

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Lothian Council to establish secondary stage education, initially with S1 provision, within Ogilvie School Campus.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of West Lothian Council's proposal to establish secondary stage education, initially with S1 provision, within Ogilvie School Campus. 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 statutory 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 Ogilvie School Campus; 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:

- 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 site of Ogilvie School Campus, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 West Lothian Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.2 West Lothian Council formally consulted stakeholders between 21 August and 3 October 2018. A public meeting was held at Ogilvie School Campus on 11 September 2018 and was attended by 19 members of the public. The consultation was widely communicated through the council's website, digital media and in the local press. Copies of the consultation document were made available via central locations within West Lothian. A letter informing them of the consultation was issued to all parents of children attending Ogilvie School Campus. All other nursery, primary and secondary schools in the council area also distributed notification of the proposal via hard copy or through digital sources. All stakeholders were invited to submit their views either through hard copy or by email.

2.3 The council received 11 individual written responses to the consultation, all of which indicate agreement with the proposal. Pupil groups at Low Port Primary School, Kirkhill Primary School and Deans Community High School also provided written responses indicating approval of the proposal. NHS Stakeholders submitted a positive response with some details of accommodation and resource requirements to enable practitioners to work with and treat young people appropriately. No respondents objected to the proposal.

2.4 Those who attended the public meeting were generally in favour of the proposal. However, a number of questions were raised. Issues of concern mainly related to the council's ability to recruit adequate staffing for the secondary provision, the impact of proposed adjustments to the existing learning environment to create classrooms for the new S1 from August 2019 and the potential increase in traffic and parking requirements. A few attendees also raised concerns about placing requests in the future and whether there was an expectation that children would continue from the primary through to the secondary stage on the campus. A few asked for further information about the design and layout of the extended building. They sought reassurance that learners in the primary and secondary stages would have sufficient appropriate space for learning and teaching as well as for dining and other social activities. The note of the public meeting indicates that attendees were able to offer views on the design of the learning environment and were assured that this opportunity remains open until the plans are completed.

2.5 Parents who attended meetings with the HM Inspector were well informed about the consultation. They were all positive about the proposal to establish secondary education at the Ogilvie School Campus. They are keen to see current plans for the refurbishment and extension of the building. They have a number of questions including about the use of existing indoor and outdoor space which they would like an opportunity to discuss. They are worried about the increased pressure on existing communal spaces such as the dining/gym hall and the impact of this on their children. A few parents raised concerns about the potential increase in traffic and the need for more car park space. They would also value the opportunity to discuss their concerns about potential disruption to learning during the building works and how additional noise and change will affect their children's wellbeing.

Parents of those in the current P7 class are concerned about the time-line within the proposal. They would like more information to reassure them that the secondary provision will be available on the campus from August 2019 as stated in the consultation document.

2.6 Staff at Ogilvie School Campus recognise that there are many benefits for children and families of having secondary education within the campus. During a discussion with the HM Inspector they highlighted the potential for smoother transition arrangements, continuity in learning pathways and the benefits of longer-term home/school relationships to support the children. They expressed caution about the timing of the proposed expansion of the school. They feel they need further professional learning and greater stability in staffing and leadership and management of the school in order to be ready confidently for the expansion. They would like more opportunities to discuss their concerns with West Lothian Council staff.

2.7 Partners working with the school to support children's needs are also positive about the potential for longer-term relationships which will enable them to build continuity in the way they work with the children and families.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 There are a number of potential educational benefits to this proposal which all stakeholders recognise and agree with. Establishing secondary stage education at Ogilvie School Campus has the potential to strengthen the transition from P7 to S1. This could lead to improved continuity of learning and teaching strategies to better meet the needs of the children. An all-through experience could strengthen how staff, working in partnership with parents, use their knowledge of children's needs to plan appropriate learning pathways from P1 through to the senior phase. The children educated at Ogilvie School Campus can often suffer setbacks in their learning as a result of change and disruption so the proposal to minimise this is a positive one. The development of a secondary stage curriculum with specialist teaching areas, for example, for science and home economics, may also bring additional opportunities to strengthen the curriculum in the primary stages.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that there are a number of potential educational benefits which could be realised by establishing secondary education within Ogilvie School Campus. All staff parents and other stakeholders who have expressed their views during the consultation agree with the proposal and no-one has raised objections to the overall idea of introducing secondary education to the campus. However parents, staff and local residents have raised a number of concerns and questions about the practical implications of enacting the proposal. If the council decides to take this proposal further it will need to ensure ongoing consultation with stakeholders with regard to the planning, design and extension of the campus. All stakeholders need ongoing opportunities to share their views and ideas and to have their questions answered. This should include early access to proposed plans for the campus. Staff also need increased opportunities for professional learning and effective leadership so that they feel able confidently to support the growth of their school. West Lothian

Council should also give careful consideration to the proposed timescale for implementing this proposal to ensure parents of children in the current P7 classes have certainty about arrangements for their transition from P7 to S1.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
October 2018**