

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Fife Council to establish a new stage of education within a school – new additional support class (ASC) within Strathallan Primary School, Kirkcaldy.

March 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 Fife Council to establish a new stage of education within a school - new additional support class (ASC) within Strathallan Primary School, Kirkcaldy. 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 setting; 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 29 January 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; and
- visits to the site of Strathallan Primary School and Balwearie High School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The council undertook the consultation from 7 January to 21 February 2025. Copies of the proposal were made available to stakeholders and on the council website. Fife Council held a public meeting at Strathallan Primary School on 29 January 2025, which 14 stakeholders attended. On the same day, the council also held informal drop-in sessions at Strathallan Primary School. The council received 18 responses to their online consultation. Most respondents were parents or carers who had a child living in the school cluster area. A majority of respondents are opposed to the proposal to establish a new stage of ASC provision within Strathallan Primary

School. A few respondents are supportive of the proposal and a minority were unsure of how to answer. Those supportive of the proposal noted that a new ASC provision would have a positive impact on the lives of children with additional support needs within their local community. A few respondents noted that the educational benefits statement did not take account of any potential negative benefits to children and the wider community. A few respondents questioned the predictions for future roll numbers, the number of children who will access the ASC and projected timescale for implementation. A majority of respondents also had concerns over the safety of children due to any potential increase in traffic around the school.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council's proposal is to establish a new stage of ASC provision within Strathallan Primary School, which is within the Balwearie High School cluster. The maximum capacity of the provision will be 20 full-time places. This is in response to a projected reduction in the school roll, alongside a projected increase in demand for enhanced provision and ASCs across the Kirkcaldy West area.

3.2 The council has set out educational benefits to establish a new stage of ASC provision within Strathallan Primary School. These include providing a new ASC provision that will ensure that children from the local community that require enhanced support can access this provision locally. It will also enable those local pupils to transition with their peers to the cluster secondary school where there is also ASC provision. The council states that the creation of an enhanced provision within Strathallan Primary School will help children and the community to develop a shared understanding of an inclusive education and diversity. HM Inspectors agree with the proposal to establish a new stage of ASC provision. The projected school roll is reducing, which provides opportunities for the establishment of ASC provision. This will enable children with additional support needs to access provision locally where they can interact with and transition to secondary with their peers. The indoor and outdoor space will be designed flexibly and creatively to support the wellbeing of all learners. Children will learn collaboratively in all curricular areas. Opportunities for integration into the wider school community will be promoted and offered where appropriate, which will help ensure the children feel part of the Strathallan Primary School community.

3.3 Almost all parents that met with HM Inspectors were opposed to the proposal. They questioned the reliability of the pupil roll projections, which relate to the projected decrease in the school roll given proposed housing developments in the area. They were concerned about any potential negative impact on the children attending mainstream classes, including loss of playgroups space, classrooms and any increase in traffic flow. All children that met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposal. They suggested there was lots of space indoors and outdoors to accommodate children with enhanced needs. Children noted the benefits of having a dedicated ASC with appropriate equipment. They also noted concerns relating to any increase in traffic and the potential dangers to all children.

3.4 Almost all primary school cluster staff that met with HM Inspectors were supportive of the proposal. They recognise the benefits of children learning alongside their peers in their local community. They know that the number of children requiring enhanced provision is rising across the area and that this proposal may help to address this. A few staff welcome the professional learning opportunities of working alongside specialist ASC staff. However, with the addition of an ASC provision, a few staff noted concerns relating to any increase in responsibilities for the leadership and management of the school. A few secondary school staff that met with HM Inspectors also recognised the educational benefits of children learning and transitioning within their cluster area. However, concerns were raised relating to the need for a consistent approach to assessment of need. This will help to ensure that children's needs can be met within ASC provision in the secondary schools. Should the proposal be approved, the council should work with

stakeholders to ensure that the projected figures are clearly set out and understood. Appropriate arrangements for transition and safe routes to school should also be considered.

3.5 During the consultation period a few stakeholders questioned the council on the reliability of the pupil roll projections outlined in the proposal. The council will need to ensure that it takes the necessary steps to consider these questions. In its consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address these concerns.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that the proposal has educational benefits. These may include the potential for better transition arrangements within the school cluster area. Children will have the opportunity to learn and play within a local school alongside their peers. Staff may benefit from professional learning opportunities from working with additional support needs staff. Should the proposal be approved, the council should work with stakeholders to ensure that the projected figures are clearly set out and understood. Appropriate arrangements for transition and safe routes to school should also be considered. In its consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address concerns relating to reliability of pupil roll projections.

HM Inspectors
March 2025