

# **Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**

**Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Ayrshire Council to permanently relocate the senior phase of pupils (S4-S6) at Park School to accommodation within St Joseph's Academy from the beginning of the academic year 2025/26 in August 2025.**

January 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 East Ayrshire Council to permanently relocate the senior phase of pupils (S4-S6) at Park School to accommodation within St Joseph's Academy from the beginning of the academic year 2025/26 in August 2025. 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 schools; any other users; 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 meetings held on 21 and 26 November 2024 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 St. Joseph's Academy and Park School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## 2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation period ran from 7 October to 6 December 2024. Two public meetings were held in November 2024, with the opportunity for attendees to join online. Forty-nine people attended across the two meetings including council officers, parents and other interested parties. Almost all attendees at the public meetings were in favour of the permanent move to St Joseph's Academy. A total of 180 young people from Park School and St Joseph's Academy responded to a questionnaire regarding the temporary relocation of S4-S6 pupils previously located within Grange Campus to St Joseph's Academy. Most who responded felt that the relocation had been

successful and thought it should be made permanent. However, a significant number of young people (89) did not answer all the questions or did not know. Twenty-six people responded to a public questionnaire and over half (59%) were in favour of the proposal going ahead.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 East Ayrshire Council believes that senior phase young people's educational experience will be enhanced by moving to St Joseph's Academy on a permanent basis. They note that the success of the temporary arrangements over the past two years would support this. The council also believe the space available at St Joseph's Academy better meets the needs of young people who are more restricted at Grange Campus. This is where the rest of Park School is located. HM Inspectors agree with the council's proposal. Young people from Park School now have greater access to subjects, such as art, music and science. There are also encouraging signs identified by the schools involved that young people with additional support needs are integrating well within the mainstream school.

3.2 HM Inspectors met with parents, staff and young people from Park School and St Joseph's Academy and the headteacher of Grange Campus. Almost all stakeholders agree with the proposal to make the arrangement permanent. Parents from Park School feel that overall the move has benefited their young people. Although some parents were apprehensive about the move to St Joseph's, overall the experience of young people has been positive. In the early stages of the temporary move to St Joseph's, young people from Park School were losing learning time due to transport arrangements. However, this has now been resolved. Young people at both schools are positive about the proposal. They recognise the benefits of learning together in a shared environment. There are some positive examples of where young people from both schools are forming friendships, through socialising at lunch times and playing football. Young people from Park School are particularly positive about the food at St Joseph's Academy.

3.3 Staff from both schools who met with HM Inspectors were positive overall about the proposal. While there have been a few minor issues since the temporary arrangement was put in place, the positives outweigh the negatives. Staff from Park School recognise that young people gain life skills while developing positive relationships with staff and young people at St Joseph's Academy. There is better access to facilities than at Grange Campus, for example in physical education and home economics. However, a few staff expressed frustration with their time being split between the two campuses. This is leading to a sense of separation from the rest of Park School. Should the proposal be approved, staff feel that Park School and East Ayrshire Council should take their views into account when planning for the future. There is currently no dedicated administrative support or first aider for Park School in the St Joseph's Academy building. Several stakeholders felt this needed to be addressed should the proposal go ahead.

3.4 HM Inspectors met with a representative from the Catholic church. They were supportive of the proposal and noted that the first public meeting was very positive. They felt that the move to St Joseph's Academy would be beneficial for Park School pupils to increase equality of opportunity.

### 4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree with East Ayrshire Council's proposal to permanently re-locate the senior phase of pupils (S4-S6) from Park School to St Joseph's Academy as of August 2025. The majority of stakeholders agree that this arrangement has worked well on a temporary basis and that it should continue. Should the proposal go ahead, East Ayrshire Council should engage with

staff at Park School currently working at St Joseph's Academy to ensure their views are taken into account. The council should also consider the arrangements for administrative support and first aid.

**HM Inspectors**  
**January 2025**