

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children's Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	4 July 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Inspection Reporting
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CFS/23/202
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Shona Milne/ Graeme Simpson
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Shona Milne / Graeme Simpson
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.1

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report details how Aberdeen City schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings have engaged with His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) and The Care Inspectorate and had a report published since May 2023.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 notes the content of this report; and
- 2.2 instructs the Chief Education Officer to continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools to implement continuous improvement in keeping with the Quality Frameworks.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

#### 3.1 **Education Scotland inspection of Sunnybank Primary School**

Sunnybank Primary School was subject to an inspection in February 2023 as part of the short model of inspection which looks at two key quality indicators over three days. During the visit inspectors talked to parents/carers and children, worked closely with the headteacher and staff and visited classrooms to see how children were being supported. Taking this approach allowed them to triangulate the evidence to support their evaluations. The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- The caring and nurturing relationships between staff and children. This supportive culture enables children to settle quickly in the school, Language Support Provision and Early Learning and Childcare setting.
- Polite children who are friendly, respectful and keen to learn.
- In the Language Support Provision, staff provide effective strategies to support children to overcome any difficulties they face in understanding

or using language. Children are developing their communication skills well and are keen to share their learning and achievements.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a central officer with responsibility for supporting the school:

- Improve children's progress and attainment across the curriculum in both the school and Early Learning and Childcare setting.
- Improve the consistency, quality and approaches to learning, teaching and assessment across the school and Early Learning and Childcare setting. This should include ensuring that all children build on their prior learning and experience learning which is at the right level of difficulty.
- Senior leaders and staff should develop further their use of data to inform effective planning, assessment and tracking of individual children's attainment over time. This should include a focus on children facing barriers to their learning.

The school secured the following gradings against the Quality Indicators.

School Quality Indicators	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory (3)
Raising attainment and achievement	Weak (2)

ELC Quality Indicators	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory (3)
Securing children's progress	Satisfactory (3)

The link to the full report is [here](#). The logic model in place to guide the required improvement is available in Appendix A. Good progress is being made. An update on progress will be provided before the end of 2023.

### 3.2 **Education Scotland inspection of Kingswells Primary School**

Kingswells Primary School was subject to a full inspection which evaluates all four key Quality Indicators. During the visit inspectors talked to parents/carers and children, worked closely with the headteacher and staff and visited classrooms to see how children were being supported. Taking this approach allowed them to triangulate the evidence to support their evaluations. The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- Practitioners in the nursery who are caring and respectful in their interactions with children. They have established very positive relationships with parents and encourage them to be active participants within the nursery.
- The confident and articulate children in Kingswells Primary School, who are leaders of their own learning.

- The highly effective leadership of senior leaders and staff at all levels has established a caring and nurturing environment for children. As a result, children attain and achieve very well.
- Teachers engage with high-quality professional learning and work very well together to provide engaging and motivating learning experiences for children. Staff create a stimulating and rich learning environment both indoors and outside, enabling children in P1 to P3 to learn very effectively through play. Children’s engagement in learning is very high.
- The effective approaches to supporting wellbeing and inclusion, including staff’s responsive use of wellbeing data. This is leading to very good outcomes for children in the school.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a central officer with responsibility for supporting the school and ELC

- Review and improve current approaches to learning, teaching and assessment in the nursery to ensure children access consistently high-quality learning experiences. In doing so, develop robust approaches to quality assurance to help identify what is going well and what needs to improve.
- Senior leaders should revisit the Kingswells Primary School skills framework, as planned, and strengthen approaches to developing the young workforce, including partnership working.

The school and ELC secured the following gradings against the Quality Indicators.

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)

ELC Quality Indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	Satisfactory (3)
Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory (3)
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Good (4)
Raising attainment and achievement	Good (4)

The link to the full report is available [here](#). The inspection team recognised the highly reflective practice of the senior leaders and how this is modelled to build capacity in all staff. Inspectors noted that teachers trust senior leaders and feel empowered to lead change. Work being developed around play based learning, outdoor learning and cross stage learning was highlighted as being very effective in supporting children to be more resilient and engaged in their learning as supporting high levels of attainment and achievement. The staff are

delighted that the hard work undertaken around curriculum in the school has been recognised. The headteacher currently supports our middle leadership programme 1 day per week and this will provide an opportunity for her to share the experience and support others with their strategic vision. The action plan for the ELC is attached as Appendix B and staff continue to make good progress in driving improvements forward.

### **3.3 The impact of on-going improvements at Northfield Academy**

The Logic Model approved by Committee continues to help drive improvements at Northfield Academy and positive early progress has been made. Effective leadership of change has supported progress in the priority areas identified through the logic model. This effective leadership has been supported by the introduction of a structure of regular meetings, changed remits and clear accountability.

Data analysed within the safeguarding meetings is showing very early signs of positive change, with almost all staff having now been provided with professional learning around de-escalation techniques to support positive relationships.

The Head Teacher has worked with stakeholders to create a new vision and set of values. These are being outworked into clear high expectations to be consistently applied within the school.

Timescales necessitated rapid progress to overhaul large parts of the curriculum and the operational team have successfully created more relevant and appropriate pathways for young people. In order to support the S1 redesign 9 experienced primary teachers have been recruited and staff have been attending the transition meetings for families.

It is recognised that raising attainment will be an outcome of all of the positive work of the school. In the meantime school leaders have been targeting literacy and numeracy with the aspiration that no young person misses out on qualifications.

Appendix C provides a more detailed update on progress made across all of the workstreams.

### **3.4 Care Inspectorate Inspections**

The Care Inspectorate continue to inspect on a risk basis, leading to a higher proportion of settings being inspected where complaints or issues have been raised with them.

### **3.5 Riverbank ELC, an Aberdeen City run provision, was inspected in April 2023.**

The inspectors spoke with staff, children and parents and spent time observing in the playrooms and the outdoor area. Inspectors were unable to elicit areas for improvement that would improve the quality of play and care for children from some leaders. There were several issues identified around cleanliness and infection control. Mealtimes were a positive experience with staff providing encouragement and support as well as promoting conversation. Any concerns

on the first day of the visit were corrected overnight and the improvement was noted by inspectors. All requirements are on track to be completed by 14 June.

Aspect being inspected	Evaluation
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)

A new manager is now leading the ELC setting and the setting has benefitted from support and challenge visits from the Locality Lead, Quality Improvement Manager and Quality Improvement Officer for the school. The school is currently receiving intensive support as outlined in the Quality Improvement Framework. A link to the full report is available [here](#). The action plan for improvements is available at Appendix D.

- 3.6 **Gilcomstoun ELC**, an Aberdeen City run provision, was inspected in March 2023. Some of the key messages highlighted by inspectors indicated that children were cared for in a kind and caring way by staff who gave them cuddles, comfort and positive encouragement. The nursery provided a range of individual supports to children and families who were experiencing difficult life circumstances. Children enjoyed outdoor play in all weathers. Parents told inspectors their children liked and enjoyed playing outside. Although the staff team had recently been formed, they had worked well to build trusted relationships and were keen to move forward with further improvements. Staff should now continue to develop their approach to assessing and planning for children's learning. Overall quality assurance and self-evaluation could be improved to ensure continuous improvement was embedded into practice

Aspect being inspected	Evaluation
How good is our care, play and learning?	Adequate (3)
How good is our setting?	Adequate (3)
How good is our leadership?	Good (4)
How good is our staff team?	Good (4)

The school will be supported at the Targeted level as outlined in the ELC Quality Improvement Framework. A link to the full report can be found [here](#).

- 3.7 **The Links Nursery and Hub**, an Aberdeen City run provision, was inspected in May 2023. Inspectors spent time talking to children, parents and staff and observed play in the playrooms and outdoor spaces. Inspectors noted that children were well supported by staff who offered a nurturing environment which was responsive to the needs of individuals. They highlighted the strong leadership at all levels and the positive impact this had on the support offered to children and families. The inspectors were impressed with the number of opportunities offered to build independence and social skills throughout the setting. The team working approach between health visitor, speech and language therapist and Hub staff was identified as supporting increased attendance and therefore closing the attainment gap for children.

Self-evaluation was identified as sector leading and inspectors noted that leaders had a comprehensive understanding of the importance of seeking and using feedback from families to inform their improvement plan. Parents were able to talk about the improvements and commented that progress or achievements were regularly shared with them through noticeboards and newsletters.

Aspect being inspected	Evaluation
How good is our care, play and learning?	Very Good (5)
How good is our setting?	Very Good (5)
How good is our leadership?	Excellent (6)
How good is our staff team?	Very Good (5)

The team were delighted with the report which highlights their hard work and achievements since opening. The Links will sit within the universal support category of the Quality Improvement Framework and in order to continue to develop a self-improving system there will be opportunities for the manager to share her experience with other settings.

A link to the full report can be found [here](#)

- 3.8 **Duthie Park Outdoor Nursery**, an Aberdeen City run provision, was inspected in May 2023. Inspectors noted that children were well supported by staff who were consistently responsive to their needs. Staff knew the children well and this showed in how each child was supported. Children benefitted from a rich play and learning environment which provided them with very positive experiences. They had access to fresh air all day, were surrounded by nature and had lovely spaces for relaxation which encouraged a calm and very inviting atmosphere.

Staff worked hard to ensure children received consistently high-quality learning opportunities which were meaningful, interesting and exciting. There was strong leadership at all levels and staff were well supported, valued and nurtured. This helped staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential.

Aspect being inspected	Evaluation
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 team were delighted with the report which highlights their hard work and achievements since opening just over 1 year ago. Duthie Park will sit within the universal support category of the Quality Improvement Framework and in order to continue to develop a self-improving system the manager will be to sharing her experience to support improvement in other settings.

A link to the full report can be found [here](#)

- 3.9 **J Puddleducks** is a funded provider setting. Care Inspectorate carried out an unannounced inspection in May 2023. Key messages from the report included that children received warm and nurturing care and were happy and confident in the setting. Some staff need time and support to develop their skills knowledge and understanding in observing, assessing and planning for children's learning. The provider, managers and staff should now continue to progress the development plan in place to improve children's experiences and outcomes.

Aspect being inspected	Evaluation
How good is our care, play and learning?	Adequate (3)
How good is our setting?	Adequate (3)
How good is our leadership?	Adequate (3)
How good is our staff team?	Adequate (3)

The setting will be supported at the Targeted level as outlined in the ELC Quality Improvement Framework. A link to the full report can be found [here](#)

- 3.10 **Cornhill Out of School Care** is an Aberdeen City Council run provision. It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 32 primary school aged children at any one time. Care is provided before and after school and also full days during the school holidays. During school holidays the club can also support children attending S1 and S2. The Care Inspectorate carried out an unannounced inspection on 30 March 2023, and the final report was published in May.

Key messages from the report included that: children were nurtured by caring staff who knew them well; children were having fun and were happy at the club; there was a clear recognition of children's right to play; the environment allowed children to make choices about where they wanted to spend their time; the team worked very well together and contributed fully to developing the service; and the team were knowledgeable, skilled and experienced and this helped to support consistent positive outcomes for the children.

Aspect being inspected	Evaluation
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)

A link to the full inspection report can be found [here](#)

- 3.11 **Kingsford ELC update**  
On 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023 Kingsford ELC was visited by Care Inspectorate for a full 2 day inspection. Although we do not have the final report from this visit, there was a noted improvement in the delivery of the service. A further update will be provided through the next committee cycle to reflect this.

- 3.12 The education service continue to support ELC and School Age Childcare settings to improve quality and have action plans in place to drive improvement where appropriate.
- 3.13 The variation in inspection outcomes is being addressed through a revision of approaches to quality improvement and an alignment of professional learning opportunities to the core Quality Indicators. The proposed approach is presented at today's committee.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no 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?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Risk of not improving outcomes for learners	Positive engagement with Inspection agencies and sharing learning across the system where appropriate.	L	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	Risk of not complying with national guidance	Positive engagement with Inspection agencies and sharing learning across the system where appropriate.	L	Yes
<b>Operational</b>	Risk that schools/ELC settings do not accurately identify the areas for improvement that will make the greatest	Quality assurance arrangements in place to validate self-evaluation gradings	L	Yes

	difference to learners			
<b>Financial</b>	No risks identified			
<b>Reputational</b>	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
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No risks identified			

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><a href="#">COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</a></u>	
<b>Impact of Report</b>	
<p><b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b></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><a href="#">Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</a></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 in schools. 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><b>Regional and City Strategies</b></p> <p>Regional Cultural Strategy</p> <p>Prevention Strategy</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</p>

Children's Services Plan National Improvement Framework Plan	Improvement Framework Plan is also supported through external scrutiny.
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## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	None

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## 11. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Action Plan for Sunnybank  
Appendix B – Action Plan for Kingswells ELC  
Appendix C – Update on Action Plan for Northfield  
Appendix D - Action Plan for Riverbank ELC

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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