

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Lothian Council to review the non-denominational primary school catchment areas at Bridgend, Springfield, Hawkhill and Winchburgh Primary Schools.

January 2025

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 review the non-denominational primary school catchment areas at Bridgend, Springfield, Hawkhill and Winchburgh Primary Schools. 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.

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 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 December 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 site of Winchburgh, Bridgend and Springfield Primary Schools, 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 11 November to 20 December 2024. The proposal was available on the council website. Paper copies and accessible formats were available on request. A public meeting was held on 2 December 2024, which no members of the public attended. The council received two written responses to the consultation, neither of whom would be directly affected by the proposed catchment changes. The council replied to both consultees to address their questions, objections and alleged inaccuracies. The council also provided some further clarity where consultees may have misunderstood some details of the proposed changes.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 HM Inspectors support the proposal by West Lothian Council to review the non-denominational primary school catchment areas at Bridgend, Springfield, Hawkhill and Winchburgh Primary Schools. HM Inspectors agree that there will be no negative educational impact on children currently attending West Lothian schools as a result of the proposed changes. The proposed new catchment areas will be more closely aligned with natural geographic boundaries and communities. The proposal also has the potential to ensure the best use of school capacity as a result of any further housing development in the area in the future.

3.2 All of the staff, parents and children that HM Inspectors met with support the proposed changes to the non-denominational primary school catchment areas at Bridgend, Springfield, Hawkhill and Winchburgh Primary Schools. They agree that there will not be any negative educational impact on children currently attending the schools and did not raise any concerns. Stakeholders appreciate that the council are committed to ensuring that pupils can continue to attend their existing school for the remainder of their primary stage education; and that younger siblings will also be permitted to attend the same establishment.

3.3 During the consultation period consultees 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

HM Inspectors support the proposal by West Lothian Council to review the non-denominational primary school catchment areas. HM Inspectors agree that there will be no negative educational impact on children currently attending Bridgend, Springfield and Winchburgh Primary Schools as a result of the proposed changes. The proposed new catchment areas will be more closely aligned with natural geographic boundaries and communities and help to ensure the best use of school capacity in the area in the future. 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
January 2025