

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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| COMMITTEE | Education Operational Delivery |
| DATE | 12 March 2020 |
| EXEMPT | No |
| CONFIDENTIAL | No |
| REPORT TITLE | Inspection Reporting |
| REPORT NUMBER | OPE/20/055 |
| DIRECTOR | Rob Polkinghorne |
| CHIEF OFFICER | Graeme Simpson |
| REPORT AUTHOR | Eleanor Sheppard |
| TERMS OF REFERENCE | 1 |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report aims to provide Elected Members with oversight of Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspection reporting since the last Committee cycle.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:-

- 2.1 note the contents of this report; and
- 2.2 instruct the Chief Education Officer to continue to support schools to implement improvements in order to address the recommendations made by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate.

3.0 The Education Scotland Inspection Process

- 3.1.1 Education Scotland inspect schools on a proportionate basis, using a sampling approach rather than a cyclical model. An annual sample of 120 schools are selected nationally to enable Education Scotland to provide evidence for the National Improvement Framework, with Education Scotland analysis of all 120 national inspections informing national policy and strategy. The length of time since last inspection can be a factor in determining which schools are inspected.

- 3.1.2 Through inspection, Education Scotland aims to:
- provide assurance and public accountability;
 - promote improvement; and
 - inform the development of national educational policy and practice.
- 3.1.3 There are subtle differences between Inspection arrangements across sector although all school inspections focus on the same core Quality Indicators (QIs) from the framework used to evaluate schools known as How Good Is Our School?:
- QI 1.3 Leadership of change
 - QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment
 - QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement
 - QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

Each QI is given a rating on a six point scale ranging from unsatisfactory through to excellent.

- 3.1.4 In addition, and in keeping with the national direction of travel, Inspectors currently explore the extent to which the education system is moving towards an empowered system through discussion with key stakeholders during the inspection.
- 3.1.5 The process of Inspection differs slightly across sector although in general terms each inspection comprises:
- the analysis of pre-inspection questionnaires to stakeholders including parents and carers, children and young people, staff and partners;
 - review of documentation requested by the Inspection team;
 - a scoping meeting where the Senior Leadership Team share their journey to improvement and self-evaluation evidence;
 - a series of classroom visits to validate and triangulate the information shared at the scoping meeting;
 - a series of focus groups with stakeholders and staff to validate and triangulate information shared at the scoping meeting;
 - a feedback meeting;
 - a published letter of inspection findings and associated Summary of Findings (SIF); and
 - a return inspection where a school does not achieve a grading of satisfactory or better.

3.2.1 **The Early Learning and Childcare Inspection Process**

Early Learning and Childcare settings are inspected by both Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate. Education Scotland use the associated Quality Indicators from How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare to inspect whilst The Care Inspectorate make use of the Health and Social Care Standards. The inspection approaches are broadly similar and often take place at the same time.

- 3.2.2 The Care Inspectorate currently inspect:
- Quality of care and support
 - Quality of environment
 - Quality of staffing
 - Quality of management and leadership

SECONDARY SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

3.3.1 **Hazlehead Academy** was inspected on October 2019 as part of a short model inspection which focussed on 2 of the Core QIs.

3.3.2 The strengths identified during the inspection were that:

- The headteacher and senior leaders promote values as central to the life and work of the school. This is resulting in positive relationships between staff and young people for most of the time. Relationships are strengthened further by staff and partners' offer of a wide range of opportunities for achievements and clubs. Young people's participation is encouraged by ensuring cost is not a barrier;
- Senior leaders and business partners have identified key skills for employment that young people will need for future careers in Aberdeen city and beyond. Almost all young people are aware of how opportunities for achievements progress these skills; and
- Young people appreciate the opportunity to learn Gàidhlig, with Gaelic (Learners) recently added to the curriculum. Most of the young people studying Gàidhlig do well in National Qualifications.

3.3.3 The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and the Quality Improvement Manager:

- Ensure focused leadership of raising attainment, with all staff, led by senior leaders, clear on their roles and responsibilities. All staff should be able to evaluate the difference they are making to help young people achieve as highly as possible, particularly for those in S4 and S5;
- Take forward in depth, a manageable number of priorities for improvement. These should be underpinned by a clear vision, whilst ensuring well-paced change. Staff should continue to prioritise the work started on improving the curriculum;
- Continue to improve learning, teaching and assessment to better meet the needs of all young people. This should include ensuring tasks and activities support progression; and
- Take account of Gaelic in the strategic planning of the school. This should focus on increasing the numbers of young people that continue with Gaelic Medium Education from primary and throughout each stage of secondary. Young people need more regular opportunities to develop their fluency in the language.

| Hazlehead Academy | Grade |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Learning, Teaching and Assessment | Satisfactory |
| Raising Attainment and Achievement | Weak |

3.3.4 The report was published on 21st January and a briefing was held for Local Elected Members on 24th January. This briefing outlined progress to date and provided an opportunity to share the comprehensive Action Plan in place to support school improvement (available in Appendix A). Many areas have already progressed with a significant review of remits to ensure a sharp focus on the recommendations. Inspectors will return within 1 year to evaluate progress.

3.4.1 **Harlaw Academy** was inspected in November 2019. The inspection team inspected all 4 quality indicators and found the following strengths in the school's work:

- Young people in the school are articulate, motivated and keen to participate in the school's improvement;
- Senior leaders and pupil support staff, working with partners, support well those young people who benefit from specialist help with their learning; and
- Most young people in the senior phase have access to a wide range of courses in National Qualifications, vocational learning and Open University modules. They benefit from a range of opportunities for achievement including youth award programmes and The Duke of Edinburgh Award. These help young people to become successful learners, gain leadership skills, improve their confidence and learn to work as part of a team.

3.4.2 The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and the Quality Improvement Manager:

- Streamline approaches to improvement so that self-evaluation activities clearly identify priorities which will make the biggest difference to outcomes for young people;
- Continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment so that young people's experiences engage them and meet their needs. Develop more fully an ethos for learning with high expectations and mutual respect; and
- Strengthen approaches to monitoring young people's progress across all subject areas so that staff at all levels have a clear overview of learners' progress. Continue to raise the attainment of young people at all stages.

| Harlaw Academy | Grade |
|--|--------------|
| Leadership of Change | Weak |
| Learning, Teaching and Assessment | Satisfactory |
| Raising Attainment and Achievement | Satisfactory |
| Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion | Weak |

3.4.3 The report was published on the 4th February with a briefing coordinated for Local Elected Members on the same day. Officers were able to share that a new Head Teacher will begin his tenure at Harlaw at the beginning of March to lead improvements. Many areas of improvement have already been addressed and a provisional Action Plan is in place to address the recommendations (see Appendix B). This plan will be finalised with the new Head Teacher in March. Officers requested that a return inspection take place in 18 months to enable the new Head Teacher some time to become established at the school and the Inspection team has agreed this timescale for return.

PRIMARY SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

3.5.1 **Culter Primary School** was inspected in October 2019 by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate. The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- Confident, articulate children across the school and nursery who are polite, enthusiastic and eager to learn;

- The strong focus on children’s health and wellbeing across the school and nursery resulting in the positive, respectful and supportive culture underpinned by the rights of the child. Children in the primary school are developing a very good understanding of how to improve their own wellbeing and the importance of recognising and understanding their emotions; and
- The valuable opportunities provided within the primary school for children to develop their skills through wider achievements as a result of strong staff teamwork and effective partnership working.

3.5.2 The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and Quality Improvement Manager:

- Continue to provide clear, strategic guidance and direction to build and deepen nursery practitioner knowledge, skills and understanding of current thinking in early learning and childcare. Children require increased and consistent opportunities to lead their learning through play across both playrooms;
- Develop a shared understanding of good practice in learning and teaching across the school and nursery to ensure it is of consistently high quality, providing appropriate pace and challenge for all children; and
- Continue to develop the use of assessment to inform planning, tracking and monitoring and raise attainment further.

| School | Grade |
|--|--------------|
| Leadership of Change | Good |
| Learning, Teaching and Assessment | Satisfactory |
| Raising Attainment and Achievement | Good |
| Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion | Very Good |

| Early Learning and Childcare | Grade |
|--|--------------|
| Leadership of Change | Satisfactory |
| Learning, Teaching and Assessment | Satisfactory |
| Ensuring Children’s Progress | Good |
| Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion | Good |

| Care Inspectorate Gradings | Grade |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Quality of care and support | Good |
| Quality of environment | Good |

3.5.3 The school are using the inspection recommendations to help inform the School Improvement Plan and no additional Action Plan is deemed necessary. The school has demonstrated their capacity for improvement.

RETURN INSPECTIONS

3.6.1 **Kittybrewster Primary School** was inspected in December 2018 with evaluations spanning weak and satisfactory. The inspection of 2018 set out clear areas for improvement. The improvements deemed necessary were:

- Senior leaders should provide clear, strategic leadership and direction to staff to guide improvements across the school and nursery;
- Senior leaders should organise for staff to work with staff in other schools to ensure they understand national standards of attainment, and to develop consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across all stages;
- Continue to develop approaches to tracking and monitoring the work of the school and children's progress in learning, in order to raise children's attainment in literacy and numeracy;
- Across all stages, staff need to develop consistent approaches to assessment to inform children's next steps in learning. This will support children to know what they need to do to improve further; and
- Involve all children in planning and leading their learning, and in decision-making about aspects of school life that affect them. Provide more regular opportunities to give children choice and responsibility to develop greater independence in their learning.

3.6.2 In May 2019 the Chief Education Officer arranged for a central officer to be deployed as Acting Headteacher.

3.6.3 In December 2019 Inspectors returned to the school to evaluate progress. Inspectors have confirmed that all areas for improvement identified in 2018 have been addressed and that they will not return to the school. They are confident that the school now has the capacity to continue to improve. A permanent head teacher will now be appointed to the school.

3.6.4 Care Inspectorate grades for the Early Learning and Childcare have improved with gradings of 'good' now awarded across all measures.

3.6.5 Inspectors noted that the newly appointed senior team quickly made significant improvements and have effectively improved the environment for teaching and learning. In addition, parental support and parent involvement in the life and work of the school has increased.

3.7.1 **Gilcomstoun Primary School and Nursery Class** was visited in May 2018 by a team of inspectors from Education Scotland. With evaluations spanning weak and satisfactory, the inspection of 2018 set out clear areas for improvement. The improvements deemed necessary were:

- The leadership team should develop a clear strategic direction to guide well-paced leadership of change at all levels. This entails the robust use of self-evaluation, which leads to a shared understanding of strengths, improvement needs and evidence of improved outcomes;
- As a high priority, develop the curriculum to meet national expectations. This should enable children to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school. Children should be encouraged and supported to continue with Gaelic Medium Education as they move from primary to secondary;
- Build on the most effective practice to ensure high-quality learning, teaching and assessment across the school;
- Give prompt attention to ensuring that the learning needs of children are identified through reliable assessment, and are met through appropriate and timely support. As required, this should include specialist input; and

- Raise attainment in literacy and numeracy, as well as in other areas of learning, to enable children to make the best possible progress.

3.7.2 In October 2019 Inspectors returned to the school to evaluate progress. Inspectors have confirmed that the school has made progress in all areas for improvement identified in 2018 and are working to further embed some of the changes. Education Scotland have asked the Local Authority to report on progress within a year. If sufficient progress continues to be made it is unlikely that Education Scotland will return to the school. The School Quality Improvement Manager will oversee progress to ensure this pace is maintained.

3.7.3 Early Learning and Childcare grades are now:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Quality of Care and Support | Good |
| Quality of the Environment | Very Good |
| Quality of Staffing | Good |
| Quality of Leadership and Management | Good |

ANTICIPATED RETURN INSPECTIONS

3.8.1 A number of schools are awaiting return inspections and a summary of progress is included below to ensure Elected Members are sighted on progress.

3.8.2 **Orchard Brae** has made changes to the remits of senior staff to ensure that the recommendations can be effectively taken forward. The main focus is currently around Learning, Teaching and Assessment. Care Inspectorate grades for Early Learning and Childcare have significantly improved with grades of very good being awarded for Quality of Care and Support and Quality of staffing and grades of Good for Quality of Environment and Quality of Leadership and Management.

3.8.3 **Dyce Primary** continues to work to improve based on the inspection findings and are currently working with officers and peer head teachers to improve Learning, Teaching and Assessment. Officers are working closely with the school to secure a permanent head teacher to help lead the school through the improvements required.

3.8.4 **Kingsford Primary** are continuing to work with central officers and peer Head Teachers to address the recommendations within the report. The Quality Improvement Visit has helped direct support to the school in order to improve the level of differentiation and support early years staff to deliver play-based learning.

3.8.5 **Milltimber Primary** are continuing to work with central officers to address the recommendations within the report. The school has been considering the refreshed narrative around Curriculum for Excellence to ensure that work is focussed and coherent.

INSPECTIONS OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

3.9.1 All Early Learning and Childcare settings need to be operating at Good or above in order to deliver 1140 hours from August 2020. The Early Years Team has been working closely with settings to ensure that they are operating a quality

service. Significant gains have been made over the last year with a higher number of settings now meeting national standards. A comprehensive action plan is in place for settings who are not yet achieving a grading of Good or better and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Locality Leads, who oversee quality improvement work across ELC, continue to support improvement in individual settings.

- 3.9.2 Between August and December 2019, Care Inspectorate carried out 19 inspections of Local Authority Early Learning and Childcare settings. 18 of these settings were awarded grades of good or very good and 1 setting was graded as adequate (Milltimber where Locality Leads continue to support). This is a marked improvement and evidences the positive impact of our Locality Leads in supporting improvement across Early Learning and Childcare.
- 3.9.3 During this period 10 inspections of Funded Provider settings took place with 8 receiving grades of good or very good and 2 settings receiving grades of adequate (Cove Bay Kindergarden and First Class.) Locality Leads continue to support both settings to meet the quality standard.
- 3.9.4 Currently 10 local Authority settings (Abbotswell, Broomhill, Charleston, Dyce, Kaimhill, Me2¹, Loirston, Milltimber, Holy Family and Ashgrove) and 9 Funded Provider settings(Altens, Oldmachar Pre-School, Amber Kindergarden, Bridges, Cove Bay Kindergarden, J Puddleducks, The kindergarden, First Class and Bright Horizons Dyce) have at least 1 area which has been graded below the standard.
- 3.9.5 ELC Locality Lead Officers are working closely with individual settings to ensure a bespoke support package tailored to their needs is in place in order to support their work to gain a minimum of Good in each area.
- 3.9.6 In many cases the Quality of Leadership and Management is emerging as an area for improvement. In response to this, the Early years team have developed a training package for current leaders and other aspiring leaders.

LEARNING FOR THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

- 3.10.1 There are a series of emerging themes from the inspection reports, most notably a theme of inconsistent approaches to Learning, Teaching and Assessment. Vulnerabilities in this area impact on all other QIs and it is important that the service support schools to improve practice. The Service professional learning offer has a clear focus on improving learning and teaching with significant uptake from all schools.
- 3.10.2 The current approach to Quality Improvement, the development of an Aberdeen City Council Standard for Learning, Teaching and Assessment and the standardisation of approaches to tracking and monitoring will support schools to improve further.

¹ Me 2 currently provides Early Learning and Childcare for eligible 2s.

3.10.3 A second key area being highlighted is the leadership of change. This leadership extends beyond the work of the senior team and it is important that we have a more systematic approach to developing leadership at all levels. The leadership framework being presented to this committee and the use of Trios to support Quality Improvement will help support work in this area. In addition, the service continues to streamline paperwork to ensure that leaders are well placed to lead so that their time can be effectively used to secure improvement.

3.10.4 Key messages from inspection are now collated and shared with colleagues. This approach ensures that staff teams remain aware of current national standards.

3.10.5 There is clear evidence that the approach being taken to support early learning and childcare settings is realising improvement. The appointment of Locality Leads over the last year has significantly added capacity to the team. Inspections continue to be monitored so that learning is shared across local authority and funded provider settings through established Quality Assurance arrangements.

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 places an obligation on Local Authorities to secure improvement in all schools whilst the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on Local Authorities to provide 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare from 2020. Settings not able to provide a service rated as 'Good' or better will not be eligible to offer the expanded entitlement.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

| Category | Risk | Low (L) Medium (M) High (H) | Mitigation |
|------------------|---|--|--|
| Financial | Risk of an ELC setting not being able to deliver funded ELC due to poor quality | L | Mitigated through the development of more robust approaches to supporting improvement. |
| 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 through the revised education structure |
| 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 likely to have fulfilling and more independent lives, as such this report closely aligns to all the children's stretch outcomes in the LOIP. |

| Design Principles of Target Operating Model | |
|--|---|
| | Impact of Report |
| Customer Service Design | Review of performance data enables the service to be shaped to support continued improvement. |
| Organisational Design | Seeks to ensure the best use of resource in the system. |
| Governance | Overseen by the Chief Education Officer and Quality Improvement Managers and by the Education Operational Delivery Committee. |
| Workforce | Ensures that colleagues in schools and settings have clarity around their roles and responsibilities and anticipated standards. |
| 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 through simplifying messaging to staff around anticipated standards. |
| 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 Action Plan for Hazlehead Academy
Appendix B Action Plan for Harlaw

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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