

# **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 alteration to the non-denominational secondary school catchment areas of: Deans Community High School, West Calder High School, Inveralmond Community High School and The James Young High School.**

November 2021

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her 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 alteration to the non-denominational secondary school catchment areas of: Deans Community High School, West Calder High School, Inveralmond Community High School and The James Young High 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.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for 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;
- any other likely effects of the proposal; and
- 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 virtual public meeting held on 30 September 2021 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
- discussion with headteachers of Deans Community High School, West Calder High School, Inveralmond Community High School and The James Young High School.

## 2. Consultation process

2.1 West Lothian Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) and the amendments in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

2.2 The consultation ran from 15 September 2021 until 5 November 2021. The council posted the proposal document on its website and lodged copies in the schools concerned and in council offices. In addition, it announced the consultation in the local press. The council held a virtual public meeting on 30 September 2021. No stakeholders attended. The council received no responses to the proposal. Appropriate arrangements were put in place to ensure that the views of children and young people affected by the proposal were heard and taken into account.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council has set out a strong case for the proposed catchment changes to both schools. Gavieside is a major development with over 2,000 new residential properties planned. Within the Local Development Plan, at present, almost all of the site is split between Deans Community High School and West Calder High School catchment for non-denominational secondary schooling. In recognition of the West Lothian Local Development Plan, West Lothian Council has an obligation to address school capacities within the non-denominational secondary school education sector. Doing so will offer opportunity to better match allocated housing developments to existing and future primary school capacities.

3.2 The council confirms that there will be no negative impact to pupils currently in attendance at West Lothian schools as a result of proposed variations to school catchment areas. All pupils will continue to attend their existing schools for the remainder of their secondary stage education. Also, the proposal plans to associate each of the identified areas of change with a designated non-denominational primary school. This would ensure that that all secondary school catchments align with primary school catchments.

3.3 The guarantee by the council to allow siblings in the affected schools to attend the same secondary school as their brothers or sisters provides re-assurance to families.

3.4 HM Inspectors are of the view that the council has made a reasonable case for change and that the proposal will assist it to achieve best value by managing its school estate efficiently and effectively.

### 4. Summary

West Lothian Council has set out a clear rationale for the proposal and has consulted stakeholders well. The proposal makes clear the need to ensure a sufficiency of school places across the four non-denominational secondary school catchment areas. HM Inspectors agree that the council is taking positive steps to offer a feasible solution that alleviates future potential capacity issues.

**HM Inspectors  
November 2021**