

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HMIE addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Falkirk Council to permanently close Limerigg Primary School and realign its catchment to Slamannan Primary School.

April 2026

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from HMIE 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 Falkirk Council to permanently close Limerigg Primary School and realign its catchment area to Slamannan 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' 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. Where a council is proposing to close a school, there are specific additional obligations. These include notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers. There are special provisions that apply to close a rural school.

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 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 11 March 2026 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 Limerigg Primary School and Slamannan Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

1.4 As the proposal, if implemented, will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of any reasonable alternatives to closure of Limerigg Primary School the likely effect on the local community and the likely effect of any different travelling arrangements of the proposed closure.

2. Consultation process

2.1 Falkirk Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The public consultation ran from 23 February to 24 April 2026. Copies of the proposal were made available to stakeholders and on the council website. The council held a public meeting on 11 March 2026, which was attended by one member of the public. The council received four responses to its online consultation and one email response. Of the responses to the online consultation, one agreed with the proposal and three disagreed. Stakeholders raised concerns about the management of a septic tank, which is shared with nearby housing, site security and anti-social behaviour. Clarity was also sought about land ownership, which was gifted to the school. Whist saddened by the school's closure, a few stakeholders are concerned about the future use of the building and expressed it should be retained for community benefit.

2.3 Falkirk Council consulted children currently attending Slamannan Primary School. Children expressed mixed views on whether the school should close. Children were asked to share their views on the future use of the school building. Suggestions included a community centre, outdoor centre or a shop.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 Falkirk Council mothballed Limerigg Primary School in August 2019. The school roll declined for a prolonged period of time and dropped to five children during session 2018-2019. Since then, children who would have attended the school have been reallocated to the catchment area of Slamannan Primary School.

3.2 In 2021, Falkirk Council undertook a statutory consultation and the Education, Children and Young People Executive agreed to the permanent closure of the school. Scottish Ministers referred this decision to the School Closures Review Panel. The Panel concluded that the council had not fully complied with the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. As a result, the closure was not approved. The council was required to reconsider alternatives and undertake a fresh statutory consultation. Falkirk Council have since undertaken a preliminary community engagement under section 12A of the Act.

3.3 As the primary aged population in the catchment area has not increased, nor is there evidence that it will increase in the future, the council now proposes again to permanently close Limerigg Primary School. The catchment area of Slamannan Primary School would be changed to permanently reflect this.

3.4 The council has outlined several educational benefits within the proposal in relation to learning and teaching, educational outcomes, experiences and opportunities, and the environment for learning. HM Inspectors believe that the council has demonstrated the educational benefits successfully within the proposal. HM Inspectors agree there is sufficient merit to consider the permanent closure of the school.

3.5 Almost all stakeholders who spoke with HM Inspectors were in favour of closing Limerigg Primary School. All staff recognise the potential benefits of the proposal. Staff talk positively

about approaches to meeting learners' needs. Children benefit from collaborative learning with peers of the same age and stage. They believe this supports social and emotional development and better prepares them for transition to secondary school. All children agree that they are settled in their current school and benefit from positive learning experiences to develop social and interpersonal skills by working with a larger group of peers. They benefit from taking leadership roles, which are more accessible in a larger school context. A few children from Limerigg catchment area are sad that Limerigg Primary School may not reopen. They feel they would benefit from more active ways to travel to school.

3.6 As the proposal, if implemented, will lead to the closure of a rural school, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of the factors to which it should have special regard. The council has continued to monitor the pupil roll and engage with the school community. There are sound reasons to consider the long-term viability of the school. The council has consulted and considered reasonable alternatives to the closure of the school, including the reopening of the school, increasing the occupancy by rezoning and extending the catchment area and making available capacity for early years provision. There is consensus across stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors that these options are not viable and would not result in educational benefits to children. Travelling arrangements for children will continue with free transport provided for the relatively short distance of around two miles.

3.7 Whilst most members of the community who engaged with the consultation process do not agree that the school should close, they believe that the building should be retained for community benefit. They want to ensure the building does not fall into further disrepair. The council should continue to engage with local residents to address the concerns in relation to the shared septic tank, security and anti-social behaviour.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that there are clear educational benefits of closing Limerigg Primary School and for children to continue their education at Slamannan Primary School. Children benefit from positive learning experiences at the school. They benefit from learning and socialising with a larger peer group and enjoy the leadership opportunities available in Slamannan Primary School. Whilst most members of the community who engaged with the consultation process do not agree that school should close, they believe the building should be used for community benefit. Should the proposal go ahead, the council should continue to communicate with the local community to address their concerns and explore plans for the future use of the school building.

HM Inspectors
April 2026

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland