

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	21 November 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Inspection Reporting
REPORT NUMBER	CFS/23/369
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 on the quality of Aberdeen City schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings 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 Education Officer to continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools to implement continuous improvement in keeping with the Quality Framework agreed at Committee in July 2023.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Ongoing update on improvements at Northfield Academy

Work continues on the Northfield Academy logic model plans. Since the last update there has been a change in the leadership at the school. Craig McDermott took up the role of acting Head Teacher on Monday 30 October 2023. The update report (Appendix A) provides detail in relation to each of the recommendations from the original Education Scotland report. Northfield Academy will remain in **support category 3** of our agreed Quality Assurance Framework.

3.2 **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.

3.3 Where a setting has been subject to a return visit from the Care Inspectorate, we have included the date of their initial visit and the gradings for reference.

3.4 **Banana Moon** is a Funded Provider. Banana Moon was inspected in September 2023. Inspectors noted that the children were nurtured and supported by caring and responsive staff in an environment which provided a range of quality play and learning experiences. Staff were motivated and worked well as a team creating a strong ethos of improvement which most recently had led to upgrades to the physical environment which were impacting positively on outcomes for 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)

The staff team are delighted that their hard work around improving the physical environment has been acknowledged and will continue to sit within the **universal** support category of the Quality Improvement Framework.

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

3.5 **Cummings Park** is a Funded Provider. Cummings Park received an unannounced follow up inspection in September 2023. The team noted considerable positive changes to the outdoor environment allowing the children to play safely outside and this resulted in an uplift to the original inspection grading below.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation July 2023	Recent Evaluation Sept 2023
How good is our setting?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)

Staff were pleased that the work undertaken on the outdoor environment had been recognised and will continue with further planned improvements. The setting will continue to sit within the **targeted** support category of the Quality Improvement Framework.

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

3.6 **First Class** is a Funded Provider. First Class was inspected in July 2023. Inspectors noted that staff were caring ensuring all children felt loved, safe and secure. Mealtimes for children were positive and provided children with healthy

options. Staff worked well together as a team, and this created a positive atmosphere in all areas. Children and families were provided with opportunities to influence changes within the setting.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation July 2022	Recent Evaluation Sept 2023
How good is our care, play and learning?	Good (4)	Good (4)
How good is our setting?	Good (4)	Good (4)
How good is our leadership?	Adequate (3)	Very Good (5)
How good is our staff team?	Good (4)	Very Good (5)

The inspectors noted that although there had been improvements in the baby room but that further plans require to be developed at a faster pace. Staff were pleased with the report and the setting will continue to be in the **universal** category of the quality improvement framework.

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

- 3.7 **Hazlehead Park Outdoor Nursery** is a local authority provision. Hazlehead Park Outdoor Nursery was inspected for the first time in September 2023. Inspectors noted staff were nurturing and caring and responsive to the individual need of children. Children were benefitted from a rich outdoor environment which was well thought out and providing exciting and stimulating experiences. Children and family feedback was used effectively to make further improvements to the service. The inspectors recognised the high levels of motivation and commitment demonstrated by the staff team which resulted in high quality engagement with children at all times.

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 staff team were delighted the report acknowledged their hard work and commitment to the setting. Staff from the setting will be given the opportunity to share their practice to support improvement in other settings. The setting will remain in the **universal** category of the Quality Improvement Framework.

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

- 3.8 **Kingsford ELC** is a local authority provision. Kingsford was inspected in June 2023. Inspectors noted that children were benefitting from the actions undertaken since the previous inspection. They observed improved practice and an increased focus on children's overall wellbeing. Staff were using caring approaches and as a result most children were nurtured and supported throughout their experience. Mealtimes required to be better organised to ensure children's safety at all times. There was an over focus on completing tasks rather than engaging freely with the play and taking opportunities to

extend learning. Inspectors acknowledged that there had been issues with recruitment and retention. Children benefitted from free flow to the outdoors for most of the day and it was noted that this was working well.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation Sept 2022	Recent Evaluation Sept 2023
How good is our care, play and learning?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)
How good is our setting?	Weak (2)	Good (4)
How good is our leadership?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)
How good is our staff team?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)

Staff acknowledge that there are still areas to be developed further but were pleased the progress they had made was recognised within the report. This setting will move from the universal to the **targeted** category of the Quality Improvement Framework

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

- 3.9 Orchard Brae ELC**, is a local authority provision. Orchard Brae was visited in September 2023. Inspectors noted that there had been significant improvements in the learning environment in Ashgrove resulting in children being provided with experiences which were able to sustain thinking and learning. Most staff had engaged in and were committed to improving their practice and this has led to improved outcomes for children.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation March 2023	Recent Evaluation Sept 2023
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)

Although quality assurance and evaluation processes were evident inspectors noted that these were in the early stages and required further development to maintain a positive impact on children's experiences. Although there have been some significant improvements in the Ashgrove learning environment the setting will remain in the **intensive** category of the quality improvement framework to ensure sustained improvement.

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

- 3.10 Ferryhill ELC**, is a local authority provision. Ferryhill ELC was visited in October 2023. Inspectors noted staff worked well together to ensure children benefitted from a variety of positive play and learning opportunities. Inspectors commented on the strong leadership and the commitment of the staff team in ensuring high quality experiences for all learners.

Aspect being inspected	Evaluation October 2023
How good is our care, play and learning?	Very Good (5)
How good is our setting?	Good (4)
How good is our leadership?	Very Good (5)
How good is our staff team?	Good (4)

Staff were delighted that their hard work had been recognised and Ferryhill will remain in the **universal** category of the quality improvement framework to ensure sustained improvement.

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

3.11 The education service continues to support ELC and School Age Childcare settings to improve quality and have action plans in place to drive improvement where appropriate.

3.12 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 was endorsed at the July meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee.

3.13 **Children's Social Work**

In June 2023 the Care Inspectorate intimated their intention on behalf of the Scottish Government to undertake a Disabled Children and Young People Thematic Review. The thematic review will involve all 32 local authorities. The reporting on the inspection findings will be on a national basis and the Care Inspectorate intend to publish their report in the summer of 2024.

3.13 As part of the thematic inspection the Care Inspectorate will undertake a 'deeper dive' across four partnership areas. Aberdeen City have agreed to be one of these areas and this will involve a range of inspection activities predominantly over November 2023 – February 2024. It will include a level of file reading; meeting with children, young people, and families in receipt of support/services as well as meeting with relevant staff.

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?
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	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	

<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>
<p><u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u></p>	
<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>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
<p>Integrated Impact Assessment</p>	<p>Stage 1 Assessment has been completed.</p>
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment</p>	<p>No DPIA is required.</p>
<p>Other</p>	

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Northfield Academy

Appendix B - Kingsford ELC Action Plan

Appendix C – Orchard Brae ELC Action Plan

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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