

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HMIE addressing educational aspects of the proposal by North Lanarkshire Council to establish an enhanced provision within Holy Cross Primary School.

March 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 North Lanarkshire Council to establish an enhanced provision within Holy Cross 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.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children 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:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 22 January 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;
- consideration of further information on all schools affected; and
- visits to the site of Holy Cross Primary School, a meeting with local authority representatives, a meeting with a representative of the Roman Catholic diocese, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The public consultation ran from 8 December 2025 to 9 February 2026. Copies of the proposal were made available to stakeholders and on the council website. The proposal to establish an enhanced provision within Holy Cross Primary School also proposes to establish similar provision in four other primary schools. A public meeting was held on 22 January 2026 at Holy Cross Primary School, which was attended by seven members of the public and one member of staff. Questions at the public meeting were around the contingency plan if the proposal was rejected by North Lanarkshire Council, the numbers of children in the provision, and staffing and resources. Attendees expressed their support for the proposal. The council received 26 email submissions. All were extremely positive about the proposal; almost all were from family and friends who knew a child in the pilot enhanced provision.

2.3 In addition to the online consultation and public meeting, the council held a series of focus groups with staff, parents, children in the pilot enhanced support provision and children from the wider school community. Questions from staff and parents focused on the practical arrangements for the provision, such as additional staff to cover break time and the need for resources as the children grow. All children engaged with were very positive about the provision.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council outlines several educational benefits in the proposal that it expects will be achieved to meet the needs of children with the requirement for intensive support. This includes strengthened leadership, transition, learning and teaching practice and integrated planning with partners. The council also highlights the benefits of appropriately designed spaces for learning, the use of technology and an appropriately personalised curriculum. That the enhanced provision will allow children to remain within their local communities and attend school with their local peers. The council states that the proposal will provide educational benefits in line with the findings of its additional support needs (ASN) Review 2019. HM Inspectors agree that the enhanced support provision has the potential for these educational benefits to be realised. However, the council has not set out clearly in the proposal for stakeholders what its vision, strategy and operational plan for ASN means for how this enhanced support provision will develop over time. Therefore, it is difficult for stakeholders to understand how the council plans to effectively and efficiently meet the rising demand for places that they have identified. In taking forward this proposal, the council should explain clearly to stakeholders how, when taken together, this and other enhanced support provision will meet the needs of all children who require intensive support.

3.2 HM Inspectors met with children, parents and a variety of staff across the school and in the enhanced support provision. All stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors support the council's proposal. Parents are generally happy with the current level of support, effective communication and wider positive impact on the school community.

3.3 Stakeholders spoke positively about the way the pilot has strengthened the school community with mainstream pupils supporting and including children from the enhanced support provision through whole school activities and a buddying programme. HM Inspectors also recognise the positive work of staff within the pilot, particularly their nurturing approaches and strong relationships, which have helped almost all children settle well. As a result, most children are now managing routines appropriate to their needs and showing early signs of increased interaction with peers and staff, with a few beginning to engage with mainstream peers. However, staff and parents have lots of questions about how the provision will develop in the coming years.

They would like clearer information about how children's needs will continue to be met as they progress through their education.

3.4 Staff noted that the furniture in the room is aimed at a younger age group. They also noted that in the future the layout of the building may require additional secure doors to be installed. If the council goes ahead with the proposal, it will be important they ensure that the enhanced provision is appropriately resourced. There is also a need to ensure that the indoor and outdoor spaces and facilities are regularly reviewed to ensure that they can adapt as the children grow and their needs change.

3.5 During the early stages of the pilot, school staff highlighted to the council the need for some additional staffing to provide adequate operational staff cover throughout the day. The council have since taken steps to recruit more staff. Staff were clear that the additional hours are key to supporting wellbeing and maximising learning time. The current staffing is limiting the time that children could spend in mainstream classes or on participating in whole school activities. If the council goes ahead with the proposal, it will need to continue to review staffing levels to ensure that they are operationally adequate to meet children's needs. Otherwise, there is a risk that staff support for children across the wider school is negatively impacted. It will also be essential to ensure that all staff within the enhanced support provision are suitably qualified and trained to meet the educational needs of children requiring intensive support. This may include further professional learning to meet the complex needs of children placed in the provision which will change over time.

3.6 HM Inspectors met with a representative of the diocese who expressed support for the proposal. They recognise the benefits to the school and local community of this inclusive approach. In line with the Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland, the diocese expects that any staff appointed to the provision will be aware of the Catholic context of the school.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has the potential for the intended educational benefits to be realised for the children currently placed there. All stakeholders who responded to the consultation and who met with HM Inspectors support the council's proposal to establish an enhanced provision within Holy Cross Primary School. However, the proposal does not provide sufficient clarity for stakeholders on how the increasing demand for enhanced support across early years, primary and secondary will be met in North Lanarkshire over time. The council should explain more clearly to stakeholders how its overarching vision and strategy for ASN will work in practice, and how the educational benefits for other children who require intensive support will be met. The council should also continue to work closely with stakeholders to review regularly children's needs and to plan and adapt the provision appropriately. The council should also ensure that the enhanced provision continues to be resourced sufficiently and does not negatively impact on mainstream provision.

HM Inspectors
March 2026

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