

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

---

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children's Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	20 February 2024
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Inspection Reporting
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CFS/24/050
<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., 1.1.6

---

### 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 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 current QIF, agreed at the Education and Children's Services Committee in July 2023, has been in place since August 2023. The QIF categorises schools/ELC settings as being in need of different levels of support based on internal self-evaluation and external scrutiny from the central team:

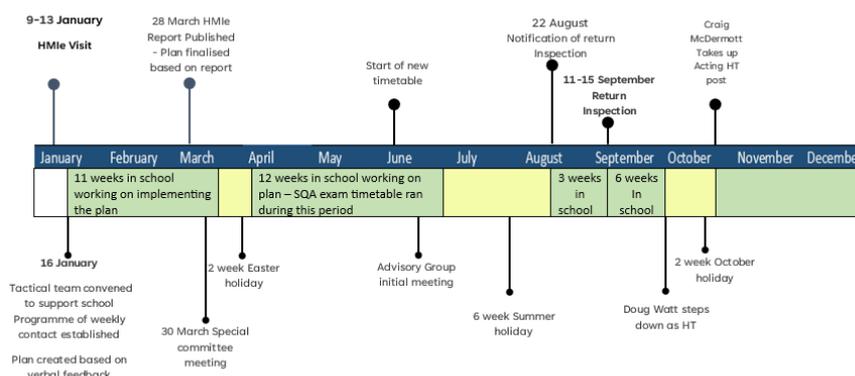
- Category 1/Universal includes schools/settings who have self and external evaluation identifying all core Quality Indicators (Qis) as good or better.
- Category 2 /Targeted includes schools/settings with external and or self-evaluation which has identified one or more of the core QI as *satisfactory* 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*.

### 3.2 Education Scotland return visit to Northfield Academy

A team of 7 inspectors returned to Northfield Academy week beginning 18 September 2023. During the visit, they talked to young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The graphic below shows a high level timeline.



Inspectors noted that staff are beginning to work together, and this signifies a considerable cultural shift. This was particularly evident in the work being undertaken to improve learning and teaching.

Inspectors noted that work to develop communication with families and utilising pupil voice requires to be developed further and ongoing work to embed the school vision, values and aims will provide an opportunity to progress this further.

Inspectors asked the school to consider the transition from S1 into S2 for session 2024/25 and work is ongoing with support from colleagues with subject specialisms from the support arm of Education Scotland.

The Acting Head Teacher has undertaken a thorough review of the application of support systems in place to ensure data is being properly recorded, managed and used to inform next steps. Considerable progress has been made.

Work to address the pace of learning is being progressed through the on-going development and establishment of an improved tracking system which will be ready for launch in early 2024. An effective and embedded tracking system will help ensure that young people, parents and carers have a better understanding of what the young person needs to do to improve.

Given the scale of necessary improvement identified when the school was first inspected in January 2023, it is unsurprising that HMle has noted that insufficient progress has been made against the original recommendations and work progresses at pace. The Tactical Team continue to be available to the Northfield Team with the level of support afforded by the Tactical Team being

determined by the Acting Head Teacher in collaboration with the Chief Education Officer.

Following a discussion with HMIE and the Acting Head Teacher, it has been agreed that an Inspector will be made available to the Acting Head Teacher to act as a 'critical friend'. This support has been welcomed by the Authority and the Acting Head Teacher as it provides a mechanism to learn from national best practice. Given the scale of improvement ahead, it has been agreed that a formal return visit within 3 months to share progress would be more helpful than a more traditional 'return' inspection. The outcome of the progress visit will be reported to Committee.

Northfield Academy will remain in **Category 3** of our agreed Quality Assurance Framework. A link to the report can be found [here](#)

### 3.3 **Education Scotland inspection of Glashieburn School**

Glashieburn school was inspected week beginning 4 October. During the visit, Inspectors talked to parents/carers and children, worked closely with the headteacher and staff and visited classrooms and the enhanced provision to see how children were being supported. Taking this approach enabled them to triangulate evidence to support their evaluations.

This was a full week inspection and inspectors evaluated the school against the four key quality indicators. The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work including the enhanced provision/Dolphin Room:

- Staff across the school and Dolphin Room who promote positive relationships and create an inclusive learning environment. As a result, children are happy, well-behaved and engaged in their learning.
- The strong and supportive leadership provided by the senior leadership team, who create a collaborative approach to supporting improvement.
- The whole staff team's approach to supporting children with barriers to learning. This enables children to make good progress, improve their wellbeing and achieve well.
- The positive start to developing learning through play in the early stages.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from the central team:

- Continue to develop approaches to high-quality learning and teaching across the school. This includes using assessment information more clearly to inform teaching and learning to ensure learning is planned at the right level of difficulty for all learners.
- Continue to raise attainment and achievement for learners across the school.
- Continue to extend opportunities for children and encourage parents and families to be more involved in planning, leading and reviewing aspects of school improvement.

The school received positive gradings.

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

The staff team were very pleased their hard work was recognised. Inspectors noted that all staff were committed to high standards and successes for their learners. Glashieburn will move up from Category 2 to **Category 1** of the School Quality Improvement Framework and share examples of the good work identified during the inspection with others. The link to the full report is available [here](#).

The ELC at Glashieburn was not visited as part of this HMle inspection as it had been inspected in the last 18 months by the Care Inspectorate.

### 3.4 **Education Scotland inspection of Heathryburn School and Nursery Class**

Heathryburn school and Nursery Class was inspected week beginning 11 September. During the visit, Inspectors talked to parents/carers and children, worked closely with the headteacher and staff and visited classrooms in the school and ELC to see how children were being supported. Taking this approach enabled them to triangulate evidence to support their evaluations.

This was also a full week inspection and inspectors evaluated the school against the four key quality indicators. The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- The headteacher's leadership of the primary school is providing much needed stability and direction following recent periods of significant challenge. She has supported children and staff well during the recovery period following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Staff's commitment to fostering positive, nurturing relationships with children. Children are respectful, welcoming and proud of their school. They demonstrate the values of the school very well in their interactions with others.
- Senior leaders monitoring and tracking approaches record accurately children's progress and levels of attainment. This approach is helping staff to predict how well children will achieve in their learning.

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

- Staff need to improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching across the school and nursery. This will support children's improved progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- The headteacher, senior leaders, and staff should improve the quality of play-based learning across the early level. This will support children to experience learning that promotes creativity, curiosity and investigate play.

- The headteacher needs to make significant improvement to the leadership of change in the nursery. Senior leaders and staff, supported by the local authority, should work together to develop approaches to evaluating, monitoring and tracking the work of the nursery and improve children's progress in learning.
- Senior leaders and practitioners should improve the planning of the nursery curriculum to ensure children receive a broad range of learning experiences appropriate to their needs. Practitioners should plan learning taking account of children who require additional support, as well those who require increasing challenge.

The school secured satisfactory or better gradings against the Quality Indicators across the Primary School.

Primary school 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	Satisfactory (3)

The school will remain in **Category 2** of the school Quality Improvement Framework for primary school provision in recognition that there is still improvement to be realised.

The Nursery Class was inspected by both HMle and Care Inspectorate as part of the joint inspection model. Inspectors from both agencies agreed that although staff were caring, welcoming and supportive towards children they were not providing activities which would challenge and support children in their learning. The quality of the learning experiences did not allow children to achieve, resulting in children disengaging with the learning. Although children were safe and happy there were insufficient systems in place to track their progress. Personal plans were in place but not updated regularly enough with families in order to capture children's achievements and successes at home.

As a result, HMle made the following evaluations of the Nursery class.

Nursery Class Quality Indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	Unsatisfactory(1)
Learning, teaching and assessment	Unsatisfactory(1)
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Weak (2)
Securing children's progress	Unsatisfactory (1)

The Care Inspectorate awarded the following Grades.

Aspect being inspected	Previous evaluation February '23	Recent Evaluation September 23
How good is our care, play and learning?	Adequate (3)	Weak (2)
How good is our setting?	Adequate (3)	Adequate (3)

How good is our leadership?	Adequate (3)	Weak (2)
How good is our staff team?	Adequate (3)	Weak(2)

Changes in the senior leadership team have considerably impacted on the quality of ELC provision due to a lack of robust senior management oversight. Since the inspection in September the headteacher has taken on direct line management of the setting and has been working directly with staff to address the action points raised during the inspection.

Immediately following the inspection, a tactical team of central officers and experienced managers was put in place to support improvements across ELC. This team, along with the headteacher and DHT, have worked alongside the staff in the setting providing support and challenge weekly in order to improve the learning environment and quality of experiences for children and families and good progress is being made.

The link to the full report is available [here](#). HMle feel that the school require additional support and time to make the improvements in the ELC and as such will return within 6 months to ensure improvements have been made. Central officers will continue to work closely with school leaders to help ensure that the necessary improvements are made before the HMle return. The action plan can be found at appendix A.

Following this inspection, the ELC will remain in **Category 3** of the ELC Quality Improvement Framework

### 3.5 **Education Scotland Inspection of Harlaw Academy**

In February 2020, HMle published a letter, following an inspection of Harlaw Academy. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which were agreed with the school and Aberdeen City Council.

In December 2023 the local authority provided HMle with a report outlining the schools progress towards meeting the areas for improvement.

After reviewing the evidence and engaging in an on-line meeting, inspectors have not been able to gain sufficient assurance that all areas have been fully addressed. HMle has committed to carrying out a further inspection of the school within the next 6 months. The school will remain in **Category 3** and will be subject to increased scrutiny and support from the central team. A quality improvement officer will meet weekly with the headteacher to provide support/challenge and monitor progress.

### 3.6 **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.

3.7 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.

3.8 **The Bruce Nursery** is a Funded Provider situated in a residential area in the west end of Aberdeen. The Bruce was inspected in October 2023. Inspectors noted that children experienced warm, caring and nurturing support from staff. Children were happy, confident and actively involved in leading their play and learning. Positive relationships with families supported continuity of care and effective partnerships. The manager and staff were committed to the ongoing development of the service; however, quality assurance processes need to be embedded to secure sustained improvements across the service. It was noted that work was required to upgrade the toilet and nappy changing facilities. Care Inspectorate also acknowledged that there had been a number of changes within the staffing and management of the nursery. At the time of the inspection, there was an acting manager who had only been in post for three months.

Aspect being inspected	Previous evaluation March '23	Recent Evaluation October 23
How good is our care, play and learning?	Adequate (3)	Adequate (3)
How good is our setting?	Good (4)	Adequate (3)
How good is our leadership?	Adequate (3)	Adequate (3)
How good is our staff team?	Good (4)	Good (4)

The staff team are pleased that the warm, caring relationships have been recognised. The setting will sit within the targeted support category of the Quality Improvement Framework. The Grade for how good is our setting dropped to adequate as the setting had not implemented a robust system for quality assurance and improvement set as an area for improvement in March 2023. This has now been incorporated as a requirement for the setting. Locality leads will work with the setting to ensure this is in place timeously.

Bruce Nursery will remain in **Category 2** category of the Quality Improvement Framework. The manager will be linked with settings who have proven good practice in quality assurance in order to address this area for improvement.

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

3.9 **Greyhope ELC** is a Local Authority setting in the new Greyhope School in Torry (formerly Walker Road). The setting received an unannounced follow up inspection in October 2023, prior to the move to the new building. The team noted positive changes to the outdoor and indoor environment and development of staff practice ensured a safe and secure environment for children. Staff had developed their knowledge, skills and confidence in relation positive behaviour strategies and were using this to effectively support children's individual needs. The team had continued to work on how they supported children's play and learning and plans were in place to develop this further. Effective leadership within the setting was leading to positive outcomes for the children. The service had been building on how they effectively involve children and families in the evaluation and improvement of the service. This continues to be a key area for improvement for the setting.

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

Staff were pleased that the work undertaken has been recognised and will continue with further planned improvements. The setting will continue to sit within **Category 2** of the Quality Improvement Framework. The action plan can be found at Appendix B.

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

- 3.10 **Hanover Street ELC**, a Local Authority run setting, was inspected in November 2023. Inspectors reported that children and their families were cared for in an inclusive and welcoming setting. Ongoing improvements to mealtimes meant most children enjoyed a positive snack and lunch experience. Staff morale had improved significantly since the previous inspection and everyone wanted to do their best for the families and children in their care. The managers of the service demonstrated a commitment to initiating change involving all stakeholders. Quality assurance, including self-evaluation and improvement plans, were in place and beginning to impact on improvement outcomes for children.

Inspectors noted that whilst children had fun and were engaged in their play, staff did not always demonstrate the knowledge and skills in providing high quality learning experiences. Some areas of the nursery were in need of care and attention to ensure children were able to play in a well maintained environment. These areas have been raised with Corporate Landlord and all recommended repairs have been made. Planned work to further improve the environment is due to take place during the Easter Holidays.

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

Staff were pleased that improvements had been recognised and will work on the areas for improvement identified by inspectors. The setting will continue to sit within **Category 2** of the Quality Improvement Framework. The action plan can be found at appendix C.

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

- 3.11 **Kittybrewster ELC** received a visit from Care Inspectorate in October 2023 to follow up on the two requirements made in May 2023. The requirements were:

Requirement 1: By 10 July 2023, the provider must make the proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of children. To do this they must, at a

minimum: a) Ensure all staff caring for children are knowledgeable about any health and/or personal needs a child may have. b) Ensure that suitable plans are in place so that children’s health, welfare and safety needs are met.

This requirement was met and inspectors noted that children were better supported by staff who confidently knew their needs well.

Requirement 2: By 10 July 2023, the provider must support the health, wellbeing and safety needs of children. To do this the provider must, at a minimum: a) Provide a robust plan to ensure that staff have the appropriate skills and experience to meet the health, wellbeing and safety needs of children.

This requirement was met and inspectors noted that a robust improvement plan was in place. This clearly set out areas for development, along with actions required to ensure staff have the appropriate skills and experience to meet the needs of the children.

This setting will remain in **Category 2** of the quality improvement framework. The action plan can be found at Appendix D.

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

- 3.12 **Gilcomstoun ELC**, a Local Authority setting, was inspected in November 2023. Inspectors noted that children were very well supported by staff who were consistently responsive to their needs. Children benefitted from a variety of positive play and learning experiences which they could access freely throughout the day. The manager led the service very well and was committed to developing the service by empowering the staff team and building further opportunities for families to be involved. The staff team had established very good connections with the wider community which reflected its cultural diversity. Children and families were supported by a motivated and skilled staff team who worked closely with each other to provide high quality, inclusive experiences for all children.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation March 2023	Recent Evaluation November 2023
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?	Good (4)	Very Good (5)
How good is our staff team?	Good (4)	Very Good (5)

The team were delighted that the positive changes had been identified. And Gilcomstoun ELC will move up to **Category 1** of the Quality Improvement Framework. There will be opportunities to share the good practice identified with those in the Category 2 and Category 3.

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

- 3.13 **Forehill ELC**, a Local Authority setting, was inspected in August 2023. Inspectors noted that Children had fun in nursery, enjoying play with their friends and exploring the activities available to them. Many children were cared

for in a way that met their own personal needs and traits, however some children would benefit from a more consistent approach. Staff had continued to improve the lunch time experience for children which had led to a happy, calm social time to spend together. The team should now continue to develop ways to meet the learning and development needs of children. The environment should be further maintained and developed to provide a high quality environment for children. The team should continue to develop their self-evaluation and quality assurance work in a way that meaningfully involves staff, children and parents and leads to high quality practice. Most parents told inspectors that staff were kind, friendly, lovely, supportive and that they were happy or very happy with the care provided for their child.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation March 2023	Recent Evaluation August 2023
How good is our care, play and learning?	Adequate (3)	Adequate (3)
How good is our setting?	Adequate (3)	Adequate (3)
How good is our leadership?	Adequate (3)	Adequate (3)
How good is our staff team?	Adequate (3)	Adequate (3)

Staff have an action plan in place and will continue to drive improvements. Care inspectorate would normally return to a setting within 12 months however in this case there was only 5 months between the visits, and this included the summer holiday period. Care inspectors in section year runs from April to April which often results in them carrying out return visits to 52 week settings earlier as they are open during the school summer holiday. Although the setting had made some improvements, they had not overtaken the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. The action plan provides evidence that the setting has now made significant progress in addressing these areas.

The setting will remain in **Category 3** of the Quality Improvement Framework to ensure the areas for improvement are addressed and maintained. Locality leads will increase the frequency of their visits and ensure staff have opportunities to visit other settings. The action plan can be found at Appendix E.

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

3.14 **Riverbank ELC**, a Local Authority setting, received a visit from Care Inspectorate in October 2023 to follow up on the two requirements made in April 2023. The requirements were:

Requirement 1: By 14 June 2023, the provider must provide a safe environment for children. To do this the provider must at a minimum: a) Ensure all areas for children maintain children's safety at all times b) Ensure all areas for children are clean and well-maintained c) Ensure staff at all levels are trained and knowledgeable in good hygiene practices and carry this out as per relevant guidance.

This requirement was met, and the nursery was observed to be clean and provide a safe environment for children. Inspectors noted that at the time of inspection, maintenance work had been carried out by the provider. This

included painting and repair work to walls, windowsills and children's toilet areas. This now allowed for easier cleaning and ongoing maintenance.

Requirement 2: By 14 June 2023, the provider must ensure that staff have the skills and are deployed in a way that keeps children safe.

This requirement was met, and inspectors noted that staff had improved their practice and how they work as a team. Staff shared with inspectors that they felt more skilled and supported by the changes that had been made. They felt proud of their work and were keen to continue with improvements.

Riverbank will move up to **Category 2** of the quality improvement framework in order to support the maintenance of the improvements.

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

- 3.15 **Woodend Nursery** is a funded provider setting situated in the grounds of Woodend Hospital. Care Inspectorate visited in December 2023 to carry out an unannounced visit over 2 days. Inspectors noted that children were very well supported by staff who were consistently responsive to their needs. The staff approach was very caring and nurturing which helped the children to feel loved, safe and secure. The manager and staff had developed positive working relationships with external professionals to support children's additional support needs and children had flourished as a result. Children benefitted from a variety of positive play and learning opportunities supported by skilled staff and a rich learning environment. They were well supported in their individual learning through clearly defined next steps and regular review. Regular opportunities to explore the local and wider community supported children to have a wide range of experiences, stimulated their interests and enhanced their play and learning opportunities. Strong leadership had enabled the team to make continued improvements to the service which impacted positively on children's wellbeing, play and learning. Children benefitted from a motivated and committed staff team who demonstrated high quality engagement with children throughout the sessions.

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

Staff are delighted with the very positive report which recognises their hard work and commitment to continuous improvement. Woodend will move up to **Category 1** of the Quality Improvement Framework.

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

- 3.16 **Muirfield ELC**, a Local Authority setting, was inspected by Care Inspectorate in November 2023. Care inspectorate visited the settings over 2 days. During the visit they spoke to staff, children and families as well as observing children's

experiences. Inspectors noted children were supported by kind and caring staff. and interactions between staff and children were inconsistent. Whilst learning experiences were being planned for, they did not always meet children's needs. Parents were positive about the setting and felt well informed about their children's progress and next steps. Inspectors noted that whilst the environment was safe overall, some safety and cleanliness aspects needed to be addressed and these were addressed immediately following contact with the facilities team.

It was noted that there had been a number of changes in management and difficulties securing permanent staff over the past year and this had impacted on the quality assurance and self-evaluation undertaken within the setting.

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

Inspectors acknowledged the approaches being taken by the recently appointed headteacher would facilitate improvement however these were in the early stages and not yet fully embedded so unable to demonstrate impact at the time of inspection.

The setting will remain in **Category 3** of the Quality Improvement Framework and coordinated support will be provided to ensure the approaches are implemented fully. The action plan can be found at Appendix F.

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

- 3.17 **Culter After School Club** is a local authority School Age Childcare provision, registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 school age children. It was inspected in December 2023. Inspectors highlighted that children had fun and were engaged in interesting activities. Children benefitted from positive relationships with staff who knew them well. Children had a variety of play spaces available to them. Staff reviewed procedures for children moving between areas during the inspection to help ensure all children's safety at all times. Children enjoyed sociable, relaxed snack times. Positive experiences for children were promoted through quality assurance measures. These will be further developed, however, to ensure positive outcomes in all areas. Staff worked well together to meet children's needs throughout the day.

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?	Good (4)
How good is our staff team?	Very Good (5)

The staff team at Culter are delighted that inspectors found significant strengths

in aspects of the care they provide and how these supported positive outcomes for children and recognised that they had embraced recent changes, which provided opportunities for them to work together to build a strong team. The report also acknowledged that the recently appointed manager had worked hard to implement performance monitoring, and this was beginning to have a positive impact on outcomes for children.

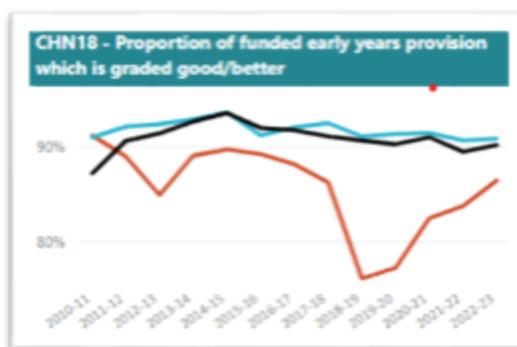
The full report can be found [here](#)

### 3.18 **What do the inspections tell us about our quality improvement arrangements across ELC?**

The education service continues to have action plans in place to drive improvement where settings have been categorised as in need of additional support (Categories 2 and 3). External evaluations are now validating our own self-evaluation, this is critical and helps us ensure that we effectively utilise resource where most needed. There is evidence that arrangements put in place through the QIF categorisations are supporting settings to improve as exemplified by the positive movement through the support categories outlined earlier.

### 3.19 Local Government Benchmarking data evidences that there is now a stable long term improvement trend evident across ELC provision (the red line shows ACC performance against family group data in blue and national averages in black.)

The service has identified the need to more closely align professional learning opportunities to the core Quality Indicators and increase opportunities to share best practice to accelerate this trend further. This work is underway.



### 3.20 There is an emerging pattern of a change in leadership and management leading to poorer inspection outcomes. The service plan to mitigate this through the creation of a mandatory course developed in partnership with practitioners and inspectorate bodies for all Head Teachers and senior leaders responsible for ELC. Taking this approach will ensure that leaders have a clear understanding of expectations. The course will be developed this term and be ready to implement from April 2024.

### 3.21 **What do the inspections tell us about our quality improvement arrangements across schools?**

The service routinely compare current HMIE evaluations of Core Quality Indicators against those achieved over school session 2018/19 to help review the impact of approaches. Although Inspection outcomes have only been routinely reported to Committee since March 2020, the 2018/19 baseline is thought helpful to determine the longer term impact of approaches.

In **Leadership of Change**, 66% of schools inspected in 22/23 received a grade of good or very good compared to 33% in session 2018/19.

In **Learning, Teaching and Assessment**, 57% of schools inspected in 22/23 received a grade of good or very good compared to 29% in session 18/19.

In **Raising Attainment and Achievement**, 43% of schools in session 22/23 received a grade of good or very good compared with 28% in session 18/19.

Evaluations of **Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion** have been maintained with 33% over session 18/19 and 34% over session 22/23. However, evaluations over 23/24 to date are sitting at 100%. This will be monitored closely over the coming months.

It is important to note that there are short and full models of inspection. In the short model Education Scotland only inspect the Quality of Learning teaching and assessment and Raising attainment. The full model inspects all four quality indicators. This session we have only had 2 full inspections, and both were graded good for Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion.

- 3.21 The improvement in school grades from session 2018/19 to session 2022/23 suggests improvement is being realised in the longer term. There is clear evidence that our self-evaluation is now more accurate. However, there is still considerable variation across schools.
- 3.22 There are indications that schools being supported at Category 1 and 2 are making better progress than those being supported at Category 3. The quality Improvement team have reviewed the level and type of support required to move schools from Category 3 to 2 and have agreed that more frequent visits and monitoring of progress is required. Officers are currently looking at how best to realise this increased schedule of visits.
- 3.23 **Children's Social Work**  
The Care Inspectorate **Secure Pathway Review** report was published in October 2023 and is presented to Members as a standalone report at this Committee.
- 3.24 The Care Inspectorates yearlong thematic review in respect of **Disabled Children and Young People** continues. This will involve all 32 local authority areas. As previously advised Aberdeen City is one of four local authority areas where the Care Inspectorate are undertaking a "deeper dive". This will involve a range of inspection activities including file reading; meeting with children, young people, and families in receipt of support/services as well as meeting with relevant staff. It is the intention of the Care Inspectorate to publish their Review report in the summer of 2024.
- 3.25 A report on the findings of the thematic review will be presented to Committee in the autumn of 2024.

#### **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?
<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 difference to learners	Quality assurance arrangements in place to validate self-evaluation gradings	L	Yes
<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>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</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>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 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>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	A Stage 1 Assessment has been completed.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	No DPIA is required.
Other	

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## 11. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Heathryburn ELC Action Plan  
Appendix B - Greyhope ELC Action Plan  
Appendix C – Hanover Street ELC Action Plan  
Appendix D – Kittybrewster ELC Action Plan  
Appendix E – Forehill ELC Action Plan  
Appendix F – Muirfield ELC Action Plan  
Appendix G – Riverbank ELC Action Plan

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Name</b>	Shona Milne/Graeme Simpson
<b>Title</b>	Chief Education Officer
<b>Email Address</b>	shmilne@aberdeencity.gov.uk
<b>Tel</b>	01224 522000