

Work started on extension to West Calder High School

Work has started on an extension to West Calder High School, to help accommodate more pupils.

The school is being extended to cope with rising pupil numbers – more than 200 – because of ongoing housing development in the school's catchment area. The bill for the extension is being funded through contributions from housing developers.

Councillors on West Lothian Council's Executive heard the early works are required to safely deliver the new planned £9 million extension to the school by August 2025.

West Calder High has one of the largest catchment areas in the county occupying the Calder, on the southern boundary of West Lothian. It stretches from beyond Fauldhouse in the west to beyond Linburn on the border with Edinburgh.

It includes housing development around West Calder at Gavieside as well as the Core Development Area at Calderwood in East Calder .

When the school was built in 2018, it was specifically designed to be extended once pupil numbers had risen high enough to require it. The extended building will again feature innovative open-plan teaching spaces.

Councillors were assured that there would be no disruption to school life over the next year.

East Calder councillor and Conservative group leader Damian Doran-Timson asked: "Is there any impact to the students while

the work is going on? If not, how is that mitigated?

Dr Cook "There should be no impact whatsoever in terms of the building because it is at the side of the school. It is very similar to the extension we have completed at Calderwood Primary."

The extension to the west of the current building will provide essential open-plan teaching spaces over two storeys with accessible roof space for teaching, and will increase the school's total capacity by 220 to 1,320.

Chairing the meeting, councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick the council leader said: "We welcome the work that has been done by officers."

The school has welcomed a new headteacher for the new school year.

Gerard Higgins will take up his new role at West Calder at the start of the new academic term in August.

He is arriving in West Lothian after five years at Rosshall Academy in Glasgow where was in the role of Depute Head Teacher with responsibility for attainment.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter