

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Angus Council to vary admission arrangements for all Angus primary and secondary schools, by establishing an Admissions and Placing Requests Policy.

September 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland 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 Angus Council to vary admission arrangements for all Angus primary and secondary schools, by establishing an Admissions and Placing Request Policy. The change will provide clarity regarding arrangements, including a revised priorities scheme for the consideration of placing requests. 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 18 June 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 Strathmartine, Birkhill, Liff and Hayshead Primary Schools and Monifieth High School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation period ran from 11 June to 12 September 2025. The council held two public meetings on 18 June and 26 August 2025. Six parents in total attended. The council also placed adverts in local newspapers and via the council website. There were 173 responses to the public consultation. Of these, most respondents (78.6%) agreed with the proposal to establish the policy and 6.9% disagreed, 14.5% neither agreed nor disagreed. With regard to a second question about the proposed priority categories in the proposal, more than half agreed (65.9%)

and 24.3% disagreed, 9.8% neither agreed nor disagreed. The council also carried out a comprehensive consultation with children and young people in 34 of its schools. The vast majority of children and young people agreed with the proposal and the proposed priority categories, although a few were not sure about its implications. A few disagreed and raised questions for example about the importance of being together with siblings in the same school.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 Angus Council state that its current admissions procedures require revision to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose and provide flexibility to the prioritisation of placing requests. In its proposal the council states that establishing a robust policy will better support the transition processes for children and young people; in particular, those moving from nursery to primary one and from primary seven to secondary school.

3.2 Almost all stakeholders, that spoke to HM Inspectors, agree that there is a need for clear admissions policies and understand why children and young people living in Angus should be a priority. However, stakeholders who spoke to HM Inspectors at Monifieth High School and in a few primary schools think that the education authority should consider whether the last priority, those who live out with Angus Council area, should be divided. They would like greater consideration to be given to those who live very close to Angus schools though reside in other council areas. Stakeholders believe that more consideration should be given to proximity, especially when an Angus school is the nearest, or where children and young people could be split from their peers who live in the same community. HM Inspectors agree that it can be beneficial for children and young people to attend the same school as friends from their community. However, HM Inspectors also recognise the need for education authorities to have clear admissions policies that address capacity issues across their schools. This includes reserving sufficient space to accommodate families that move into a catchment area wherever possible.

3.3 A minority of stakeholders that spoke to HM Inspectors, suggest that a priority should be added to the proposed list. This would be to give higher priority to those from out with the catchment but whom already attend a cluster primary school through a placing request.

3.4 Overall, stakeholders who spoke to HM Inspectors, support the proposed priority for those with older siblings who already attend a given school. However, a few queried whether this should apply to all siblings, including where the gap in ages mean that the older sibling may have already left the school.

3.5 School leaders, staff and a few parents that spoke to HM Inspectors are concerned that the proposed changes do not address current issues around supporting transition to secondary school for all children. They describe how decisions around placing requests can be made as late as June in the summer term. As a result, those who should have enhanced transition support, often miss out on the full experience. Stakeholders are worried that children and young people are being adversely affected by the current timescales for decisions made on placing requests. This can be unsettling and stressful for the children and their families. HM Inspectors agree that, wherever possible, decisions should be made early enough to support children to have the same transition experiences as their peers. This could help reduce children's anxiety and help them to be confident in moving to secondary school. For those children who are awaiting decisions about placing requests, it may be helpful for the council to consider further what additional transition support can be provided.

3.6 HM Inspectors agree with stakeholders that there is a need for the council to support families to better understand the admissions policy. This includes helping parents to understand that being granted a placing request to a primary school does not guarantee that their child will

transition to that school's cluster secondary school. Parents of nursery children would also welcome clear communication from the council regarding transition arrangements to primary schools.

3.7 HM Inspectors consider it would be helpful if the council is clearer about the educational benefits from this proposal for children and young people receiving Gaelic Medium Education (GME). This includes how GME places are prioritised in the relevant schools and clarify support for transport and travel arrangements for GME learners. Similarly, Bòrd na Gàidhlig do not believe that the proposed policy will provide clarity for families who may wish to enrol their child in GME. Currently Whitehills Primary School is the sole provider of Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) within Angus Council. Bòrd na Gàidhlig contend that there has never been a formal catchment set for GME provision within Angus. However, as there is only one provision the assumption is that the catchment for GMPE is council wide and not restricted to the catchment for Whitehills Primary School. It is not clear from the council's proposal that this is the case. It should be made clear that all children living within the Angus Council boundary have an entitlement to enrol for GMPE at Whitehills Primary School.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that there are educational benefits to the proposed Admissions and Placing Requests Policy. Most stakeholders who responded to the public consultation or met with HM Inspectors are in agreement. However, there remain concerns amongst stakeholders that a minority of children and young people are being disadvantaged by the timing of decisions regarding placing requests. This is leading to inconsistencies in the delivery of transition programmes from primary to secondary school. If the council are able to make decisions earlier, it would assist parents and schools to plan more effectively. It is clear to HM Inspectors that not all parents understand the current or proposed arrangements for dealing with placing requests. HM Inspectors suggest that further communication with parents would be helpful to allay anxiety and confusion. In finalising its report, the council should consider the views of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and other consultees to address their concerns.

**HM Inspectors
September 2025**