

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HMIE addressing educational aspects of the proposal by The Highland Council to relocate Beauly Primary School, to allow the creation of new accommodation.

February 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 The Highland Council to relocate Beauly Primary School, to allow the creation of new accommodation. 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 9 December 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 Beauly Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation period ran from 1 December 2025 to 23 January 2026. The council held a public meeting on 10 December 2025, which was attended by 11 stakeholders. The council published the consultation paper on its website and provided copies to relevant stakeholders including parents, carers, staff and elected members. The council received one response to the public consultation. Stakeholders asked questions about the location of the site. They raised

concerns about the size of the pitch and sports hall provision and stressed the need for dedicated space for after school care and clubs. Stakeholders queried community access to the new site and future use of existing buildings. A few also raised concerns about security and children's safety. The council has also undertaken informal consultation and shared initial concept designs of the potential new school with stakeholders.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council's proposal acknowledges Beauly Primary School's current poor-quality accommodation. The proposal is for a new build school to be constructed on a site west of Cnoc na Ràth, although the council has yet to acquire this land. As part of Highland's Investment Plan, the council intends to create more community facilities that will provide a range of public services, in a single location. The council anticipates that a new build school will provide a modern, purpose-built facility. Children could benefit from improved learning environments, digital infrastructure, more flexible and inclusive spaces, which could support diverse learning styles and interests. HM Inspectors agree that this proposal could bring educational benefits, which may strengthen learning, teaching, and support the wider school community.

3.2 All children, parents and staff who met with HM Inspectors agree that a new school is required. They acknowledged that the current accommodation, which is spread over multiple buildings, presents challenges for children and staff throughout the school day. This includes ongoing maintenance issues, supervision of different areas of the playground and limited break out areas to work with children who may become dysregulated or need additional support. The layout of the school currently limits direct access to the outdoors, which restricts access to free flow play for children attending the nursery. Staff and children believe that the current accommodation can also limit opportunities for peer learning across different stages.

3.3 All stakeholders recognise that a purpose-built school could improve considerably the learning environment of the school. They highlighted the need for more flexible teaching and breakout spaces. All stakeholders feel it is important that they are able to maintain direct access to Cnoc na Ràth to support outdoor learning. They believe this could enhance the delivery of the curriculum and improve children's learning experiences in the new school.

3.4 All stakeholders expressed some concern about the private residential property that is located within the current school grounds. They agree that a new school building on the proposed site would alleviate this concern and improve the safety of children. All stakeholders believe that children and staff would benefit from being housed in one building and this could help create a stronger sense of school community. They believe this will create more opportunities to share resources and provide more space for those who require additional support.

3.5 All stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors highlighted the importance of involving them in the design of the new school. They expressed the need for appropriate digital infrastructure and sensory areas, which they currently lack. All stakeholders would welcome the inclusion of adequate outdoor and indoor sports facilities, with appropriate changing areas. They believe that this could enhance the uptake of shinty and increase participation in inter-school competitions and increase opportunities for after-school clubs. Where appropriate, the council should continue to consult stakeholders about the final design of internal and external spaces.

3.6 Parents who met with HM Inspectors are concerned that the council have not yet acquired the proposed development site. They are worried that the potential cost of securing this land may reduce the available funds for the new build school. Parents also expressed some concern about traffic and congestion around the new school. They feel it is important that the council considers additional safe walkways to access the school, including access at Braeview Park.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that there are potential educational benefits to this proposal. These are dependent on the final design and build of the new school. All stakeholders agree with the need for a new school and the current school is in poor condition. They recognise that a new school could provide significantly improved facilities to support children's learning and wellbeing. All stakeholders are keen that the new school includes adequate indoor and outdoor sports facilities. However, concerns remain over the council's acquisition of the proposed site and the provision of safe access routes to the new school. If the proposal is agreed, The Highland Council should consider the suggestions raised by stakeholders and continue to involve them, where appropriate, in the development and design process.

HM Inspectors
February 2026

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