

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Lothian Council to review admission catchment arrangements at Uphall, Kirkhill and Broxburn Primary Schools.

June 2024

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 admission catchment arrangements at Uphall, Kirkhill and Broxburn 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 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 7 May 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 Uphall, Kirkhill and Broxburn 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 West Lothian Council undertook a consultation process for the above proposal from 15 April to 31 May 2024. A public meeting was held on 7 May 2024. No members of the public attended this meeting. The council had only two responses to the consultation and both were in favour of the proposal.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council's proposals to alter the non-denominational catchment areas is to ensure that the catchment boundaries fit better with community ties. In particular, it is seeking to ensure better alignment with community council and natural geographic boundaries. Of the five small areas impacted by the proposal, only Loaninghill has any residential properties.

3.2 The council's educational benefits statement is fairly general, making reference to the national guidance for Curriculum for Excellence. They state that the key advantage for the impacted schools is that they will continue to deliver the full breadth of Curriculum for Excellence. HM Inspectors agree that the council's proposals should have no any detrimental impact for families living in the affected areas. Schools should continue to deliver all aspects of Curriculum for Excellence. The council confirm in their proposal that children can continue to attend their existing school for the remainder of their primary education. The council have further guaranteed that any younger siblings may also retain the catchment status, should parents wish them to attend the same primary school. As the sibling link is guaranteed, HM Inspectors agree there should also be no detrimental impact on younger children entering education in the coming years.

3.3 HM Inspectors met with parents, children and staff in the three primary schools. All stakeholders were in favour of the proposal. Headteachers, staff and parents feel that the proposal makes sense, with better alignment to natural community boundaries. Children who met with HM Inspectors thought it was a good idea for children to remain in their current schools, where they already have friends. Pupils from Uphall Primary School said that it made sense for children from Uphall to attend their local school. Although positive about the proposal, a few parents questioned the possibility of further school consultations should any new housebuilding take place.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree with the proposal to review the admission catchment arrangements for the three primary schools. There were very few responses to the public consultation and stakeholders were positive overall. This change should continue to provide educational benefits for children whilst aligning community and natural boundaries within West Lothian.

HM Inspectors
June 2024