HMIE | His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland
Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh airson Foghlam ann an Alba

# Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

## Report by HMIE addressing educational aspects of the proposal by North Lanarkshire Council to amend the current Admissions Policy: Priorities for admissions: Primary and Secondary Mainstream

September 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 amend the current Admissions Policy: Priorities for admissions: Primary and Secondary Mainstream. 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 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 meetings held on 2 June and 4 June 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;
- visits to the sites of Aitkenhead Primary School, Christ the King Primary School and Nursery Class, Greengairs Primary School and Nursery Class, Our Lady and St Francis Primary School and Nursery class, Clyde Valley High School, Cumbernauld Academy, Greenfaulds High School, St Aidan's High School and St Ambrose High School, including discussion with relevant consultees;
- discussion with a representative from the Scottish Catholic Education Service.


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## 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 statutory consultation ran from 5 May to 21 August 2026. Copies of the proposal were made available to stakeholders and on the council website and social media. Having listened to comments and feedback at the public consultation meetings, the Education Service amended the Admissions Policy proposal. The statutory consultation period was extended by ten days, excluding school days. This was due to the amendments and links to the proposal on the council website not working initially and to allow for further consideration.

2.3 The council held three public meetings on 2, 3 and 4 June 2026 at Clyde Valley High School, St Ambrose High School and Cumbernauld Academy. Thirty-three stakeholders in total attended the public meetings. Interested parties were invited to respond to the statutory consultation through the council's online platform or by email. In total, the council received eight written responses to the consultation. Stakeholders raised queries and concerns about placing requests from families, whose children already attended associated primary schools, possibly being refused places at secondary schools which are at capacity. Stakeholders also raised queries and concerns around catchment areas and the amount of new housing in North Lanarkshire since catchment areas were last reviewed and amended. A few stakeholders expressed concerns about some cross boundary primary and secondary school catchments between North Lanarkshire Council and neighbouring local authorities.

## 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 North Lanarkshire Council proposes to review and amend the council's processes in managing school admissions as a result of placing requests to mainstream primary and secondary schools. North Lanarkshire Council state this should improve transparency, expand capacity, and better support appeals, which should enhance the system's fairness and effectiveness. HM Inspectors and almost all stakeholders who met with them agree that there are education benefits in North Lanarkshire Council providing one clear point of reference for admissions as a result of placing requests across all mainstream educational establishments in North Lanarkshire. HM Inspectors and almost all stakeholders who met with them agree this proposal should support North Lanarkshire Council to ensure fairness and transparency in the allocation of placing requests. They agree this should improve transparency and enhance the system's fairness and effectiveness.

3.2 HM Inspectors agree that there are educational benefits in North Lanarkshire Council being better placed to ensure that all children have access to quality education in a school that meets their needs, whilst also managing resources and school capacities effectively. HM Inspectors agree that partnership working with parents through a clearer policy will help schools to develop a warm, welcoming and inclusive ethos. HM Inspectors and almost all stakeholders agree that this would support the council to ensure that they can provide consistency for pupils in their school career and support choice for parents. Stakeholders who spoke to HM Inspectors say that they would like the council to consider making the process for enrolment in P1, and subsequent consideration of placing requests, earlier in the academic year. A few parents, children and young people describe missing out on enhanced transition due to the timing of approval of placing requests. They report


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this can cause undue stress for children and families. In taking forward its proposal, it will be important for the council to consider facilitating enhanced transition for children and young people awaiting the outcome of placing requests.

3.3 Currently, children living within the catchment area for a few North Lanarkshire Council primary schools normally progress to secondary schools in other local authorities. Stakeholders say those parents of children who attend such North Lanarkshire primary schools, as a result of a placing request, are unclear on the process for their child to attend secondary schools which are out with North Lanarkshire. They believe if a child attends a particular North Lanarkshire primary school as a result of a placing request, they should be considered a priority to progress to the associated secondary school in another council. Stakeholders are worried that the proposal could negatively impact on the continuity of learning and wellbeing as these children move into secondary education. They would like clear guidance about this. In taking forward its proposal, it will be important for the council to consider providing clear guidance about how parents can access information about admissions policies in other associated local authorities.

3.4 Currently, children living within the catchment area for primary schools in a few other local authorities progress to secondary school in North Lanarkshire. Stakeholders believe if a child attends a particular North Lanarkshire primary school as a result of a placing request, they should be considered a priority to progress to the associated secondary school. In taking forward this proposal, it will be important for the council to consider if such requests should be given priority.

3.5 Stakeholders are concerned that current catchment areas do not meet the needs of communities which have grown, and continue to grow, due to housing development within the council. In taking forward its proposal, North Lanarkshire Council should consider reviewing catchment areas for mainstream schools (primary and secondary).

3.6 The Catholic Church supports the proposal to ensure that denominational primary and secondary schools are fully available to Catholic pupils who live in the school's catchment area with priority for enrolment to each school given to Catholic pupils in possession of a baptismal certificate.

3.7 Although the proposed amendments to the current Admissions Policy (mainstream) do not make any changes to Gàidhlig Medium Education, the council should invite Bòrd na Gàidhlig to provide a report or express their views on its proposal. The council may also benefit from engaging with Comann nam Pàrant (Nàiseanta) to ensure full representation of parents' views on their proposals. It should give further consideration to users of Gàidhlig Medium Education to enable their proposed Admissions Policy (mainstream) to be fully a one-step and inclusive reference for all educational provisions. In so doing, the council should take account of legislation specific to Gàidhlig and specify how their proposal, should it be progressed, meets outcomes to promote Gàidhlig and North Lanarkshire Council's Gàidhlig Language Plan.

## 4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree with the educational benefits outlined by the council of the proposed amendments. They agree that the proposed amendments should support the council to adopt a more rigorous process to continue to ensure fairness and transparency. HM Inspectors agree that the proposal should help North Lanarkshire Council to ensure it can provide consistency for pupils


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in their school career and support choice for parents. HM Inspectors agree that the council should make the proposed amendments to the current Admissions Policy (mainstream). Should this proposal be agreed, it will be important for North Lanarkshire Council to work with schools and other relevant local authorities to support cohesive and effective transitions for all children. When taking forward this proposal, it will be important to clearly signpost parents, to whom this may apply, to placing request information in other local authorities. Should this proposal be agreed, it will be important for the council to consider a review of catchments for all mainstream primary and secondary schools in North Lanarkshire. In finalising its report, the council should consult Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Comann nam Pàrant and seek their views on the proposals.

**HM Inspectors**
**September 2026**

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


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