

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Lothian Council to review admission arrangements arising from school catchment area variations at Linlithgow Academy and Bathgate Academy.

June 2023

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 West Lothian Council's proposal to review admission arrangements arising from school catchment area variations at Linlithgow Academy and Bathgate Academy. 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 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:

- 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;
- visits to the site of Bathgate Academy and Linlithgow Academy, 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 consultation ran from 24 April until 9 June 2023. A public meeting was held on 30 May 2023 at Linlithgow Academy. No members of the public or parents attended. The principal aim of the proposal is to match the non-denominational primary school boundaries with the non-denominational secondary school boundaries. Only a small area with 17 residential properties is impacted by the proposal and there are currently no school age children residing there. The council did not receive any responses to the consultation.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council sets out its educational benefits statement in terms of aligning the secondary catchments with the already amended primary catchments. This is in line with the arrangements for all primary school catchments across West Lothian to ensure that children can progress to secondary school with their peers. HM Inspectors agree that as both secondary schools are equipped to offer the full breadth of the curriculum, the proposal will be of benefit to families living in the catchment area.

3.2 HM Inspectors met with headteachers of the secondary schools affected by the proposal. Both agree that the proposal makes sense. However, as there are no children of school age living in the area impacted, there will be no immediate impact on either school. Neither headteacher had received any negative comments from parents, young people or staff regarding the proposal. It was noted that should the proposal go ahead, it may reduce the need for families to make placing requests.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree with the council's proposal to amend the catchment areas for Linlithgow and Bathgate Academies. The proposed change will ensure that any families moving into the area impacted are aligned to a primary school in Linlithgow and Linlithgow Academy rather than Bathgate Academy. The proposal ensures that that primary and secondary catchments are fully aligned. It should also mean that young people benefit from delivery of the full breadth of the curriculum, no matter which secondary school they attend.

HM Inspectors
June 2023