

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

**Report by HM Inspectors of Education addressing educational aspects of the proposal by East Ayrshire Council to formally incorporate the existing inclusion resource at Onthank Campus as a supported learning centre.**

July 2022

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by Her 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 East Ayrshire Council's proposal to formally incorporate the existing inclusion resource at Onthank Campus as a supported learning centre. 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' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the 2010 Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final 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 final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children at 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 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 11 May 2022 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 Onthank Primary School and its existing inclusion resource, including discussion with relevant consultees.

## 2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The statutory consultation period for this proposal ran from 25 April 2022 until 9 June 2022. The council made copies of the full and summary versions of the consultation proposal available to statutory consultees. This included copies being available on the council website and through social media channels. The council made copies of the proposal available in alternative formats, or in translated form for readers whose first language was not English. Senior leaders at the school involved children in the consultation process through pupil council meetings, focus groups and questionnaires. A public meeting took place on 11 May 2022. Due to the COVID-19 mitigations that were in place at the time, the public meeting took place virtually. There were 27 public attendees.

2.3 Almost all stakeholders are in favour of the proposal. A few raised concerns about the increased traffic to the site, and highlighted the need to risk assess potential hazards. A few expressed concern about staffing, and ensuring children in the existing inclusion resource were not adversely affected.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The proposal to develop a supported learning centre within Onthank Primary School has clear educational benefits. It will potentially enhance the council's capacity to meet the additional support needs of children in the north Kilmarnock area. Children placed at the centre will benefit from maintaining relationships with their local peers.

3.2 If the council agrees to progress the proposal, the refurbishment of the rooms used by the supported learning centre will provide high-quality classroom accommodation and facilities to support learning across the campus. Refurbishment creates potential to provide an appropriate environment for children who require specialist support. Children may benefit from having access to more developmentally appropriate learning facilities and experiences. This includes a personal care room, access to sensory support and outdoor play areas. A dedicated drop-off area with a separate entrance to the provision will preserve the dignity of children.

3.3 Locating the supported learning centre in Onthank Primary School will provide opportunities for children placed there to access learning experiences in a mainstream setting. Children could have opportunities for greater personalisation and choice across all areas of the curriculum. This has the potential to improve continuity and progression in their learning, and to develop their wellbeing and skills.

3.4 The council should continue to work with stakeholders in taking forward this proposal. This includes considering issues related to increased traffic and parking, and ensuring the safety of children who attend the school. It also includes considering the capacity of the provision.

### 4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that there are clear educational benefits to this proposal. In particular, it has potential to allow children to access appropriate specialist provision closer to their own local community. The proposed learning centre would provide children with specialist facilities and access to mainstream classes. If the proposal is agreed and taken forward, there are plans to refurbish the classroom spaces that children will use for learning. This will result in future learners accessing updated and modern accommodation, facilities and resources that support their learning needs.

The proposal builds on well-established nurturing approaches and inclusion of learners at Onthank Primary School. There is potential to share this expertise with other schools and settings to develop staff capacity across other establishments. If the proposal goes ahead, the council should

ensure a high-quality transition programme based on the needs of children. The council should also be very clear about the referral processes and criteria for support within the supported learning centre. It is important to ensure that the capacity of the centre is able to meet demands. This includes consideration of support for children who already access the existing inclusion resource.

**HM Inspectors**  
**July 2022**