

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

**Report by HMIE addressing educational aspects of the proposal by
Perth and Kinross Council to Permanently establish a new Intensive
Support Provision in St John's Roman Catholic (RC) Academy**

January 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 Perth and Kinross Council to permanently establish a new Intensive Support Provision (ISP) in St John's RC Academy. 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 meeting held on 26 November 2025 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 St John's RC Academy, Our Lady's Primary School, St Dominic's Primary School and St Stephen's Primary School including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

2.1 Perth and Kinross 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 November to 19 December 2025. The council published the proposal paper on its website and made copies available to relevant stakeholders. The website included a helpful video, which explained the consultation process in an accessible way. The council held a public meeting on 26 November 2025, which four members of the public

attended. The council received a total of six responses to its online survey, the majority (66%) of which were in favour of the proposal. Attendees asked questions about the allocation of spaces, admission criteria and transport arrangements. They also raised queries about the recruitment and training of staff, opportunities for integration with mainstream teaching and resources, and timelines for decisions.

2.3 The council undertook consultation with children and young people from the associated primary schools and at St John's RC Academy. The council received 23 responses from associated primary schools, and 206 responses from St John's RC Academy, including individual and group responses. Most children and young people had no concerns about having an ISP at St John's RC Academy and did not think that it would change their school day. They believe this may help St John's RC Academy to be more inclusive. They also think it is important that young people attend their local catchment high school and with their peer group and siblings.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 HM Inspectors agree that Perth and Kinross Council's proposal to establish an ISP at St John's RC Academy has potential educational benefits. Across Perth and Kinross there is currently no ISP provision at either primary or secondary stage within a denominational setting for children and young people with complex or multiple needs. As a result, these pupils travel longer distances to access an ISP, which reduces their access to faith-based education within their local community. This proposed ISP has the potential to support the council in meeting the projected increase in the number of children and young people requiring specialist support across denominational schools from August 2026.

3.2 The council has stated a range of educational benefits it considers this proposal will bring. This includes providing a modern learning environment for children and young people with additional support needs who require an intensive level of support. It aims to enhance locally available learning experiences and outcomes through a broad curriculum. This should support progression to the senior phase within an all-through ISP comprising both primary and secondary provision. HM Inspectors agree that proposed adaptations for the new ISP at St John's RC Academy could provide an appropriate and accessible learning environment for children and young people who require intensive support. These adaptations, together with access to wider school facilities, should enable children and young people to experience a broad curriculum within an environment tailored to meet their individual needs.

3.3 Establishing an ISP in a faith-based setting will align religious values and preferences for those who choose a Roman Catholic education. Children and young people accessing the new ISP at St John's RC Academy may benefit from remaining within a faith-based school community and maintain important social connections. They will be able to progress in an all through ISP from primary to secondary education. This has the potential to minimise the number of transitions they experience. There are also potential benefits to further opportunities for inclusion in mainstream school activities, as appropriate.

3.4 HM Inspectors met with children, young people, parents and staff to discuss their views. All stakeholders are in favour of the proposal. They agree that establishing an ISP within St John's RC Academy will enable children and young people to access to specialist provision, whilst remaining in a faith-based learning environment. They agree that children and young people should be able

to progress with their peers and siblings. Stakeholders are aware that children travel out with their catchment area to access specialist support and this is having an impact on children and their families. As a result, children may experience multiple transitions, which may disrupt continuity of the learning experience. A few stakeholders from Crieff also expressed concern over the lack of dedicated school transport to and from St John's RC Academy.

3.5 Children and young people from St John's RC Academy who met with HM Inspectors want to ensure that everyone is welcome and included in their school. They feel strongly that children and young people who are allocated spaces in the ISP are included in the school 'house system'. They believe that this will help to create opportunities to build relationships, make new friendships and learn from each other.

3.6 A few stakeholders raised considerations for the implementation of the proposal. This includes the use of shared spaces such as the life skills and sensory areas. A few staff from St John's RC Academy would like clarity of roles, such as the named person, across the ISP and how this may impact on the wider school. Stakeholders are keen that shared spaces are managed effectively so there is no negative impact on other children or young people. Parents, children and young people expressed the need for choice to be a key consideration in allocation of spaces. Parents would like to be involved in the decisions where their child is placed. They also would like the council to consider the use of split placements in the primary stage to allow children to maintain existing friendships within their catchment primary school.

3.7 All stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors expressed the need for well-planned transition arrangements and clear communication. They believe that this will help all children and young people to understand the proposed changes and how this may affect them. All stakeholders highlighted the importance of the recruiting and retaining staff, including the need for specialist training. They believe that robust policies should be in place to support positive relationships that will help support the continuity of learning.

3.8 HM Inspectors spoke with a representative of the Diocese of Dunkeld. They fully support the proposal. They believe the proposal will create equity of access to specialist support for children and young people who choose a faith-based education setting. They believe this will reduce barriers to children and young people requiring intensive support to access a faith-based education. They believe that the ISP should be supported by qualified Catholic teachers to ensure appropriate pastoral care.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has the potential to deliver educational benefits for children and young people who require specialist support. The opening of a new ISP in St John's RC Academy should ensure that more children and young people will be able to access the right support at the right time in a faith-based environment. The new ISP should allow children and young people to remain in their faith-based community and reduce the need for additional travel. This may help support connections with peers and minimise disruption to transition processes. This should help the council to meet the national requirements of the presumption of mainstreaming. Children and young people will, where appropriate, have opportunities to be included within the mainstream school alongside their peers. The new ISP in St John's RC Academy will further support the council to meet the projected increase in children and young people requiring specialist

support and keep them, where possible, within a faith-based community. The council should continue to engage with stakeholders to address the queries they have raised.

HM Inspectors
January 2026