

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

**Report by HMIE addressing educational aspects of the proposal by
Midlothian Council to establish an additional support needs (ASN) stage
at Woodburn Primary School.**

April 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 Midlothian Council to establish an additional support needs (ASN) stage at Woodburn 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 18 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
- visits to the site of Woodburn Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The public consultation ran from 12 February to 2 April 2026. Copies of the proposal were made available to stakeholders and on the council website. A public meeting was held on 18 March 2026 at Dalkeith High School, attended by one member of the public. Discussion at the meeting centred around who would access the proposed provision.

2.3 Sixty-five stakeholders completed an online survey expressing their views on the provision and the proposal for the ASN stage under the leadership of the headteacher. The majority of respondents (52%) were current parents of Woodburn Primary School. Most respondents (87%) were in favour of the proposal, and most respondents (78%) agree that it should be led by the headteacher. Stakeholders value the inclusive approach and feel that an ASN stage would meet children's educational needs. A few respondents raised concerns about the future capacity of the school and the potential increased workload for the headteacher.

2.4 A pupil voice session was held at Woodburn Primary School on 24 March 2026 with a selected number of pupils, supported by staff. All children were in favour of the proposal. Children within mainstream provision spoke positively about developing their understanding of ASN and playing with children from the ASN classes.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 HM Inspectors agree that there are potential educational benefits for primary children with complex needs arising from the council's proposal to establish permanently an ASN stage at Woodburn Primary School. In its proposal, the council has set out clearly the educational benefits. There is potential for these to be realised within Woodburn Primary School. Educational benefits include an established ethos of inclusion within the school and personalised learning and teaching. There is a strong emphasis on health and wellbeing, supported by a flexible, relevant, and accessible curriculum. Stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors recognise that the temporary ASN classes can already demonstrate many of the educational benefits outlined in the proposal. All children, staff, and parents who met with HM Inspectors expressed support for the council's proposal. They highlighted several aspects that they feel are working well as a result of the temporary establishment of the four classes. Children who met with HM Inspectors communicated that they feel settled, safe and happy with positive relationships made with peers and staff.

3.2 ASN staff who met with HM Inspectors stated that they enjoy being part of a larger staff community and are feeling less isolated since the temporary move to Woodburn Primary School. Staff who met with HM Inspectors highlighted the benefits of increasing opportunities to share knowledge between ASN and mainstream teachers. If the council make permanent the proposal, there is potential for staff to continue to contribute to staff development and support planning for children who require additional support in mainstream classes. Additionally, there is potential for mainstream teachers to support moderation and planning for children in the ASN stages.

3.3 In its proposal, the council states that "Woodburn Primary School is also currently hosting Mayfield Primary School ASN classes, these will move to the new Mayfield Schools Campus when it opens in 2027". Parents and staff, who met with HM Inspectors, would like further information about this. HM Inspectors agree that the council should provide clarity on this aspect of the proposal. In doing so, the council should engage further with parents to clarify for them what school choices will be available for their child and the arrangements for school transport. If the proposal proceeds, children in Mayfield Primary School's ASN classes may be required to make another transition that could be unnecessary. HM Inspectors recommend that the council begins to work closely with parents of these children to provide clarity and make plans for any children who may be moving to the ASN classes in the new Mayfield Schools Campus. The council should ensure that any transition arrangements are well planned and clearly communicated to all affected children and families, and staff.

3.4 The council states that the Woodburn ASN provision offers a purpose-built, safe, and accessible learning environment designed to meet the complex needs of its learners. However, the staff and parents that met with HM Inspectors questioned this. Stakeholders acknowledge that adaptations have been made to accommodate the current ASN classes since they were moved to Woodburn Primary School earlier than planned. The reasons for which are set out within the council's proposal. The staff who met with HM Inspectors raised a few concerns around personal care and dignity within the current environment. Their concerns relate mostly to the extensive use of clear glass throughout the building and what they feel are insufficient toileting and changing facilities for the number of children who require intimate care. HM Inspectors recommend that the council continues to work with staff and parents to ensure that the ASN classes and other resources meet sufficiently well the range and complexity of children's needs.

3.5 During the consultation period, parents and staff identified alleged inaccuracies in the proposal. The council will need to ensure that it takes the necessary steps to investigate these alleged inaccuracies. In its consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies notified to it.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that there are potential educational benefits for children with complex needs arising from the council's proposal to establish an ASN stage at Woodburn Primary School. All of the children, staff and parents who met with HM Inspectors support the council's proposal. If the proposal is agreed, the council should continue to work with stakeholders to develop further the provision to ensure that it can fulfil the proposed educational benefits. In particular, the council should continue to review the learning environment to ensure that it is sufficiently and appropriately resourced to meet children's complex needs. The council should also provide clarity and support for parents and families of children who may need to transition to the new Mayfield Primary School when it opens. In its consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies notified to it.

HM Inspectors
April 2026

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