

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Lothian Council to relocate Dechmont Infant School, introduce year stages P4-P7 to Kirkhill Primary School and revise catchment for stages P4-P7 to new primary school at Bangor.

November 2022

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 Dechmont Infant School, introduce year stages P4-P7 to Kirkhill Primary School and revise catchment for stages P4-P7 to new primary school in Bangor. 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 schools; 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 Dechmont Infant 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 main proposal within the consultation is to relocate Dechmont Infant School, introduce year stages P4-P7 to Kirkhill Primary School and revise catchment for stages P4-P7 to a new primary school in the proposed new Bangor development site.

2.3 A pre-consultation was undertaken in Autumn 2019, including a public meeting at Dechmont Hall on 8 October 2019. Consultees were supportive of the principles of the consultation and did not feel strongly about the alternative school site locations. The formal consultation ran from 20 August 2022 until 7 October 2022. Copies of the proposal were made available electronically on the council website and in paper format via central locations within West Lothian. A public meeting was held at Dechmont Infant School on 21 September 2022. Three members of the public and four members of staff attended.

2.4 No written or email responses were received regarding the proposals and no expressions of opposition to the proposals were received during the consultation period. The seven attendees at the public meeting supported the consultation proposals. Although the number of attendees was small, it was not unexpected with the current low pupil roll at Dechmont Infant School and given there were no expressions of opposition during the pre-consultation conducted in 2019.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council sets out a strong case to address the demands of future housing developments ensuring the best use of existing and future school capacities in West Lothian. The proposed location of the new school is within the consented development site at the former Bangour Hospital. The move to a new infant school allows Dechmont Infant School to change from a P1-P3 infant school to a P1-P7 school. This proposal removes the need for an additional transition for children who move to Kirkhill Primary School at P3. The removal of Dechmont and Bangour from the catchment areas of Kirkhill Primary School P4-P7 aged children will result in the transition of children to Winchburgh Academy. Currently, almost all children transition to Broxburn Academy. The transition to Winchburgh Academy will help support the demands on future pupil rolls in secondary schools within the proposed areas. This change will not come into effect until the new primary school is built. The estimated date for completion of the build is 2026. Based on an increased capacity from future housing developments, the new school will be able to accommodate the forecasted increase in the pupil roll. It will assist the ambitions of Curriculum for Excellence linking schools with their surrounding communities.

3.2 Headteachers of the affected schools were all supportive of the proposal. None had received any objections from members of their own school communities. To accommodate the introduction of additional year stages, West Lothian Council anticipate additions to the existing teaching staff complement. All children, school staff and one parent who engaged with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposal. However, they requested continued involvement in decisions on the name for the school to ensure it reflected the community context and deep history of the area. As a result, HM Inspectors support the educational benefits statement as outlined by the council. The council have highlighted no negative impact and HM Inspectors endorse this view.

4. Summary

The council's proposal provides a strong case to relocate Dechmont Infant School, introduce year stages P4-P7 and revise catchment areas for P4-P7 from Kirkhill Primary School to a new primary school at Bangour. The associated educational benefits are clearly outlined. All children and school staff who met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposal. The council's proposal, should it proceed, should see increasing numbers of children and young people in the area benefit from a building equipped to meet the needs of 21st century learners. This will result in a much improved environment for the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence and potentially improved outcomes for learners. The proposed new site will provide enhanced outdoor play spaces and physical education facilities with the potential for wider community use. In taking forward the proposal, the council would benefit from involving the wider community, school staff, parents and pupils in the final decision on the name of the school.

**HM Inspectors
November 2022**