

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Lothian Council to relocate Cedarbank School, Livingston, to The James Young High School campus.

November 2019

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 relocate Cedarbank School to The James Young High School campus. 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 26 September 2019 at The James Young High School 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 sites of Cedarbank School and The James Young High School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

2.1 West Lothian Council undertook the consultation on its proposal with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 Cedarbank School is an authority-wide facility which provides education for secondary-aged young people who have a range of additional support needs relating to learning and social communication. It is currently operating across sites at Cedarbank School, Deans Community High School and Armadale Academy. The council proposes the construction of a new, integrated all-purpose facility on the campus of The James Young High School.

2.3 The consultation period incorporated a period of 30 school days from 9 September 2019 until 30 October 2019. Information about the proposal was made available in the local press, through a dedicated page on the West Lothian Council website, through West Lothian Council

digital media products, and was also available in hard copy in central locations within West Lothian and by postal distribution on request. The consultation document was made available through translation services and provision for deaf and hearing impaired, blind and visually impaired. Public meetings took place at Cedarbank School on 18 September 2019 and at The James Young High School on 26 September 2019. The first of these was attended by 13 members of the public and the second by 12 members of the public. There were 12 written responses to the consultation from individuals. None of these opposed the proposal, although some issues were raised including access to the proposed site and the size of the new Cedarbank building. Positive consultation responses were also received from pupil groups from three local schools and from Livingston Village Community Council. Further meetings were held with parents and staff to examine and discuss draft plans for the proposed new school building.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council has outlined a number of specific educational benefits of the proposal which are summarised in this section. Firstly, it believes that provision at the new Cedarbank School building will enable young people to access the curriculum in an alternative environment to mainstream school. The location of the proposed building should allow Cedarbank pupils to work in small group settings to meet their needs as well as having access to secondary education at The James Young High School. There is also a significant advantage to having all Cedarbank pupils and staff based in the same building. Overall, this is a potential educational benefit.

3.2 Secondly, the council believes that the location of the new building will enhance links with secondary schools as well as building upon strong community links. There is significant potential for staff and young people from Cedarbank School and The James Young High School working together in mutually beneficial ways, including sharing of practice and moderation of assessment standards. It will also be more straightforward to make community links when the school is on a single site rather than spread across three. Overall, this is a potential educational benefit.

3.3 Thirdly, the council maintains that there are no negative implications for either the management of the school or its staffing. Currently, a significant amount of management time is taken up by organising and timetabling the movement of staff and young people between different locations across the school's three sites. If the proposal goes ahead, senior staff should have more time for strategic and improvement activities within the school. Similarly, staff and pupils will have more time for learning activities which they would previously have used for travelling between sites. This is therefore a clear potential educational benefit.

3.4 Pupils, parents and staff of Cedarbank School who spoke to HM Inspectors are in favour of the proposal. They are keen for the whole school to be on a single site, and see benefits to the central location and to the access to secondary education in The James Young High School. They appreciated the recent opportunity to comment on draft plans for the new school and feel that it is vital for their involvement to continue so that the brief for the new school is comprehensive and that the new building is of an appropriate size and fit for purpose.

3.5 Pupils, parents and staff of The James Young High School who spoke to HM Inspectors are in favour of the proposal. They are keen to welcome young people and staff from Cedarbank School to their campus and are enthusiastic about ways in which young people from each school could benefit from the location of the new building, including access to a wider curriculum and work experience opportunities. They also see benefit in the opportunities for staff from both schools to work with and learn from each other, enhancing each other's practice. They are keen to be involved in the development of the project and would appreciate confirmation that the Cedarbank access road will be built first so that construction traffic does not have to use the busy narrow road which leads to The James Young High School.

4. Summary

This proposal has significant potential educational benefits for young people who currently attend Cedarbank School. They would have access to a more flexible, modern and integrated learning environment, with ready access to the curriculum opportunities and resources of The James Young High School. In preparing its final report, the council should address the issues raised by parents and staff relating to the specifications for the new school. In taking its proposal forward, an effective communication strategy and an action plan will be essential for the council to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged in this development. The council should include details of these in its final report.

**HM Inspectors
November 2019**