

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HMIE addressing educational aspects of the proposal by North Lanarkshire Council to establish an Enhanced Provision within Muirhouse 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 North Lanarkshire Council to establish an Enhanced Provision within Muirhouse 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 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 19 January 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;
- held a range of online and in person meetings with relevant consultees; and
- visits to the site of Muirhouse Primary School and enhanced provision, and a meeting with local authority representatives including discussion with relevant consultees.

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 public consultation ran from 8 December 2025 to 9 February 2026. The proposal was published on the council's website, with paper copies available on request. The proposal to

establish an enhanced provision within Muirhouse Primary School also proposes to establish similar provision in four other primary schools. A dedicated email address was created to support accessibility and allow stakeholders to submit questions and comments ahead of the public meeting. One written response was received. A public meeting was held on 19 January 2026, attended by 13 members of the public. Council representatives outlined the proposal, explained the consultation process and responded to questions. Overall, almost all stakeholders were supportive of the proposal, highlighting the potential for improved provision for children with additional support needs, enhanced inclusion aligned to individual needs, and greater opportunities for children to learn within their local community. Most stakeholders sought clarity on aspects such as learning spaces, staffing and transition planning as children move through the school. A few remained undecided, expressing concerns about the potential impact on staffing and whether the indoor and outdoor spaces would remain suitable as children grow and develop within both the enhanced provision and the mainstream school.

2.3 The council held a small number of consultation meetings in the school to gather views from staff, parents and children across the mainstream and pilot Enhanced Provision. Almost all were supportive of the proposal and positive about its overall intent. However, most sought clarity on key areas such as staffing, current placement models and the suitability of the physical environment. A few highlighted the ongoing need for clear planning, appropriate training and strong partnership working to ensure staff can meet all children's needs effectively.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council outlines several educational benefits in the proposal that it expects will be achieved to meet the needs of children with the requirement for intensive support. This includes strengthened leadership, transition, learning and teaching practice and integrated planning with partners. The council also highlights the benefits of appropriately designed spaces for learning, the use of technology and an appropriately personalised curriculum. That the enhanced provision will allow children to remain within their local communities and attend school with their local peers. The council states that the proposal will provide educational benefits in line with the findings of its additional support needs (ASN) Review 2019. HM Inspectors agree that the enhanced support provision has the potential for these educational benefits to be realised. However, the council has not set out clearly in the proposal for stakeholders what its vision, strategy and operational plan for ASN means for how this enhanced support provision will develop over time. Therefore, it is difficult for stakeholders to understand how the council plans to effectively and efficiently meet the rising demand for places that they have identified. In taking forward this proposal, the council should explain clearly to stakeholders how, when taken together, this and other enhanced support provision will meet the needs of all children who require intensive support.

3.2 All stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors agreed the proposal has the potential to better meet children's wellbeing and learning needs. HM Inspectors also recognise the positive work of staff within the pilot, particularly their nurturing approaches and strong relationships, which have helped almost all children settle well. As a result, most children are now managing routines appropriate to their needs and showing early signs of increased interaction with peers and staff, with a few beginning to engage with mainstream peers. Stakeholders spoke positively about the way the pilot has strengthened the school community, with mainstream pupils supporting and including children from the Enhanced Provision through whole-school activities and buddying programmes.

3.3 Stakeholders agree that children in the Enhanced Provision require a bespoke curriculum with high levels of skilled adult support. Staff and parents believe children are beginning to experience more personalised learning.

3.4 HM Inspectors agree with staff that the current staffing model lacks clarity, and strategic leadership is not sufficiently aligned to the proposed structure. Additional specialist ASN staff are required to strengthen expertise. HM Inspectors note the local authority has correctly identified the need to increase staffing, particularly during key transition points, to support wellbeing and maximise learning time. Clearer staffing arrangements and strengthened leadership oversight are essential to ensure the provision can meet children's needs effectively and demonstrate children's progress in their wellbeing and learning over time.

3.5 HM Inspectors agree that the available indoor and outdoor space is sufficient; however, the indoor learning environment requires significant development to meet children's holistic needs. Whilst children have access to some appropriate resources, essential sensory and regulatory equipment is lacking. More intentional environmental design, including improved transitions between indoor and outdoor areas, is required. Strengthened partnership working with therapeutic services should be considered to ensure the environment reflects children's sensory, emotional and regulatory needs. A few stakeholders expressed concern which are shared by HM Inspectors that, although the space is currently adequate, the local authority must regularly review the environment as children grow and needs change. Personal care and toileting arrangements also require ongoing review. Whilst there are no plans to expand the footprint of the provision, decisions about space allocation must not adversely affect mainstream staff or pupils.

3.6 Staff who met with HM Inspectors spoke positively about the whole-school professional learning provided at the start of the pilot. HM Inspectors agree this has improved most staffs understanding of autism and their ability to create communication-friendly environments. However, staff within the Enhanced Provision now require more specialist training to deliver a wider range of teaching approaches and ensure all children receive bespoke, effective learning experiences. Staff expressed concern about challenges accessing such training and ensuring consistent, appropriately qualified staffing.

3.7 Absence during the pilot has required senior leaders and mainstream staff to be deployed to the Enhanced Provision, which staff report has occasionally reduced support for mainstream classes. Senior leaders also note difficulties in filling vacancies. HM Inspectors agree with the concerns. Moving forward, the council should work closely with senior leaders to ensure robust contingency plans are in place to manage absence and recruitment and ensure children benefit fully from the correct level of skills staffing to support them to make the best possible progress.

3.8 Stakeholders are unclear about how the current pilot fits within the council's staged intervention framework. Parents and staff are unsure about transition processes for current children as they move through primary stages and into secondary school. They expressed concern that continued access to enhanced support is not guaranteed, which they believe could significantly affect children's progress. Stakeholders also raised questions about future intake patterns, noting that all 10 pilot spaces are currently filled by P1 pupils. They were unclear whether new entrants would be admitted every seven years and whether classes would operate as single-age or composite groups. HM Inspectors share these concerns. It is important that the council develops a clear strategic model for specialist Enhanced Provision across the local

authority. This should clarify staged intervention approaches, and ensure transparent, consistent transition policies, including from primary school to secondary school.

3.9 HM Inspectors share parents' and staffs' concerns about the practicality and safety of accessing the school building. The absence of a designated pick-up and drop-off zone presents ongoing risks, with staff and children required to move through a congested area at peak times. For many children in the Enhanced Provision, transitions between school and transport remain challenging and can lead to heightened stress or dysregulated behaviours, further increasing safety risks. HM Inspectors consider it essential that the council reviews relevant risk assessments and implements appropriate mitigations to ensure the safety of all.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has the potential for the intended educational benefits to be realised for the children currently placed there. HM Inspectors note important early gains in children's wellbeing, engagement and inclusion during the pilot. Across all stakeholder groups there is strong support for the principles of the proposal to create an Enhanced Provision at Muirhouse Primary School. Stakeholders raised several concerns, including around staffing models, the indoor learning environment and arrangements for access to the building. It will be important for the council to work with stakeholders to consider and where possible address these issues. The proposal does not provide sufficient clarity for stakeholders on how the increasing demand for enhanced support across early years, primary and secondary will be met in North Lanarkshire over time. The council should explain more clearly to stakeholders how its overarching vision and strategy for ASN will work in practice, and how the educational benefits for other children who require intensive support will be met. The council should also continue to work closely with stakeholders to review regularly children's needs and to plan and adapt the provision appropriately. The council should also ensure that the enhanced provision continues to be resourced sufficiently and does not negatively impact on mainstream provision.

HM Inspectors
March 2026

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