

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HMIE addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Lothian Council to establish a new Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision at Stoneyhill Primary School.

May 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 East Lothian Council to establish a new Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision at Stoneyhill 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 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 17 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
- visit to the site of Stoneyhill Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

2.1 East Lothian Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.2 The public consultation ran from 3 March to 5 May 2026. Copies of the proposal were made available to stakeholders. A public meeting was held at Musselburgh Grammar School on 17 March 2026 and was attended by 18 members of the public, including parents. Additional drop-in sessions were also held 30, 31 March and 1 April 2026 to accommodate those who could not attend the public meeting. Four hundred and forty-four people responded to the council's consultation

including parents, staff and other members of the public. Almost all stakeholders agree in principle with the proposal to establish the ASN base in Stoneyhill Primary School. However, a few stakeholders expressed reservations about the practicalities of establishing the provision and the impact it may have on children and staff currently attending the school.

2.3 Council officers also facilitated a discussion with 11 children from the Pupil Voice Group at Stoneyhill Primary School on 16 March 2026. Children expressed their views, asked questions and were overall positive about the proposal.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council believes that there are considerable educational benefits arising from the proposal. These include inclusion, the learning environment, curriculum and health and wellbeing. HM Inspectors agree that there are potential educational benefits to providing a learning environment that will support children with additional needs within Stoneyhill Primary School. At present, there is a lack of provision in Musselburgh and the council's proposal could give children with additional needs the opportunity to be educated within their local community. As part of the proposal, the council has rightly considered the projected increase in East Lothian's population of 15.8% as compared to 4.9% for Scotland as a whole into account. It also recognises the considerable national increase in children with additional support needs, which is likely to be replicated in East Lothian. HM Inspectors agree that the council's proposal should provide educational benefits for children with additional support needs in the longer term. There is also potential to establish a nurturing and high-quality learning environment and create improved opportunities for inclusion.

3.2 Almost all stakeholders that met with HM Inspectors understand that there is a need to meet the growing number of children with severe, complex and enduring additional support needs within the council. They agree that provision needs to be planned now so that future needs can be met. Most stakeholders agree that there is potential for Stoneyhill Primary School to provide a nurturing and supportive learning environment for children with additional support needs. Children who met with HM Inspectors are keen to welcome new people to their school. They welcome the opportunity to learn from others.

3.3 Whilst most stakeholders that met with HM Inspectors are supportive of the proposal, a few parents and staff expressed concern about the practicalities and planning for the move. Questions arose about the loss of current learning spaces such as the Nurture and Music rooms. Staff also expressed concerns about the provision of toilet facilities, storage and noise levels due to the open-plan nature of the school. It is the view of HM Inspectors, that should the proposal be agreed, the council should work with staff and parents to address their concerns. This should include mitigating any potential negative impacts, including around the use of the site. The council could help alleviate some of the issues raised by communicating regularly with stakeholders on aspects such as transition arrangements.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that East Lothian's proposal to introduce a new ASN provision within Stoneyhill Primary school has potential education benefits. These include increased opportunities for children with severe and complex needs to be taught in the same school as their peers.

Potentially, children attending the provision will have access to resources to meet their needs. There could also be increased opportunities for inclusion and joint working with staff and children at Stoneyhill Primary School. However, parents and staff raised reasonable concerns regarding the practical arrangements for the proposed provision. It is the view of HM Inspectors, that should the proposal be agreed, the council should work with parents and staff to address their concerns and mitigate any potential negative impacts. That the council should also ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed about progress.

HM Inspectors
May 2026

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