

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Lothian Council to establish a new non-denominational primary school at the Hawkhill site, Winchburgh and associated proposals.

June 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 establish a new non-denominational primary school at the Hawkhill site, Winchburgh and associated proposals. 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.

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 the public meeting held on 29 May 2023 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
- visit to the site of Winchburgh 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 consultation ran from 24 April until 9 June 2023. A public meeting took place on 29 May 2023 and was attended by three members of the public and officers from West Lothian Council. No objections were raised at the public meeting regarding the proposal. The consultation paper was made available to parents and staff at Winchburgh Primary School and to the public via the council's website. The council received only one email response to the consultation regarding catchment boundaries. A reply and copies of boundary maps was sent in response.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council sets out the educational benefits it believes will result from the proposal. This includes the provision of a modern learning environment designed to deliver the curriculum with improved space for outdoor learning. HM Inspectors agree that the building of a new school will provide potential educational benefits for the delivery of the full breadth of the curriculum. In addition, there are clear opportunities to increase the use of the outdoor space to support children's learning.

3.2 All children, staff and parents who met with HM Inspectors are in favour of the proposal. Children from Winchburgh Primary School like that their community is growing. They think it is a good idea to have a new school in Winchburgh as they recognise that their own school is already under pressure for space. Staff are also in favour of the proposal. They recognise that the rapid growth of the community due to housebuilding is resulting in pressures on Winchburgh Primary School. The school roll has risen over recent years and is estimated that it will continue to do so. Staff are enthusiastic about the opportunities for cluster working when the new school is built. They also believe that as most children will be able to walk or cycle to the new school, there should be benefits for health and wellbeing.

3.3 Parents are keen to see the establishment of a new school. They recognise the benefits which may arise from a modern learning environment with high quality facilities. Although there was an initial worry from the Parent Council regarding the village being divided by new housing developments, they believe that the benefits outweigh the disadvantages. As part of the ongoing improvements, there are plans to refurbish Winchburgh Primary School whilst the new school is being established. Parents would welcome being involved in how these plans develop.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree with West Lothian Council's proposal to build a new primary school in Winchburgh. The existing Winchburgh Primary School will no longer be able to accommodate the increasing number of primary school age children living locally. The proposed additional non-denominational primary school will help to meet the current and projected increase in demand. There are potential educational benefits in terms of delivery of the curriculum in a new and modern facility and increase opportunities for outdoor learning. West Lothian Council should ensure that parents at Winchburgh Primary School are kept up to date with plans to refurbish the existing Winchburgh Primary School building.

HM Inspectors
June 2023