and specific plans to improve education for children with additional support needs. This proposal is one of four which have resulted from the council's review of provision for children with additional support needs.

## **3. Educational Aspects of Proposal**

3.1 West Lothian Council's proposal to relocate the existing four SEBN primary special classes (providing education across P1 to P7) from Ogilvie School Campus, Knightsridge, Livingston to Connolly School Campus, Blackburn has a number of potential educational benefits for children who may attend the provision in future. It will also assist the council to make efficient and effective use of its resources by addressing capacity issues in the Ogilvie Campus and utilising accommodation which is currently unoccupied in the Connolly House building which adjoins Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School.

3.2 The council has set out a detailed and comprehensive statement of educational benefits that will accrue if the proposal goes ahead. The statement is specific to this proposal and takes appropriate account of the entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence, the need for individualised transition planning and the need for skills to be developed and practised in a real-life community context. Proposed staffing and management arrangements for the Connolly School Campus will ensure that pupils and staff benefit from the support and expertise of experienced senior managers.

3.3 The council intends that the relocation process from Ogilvie School Campus to Connolly School Campus be completed by August 2015. This will require it to make a decision timeously, so that appropriate individualised transition plans can be put in place.

3.4 The campus will have the potential to provide high-quality learning experiences by delivering Curriculum for Excellence as well as targeted, individualised and family support within modern, well-equipped provision. Provision will be made for children to access gym and dining facilities within Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School. The council is committed to ensuring parity of accommodation and resources with the provision the children currently enjoy in Ogilvie School Campus. In taking forward the proposal, the council should provide more information to parents and children about how this will be achieved.

3.5 The proposal makes provision for opportunities for part-time or full-time re-integration for most pupils who will attend Connolly School Campus. However, the council needs to consider how it can ensure that there are opportunities for children of Connolly School Campus and Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School to benefit from shared learning experiences.

3.6 HM Inspectors met with school staff, representative groups of pupils and a very small number of parents and members of the local community. Most of those who met with HM Inspectors were positive about the proposal. Staff of Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School would welcome opportunities, should they arise, to work collaboratively with Connolly School Campus staff. They were positive about the potential for the two groups of children to share, as appropriate, some aspects of their school experiences.

3.7 The Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh was in agreement with the proposal. It would be supportive of Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School taking opportunities, should they arise, to work collaboratively with staff and children from the Connolly School Campus.

#### **4. Summary**

The proposal has the potential to deliver a number of educational benefits. These include the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence and family support within modern provision. It will also enable the council to make efficient and effective use of its resources by addressing capacity issues within its school estate. The council needs to decide timeously whether to implement this proposal so that appropriately individualised transition plans can be implemented without delay. In finalising the proposal, the council should state clearly how it will ensure that staff and children from the two schools will have opportunities to work together where appropriate, in keeping with good practice elsewhere when two or more schools occupy a single building. It should also demonstrate to parents how it has fulfilled its commitment to ensure parity of accommodation and resources with the provision the children currently have access to in Ogilvie School Campus.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
January 2015**