

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Lothian Council to alter the catchment areas of Pinkie St Peter's Primary School and Wallyford Primary School.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments contained in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of East Lothian Council's proposal to alter the catchment areas of Pinkie St Peter's Primary School and Wallyford 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 a copy of 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. Where a council is proposing to close a school, it needs to follow all legislative obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

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:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 7 December 2016 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 Pinkie St Peter's Primary School and Wallyford Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 East Lothian Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* and the amendments in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.

2.2 The consultation process ran from 8 November 2016 to 20 December 2016. During this period the council held a public meeting at Brunton Hall, Musselburgh which was attended by one parent. Statutory consultees, including Parent Councils of the schools directly involved and Wallyford and Musselburgh and Inveresk Community Councils, were informed of the consultation in writing. Consultation documentation was published on East Lothian Council's website and copies were available for public consultation at several venues during the consultation period, including the schools concerned. A proforma questionnaire and an email address were made available for responses. The council received five responses. Four of these responses indicated support for the proposal. Stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors, including pupils attending the two affected schools, felt that the council had provided good opportunities for consultation and had listened to their views.

3. Educational Aspects of Proposal

3.1 East Lothian Council's proposal to extend the catchment area of Pinkie St Peter's Primary School to include the whole of the planned Levenhall housing development offers educational and social benefits to the children who will come to reside in that area. The site of the housing development currently has no residential properties. The proposal will allow all primary-aged children who will come to live in the Levenhall housing development to attend the same school and this will help them to develop and sustain friendships both in school and at home.

3.2 The Levenhall site is located closer to Pinkie St Peter's Primary School than to Wallyford Primary School and the proposal has the potential to reduce traffic congestion in the area and to encourage more children to walk to school.

3.3 The council acknowledges that it will need to provide an additional phased permanent extension at Pinkie St Peter's Primary School to accommodate the increased roll resulting from its proposal. In taking the proposal forward, the council should continue to engage with all stakeholders in planning this extension.

3.4 Almost all parents, pupils and staff who met with HM Inspectors or responded to the council's questionnaire support the proposal.

4. Summary

East Lothian Council's proposal to extend the catchment area of Pinkie St Peter's Primary School has clear educational benefits. It will allow all children who come to live in the planned housing development at Levenhall to attend the same school. This will help to promote a greater sense of community in the new development and will encourage children to develop and maintain friendships with their neighbours. The proposal has the potential for encouraging children to walk to school and to reduce possible traffic congestion in the area. The council should continue to engage with stakeholders as it makes plans for a further extension to Pinkie St Peter's Primary School.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
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