

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	26 January 2022
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Inspection Reporting
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/22/009
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Eleanor Sheppard
REPORT AUTHOR	Eleanor Sheppard
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.6

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

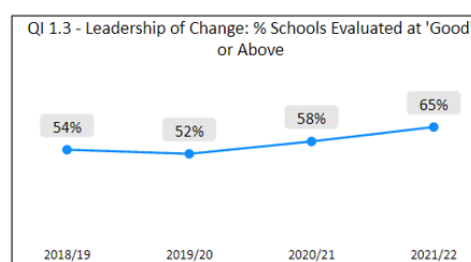
2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:

- 2.1 note the content of this report for assurance; and
- 2.2 instruct the Chief Education Officer to continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools to implement improvements in keeping with the Quality Frameworks.

3. INSPECTION ACTIVITY TO DECEMBER

- 3.1.1 School and ELC Inspections were suspended in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Education Scotland and The Care Inspectorate resumed their inspection regime in October 2021 for settings and schools where a return inspection had been planned.
- 3.1.2 In March 2020, Members were advised of two broad themes emerging from schools and settings due for a return inspection. These were
- leadership of change; and
 - inconsistent approaches to Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- 3.1.3 Considerable work has been undertaken to address these areas and improvement is clearly evident in the Leadership of Change quality indicator.



- 3.1.4 Work to address inconsistent Learning, Teaching and Assessment has also progressed at pace, although approaches had to be amended in light of the need to deliver the curriculum remotely. Efforts to improve the quality of the remote curriculum offer led to 97% of children and young people engaging in their curriculum during the second period of school closure.
- 3.1.5 Restrictions in place due to the Return to School guidance meant that 'learning walks' and classroom observations were not possible until into session 2021/22. As a result Senior school leaders and central officers were unable to quality assure classroom practice against our agreed Learning, Teaching and Assessment Standard in person and this will have hampered progress in this area. Classroom observation has now fully resumed.

3.2 THE FOCUS OF RETURN INSPECTIONS

- 3.2.1 Visits to schools and settings have comprised a blend of virtual and in-person engagement. Local Authority Officers were invited to participate in almost all school inspection activity by Education Scotland and this has been helpful.
- 3.2.2 During the visits, Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) have evaluated progress against the areas for improvement identified pre-pandemic. Inspectors recognise that some of the areas for improvement will have been impacted by COVID-19 and that the focus of improvement may have changed to reflect the very different circumstances.
- 3.2.3 Following the visit, HM Inspectors publish a brief report.
- 3.2.4 6 Aberdeen City schools participated in full inspection activity with HM Inspectors over late October through to early December 2021:
- Harlaw and Hazlehead Academies
 - Milltimber, Dyce and Kingsford Primaries
 - Orchard Brae School
- 3.2.5 In addition, HM Inspectors undertook virtual visits with Gilcomstoun and Loirston Primary Schools in November 2021.
- 3.2.6 The inspection reports will continue to be published over the coming weeks. Those not included in this report will be shared through a Service Update when published.

3.3 NATIONAL THEMATIC INSPECTIONS

- 3.3.1 HM Inspectors also completed a programme of national thematic inspections to explore:
- Approaches to supporting children's and young people's wellbeing
 - Outdoor learning
 - Local approaches to recovery

3.3.2 The Education Service continue to engage positively with the thematic inspections and Northfield Academy, Airyhall Primary, Dyce Primary and Heathryburn Primary were all visited over November 2021.

3.4 EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE INSPECTION PROCESS

3.4.1 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.

3.4.2 The Care Inspectorate currently inspect:

- Quality of care and support
- Quality of environment
- Quality of staffing
- Quality of management and leadership

3.5 ARRANGEMENTS FROM JANUARY

3.5.1 In September 2021 plans to resume Education Scotland inspections from January 2022 were announced. Given the concerns around staffing levels and concerns around the new variant of COVID-19, this situation has now changed and Officers were advised in December 2021 that the full programme will now not resume as planned.

3.5.2 From February 2022 following the mid-term school holiday, if COVID-19 conditions allow, HM Inspectors will carry out 'recovery visits' to a selection of early learning and childcare settings and schools. During these visits, HM Inspectors will focus on how settings and schools are addressing the impact of COVID-19.

3.5.3 HM Inspectors will explore with staff the range and quality of learning children and young people are experiencing; and the work being done to meet children's and young people's learning and wellbeing needs. They will not report on specific quality indicators or assign summative grades as part of the visits.

3.5.4 Members will be kept informed of any such visits to our schools and settings by HM Inspectors.

3.5.5 The Care Inspectorate inspections are also likely to be reduced significantly due to the Omicron variant.

3.6. INSPECTION ACTIVITY AT DYCE PRIMARY SCHOOL

3.6.1 Dyce Early Learning and Childcare was inspected by the Care Inspectorate in September 2021 to assess progress against the findings and recommendations from the Care Inspectorate report of March 2019.

3.6.2 The inspection of March 2019 identified a number of recommendations. These were to:

- ensure each child receives appropriate care and support and their needs are met the head teacher and staff should ensure:
 - personal plans are developed and implemented that reflect children's current needs and provide clear guidance to staff on how they will meet each child's needs.
 - The personal plans are used by staff to effectively meet each child's needs.
- support children to progress and achieve staff should:
 - develop their skills and knowledge of effective interaction to support and extend learning
 - be supported to reflect on their practice and develop new ways of working.
- ensure all children received the support, interaction and attention they need to meet their needs the provider, head teacher and senior staff should ensure staff have the time to effectively support, care and speak with children
- ensure children receive high quality care, support and early learning experiences and the provider, manager and staff should ensure effective quality assurance systems are developed and implemented. To achieve this clear roles and responsibilities should be defined for senior staff.

3.6.3 The inspection team found that all recommendations had been met and that considerable progress had been made since the last inspection.

Area of scrutiny	March 2019	September 2021
Quality of care and support	Adequate (3)	Good (4)
Quality of environment	Good (4)	Good (4)
Quality of staffing	Adequate (3)	Good (4)
Quality of management and leadership	Adequate (3)	Very Good (5)

3.6.4 The full Care Inspectorate report for Dyce Primary ELC is available on the Care Inspectorate site <https://www.careinspectorate.com/>

3.6.5 Dyce School and ELC provision was then inspected by HM Inspectors in late October 2021. The inspection of 2016 (and subsequent returns) had highlighted a need to:

- Develop a more consistent use of robust data across the curriculum to inform improvements to learning and teaching and raise attainment so that all children are working to their potential

- Across the school and nursery, further develop effective self-evaluation processes to focus more directly on improving outcomes for all learners
- Increase the pace of curriculum development across the school and nursery as a priority to ensure that all children's needs, aspirations and entitlements are fully met.
- Further develop leadership at all levels, including children leading learning, to ensure this effectively improves outcomes for all children.

3.6.6 HM Inspectors were happy that all recommendations had been met. Their report states, *'Understandably, Dyce Primary School and Nursery Class has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. They have successfully turned the challenges into opportunities to reflect on learning and teaching and brought about significant curricular change. In doing so, staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, we will make no more visits to Dyce Primary and Nursery Class in connection with the original inspection. Aberdeen City Council will continue to inform parents about the school and nursery's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service'*.

3.6.7 The full HM Inspectors report is available [here](#)

3.7 INSPECTION ACTIVITY AT LOIRSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

3.7.1 Loirston Early Learning and Childcare was inspected by the Care Inspectorate in October 2021 to assess progress against the findings and recommendations from the Care Inspectorate report of January 2020.

3.7.2 The inspection of January 2020 identified a number of recommendations.

These were:

- To ensure children receive high quality early learning and childcare and their individual needs are met, the provider should: a) implement a robust and effective quality assurance process b) promote a culture of continuous improvement.
- To ensure children's care and support meet their needs and is right for them, the provider must develop care plans that provide comprehensive and effective information and ensure staff use these effectively to meet children's needs.
- To support children to progress and achieve staff should develop their skills and knowledge of: - observation, assessment and planning - effective interaction to support and extend learning

3.7.3 The inspection team found that all recommendations had been met and that considerable progress had been made since the last inspection.

Area of scrutiny	January 2020	October 2021
Quality of care and support	Adequate (4)	Very Good (5)
Quality of environment	Good (4)	Good (4)
Quality of staffing	Adequate (3)	Very Good (5)

Quality of management and leadership	Adequate (3)	Very Good (5)
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3.7.4 The full Care Inspectorate Report is available on the Care Inspectorate site <https://www.careinspectorate.com/>

3.7.5 Loirston School and ELC provision was then inspected by HM Inspectors through a virtual visit in November 2021. The inspection of May 2017 (and subsequent returns) had highlighted a need to:

- Establish effective approaches to self-evaluation and strategic planning, which support leadership at all levels to secure improvements across the school and nursery.
- Develop the school's curriculum, taking full account of national guidance and expectations to ensure learning experiences lead to improvements in children's attainment across all curricular areas.
- Develop and implement robust processes to plan, assess, track and monitor children's learning. This includes the need to review the school's arrangements for meeting the needs of children requiring additional support.

3.7.6 Inspectors commended the improvements made at the school and stated in their report to parents that, *'Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. Staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, we will make no more visits to the school in connection with the original inspection'*.

3.7.7 The full report is available [here](#)

3.8 INSPECTION ACTIVITY AT HARLAW ACADEMY

3.8.1 Harlaw Academy was inspected in November 2021 by Education Scotland in order to assess progress against the findings and recommendations from the inspection report of February 2020.

3.8.2 The report of February 2020 identified a number of recommendations. These were 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 the attainment of young people at all stages.

3.8.3 Inspectors noted the early impact of the new Head Teacher but recognised that his appointment just prior to the first period of national lockdown had impacted progress against the recommendations. Inspectors state, *‘Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff are prioritising their plans to support recovery. As a result, the school needs more time to take forward the recommendations from the original inspection. We will carry out another visit to the school within one year of the publication of this letter. When we carry out another visit, we will write to you informing you of the progress the school has made’.*

3.8.4 The full inspection report is available [here](#)

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 2021. 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
Strategic Risk	Risk of employees feeling overwhelmed by the many improvements required.	L	Support in place from the Local Authority Education Service
Compliance	Failure to deliver on legal duties and inability to delivery 1140 hours of ELC if evaluations are poor.	L	Team of locality leads in place to monitor and support quality
Operational	Potential for children or young people to be disadvantaged by not having access to a quality educational experience.	M	Close monitoring of progress by the Education Service through the revised education structure
Financial	NA		

Reputational	Risk of reputational damage for school and service	M	This report will provide some assurance that plans being implemented are effective
Environment / Climate	NA		

7. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>			
			Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement			
UNICEF Child Friendly accreditation			Delivering a high quality education requires schools and services to engage with children and young people to help them shape the provision available to them.
Work with the Scottish Government to provide flexible and affordable childcare for working families on the lowest incomes.			The provision of 1140 hours of ELC will only improve outcomes if settings deliver a high quality service.
Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners in the city.			The provision of high quality education can help to close the attainment gap and outcome gap for those living in poverty.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan			
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes			Ensuring a high quality curriculum and provision of flexible pathways will contribute towards an increase in employment.
Prosperous Outcomes	People	Stretch	Working with partners to develop a senior phase offer that meets the needs of all learners will help to support our young people into positive sustainable destinations
Prosperous Outcomes	Place	Stretch	Underpinning the work of all schools in Aberdeen City is achieving excellence and equity for all.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes			
			<p>The Education (Scotland) Act 1980</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Duty to provide adequate and efficient education for our area. <p>The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Duties with regard to meeting the needs of children and young people with additional support needs.

	<p>The Equality Act 2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Duty to ensure we are not discriminating disabled learners <p>The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000 · Raising standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Requirement that education be provided in mainstream schools The National Improvement Framework · Education Authorities are under a duty to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of education of school education which is provided in the schools managed by them and to carry out the duty with a view to achieving the strategic priorities set out in the National Improvement Framework
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8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

10. APPENDICES

None

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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