

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by HMIE addressing educational aspects of the proposal by Falkirk Council to restructure the Primary Enhanced Provision model.

November 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 Falkirk Council to restructure the current Primary Enhanced Provision model. 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 and young people of the schools; 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 meetings held on 16, 17 and 30 September 2025, and the online meetings on 23 and 25 September, 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 sites of Airth, Beancross, Deanburn, Denny, Langlees, St Andrew's, St Margaret's and Wallacestone Primary Schools, two of which have enhanced provisions, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The council launched the consultation with an initial electronic communication to parents on 29 August 2025. This was followed up by a further message on 22 September 2025. The council published the consultation paper on its website, along with frequently asked questions and an electronic survey. The consultation ran from 29 August to 27 October 2025.

2.3 Public meetings were held on 16 September (Braes High School), 17 September (Denny High School), 30 September (Falkirk High School) and 1 October 2025 (Grangemouth High School). Additional online meetings were held on 23 and 25 September 2025. Following the first public meeting, a note of clarification was posted on the consultation website relating to the wording in the original proposal. It stated that all children who currently attend an enhanced provision would be required to return to their catchment school. The council wished to clarify that no child would be forced to move school.

2.4 There were 1,194 responses to the electronic survey. Thirteen percent of these responses indicated that they could identify potential benefits to the proposal. The majority of these responses focused on children being closer to home and being educated with their peers, as long as the initiative was resourced appropriately. The remaining 87% of responses saw no benefit to the proposal. There were 33 other emails from stakeholders, most of which were from parents. Each of these expressed reservations about the proposal, the consultation process, or both.

2.5 The council also undertook structured engagement with children to gather their views. Children in enhanced provisions enjoy learning in a small group in a quiet place. They like working with staff who understand their needs and how to meet them. They are unhappy in places which are busy with other children and are noisy.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council outlines several educational benefits which it believes will result from the proposal. HM Inspectors agree that supporting children from enhanced provisions to return to their catchment school has the potential to create more equitable and inclusive provision across primary schools. However, the council will need to ensure that children's current support in enhanced provisions is neither diminished nor compromised on their return. As such, the council will also need to ensure that any changes resulting from the proposal continue to be adequately resourced.

3.2 During the consultation, the council has helpfully clarified that no child would be forced to move school. If the proposal is agreed, the council should continue to reassure and clarify the position for any parents who raise concerns about this. The proposal does not provide sufficient information about how the transition back to catchment schools would be managed for children in enhanced provisions. HM Inspectors consider that the council should provide such information in its report. There is also no date given for the implementation of the proposal, if it is approved at the council's Executive meeting on 19 February 2026. In its final report, the council should be clear about when the proposal will be implemented.

3.3 The council states that staff development in inclusive pedagogy, positive behaviour strategies and universal design for learning will lead to improved teaching and learning across all schools. The proposal indicates that investment will be made in this professional development for staff, but does not give details of this. Staff in enhanced provisions who met with HM Inspectors

are aware of the importance of appropriate professional learning for teachers supporting children who have substantial barriers to learning that require an enhanced level of additional support. They are concerned about the lack of information in the proposal about plans for training or dates for its implementation. HM Inspectors agree that professional development for all staff across the primary sector will be important for this proposal to be successful, should it be agreed. This needs to be carefully planned and budgeted for, with an appropriate lead time before implementing the proposed changes.

3.4 All parents of children currently placed in enhanced provisions who met with HM Inspectors expressed their opposition to the council's proposal. They raised concerns that there are no clear plans or risk assessments linked to implementation of the proposal. They believe that the proposal is a way for the council to close enhanced provisions and to save money on school transport. Parents who met with HM Inspectors are concerned that their child would only get part of the time of an enhanced provision member of staff on return to their catchment school. They have concerns about the staffing, resources and dedicated space that would be available if their child returns to their catchment school. HM Inspectors consider that the council should more clearly set out in its report, how the needs of children who have substantial barriers to learning that require an enhanced level of additional support will be met in mainstream provision. This should also include information on what will happen if schools do not have dedicated space for an additional small group.

3.5 Parents of children in other schools, who met with HM Inspectors, are concerned that current support and staffing would be redirected to support children with high levels of need returning from enhanced provisions. They are worried that this could have a negative impact on their child's learning and progress. Staff in enhanced provisions are also concerned about how support following each child back to their catchment school will work in practice. They feel that there will be a negative impact for children currently receiving support and also for those in regular classrooms.

3.6 A few staff in schools that children could return to, point out that they do not have spaces available for small group tuition that will be required. Staff also have concerns that provision developed by individual schools at their own expense, to meet the needs of their current cohort, will be requisitioned as bases for those returning from enhanced provisions. A few children who met with HM Inspectors are concerned that those returning from enhanced provisions might struggle to have their needs met in class. They are aware that providing space in their school for a small group could result in the removal of their library or music facilities.

3.7 Staff and parents in mainstream schools, who met with HM Inspectors, are concerned about safety and security risks within their buildings and school grounds for children returning from enhanced provisions. If the proposal is implemented, the council should work with stakeholders to address these concerns.

3.8 The diocese would like the council to ensure that children have a high quality of support if the proposal goes ahead. They stated that children should receive the right support at the right time and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

3.9 During the consultation period, the council was notified of alleged inaccuracies and omissions in the proposal. The council will need to ensure that it takes the necessary steps to

investigate these alleged inaccuracies and omissions. In its consultation report, the council will need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies and omissions notified to it.

4. Summary

The council's proposal lacks sufficient detail to demonstrate how all of the educational benefits, which are asserted in it, will be achieved. For example, how the needs of children who have substantial barriers to learning that require an enhanced level of additional support will be met in mainstream provision, without being diminished nor compromised.

If the council proceeds with its proposal, it should consult further with stakeholders and address their concerns before producing a final report. It should clarify its plans for staff professional development and for ensuring the safety and security of children returning from enhanced provisions, as well as those in their catchment school. It should provide a detailed plan of how transitions will be handled and what will happen if schools do not have dedicated space for an additional small group. The whole proposal should be clearly costed and risk assessed by the council. In its consultation report, the council will also need to set out the actions it has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies and omissions notified to it.

HM Inspectors

November 2025