

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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| COMMITTEE | Education and Children's Services Committee |
| DATE | 26 November 2024 |
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| REPORT TITLE | Inspection Reporting |
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| EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | Eleanor Sheppard |
| CHIEF OFFICER | Shona Milne/ Graeme Simpson |
| REPORT AUTHOR | Shona Milne / Graeme Simpson |
| TERMS OF REFERENCE | 1.1.6 |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report details the outcome of inspection reports published by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) and The Care Inspectorate published since the last meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 Notes the content of this report; and
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools to implement continuous improvement in keeping with agreed Quality Improvement Frameworks approved at Committee in July 2024.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Education Service utilise a Quality Improvement Framework (QIF) to support schools and ELC settings to achieve the standards expected by external inspection agencies. The QIF categorises schools/ELC settings as needing different levels of support based on internal self-evaluation and external scrutiny from the central team:
- Category 1/Universal includes schools/settings who have self and external evaluation identifying all core Quality Indicators (QIs) as good or better.
 - Category 2 /Targeted includes schools/settings with external and or self-evaluation which has identified one or more of the core QIs as *satisfactory or below*.

- Category 3/Intensive includes schools/settings with external and or self-evaluation which has identified one or more of the core Quality Indicators as *weak* or *unsatisfactory*.

The updated QIF for academic session 2024/25 was approved by the Education and Children's Services Committee in July 2024.

3.2 EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTIONS

3.2.1 National Thematic Inspection: Local Authority approaches to support school improvement

Our local Authority thematic inspection took place on Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 September 2024. During the 2 days a team of two inspectors and an associate inspector met with the Executive Director of Families and Communities, Chief Officer Education and Lifelong learning and focus groups of central support staff, headteachers, class teachers, parents/carers and Elected Members. The inspection team also reviewed a significant volume of supporting evidence. Individual inspection findings will be used to inform a national report which will be published in early 2025. Following the publication of the national report we will receive a finalised written summary of the findings reflecting our visit. Our report will be shared with committee thereafter.

3.2.2 Education Scotland Inspection of Tullos School and ELC

Tullos School and Nursery Class was inspected in June 2024 using the short inspection model. The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work

- Almost all staff have a clear understanding of the social, cultural and economic context of the school and nursery. This helps staff to build positive relationships with children to better support them in their learning.
- The strong focus among staff on emotional wellbeing across the school and nursery. This work is supporting most children to understand their feelings and manage their emotions to engage in learning effectively.
- In the nursery, staff work very well together to provide well organised environments with rich learning experiences to motivate and engage children in their learning.

The following areas for improvement were identified:

- Teachers need to improve the quality of learners' experiences across the school. This should include planning more enjoyable, challenging and relevant learning experiences.
- School leaders should work with teachers to ensure strategies to promote positive relationships and behaviour are applied consistently across the school. There is a need to improve attendance of children to school.
- Teachers should, with the support of the local authority, ensure that they quickly and consistently identify the needs of individuals and groups of children. To support this, teachers should plan tasks, activities and resources more effectively to meet the identified needs of children.

- Senior leaders and staff need to work together to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school. Staff should develop and implement approaches to track children's progress, attainment and achievements more effectively. This will help them to better monitor children's progress and evaluate the impact of interventions to remove barriers to learning

Tullos School were evaluated as weak across the quality indicators.

| Primary School Quality Indicators | Evaluation |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Learning, teaching and assessment | Weak (2) |
| Raising attainment and achievement | Weak (2) |

Through Quality Improvement Visits during session 22/23 the central team had identified key areas for improvement, particularly around the quality of teaching and learning. The school was placed in category 3 and the central team had worked with the senior leadership team to develop a comprehensive improvement plan.

The resignation of the Head Teacher in January 2024 resulted in the need to recruit, and the decision was made to second one of our experienced Head teachers to the post and she had begun to address the improvements prior to the inspection. The inspection team are confident in the Head Teacher's ability to lead improvements in the school. Following the inspection the Quality Improvement team have supported the school to amend the action plan to take account of the HMle feedback. Inspectors will return to Tullos within one year of the publication of the letter. The headteacher will remain in post to lead the school through the return visit.

The school was in **Category 3** of the quality Improvement framework prior to the inspection and will remain in **Category 3**.

HMle made the following evaluations of the Tullos ELC class. The Care inspectorate were not part of this inspection.

| Nursery Class Quality Indicators | Evaluation |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Learning, teaching and assessment | Good (4) |
| Securing children's progress | Good (4) |

Staff in the ELC were delighted their nurturing approach, organised and well planned environments and ability to motivate and engage children in learning was recognised. The ELC was in **Category 1** prior to inspection and has moved to **Category 2** post inspection to allow the improvement work that is required around transition to school to be tracked and supported by central officers

A copy of the improvement plan can be found in Appendix A.
A copy of the HMle report can be found [here](#).

3.2.3 Education Scotland Inspection of St Joseph's School and Nursery Class

St Joseph's School and Nursery Class was also inspected in June 2024 using the short inspection model. The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- Across the school and nursery, children are motivated to learn in a highly inclusive and diverse learning environment. In the school, this is underpinned by the strong Catholic ethos where every child is supported to make very good progress in their learning.
- The headteacher's highly-effective leadership supports staff well to improve the consistency of quality learning and teaching across the school and nursery. Together with senior leaders, staff are working well together to consider carefully the best approaches to improve learners' experiences.
- Senior leaders are rigorous in monitoring the progress of children's literacy and numeracy attainment across the school. They use assessment information well to identify gaps in children's learning and inform well-judged approaches to support children effectively. As a result, most children attain very well.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Aberdeen City Council.

- Children should have a greater role in setting and reviewing quality targets to improve their learning. They need to use these targets regularly to reflect on their learning and measure the progress they make across all curriculum areas.
- Staff should provide increased levels of challenge to children across all stages of the school and nursery who are capable of making greater progress in their learning

St Joseph's School were evaluated as Good and Very Good across the quality indicators.

| Primary School Quality Indicators | Evaluation |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Learning, teaching and assessment | Good (4) |
| Raising attainment and achievement | Very Good (5) |

St Joseph's staff were delighted their hard work had been recognised and that inspectors highlighted the work around maintaining standards through rigorous monitoring of young people's attainment as a strength of the school.

The leadership of the headteacher was also highlighted as a strength and following the inspection she has been sharing her experiences with others. Through the work of trios (school groups to support school improvement) her experience as a leader will be used to support other schools to improve.

Prior to the inspection St Joseph's School were in **Category 2** to ensure inspection readiness, following the inspection they will be moved into **Category 1** and the Head Teacher will have the opportunity to work with others to support improvement across the city.

HMIe made the following evaluations of the St Joseph's Nursery class. The Care inspectorate were not part of this inspection.

| Nursery Class Quality Indicators | Evaluation |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Learning, teaching and assessment | Very Good (5) |
| Securing children's progress | Very Good (5) |

Inspectors noted that the rigorous tracking in the school was also evident within the ELC leading to effective transitions to school.

Inspection findings aligned with our evaluation of the ELC as prior to inspection the ELC was in **Category 1**. Following the inspection the setting will remain in **Category 1** and have the opportunity to share practice with other settings through our ongoing professional development sessions.

A copy of the report can be found [here](#).

3.2.4 Airyhall Primary School

In September 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate visited Airyhall School and Nursery Class. The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The headteacher demonstrates strong, effective leadership and is well supported by her depute headteachers. They have a nurturing and aspirational vision for all children.
- Together, the senior leadership team and staff work very well to create positive, respectful and trusting relationships with all children and parents.
- The staff in the nursery and school are enthusiastic to lead change. They feel trusted and respected by senior leaders to lead change to improve learning experiences and outcomes for children. They are proactive in engaging with professional learning and research. This is resulting in improved outcomes for all children.
- The staff in the school and nursery work effectively with a wide range of partners. These partners support the delivery of the curriculum and the wellbeing of children and families very well. This is helping all children to have their needs met effectively and to engage in learning.
- Across the school and nursery, children have a strong understanding of their own wellbeing. They know how to access and use a range of strategies to support them and others when they feel deep emotions. This is helping children to feel calm and engage well in play and learning.
- Teachers have developed a clear approach to assessing and recording children's progress, which has resulted in strong attainment in literacy and numeracy.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Aberdeen City Council.

- As planned, teachers and senior leaders should further strengthen approaches to planning learning and teaching beyond literacy and numeracy. In doing so, children should have greater opportunities to lead their own learning.

- In the nursery, senior leaders and staff should use data more effectively to ensure that they have a clearer focus on children's progress.

Airyhall School was evaluated Very Good across all the quality indicators.

| Primary School Quality Indicators | Evaluation |
|--|---------------|
| Leadership of change | Very Good (5) |
| Learning, teaching and assessment | Very Good (5) |
| Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion | Very Good (5) |
| Raising attainment and achievement | Very Good (5) |

Education Scotland evaluations aligned with the findings of the central team at the last quality improvement visit. Inspectors noted the highly effective leadership of the head teacher and how her clear strategic vision for school improvement and well informed rationale for change creates a school which is nurturing and calm enabling most children to make very good progress. The headteacher routinely involves parents and children in the setting of improvement priorities.

The Senior Leadership Team and teachers were delighted inspectors recognised the range of robust assessment and moderation practice in place and the importance placed on the celebration of children's achievements both in and out of school.

The school was in **Category 2** to support preparations for inspection. Following the inspection the school will now sit in **Category 1**. The headteacher will be encouraged to apply to be an Associate Assessor and has already volunteered to support the delivery of the middle leadership programme.

HMIe made the following evaluations of the Nursery Class

| Nursery Class Quality Indicators | Evaluation |
|--|---------------|
| Leadership of change | Very Good (5) |
| Learning, teaching and assessment | Good (4) |
| Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion | Very Good (5) |
| Raising attainment and achievement | Good (4) |

The team were pleased both sets of inspectors noted how they worked well together valuing each other's strengths in order to support improvements in pedagogy. Other settings will be offered the chance to visit the setting and learn from the strengths of the team.

The inspectors' gradings aligned with the most recent quality improvement visit to the school. The nursery was in **Category 2** as they were preparing for inspection. Following the inspection the ELC is now in **Category 1** and will be encouraged to share their practice with others.

A copy of the HMIe report can be found [here](#).

3.2.5 Harlaw Academy Inspection

Harlaw Academy was originally inspected in November 2019 with a report published in February 2020. Three further visits were made in the intervening period, with the most recent being during the week of 10th June 2024. Despite intensive support from central officers and peers provided to Harlaw Academy throughout this time, this most recent inspection report sets out that a journey of improvement still lies ahead in addressing the three key priorities which remain to:

- 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.
- 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 attainment of young people at all stages.

An Acting Head Teacher has been put in place. The Acting Head Teacher has supported the staff and wider school community to put an Action Plan in place to steer work against the priorities and good progress is being made. A summary of progress since June, a draft high level plan and faculty plan can be found in **Appendix B**. Further information made available at the point of publication will be used to finalise the plan.

There are already positive early signs emerging from survey work with the school community. The Acting Head Teacher and wider leadership team are receiving and now benefitting from support from experienced Head Teacher colleagues and officers. The school has been in **Category 3** since 2022 and will remain in receipt of this intensive support.

The full report can be found [here](#)

3.2.6 Northfield Academy Update

An update to Committee was provided on 2nd July following the inspection of Northfield Academy during the week of 11th March 2024. The Head Teacher continues to provide clear direction for school improvement, noted in the most recent inspection report. This includes ensuring that the whole school community has a voice in evaluation and planning, and creating a clearer set of remits and policies to guide school improvement. Following the successful changes made to the guidance around use of mobile phones in the classroom, the school is now working on a refreshed anti-bullying policy, with consultation, implementation and evaluation to follow.

Northfield Academy continues to improve learning and teaching through their Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework. Whilst continuing to build upon the work by school staff to improve core routines and the learning environment, next steps include enhancing the professional learning

programme in the school and the introduction of the new monitoring and tracking software PupilTracking, with clearly identified roles and responsibilities for how the data collected is used and analysed to improve learner outcomes.

Northfield Academy continues to be driven by improving outcomes for learners. These outcomes relate both to increasing wellbeing and raising attainment. In relation to wellbeing, the school has built on the description of S1 Crew by HM Inspectors as an emerging success to develop a further, reduced but continued experience of Crew in S2 allowing learners to continue to benefit from the established relationships with their Crew Teacher. Early evidence is showing that Crew increases attendance, reduces exclusions, and impacts positively on individual learners with the benefits seen by all involved, with Table 1 below showing some examples of what learners say about the impact of Crew. Although with significant continued work required for all aspects of attainment, the SQA results in 2024 showed improvements in a number of key measures (Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF 5, Attainment for All in all cohorts for S5 and S6, and Breadth and Depth measures in S5) for learners in S5 and S6. The school has identified further key measures for improvement in attainment during session 2024-25.

| Who? | What they said... |
|-------------|---|
| Pupil Voice | "Crew is a safe place where you can express yourself and no-one can judge you." |
| Pupil Voice | "Crew has supported me by making me feel more confident in talking in big groups." |
| Pupil Voice | "Crew is a safe place to share. We circle up to express ourself and how we feel. Crew has supported me a lot, especially what has gone on in my life." |
| Pupil Voice | "Crew is a safe space where you can talk freely. Crew has supported me by helping with math. I think S1 would have been bad without crew because I don't think I would have had the skills I now have." |

Table 1

3.3 **Care Inspectorate Inspections**

The Care Inspectorate has now resumed their standard inspection model and no longer prioritise the inspection of settings deemed to be at higher risk. Where a setting has been subject to a return visit from the Care Inspectorate, we have included the date of their previous visit and the gradings for reference.

3.3.1 Flexible Childcare Services Tillydrone, a funded provider setting in the Tillydrone area, received an unannounced inspection over two days on 31st July and 1st August 2024. Inspectors noted that children were happy, confident and settled. Children were leaders of their own play and learning and could transport resources to meet their interests. Daily access to fresh air and outdoor experiences supported children's health and wellbeing. The staff team were motivated and enthusiastic about their roles and were keen to undertake training to develop their practice. Staff and management should now work together to ensure they have a planning, observing and tracking system in place which supports good experiences and outcomes for children.

| Aspect being inspected | Previous evaluation Oct 23 | Recent Evaluation Aug 24 |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| How good is our care, play and learning? | Good (4) | Good (4) |
| How good is our setting? | Good (4) | Very Good (5) |
| How good is our leadership? | Good (4) | Very Good (5) |
| How good is our staff team? | Adequate (3) | Good (4) |

The team are very pleased that their improvements have been recognised. They will continue to develop their planning and tracking systems. The setting will move from a **Category 2** to a **Category 1** level of support in the Quality Improvement Framework and there will be an opportunity for practitioners to share their practice with other settings through our manager development sessions.

The full report can be read [here](#).

3.3.2 Stonewood ELC, a Local Authority setting in Stonewood School, received an unannounced inspection over 2 days in August 2024. Inspectors noted that children were settled and happily engaged in play and learning leading their own play through a well-balanced mix of activities both indoors and outside. Children received nurturing care and support from staff who knew them well. The staff team were motivated and enthusiastic about their roles and were keen to continue to take on training to develop their practice. Inspectors identified that to ensure high quality care and experiences for children, quality assurance, including effective audits and monitoring of staff practice should be embedded into practice.

| Aspect being inspected | Evaluation August 2024 |
|--|------------------------|
| How good is our care, play and learning? | Good (4) |
| How good is our setting? | Good (4) |
| How good is our leadership? | Good (4) |
| How good is our staff team? | Good (4) |

Locality leads will share examples of where effective audits are implemented and support staff to increase confidence and realise improvement in this area. Prior to the inspection the setting was in **Category 2** and receiving regular visits and support from the Locality Lead. Following the inspection the setting will remain in **Category 2** of the Quality Improvement Framework with continued regular engagement from the Locality Lead until the team are confident the improvements are embedded.

The full report can be read [here](#).

3.3.3 Happitots Cove Bay, a funded provider setting in the Cove Bay area of Aberdeen, received an unannounced inspection over 2 days in July 2024. Inspectors noted that staff were warm and caring, helping to support positive connections with children. They knew children well and followed their routines and preferences from home. This provided continuity of care between home

and the service. Improvements were needed to ensure children experienced a safe, clean and well-maintained environment. Staff deployment was not outcome focused. As a result, there were missed opportunities to support children. Following two incidents relating to children's safety, the provider had taken some action to prevent risk to others, however, there were areas of practice that still needed to be improved. Quality assurance systems needed to improve to ensure children experienced consistently positive outcomes.

| Aspect being inspected | Evaluation July 2024 |
|--|----------------------|
| How good is our care, play and learning? | Weak (2) |
| How good is our setting? | Weak (2) |
| How good is our leadership? | Weak (2) |
| How good is our staff team? | Weak (2) |

Many of the areas for improvement have already been addressed and an action plan has been created to support further development. Prior to the inspection the setting was in **Category 2** and following the inspection the service will be placed in the **Category 3** level of support in the Quality Improvement Framework. Fluctuations in staff and management have meant grades for the setting have not been consistent with them moving in and out of Category 3. In order to address this variation, the Locality Lead will be in the setting once a fortnight to review processes and procedures and ensure improvements are made and embedded.

The full report can be read [here](#).
An Action Plan is available in Appendix C.

3.3.4 Great Western @ Kingswells, a Funded Provider setting based in the Kingswells area of Aberdeen, received an unannounced inspection in July 2024. Inspectors noted that children experienced care from kind, nurturing and caring staff. Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning. There were a wide range of high-quality resources, offering children opportunities for challenge, creativity and problem solving. Children have regular outdoor experiences to promote their health and wellbeing. Staff were committed to their role to support the wellbeing of children and families in their care.

Management and staff should now continue the process of quality assurance including self-evaluation to support further improvements to the experiences for children.

| Aspect being inspected | Evaluation July 2024 |
|--|----------------------|
| How good is our care, play and learning? | Good (4) |
| How good is our setting? | Very Good (5) |
| How good is our leadership? | Good (4) |
| How good is our staff team? | Good (4) |

The setting was in **Category 1** prior to inspection and will remain in the **Category 1** support category of the Quality Improvement Framework with opportunities to share practice through management training sessions.

The full report can be read [here](#).

3.3.5 Little Dreams, a funded provider setting in Bon Accord Street, Aberdeen, received an unannounced inspection in July 2024. Inspectors noted that staff knew children well which supported them to meet their needs. They reported that mealtimes were a positive, unhurried experience offering children opportunities to be independent. Positive and safe sleep routines supported children's health and wellbeing. Quality assurance processes were mainly effective and had a positive impact on experiences for children and families. The provider and manager engaged well with the inspection process and were responsive to suggestions made. Interactions should now be developed to support children's autonomy and critical thinking skills. Learning opportunities should be extended to provide sufficient challenge, curiosity and engagement for all children.

| Aspect being inspected | Previous evaluation June 23 | Recent Evaluation July 24 |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| How good is our care, play and learning? | Adequate (3) | Adequate (3) |
| How good is our setting? | Good (4) | Good (4) |
| How good is our leadership? | Good (4) | Good (4) |
| How good is our staff team? | Adequate (3) | Good (4) |

Although the setting has made steady progress following the support provided by the Locality Leads, they are not meeting the standard for care, play and learning meaning they will remain in **Category 3** level of support in the Quality Improvement Framework until we are sure improvements are embedded and evident across all core indicators.

The action plan can be found at Appendix D.

The full report can be read [here](#).

3.3.6 Little Trees, a funded provider in the Bridge of Don area of Aberdeen, received an unannounced inspection in September 2024. Inspectors noted that children experienced kind, nurturing interactions with staff who knew them well. Staff were being supported to develop their skills in planning, assessing and observing children's play and learning. Children experienced clean, fresh, well-resourced surroundings. They benefitted from significant improvements to the outdoor areas since the last inspection. Staff worked well together to provide consistency for children. Where gaps in care were identified, staff adjusted their practice to promote improved experiences. Quality assurance practices were effective in identifying areas for development to promote positive outcomes for children.

| Aspect being inspected | Previous evaluation January 23 | Recent Evaluation Sept 24 |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| How good is our care, play and learning? | Good (4) | Good (4) |
| How good is our setting? | Adequate (3) | Good (4) |
| How good is our leadership? | Good (4) | Good (4) |
| How good is our staff team? | Good (4) | Good (4) |

The setting is making steady progress and are now meeting the National Standard and therefore no longer on a Service Improvement Period (SIP). The setting will move from **Category 3** to **Category 2** level of support in the Quality Improvement Framework and progress will continue to be monitored by the Locality Lead team.

The full report can be read [here](#)

3.3.7 Orchard Brae, a Local Authority setting, received an unannounced inspection in September 2024. Inspectors noted that children experienced caring and loving interactions. They were well supported in their learning and had fun. Snacks and mealtimes were well supervised, relaxed, and unhurried. Self-evaluation and quality assurance processes led to consistent high quality care and support. Staff were skilled in supporting children with additional support needs and worked well as a team. Some areas of the Ashgrove building would benefit from maintenance and refurbishment. This included the garden area and these have been shared with our colleagues in Corporate Landlord.

| Aspect being inspected | Previous evaluation Sept 23 | Recent Evaluation Sept 24 |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| How good is our care, play and learning? | Adequate (3) | Very Good (5) |
| How good is our setting? | Adequate (3) | Good (4) |
| How good is our leadership? | Adequate (3) | Very Good (5) |
| How good is our staff team? | Adequate (3) | Very Good (5) |

The team are delighted the improvements made have been recognised and are motivated to continue to improve. Staff are working well as a team and communication across the team has improved ensuring smooth transitions at the start and the end of the session. To support the ongoing improvement journey Orchard Brae will move from **Category 3** to **Category 2** level of support in the Quality Improvement Framework. Locality Leads will continue to offer support and monitor progress.

The full report can be read [here](#).

3.3.8 Danestone ELC, a Local Authority setting in Danestone School, received an unannounced follow up inspection on 17 September 2024. This follow up inspection focused on the requirements and areas for improvement made during the previous inspection and evaluated how the service had addressed these to improve outcomes for children. Although evaluations do not usually

change at a follow up inspection, during this follow up inspection, Care Inspectorate increased the evaluation for quality indicators 1.1, 1.3, 2.2, 3.1 and 4.3 to adequate, because the service had made progress by building of key strengths.

Some of the key messages contained in the report include Improvement had been made in all required areas, as a result, children's needs were met more effectively. Progress had been made in all areas of improvement and the setting had a detailed improvement plan in place to ensure this continued. Children were happier and more settled within nursery. Parents gave positive feedback to the changes that had been made so far. Support for staff was more consistent and tailored to their individual and team needs.

| Aspect being inspected | Previous evaluation May 2024 | Recent Evaluation Sept 2024 |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| How good is our care, play and learning? | Weak (2) | Adequate (3) |
| How good is our setting? | Weak(2) | Adequate (3) |
| How good is our leadership? | Weak (2) | Adequate (3) |
| How good is our staff team? | Weak (2) | Adequate (3) |

The team are pleased the improvements made have been recognised and are motivated to continue to improve. To support the ongoing improvement journey Danestone will remain in the **Category 3** level of support in the Quality Improvement Framework. Locality Leads will continue to offer support and monitor progress'

A copy of the Action Plan is available in Appendix E.

The full report can be read [here](#).

3.3.9 The Kindergarten, a funded provider setting on Westburn Road, received an unannounced visit from Care Inspectorate in August 2024. Inspectors noted that children experienced kind and nurturing care from a staff team who were dedicated to the wellbeing of children. Most children enjoyed their time at nursery, had fun in their play and formed friendships and connections.

There were several areas for improvement identified. Inspectors found that children's experiences over mealtimes were varied and did not consistently provide a relaxing experience, with meaningful connections to support social skills. The setting should work in partnership with families to bring them back fully into the setting to further develop meaningful relationships and strong connections.

The arrangements for monitoring maintenance and repair of the setting were not sufficient to deliver safe, high-quality spaces for children. Quality assurance had not always led to effective and meaningful changes to ensure consistently positive outcomes for children. Staff were not always deployed in a way that best met children's needs.

| Aspect being inspected | Evaluation Aug 2024 |
|--|---------------------|
| How good is our care, play and learning? | Adequate (3) |
| How good is our setting? | Weak (2) |
| How good is our leadership? | Adequate (3) |
| How good is our staff team? | Adequate (3) |

A detailed action plan has been created to ensure improvements are made and maintained. The setting will be placed in the **category 3** level of support in the Quality Improvement Framework. The Locality Lead will offer regular support and monitor progress.

An action Plan is available in Appendix F.
The full report can be read [here](#)

- 3.3.10 **Hazlehead ELC**, a Local Authority setting in Hazlehead School, received an unannounced visit from Care Inspectorate in October 2024. In the very positive inspection report, inspectors noted that children were very settled and happily engaged in play and learning. They led their own play through a well-balanced mix of activities. Children received nurturing care and support from staff who knew them well. The staff team were motivated and enthusiastic about their roles and were very keen to continue with training to further develop their practice. To ensure continued high-quality care and experiences for children, self-evaluation and quality assurance should continue to be a focus.

| Aspect being inspected | Evaluation Oct 2024 |
|--|---------------------|
| How good is our care, play and learning? | Very Good (5) |
| How good is our setting? | Very Good (5) |
| How good is our leadership? | Very Good (5) |
| How good is our staff team? | Very Good (5) |

The staff were delighted that their hard work had been recognised. The setting was in **Category 1** prior to inspection and will remain in the **Category 1** support category of the Quality Improvement Framework with opportunities to share practice through management training sessions.

The full report can be read [here](#).

3.4 Children's Social Work

- 3.4.1 Registered services in children's social work are inspected by the Care Inspectorate on a regular basis. The frequency of inspections are risk based, taking account of data from a range of sources. This includes service type, complaints, data provided by the service to the Care Inspectorate but fundamentally the outcome of past inspections – positively evaluated services are inspected less frequently, with the opposite for weaker services.
- 3.4.2 All inspections are unannounced and registered services need to be "inspection registered and ready" at all times. As part of the inspection the

Care Inspectorate undertake a range of activities to evaluate “How well does the service support children and young people’s rights and wellbeing.”

3.4.3 In July 2024 the Care Inspectorate undertook an inspection of Marchburn Children’s Home service. The service was positively evaluated and graded as “very good” (5) based on a 6 point scale. There were no ‘requirements’ to attend to, although 2 ‘recommendations’ were made:

- There should be demonstrable evidence that all staff have completed the essential training expected by the organisation.
- A staffing needs assessment should be completed to ensure the numbers, skills, training and experience of the team are appropriate to meet the needs of young people

3.3.4 These recommendations are being actively attended to and form part of the continuous improvement of the services. The report can be accessed [here](#).

3.3.5 In August 2024 our Kingsfield Children’s Home Service was inspected. The service was positively evaluated and graded as “very good” (5) based on a 6 point scale. There were no ‘requirements’ to attend to, although again 2 ‘recommendations’ were made:

- All staff should have completed the essential training expected by the organisation. There should be demonstrable records which ensure managers at the service can have an overview of the training, and training needs, of the team. This includes, but is not exclusive to, child and adult protection training
- The continuing care and aftercare policy should be reviewed by the service to ensure that it reflects the practice and support young people receive.

3.3.6 The recommendations are being taken forward by the service. The report can be accessed [here](#).

3.3.7 Both inspection reports spoke very encouragingly about the quality of the relationship between staff and the young people they care and support. “Young people experienced relational nurturing care, which promoted their emotional and physical safety”. Inspectors recognised that staff appeared to know the children and their needs well. In addition Inspectors positively recognised the extent to which both services ensured a rights based approach to the care provided to the young people.

3.4.6 The Chief Social Work Officer annual report shared with Committee today provides further information about the philosophy of care provided to the young people. Recruitment of staff to our residential services is challenging and these roles are recognised as being ‘hard to fill’. This context reinforces very positively on the leadership and commitment of all our residential staff.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No negative environmental impacts have been identified.

7. RISK

| Category | Risks | Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve. Target Risk Level | *Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *Taking into account controls/control actions | *Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set? |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Strategic Risk | Risk of not improving outcomes for learners | Positive engagement with Inspection agencies and sharing learning across the system where appropriate. | L | Yes |
| Compliance | Risk of not complying with national guidance | Positive engagement with Inspection agencies and sharing learning across the system where appropriate. | L | Yes |
| Operational | Risk that schools/ELC settings do not accurately identify the areas for improvement that will make the greatest difference to learners | Quality assurance arrangements in place to validate self-evaluation gradings | L | Yes |
| Financial | No risks identified | | | |
| Reputational | Risk that poor quality of provision will present a reputational risk to the Council | High levels of assurance are taken Quality Improvement and Inspection visits | L | Yes |
| Environment / Climate | No risks identified | | | |

8. OUTCOMES

| <u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u> | |
|--|--|
| | Impact of Report |
| <p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p>Commit to realising the potential of each individual, by seeking to widen curriculum choice and implement progressive choices.</p> <p>Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners across the city.</p> | <p>External scrutiny provides helpful assurance that there is sufficient focus on helping young people recover from the pandemic and that the school self-evaluation and improvement plan is well positioned to support a closing of the poverty related attainment gap.</p> |
| <u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u> | |
| <p>Prosperous People - 95% of all our children, including those living in our priority neighbourhoods, will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.</p> | <p>Engagement with inspectors provides an opportunity to learn from national best practice and validate self-evaluation evidence available. The support and challenge received by Inspectors helps to shape improvement plans for the coming sessions in keeping with the LOIP stretch aims.</p> |
| <p>Regional and City Strategies</p> <p>Regional Cultural Strategy</p> <p>Prevention Strategy</p> <p>Children's Services Plan</p> <p>National Improvement Framework Plan</p> | <p>Engagement with the Inspectorate is fully aligned to the city prevention strategy. Work to address poverty and improvement in the Children's services plan, the Child Poverty Action Plan and the National Improvement Framework Plan is also supported through external scrutiny.</p> |

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

| Assessment | Outcome |
|--|--|
| Integrated Impact Assessment | No assessment required. I confirm this - Shona Milne, Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning. |
| Data Protection Impact Assessment | No DPIA is required. |
| Other | |

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. APPENDICES

- A – Tullos Action Plan
- B – Harlaw Action Plan
- C – Happitots Action Plan
- D - Little Dreams Action Plan
- E – Danestone Action Plan
- F - The kindergarten Action Plan

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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|----------------------|--|
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