

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Perth and Kinross Council to permanently establish a new Intensive Support Provision in Viewlands Primary School for pupils with Additional Support Needs with effect from January 2026.

June 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 Perth and Kinross Council to permanently establish a new Intensive Support Provision in Viewlands Primary School for pupils with additional support needs with effect from January 2026. 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 12 May 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;
- consideration of further representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal;
- consideration of further information on all schools; and
- visits to the site of Viewlands Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The consultation ran from 24 April until 6 June 2025. The council made the consultation paper available via its website and sent an electronic version of the paper to relevant consultees. Paper copies were also available at Viewlands Primary School and the council headquarters. A specific email address was also set up for representations and enquiries. An online response form

was set up on the consultation webpage. A public meeting was held on 12 May 2025, which 13 members of the public attended. At the meeting council representatives outlined the consultation process and the proposals, and answered questions raised by member of the public. The council engaged with a sample of pupils from Viewlands Primary School and parents of children that are likely to attend the proposed Intensive Support Provision (ISP). They also engaged with a group of teachers from Viewlands Primary School.

2.3 The council received eight online response forms. Four agreed and four disagreed with the council's proposal. The council also received eight written responses. One of these responses was a letter which 61 parents had signed digitally, objecting to the proposal. Almost all respondents were in favour of the principles of inclusion and expanding provision for children with additional support needs. All respondents who were parents of children who would be likely to attend the provision were very positive about the proposal. Most respondents who were parents of children who currently attend Viewlands Primary School expressed concerns about how the service would impact on the existing provision there.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 HM Inspectors agree that establishing a new ISP in Viewlands Primary School for pupils with additional support needs with effect from January 2026 has potential educational benefits.

3.2 Perth and Kinross Council aim to improve education provision for children with complex and multiple additional support needs. They intend to establish suitable provision for all children within the catchment area of their local secondary school. Viewlands Primary School is a non-denominational school situated on a shared site with Perth Academy and Fairview Special School. Establishing a new ISP at Viewlands Primary School would increase the number of placements for children with complex and multiple additional support needs within the local management group of Perth Academy and the catchment primary schools. The proposed ISP at Viewlands Primary School will accommodate up to 16 pupils. Pupils considered eligible to attend the ISP would be assessed and placed by a transition panel in accordance with the council's admission policy.

3.3 In establishing the ISP, the council intends to utilise and redesign existing spaces in the school building. This has the potential to provide a high quality, bespoke learning environments for children requiring additional support. The council aims to create learning spaces that incorporate sensory zones, allowing children the space and privacy to regulate their emotions without leaving the learning area. The council envisage a safe, nurturing environment, also benefiting from an outdoor play space. HM Inspectors agree that having well-designed learning and sensory spaces have potential to meet better the needs of children with additional support needs.

3.4 HM Inspectors spoke with stakeholders, including children, parents and teachers at Viewlands Primary School. Most of the stakeholders were concerned that the proposed establishment of an ISP will result in lost resources for children currently attending Viewlands Primary School. The proposal would mean a reduction in the size of the P7 classroom and the current music room would become a dedicated classroom space for the ISP. Concern was also expressed about toilet facilities and about reduction in playground space. If the council proceeds with the proposal, it should work with stakeholders to ensure that they fully understand how all children's needs will continue to be met alongside meeting the needs of children attending the ISP. In particular, the council should seek more effective communication with parents to clarify how investment in school premises benefits all children attending the school. This should include those for whom the school is not currently accessible.

3.5 If progressed, the proposal would increase the overall number of specialist placements available for children with additional support needs. It should also support the local authority to ensure that ISP placements are more evenly distributed across its specialist provisions. There is potential to reduce the time that children spend in transport as schools will be situated nearer children's homes. The proposal makes it possible for the local authority to reduce the need for lengthy taxi journeys and resulting transport costs. Children attending the proposed ISP will potentially have an improved transition into the neighbouring secondary school, Perth Academy.

3.6 Stakeholders also raised concerns around possible increased traffic around the school. The council recognise this as a valid concern and are planning a review of taxi arrangements on the campus and a wider home-to-school transport review is also underway. HM Inspectors agree that the LA should continue to work with transport teams to ensure the safety of children and young people when coming to and leaving school.

3.7 If the council agrees to proceed with the proposal to establish an ISP, children may begin to access this from August 2025 on a temporary basis and to avoid unnecessary transitions. It is the view of HM Inspectors that the current Viewlands Primary School environment requires adaptations to meet the additional support needs of children likely to attend the ISP. The council should ensure that the educational benefits, as outlined in the consultation, reflect the educational experiences for any child attending Viewlands Primary School from August 2025. For example, there is a need to improve toilet facilities for all children, and particularly for those using mobility aids or for children who require intimate care across the whole school. There is also a need to improve outdoor spaces to ensure that there is high quality outdoor play provision for all children attending Viewlands Primary School. The council should ensure it has robust contingency plans in place for continuity of children's education if it does not agree to proceed with the proposal.

3.8 During the consultation period, consultees identified alleged inaccuracies in the proposal. They suggested that it was inaccurate of the council to say that there would be no impact on children currently attending Viewlands Primary School. It is the view of HM Inspectors that the school would repurpose rooms to increase inclusivity for all children. However, the council should take further steps to ensure that they address the limitations of the existing toilet facilities before any temporary arrangements are put in place. There will be increased demand on accessible toilets, which has potential to affect children currently attending the school. The council will need to ensure that it takes the necessary steps to examine and respond to any alleged inaccuracies. In its final consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has potential educational benefits for children with additional support needs across the local authority. The proposal would increase the number of placements available locally and would mean children spend more time in their communities and less time travelling in taxis to school. If suitable adaptations and upgrades are made, the new ISP should bring with it improvements to the current school building. It could also offer potentially easier transition arrangements to the neighbouring Perth Academy.

Stakeholders expressed concerns that the establishment of the ISP would mean fewer resources for children currently attending Viewlands Primary School. However, the council's proposal has the potential to minimise impact on children at the school if it is well planned and carefully implemented. The council should work closely with stakeholders to ensure that they improve communication around the purpose and benefits of the establishment of the ISP. They should also ensure that they have contingency plans in place should the council not agree to take the proposal forward.

In its consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies notified to it. In particular, it should state how it plans to address improving current toilet facilities.

HM Inspectors
June 2025