

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Lothian Council to relocate Kirkhill Nursery School to Kirkhill Primary School and close Kirkhill Nursery School.

April 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His 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 relocate Kirkhill Nursery School to Kirkhill Primary School and close Kirkhill Nursery School. 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 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 of the setting; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and their families 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 Kirkhill Primary School and Kirkhill Nursery School, 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 The consultation period organised by the council took place between 30 January and 24 March 2023. The proposal was communicated to stakeholders via the council website, digital media outlets and local press. West Lothian Council held a public meeting at Kirkhill Primary School on 7 March 2023 which was attended by four members of staff.

2.3 The council received no responses to the public consultation. All four attendees at the public meeting were in favour of the proposal.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council outlines the educational benefits of its proposal in terms of supporting continuity of progression for children transitioning to Kirkhill Primary School from the nursery. They believe that the new purpose-built facility will create a more flexible space for learning which will improve children's learning experiences. High on the list of staff priorities will be the development of a comprehensive transition programme from nursery to primary one. They also state that the new setting will make good use of access to the outdoors which will enhance the positive play experiences in the current nursery building. In addition, the new nursery will have the capacity to increase the number of places on offer to local families including provision for two years olds. HM Inspectors agree that the move to the new facility should help children transition smoothly into Kirkhill Primary School and may improve their learning experience.

3.2 HM Inspectors met with a number of stakeholders including staff and parents. All stakeholders are in favour of the proposal. The current nursery building is outdated and the move to a new facility is welcomed. Staff at the nursery and the primary school are very positive about the move to the new facility. They see the benefits of closer working and the enhanced arrangements for transition into primary one. They also feel that those children with additional support needs can be better supported in the new nursery.

3.3 Parents of nursery children that met with HM Inspectors agree that the new facility presents positive opportunities for their children. They feel that transition will be easier if children are in the same building. This should help reduce some of the anxiety that a few children experience when moving between the two buildings. Although the distance between the two buildings is small, parents believe that safety should be improved to avoid nursery children having to cross a car park to access the primary school. They also note that opportunities for working with older primary school children, for example through the buddying programme, should be enhanced.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal for the move of the existing nursery into Kirkhill Primary School has the potential to bring clear educational benefits for the children attending. The move to the new nursery could help to enhance transition arrangements and improve learning experiences for children.

HM Inspectors
April 2023