

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 Musselburgh Grammar 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 Musselburgh Grammar 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 young people of the school; any other users; children and young people likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other 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 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 Musselburgh Grammar 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 26 March 2026 and was attended by 15 stakeholders, including parents, staff and members of the public. Additional drop-in sessions were held on 30, 31 March and 1 April 2026. One hundred and

nineteen 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 at Musselburgh Grammar School. However, a few stakeholders expressed reservations about the practicalities of establishing the provision and the impact it may have on young people and staff currently attending the school.

2.3 On 16 March 2026, council officers also facilitated a discussion with young people from the Pupil Voice Group at Musselburgh Grammar School. This provided a useful opportunity for young people to ask questions and express their views which included their understanding of the need to increase provision.

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 Musselburgh Grammar School. At present, there is a lack of provision in Musselburgh and the council's proposal could give young people 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 young people with additional support needs, with East Lothian being the second fastest growing local authority in Scotland. HM Inspectors agree that the council's proposal should provide educational benefits for young people with additional support needs in the longer term. There is also potential to create a nurturing, high quality learning environment with opportunities for inclusion within Musselburgh Grammar School.

3.2 Almost all stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors understand that there is a need to meet the growing number of young people 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 Musselburgh Grammar School to provide a nurturing and supportive learning environment for young people with additional support needs. Young people who met with HM Inspectors are positive about the proposal, although they had a few questions about how it would work in practice.

3.3 Almost all stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors are supportive of the proposal. A few parents and staff expressed concern about the location of the provision, including access and the movement of young people around the school. Staff are concerned about the practicalities of locating the provision within the current science classrooms. They are unclear why this area was selected and are worried about the arrangements for moving to other locations within the building. Similarly, a few parents who met with HM Inspectors expressed reservations about longer-term planning for young people with additional support needs and whether the current proposal is sufficient. If the proposal is agreed, it is the view of HM Inspectors, that the council should work with stakeholders to address their concerns, including in relation to the proposed location of the provision. It will be important for the council to work with school leaders and staff to ensure that the needs of all children are met. The council could help to alleviate some of the issues raised by stakeholders by setting out clear channels of communication.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that East Lothian's proposal to introduce a new ASN provision within Musselburgh Grammar School has potential education benefits. These include increased opportunities for young people with severe and complex needs to be taught in the same school as their peers. There could also be increased opportunities for inclusion and joint working with staff and children at Musselburgh Grammar School. However, HM Inspectors understand the concerns of parents and staff regarding the practical arrangements for the provision, in particular the proposed location. If the proposal is approved, the council should seek to address these concerns and then ensure that all stakeholders are kept fully informed about progress.

HM Inspectors
May 2026

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