

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

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Lothian Council to review admission arrangements as a result of alterations to the non-denominational primary school catchment areas.**

October 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 review admission arrangements as a result of alterations to the non-denominational primary school catchment areas. 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 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:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 2 October 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
- visits to the site of Parkhead and Woodmuir Primary Schools, including online discussions with all headteachers of the affected primary schools and other 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 council undertook the consultation between 21 August to 6 October 2023. The council published the proposal paper on its website. Paper and electronic copies of the proposal paper were made available. Written responses were also accepted by letter or email. West Lothian Council held a public meeting at West Calder High School. No one attended the public meeting and there were no written responses. Williamston Primary School pupil council discussed the proposal and had a range of comments, which were mostly supportive.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council's proposal is to review admission arrangements as a result of alterations to the non-denominational primary school catchment areas. The proposed changes are to ensure that catchment boundaries fit better with local community ties and ensure better alignment with community council and natural geographic boundaries. The proposal also aims to address the demands of future housing developments and ensure the best use of existing and future school capacities in West Lothian non-denominational school catchment areas. The affected schools are Mid Calder Primary School (PS), East Calder PS, Williamston PS, Parkhead PS, Addiewell PS, Woodmuir PS, Stoneyburn PS and Fallahill PS.

3.2 The council's proposal sets out a number of educational benefits for those affected. These include to continue the delivery of education in line with national guidance, which are aligned with the key principles of Curriculum for Excellence. There will be no impact to pupils currently attending West Lothian schools. Younger siblings of children currently attending the schools would retain the catchment status of the older siblings. There is no expected impact or changes required to school management or staff teams and school transport arrangements will remain in line with council policy. HM Inspectors agree with the educational benefits which are set out in this proposal.

3.3 All children, parents and teaching staff who met with HM Inspectors support the proposal. They recognise the importance of ensuring that catchment boundaries fit better with local schools. They also noted that future housing developments require making best use of existing and future school capacities. A few children from Parkhead Primary School noted that any potential increase in the number of children attending the school may increase diversity and provide more opportunities for extended friendship groups. In contrast, children and staff had a few concerns over capacity of the school to accommodate a potential increase in the school roll. They also noted that a few year groups are currently at capacity. The importance of accessibility for those that may have additional support needs and any potential negative impact on outdoor space were also raised by children and staff.

### 4. Summary

West Lothian Council has set out a clear case for the review of admission arrangements as a result of alterations to the non-denominational primary school catchment areas. HM Inspectors agreed with the educational benefits the council outlines in the proposal. All children, parents and staff who met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposal. Should the proposal be approved the council should consider the concerns regarding future capacity at Parkhead Primary School.

**HM Inspectors  
October 2023**