

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Lothian Council to vary admission arrangements by altering the catchment areas of Polkemmet Primary School, Croftmalloch Primary School and Greenrigg Primary School.

December 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 vary admission arrangements by altering the catchment areas of Polkemmet Primary School, Croftmalloch Primary School and Greenrigg Primary 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
- visits to the site of Polkemmet Primary School, Croftmalloch Primary School and Greenrigg 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 30 October 2019 to 10 December 2019. Communication was issued to all statutory stakeholders at the affected schools and in the community informing them of this consultation. A public meeting was held at Polkemmet Primary School on 13 November 2019. This was attended by the seven stakeholders. All questions from attendees were responded to positively. During the consultation period there was one email response received, which was a question requiring clarification. There was no expression of opposition to the proposal received during the statutory consultation.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council has set out a strong case for its proposal to vary admission arrangements by altering the catchment areas of Polkemmet Primary School, Croftmalloch Primary School and Greenrigg Primary School. The proposal takes account of projected increase in roll numbers as a result of a major housing development in the area. The proposal will help to ensure West Lothian Council meets its statutory educational responsibilities.

3.2 The Heartlands site is a major development with more than 2,500 new houses planned in the West Lothian Local Development Plan. Almost the entire site is currently located within Greenrigg Primary School catchment area. The school does not have the capacity to accommodate children from all the new houses. The proposal would move over 400 residential properties from the Greenrigg Primary School catchment area to the Polkemmet Primary School catchment area. It is also proposed to transfer over ten existing residential properties and a large area of the proposed Heartlands development to the Croftmalloch Primary School catchment area.

3.3 Younger siblings of those pupils currently attending any of the non-denominational primary schools detailed in this report will retain catchment status of the older sibling. Similarly, they will continue to have a primary to secondary school association in the catchment of Whitburn Academy. There are no anticipated amendments to existing school transport provisions as a result of the proposals.

3.4 The council has considered a number of educational benefit factors. This includes the capacity of the non-denominational primary schools to meet growing roll numbers. The use of indoor and outdoor space by children. The provision of breakfast clubs which are helping to provide children with a healthy start to the school day.

3.5 HM Inspectors met with children, parents and school staff from the affected primary schools. All were supportive of the proposal. Parents and staff recognise potential changes to the demographics of the area and welcome opportunities for increased diversity within the school. Children are looking forward to making new friends within and outwith the school.

3.6 Staff at Greenrigg Primary School recognise that the proposed Heartlands site would potentially increase the school's roll beyond its capacity. The proposed catchment realignment would help to address this. However, staff and children in Polkemmet and Croftmalloch Primary Schools recognise that potential increased roll will impact in areas of the school that they currently use for music, drama and technology. These areas may now be needed as classrooms. Moving forward it will be important to consider the use of internal and external space in all non-denominational primary schools and ensure that they are used to their capacity.

4. Summary

The council's proposal provides a strong case for its proposal to vary admission arrangements by altering the catchment areas of Polkemmet Primary, Croftmalloch Primary and Greenrigg Primary Schools. 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 improved alignment of localities to school catchment areas. This forward planning will assist the authority in managing the rolls in all affected schools.

HM Inspectors
December 2019