

# **Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Lothian Council to close Glenvue Nursery School.**

December 2024

## 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 a proposal by West Lothian Council to close Glenvue 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' view. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it alongside any relevant considerations the council received and then prepare its consultation report. The council's 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 consultation report at least three weeks before it takes its final decision. With all proposals the council needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act. Where a council is proposing to close a school, there are specific additional obligations. These include 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 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 26 September 2024 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 Glenvue Nursery School, St Ninian's RC Primary School and Bankton Primary 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 public consultation ran from 9 September to 1 November 2024. The proposal was available on the council website. Paper copies and accessible formats were available on request. This proposal is one of nine closure proposals for early years and childcare settings on which the Council are consulting. The council held a public meeting at Dedridge Primary School, Livingston, on Thursday 26 September 2024 which 35 stakeholders attended. These included

21 parents/carers of children currently attending the ELC setting, or of children who may apply in the future. Questions asked were either for clarification or were critical of the proposal. There were seven written responses to the consultation. None of these were supportive of the proposal. The main concerns raised at the meeting and through written responses related to the pattern of childcare offered at Glenvue Nursery which is not mirrored at other establishments, the provision for children with additional support needs and the overall quality of care.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 In its educational benefits statement, the council has outlined the efficiencies which arise from this proposal. It states how its proposal takes forward national policy for curriculum, play and providing children with free 1140 hours of early learning and childcare. HM Inspectors agree that some rationalisation of nursery provision may be reasonable as it is important that the council ensures the best use of its resources. It is also important to make sure that stakeholders can understand positive changes, where they exist, for children in the settings affected. In preparing its report the council should more clearly outline the educational benefits from this proposal. HM Inspectors agree that, should this proposal be agreed, it will be important that the closure is managed well and transition arrangements are developed with stakeholders.

3.2 HM Inspectors agree that the closure of Glenvue Nursery should not adversely affect the delivery of the curriculum or transition arrangements. They agree that the accommodation, school grounds and outdoor learning in the remaining provision is of an equally high standard to Glenvue. The council also states that there will be no change to admission criteria for early learning and childcare settings in the council or in the management structure of any of the primary schools within the Dedridge area. The proposal, if agreed, should not negatively affect accessibility to early learning and childcare provision within the local area. There is already close working between the three existing nursery provisions run by West Lothian Council. However, the council should make it clearer what the arrangements for parental involvement will be.

3.3 Parents and carers of children who attend Glenvue Nursery would prefer that it was not closed. Those who spoke to HM Inspectors, or responded to the consultation, value the positive relationships which staff have with their children. They have justifiable concerns that it might not be possible to replicate the pattern of childcare which Glenvue Nursery offers in other provisions. Glenvue runs during school hours in term time (38 weeks) from Monday to Thursday. The remaining council provisions are open morning, afternoon or for two whole days across 50 weeks of the year. The council should clarify this for parents in its final report. Some parents are under the misconception that the nursery class at St Ninian's Primary School is a denominational facility. The council should clarify this issue for parents in its final report.

3.4 Senior leaders and staff at Glenvue Nursery feel that there is an advantage to their 'whole day' provision which allows children to play and learn at a relaxed pace. They are proud of their provision and appreciate that it was being shared recently within West Lothian Council as an example of good practice. There is uncertainty amongst practitioners regarding their redeployment if the proposal is taken forward. The council should clarify timescales, options and next steps for early learning and childcare staff at Glenvue Nursery in its final report.

3.5 During the consultation period the council has identified alleged inaccuracies in the proposal. The council will need to ensure that it takes the necessary steps to investigate these alleged inaccuracies. In its consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies notified to it.

## 4. Summary

4.1 The council has demonstrated that there will not be any significant negative effects from the closure of Glenvue Nursery. However, it has not demonstrated any clear educational benefits which will result from this. In preparing its final report, the council should clearly outline educational benefits. In this report, the council should ensure that it addresses parents' concerns that they will not be able to access the same pattern of childcare once Glenvue Nursery closes. It should also clarify that St Ninian's Nursery Class is not a denominational provision. In its consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies notified to it.

**HM Inspectors  
December 2024**