

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery
DATE	12 November 2019
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Orchard Brae
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/19/426
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR	Eleanor Sheppard
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Elected Members with further information on the range of support being afforded to Orchard Brae following their inspection by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate which was published on 2 July 2019.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:-

- 2.1 note the contents of this report; and
- 2.2 instruct the Chief Operating Officer to continue to support the school to address the recommendations made by Education Scotland.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 Orchard Brae School was opened in August 2017 to replace the previous Hazlewood, Woodlands and Pre-School provision for children with severe and complex needs. The £18.5 million investment in a new building enabled children and young people from across the City with the most complex needs to access an environment with all of the facilities and services they require in one location.

3.1.2 The new school represents a significant investment in children and families with additional support needs and was welcomed by the community. Significant work was undertaken prior to the move to the new building in order to shape services around the needs of children and families and ensure that transition plans were effective. Significant time was also invested in developing strong partnerships with parents, carers and partners to ensure that all parties and agencies were well placed to effectively support the complex wellbeing needs of learners.

3.1.3 Amalgamating two schools is challenging and the challenge of amalgamating three cannot be underestimated. Unfortunately, the amalgamation of the three schools also came at a time when difficulties in recruiting staff were most pronounced and at times the school has managed up to 20 vacancies a day over the past two years.

3.2.1 Quality Assurance

3.2.2 Quality Assurance visits by the central team had confirmed that improvements were required in several areas. As a result of these visits many key approaches had been established, such as the development of a Quality Assurance Calendar, although these were early in their development at the time of the inspection by Education Scotland.

3.3.1 Inspection by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate

3.3.2 A team of inspectors from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate visited Orchard Brae School and Nursery Class in May. During their visit they talked to parents and carers, children and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

3.3.3 The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- Children and young people have benefited from a well-planned transition to their new nursery and school and have responded positively to the learning environment.
- The school has developed important partnerships with a range of professionals and organisations. These partnerships are benefiting children, young people and their families.
- Parents feel welcomed by staff and are proactive in supporting the work of the school and each other through workshops and events.

3.3.4 The staff team are pleased that these strengths were identified given the investment of time to establish a clear vision for the school and drive work towards that vision.

3.4.1 Areas for Improvement from Education Scotland

3.4.2 The following areas for improvement were identified by Education Scotland:

- (1) Senior leaders and staff should implement approaches to evaluating the work of the nursery and school that accurately identify what needs to be improved. All staff need to be more involved in school improvement.
- (2) There is a need to increase planned learning opportunities to ensure there is high quality learning and teaching for all children and young people across the school and nursery.
- (3) Review and develop curriculum frameworks in all subject areas, starting with literacy, numeracy and health wellbeing.
- (4) There needs to be a greater focus on improving the wellbeing of all learners. Approaches to safeguarding and child protection need to be improved and follow education authority guidance.
- (5) Raise attainment and achievement across the school and nursery and increase expectations of what children and young people can achieve.

3.4.3 Education Scotland gave the following evaluations based on their 6 point evaluation scale.

School	Grade
Leadership of Change	Weak
Learning, Teaching and Assessment	Unsatisfactory
Raising Attainment and Achievement	Weak
Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion	Weak

Early Learning and Childcare	Grade
Leadership of Change	Weak
Learning, Teaching and Assessment	Weak
Raising Attainment and Achievement	Unsatisfactory
Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion	Weak

3.4.4 The full inspection report published in July 2019 is available in Appendix A.

3.4.5 A robust action plan was immediately put in place to address the fourth recommendation above with a robust calendar of professional learning put in place for the day after the inspection. This work was tailored for both school and the Early Learning and Childcare Setting.

3.4.5 The School Leadership Team (SLT) have worked with the central team to plan how to address the other areas for improvement. This early plan has now been built into the School Improvement Plan to ensure that the school works to one plan for ease, a copy of which is available in Appendix B.

3.5.1 Areas for Improvement from the Care Inspectorate

3.5.2 The Care Inspectorate make evaluations based on the Health and Social Care Standards. The evaluations given are:

Health and Social Care Standards	Grade
Quality of care and support weak	Weak
Quality of environment	Weak
Quality of staffing	Weak
Quality of management and leadership	Weak

3.5.3 In addition, the Care Inspectorate made a number of requirements and recommendations which are detailed in the letter of inspection findings in Appendix A.

3.5.4 All recommendations and inspection findings were considered with a robust short-term plan put in place. Outstanding actions from the short-term plan have now been transferred into the School Improvement Plan for ease.

3.6.1 Early Progress

3.6.2 The SLT and staff worked tirelessly to address the fourth recommendation from Education Scotland and regularly discussed progress and next steps with central officers and with the Care Inspectorate. The team felt it was important to provide assurance in this area at the earliest opportunity. The Chief Education Officer and Chief Officer Integrated Children and Family Services were both involved in evaluating the impact of changes made in order to align procedures across the school to provide a more consistent approach by the end of the summer term. This change took place very quickly and was complete before publication of the report in July.

3.6.3 Much SLT time is taken up with fairly operational tasks and it was decided that making better use of the resource available in the school office would enable the leadership team to support improved learning and teaching. The Customer function has supported the service to evaluate working practices in the office and has a plan in place to address these issues.

3.6.4 The Chief Education Officer spent time with staff in June to look at expectations around leadership in an empowered system. This session was important to guide understanding of the Quality Indicator Leadership of Change which relies on all members of the school community collectively leading and driving improvement.

3.6.5 A plan to improve the quality of learning and teaching has been put in place. This plan will see partners such as Education Scotland and external professional learning providers support the staff over the coming months and years.

3.7.1 Return Inspection in September

Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate returned to Orchard Brae to check progress in September.

3.7.2 Education Scotland noted the significant progress made, particularly in relation to recommendation 4, and plans to return to the school within 12 months. The school await official publication of their findings.

3.7.3 The Care Inspectorate completed a full return inspection with the report available in Appendix C. The organisation noted that all requirements and recommendations had been met and that the evaluations have significantly improved.

Health and Social Care Standards in September 2019	Grade
Quality of care and support weak	Very good
Quality of environment	Good
Quality of staffing	Very good
Quality of management and leadership	Good

3.7.4 Both inspection teams noted the significant progress made in a short period of time.

3.7.5 The SLT and staff team have worked exceptionally hard to address the findings of the inspection report and will continue to do so. The central team will continue to support the school to ensure that these early gains are built upon.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Standards In Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000 placed an obligation on Local Authorities to secure improvement in all schools whilst the Education (Additional Support for Learning)(Scotland) Act 2004 requires adequate and efficient provision to be made for such additional support as is required for children and young people with additional support needs.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	N/A		There are no financial risks arising from the recommendations in this report.
Legal	Failure to deliver on legal duties	L	Actions and proposed actions satisfy these legal duties.

Employee	Risk of employees feeling overwhelmed by the many improvements required.	L	Support in place from the Local Authority Education Service
Customer	Potential for children or young people to be disadvantaged by not having access to a quality educational experience.	L	Close monitoring of progress by the Education Service
Reputational	Risk of reputational damage for school and service	M	This report will provide some assurance that plans being implemented are effective

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	Children who have their learning and wellbeing needs well met are more able to contribute to a prosperous economy
Prosperous People	Children and young people who have their learning and wellbeing needs met are more to have fulfilling and more independent lives.

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Customer Service Design	Promotes an understanding of the circumstances of individual children and young people to ensure that personalised support is available to them.
Organisational Design	Seeks to ensure the best use of resource in the system.
Governance	Overseen by Chief Officers and by the Education Operations Committee.
Workforce	Ensures that colleagues in schools have clarity around their roles and responsibilities and supports joined up working across departments and agencies.
Process Design	Revised monitoring arrangements ensure that any vulnerabilities in the system are quickly addressed.

Technology	Supports increased use of technology to improve outcomes for children and young people.
Partnerships and Alliances	Promotes and makes use of wider partnership support as appropriate.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	Not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Applicable

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

10. APPENDICES

- Appendix A Inspection Report of 2 July 2019
- Appendix B School Improvement Plan for session 19/20
- Appendix C Care Inspectorate Report of September 2019

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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