

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HMIE addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Fife Council to close Kirkton of Largo Primary School and to rezone the catchment area of Lundin Mill 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 Fife Council to close Kirkton of Largo Primary School and to rezone the catchment area of Lundin Mill 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 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 9 February 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 Waid Academy and Lundin Mill Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees and meetings with community representatives.

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 Kirkton of Largo 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 Fife Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.2 Fife Council took the decision to temporarily close Kirkton of Largo Primary School in January 2025. There were no pupils enrolled at the school from the academic session 2023/2024 up to the present. From October 2023, the council carried out regular engagement with parents. Children were offered places at Lundin Mill Primary School and transport if they met the distance criteria. Kirkton of Largo Primary School has a shared headship with Lundin Mill Primary School.

2.3 The public consultation ran from 21 January to 10 March 2026. Copies of the proposal were made available to stakeholders and on the council website. Stakeholders were invited to complete a consultation response form. A public meeting was held on 9 February 2026 at Durham Hall, Lower Largo. Two informal drop-in sessions took place at Lundin Mill Primary on 3 February 2026. Seven people attended the public meeting and one person attended an informal drop-in session. Attendees asked about transport arrangements and if there was enough capacity at Lundin Mill Primary School. The council received nine online response forms. Six respondents supported the proposal, two did not and one selected 'don't know'. Respondents raised issues including safe travel for children going to Lundin Mill Primary School and the future use of the Kirkton of Largo school building.

2.4 Council officers conducted two pupil consultation sessions at Lundin Mill Primary School with a total of 30 children from P4 to P7. Most children did not want to attend a reopened Kirkton of Largo Primary School. They were concerned that very low numbers would limit their friendships, play and group activities. A few children thought it could be more difficult to learn in a single P1-P7 class. A few other children thought that smaller schools could offer more individual attention. Most pupils were positive about the current roll at Lundin Mill Primary School and wanted numbers to stay broadly similar. A small number liked the idea of reopening Kirkton of Largo due to its location but emphasised the need for a balanced number of pupils.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 Fife Council proposes to permanently close Kirkton of Largo Primary School and rezone the catchment area to Lundin Mill Primary School. The council has provided a comprehensive educational benefits statement, which outlines the benefits for children in the Kirkton of Largo Primary School catchment and those attending Lundin Mill Primary School. The council recognises that most primary-aged children from Kirkton of Largo Primary School catchment are attending Lundin Mill Primary School. In its proposal, the council states that being part of a larger school has the potential to enhance children's curriculum experiences, including leadership and team roles. A larger pupil roll at Lundin Mill Primary School will allow classes to be organised across narrower year groups. This could help to support planning and increase opportunities for peer-group learning. Children from Kirkton of Largo are settled in Lundin Mill Primary School. They enjoy learning alongside peers and are developing wider friendship groups. There are more lunchtime and after-school activities than were previously available at Kirkton of Largo Primary School. HM Inspectors agree that there are potential educational benefits for the children attending Lundin Mill Primary School and children from the Kirkton of Largo catchment.

3.2 Most of the children, young people, parents, staff and community that spoke with HM Inspectors support the council's proposal to permanently close Kirkton of Largo Primary School. Stakeholders are disappointed that Kirkton of Largo Primary School is currently closed. However, they understand the council's reasoning behind the temporary closure and do not think it is feasible for the school to reopen. A few stakeholders would prefer the school to reopen as they feel it is a valuable asset for the community.

3.3 All stakeholders that met HM Inspectors agree that rezoning the catchment area to Lundin Mill Primary School makes sense. Projections show there is capacity within Lundin Mill Primary School to accommodate children from the Kirkton of Largo Primary School catchment. This will help to sustain the school roll, which is predicted to fall in the next few years. Parents do not want to move children who are settled and happy at Lundin Mill Primary School. Children and young people who met with HM Inspectors spoke positively about their experiences of being at Kirkton of Largo Primary School. They liked the smaller class sizes and the access to the outdoors. However, most children agreed that they would not want to return to Kirkton of Largo Primary School. If the proposal is implemented, stakeholders welcome the opportunity for Lundin Mill Primary School to participate in the wider community of Kirkton of Largo.

3.4 A few parents with younger children would have liked their children to attend Kirkton of Largo Primary School and identified a lack of out of school care as an issue. Parents would like the council to explore the possibility of re-purposing the school building to provide services they feel are missing in the community such as out of school care, playgroup provision or support to children with additional support needs. If the decision is made to close the school permanently, most stakeholders want to see the building used to benefit the community. Community representatives do not see the need for another community centre in the area. However, they recognise the need for further engagement with the community to discuss options.

3.5 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. As part of the options appraisal the council considered a range of factors. This included, reopening the school or continuing with the temporary closure. In considering the rezoning of the catchment area, four other schools were considered alongside Lundin Mill Primary School. The council have stated that they do not see continuing with the temporary closure as an option. Ongoing engagement with local parents has shown that while parents are disappointed with the temporary closure they have not requested for the school to reopen. Most parents have opted for nearby Lundin Mill Primary School. In considering the permanent closure, the council notes that there were no children enrolled for the last three academic sessions up to and including in 2025/2026. Projected pupil numbers do not show a significant increase in the catchment area. HM Inspectors agree with the council's appraisal of the options.

3.6 Most children from the Kirkton of Largo area currently attend Lundin Mill Primary School. Where children meet the distance criteria, transport has been provided. If the proposal is implemented, this should mean there would be no change for children currently attending Lundin Mill Primary School. The council has also stated that if the proposal is implemented, they will review the walking routes to Lundin Mill Primary School, in line with their transport policy. Consideration was also given to the rezoning of the catchment area. Four other schools were considered. Lundin Mill Primary School is the closest at 1.4 miles from Kirkton of Largo Primary School and already has a shared headship. HM Inspectors agree with the council's position that Lundin Mill Primary School is the most appropriate catchment to rezone.

3.7 In considering the likely impact on the local community, the council noted that Lundin Mill Primary School already has links with local groups. Community halls are available in the area and no local groups regularly used Kirkton of Largo Primary School. As a result, the council believes that the impact of closure would be minimal for the community. HM Inspectors agree with the conclusions that the council has drawn from consideration of the alternatives to closure.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree with the educational benefits outlined in the council's proposal to permanently close Kirkton of Largo Primary School. There have been no enrolments for the last three academic sessions. Lundin Mill Primary School has the capacity to accommodate children from the area now and in the future and to meet their educational needs. Whilst stakeholders are disappointed, they agree with the council's assessment. Stakeholders also agree that the catchment should be re-zoned to Lundin Mill Primary School. This is the closest school, which most children from Kirkton of Largo Primary School catchment already attend. Most stakeholders would like to see the building used to benefit the community. If this proposal is agreed, the council should engage further with local people to explore future options for the building.

HM Inspectors
March 2026

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