

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Lothian Council to create a new non-denominational primary school at Calderwood, East Calder and Associated Proposals.

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 create a new non-denominational primary school at Calderwood, East Calder. It is further proposed to review admission arrangements and establish a catchment area for the new school; review admission arrangements arising from proposed alterations to the current non-denominational catchment area at East Calder Primary School; and review transfer arrangements from primary school to secondary 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 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:

- 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
- visit to East Calder Primary 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 formal consultation ran from 26 September 2019 to 15 November 2019. Communication was issued to all statutory stakeholders at the affected schools and in the community informing them of this consultation. Pre consultation sessions were held during May 2019. A public meeting was held at East Calder Primary School on 24 October 2019. This was attended by 23 members of the public. There was one formal response received during the consultation period. All in favour of the proposed changes.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council has set out a strong case for its proposal to establish a new non-denominational primary school at Calderwood, East Calder and associated proposals. The proposed creation of a new education establishment and review of school catchment areas are required to ensure existing and future housing developments in East Calder have appropriate catchment schools and also ensure West Lothian Council meet its statutory educational responsibilities.

3.2 At present, East Calder Primary School has a capacity of 462 and a roll of 307 for school session 2018-19. Projections show an anticipated increase to roll numbers, which would lead to the school exceeding its capacity. Initial design intention is that the proposed new Calderwood Primary School will be constructed as a double stream capacity school to accommodate 462 pupils with a flexible design that will allow future expansion. A 128 place nursery will be a component of the proposed new development. If the proposal is approved, changes would come into effect in 2021.

3.3 Variations to admission arrangements are anticipated as a result of the establishment of a catchment area for the proposed new primary school at Calderwood and the associated proposal to alter the school catchment area at East Calder Primary School. Younger siblings of those pupils currently attending East Calder Primary School and living within the proposed new Calderwood Primary School catchment area will retain catchment status of the older sibling. East Calder Primary School and the proposed new primary school will both be associated primary schools aligned to West Calder High School.

3.4 The council has considered a number of educational benefit factors. This includes, the capacity of East Calder Primary School to meet growing roll numbers and context for the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. There will be improved use of indoor and outdoor space by children and the wider community, in the existing and the proposed new school. This recognises that community interaction can encourage a welcoming ethos, provides pupils with valuable life and interpersonal skills and promotes acknowledgement and respect for the local area. The council has also given due consideration of the sustainability of the construction of the new school, with room for expansion if required.

3.5 HM Inspectors met with parents and school staff in East Calder Primary School. All were supportive of the proposal. In particular, staff recognised that any new teaching staff would increase capacity across the cluster, thus providing opportunities for skills and resource sharing. Due to increasing roll numbers, many areas of the school that were previously used for music, drama and technology are now used as classrooms. Staff and children are looking forward to the possibility of having more flexible space for learning. However, school staff and parents are concerned about the potential for the roll at East Calder to reduce. Parents who live nearer to the proposed site may choose to enrol their children in the proposed new school. Ongoing dialogue with parents and carers will be important to gauge potential numbers and ensure children are supported with transition.

4. **Summary**

The council's proposal provides a strong case for the proposed new school. The proposal is supported with appropriate amendments to catchment areas, in line with the identified location of the proposed new Calderwood Primary School. The council outlines the associated educational benefits. HM Inspectors endorse this view. All children, parents and school staff who met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposal. The council's proposal, should it proceed, will see an increase in school estate to accommodate projected housing expansion within the community.

**HM Inspectors
November 2019**