

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children's Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	17 September 2024
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Inspection Reporting
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	F&C/24/267
<b>EXECUTIVE 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>	1.1.6

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee: -

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

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

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

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

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

### 3.2 **National Thematic Inspection: Local authority approaches to support school improvement**

Education Scotland are undertaking a national thematic inspection of the approaches taken to support school improvement. A team of 2 inspectors will be visiting Aberdeen on September 17 and 18 to gather evidence on the following themes:

- How do local authorities support schools to improve the quality of education through implementing effective improvement planning and standards and quality reporting?
- How do local authorities support schools to improve the quality of education through self-evaluation and quality assurance?
- How do local authorities support schools to improve the quality of education through professional learning?
- How do local authorities deliver universal support and challenge for all schools, and/or targeted support for specific schools to improve the quality of education?

The inspection team will speak to central staff and focus groups of head teachers, teachers, Elected Members and representatives from professional associations.

Findings from the national report will be shared once published.

### 3.3 **Education Scotland Inspection of Midstocket Playgroup**

In May 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate visited Midstocket Playgroup, a funded provider based in the Rosemount Learning Centre. During the visit, inspectors talked to parents/carers and children, and worked closely with the manager and practitioners.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the setting's work.

- Children who are curious and resilient problem- solvers, who enjoy their interesting experiences at nursery and in their local area very much.
- Highly positive, supportive, and nurturing relationships between parents, practitioners and children. The hardworking team share their passion for outdoor learning with children and families. There is a strong sense of community and belonging.

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

- As planned, develop further approaches for planning, observing and monitoring the progress children make in their learning. Observations should clearly identify children’s skills, and fully inform the planning of all spaces, experiences and interactions. Practitioners should ensure all learning experiences and spaces build effectively on what children already know and can do.
- Continue to improve approaches to self-evaluation. The manager should now engage practitioners, parents and children to evaluate and develop further their work.

Nursery Class Quality Indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	Satisfactory (3)
Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory (3)
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and Inclusion	Satisfactory (3)
Securing children’s progress	Satisfactory (3)

The Care Inspectorate awarded the following Grades.

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

Inspectors from Education Scotland are confident that the playgroup has the capacity to continue to improve and will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.

As a result of the Care Inspectorate’s findings there will be ongoing support and challenge in relation to improvements in the setting. The setting will remain within **Category 2** of the Quality Improvement Framework and the Locality Lead will offer support to the manager and team to meet their improvement priorities.

A copy of the action plan can be found at Appendix G.

**3.4 Further Inspection of Heathryburn ELC.** Heathryburn is a Local Authority ELC provision. In May 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate conducted a return inspection of the setting. Although inspecting at the same time, each inspection team published their findings independently.

Education Scotland inspectors identified clear evidence of improvements in planning and delivering learning experiences in both the ELC and the early stages of the school. They recognised the positive impact of increased support and guidance provided by the senior leadership team on the quality

of interactions between staff and children. They found the requirement for robust self-evaluation has been addressed and were confident the head teacher and staff had clear evidence of the strengths and development needs of the setting enabling them to continue to improve. The team noted that the school had made clear progress since the original visit in November 2023 and were confident this would continue. Inspectors will not return to the setting and have asked for a report on progress from the local authority in 12 months.

Education Scotland do not issue grades on a return inspection, however the Care Inspectorate categorised the visit as a full inspection and awarded the following grades:

Aspect being inspected	Previous evaluation Sept '23	Recent Evaluation May 24
How good is our care, play and learning?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)
How good is our setting?	Adequate (3)	Good (4))
How good is our leadership?	Weak (2)	Good (4)
How good is our staff team?	Weak(2)	Adequate (3)

The Care Inspectorate noted that staff were friendly, caring and fostered positive relationships with families. Staff knew children well, care and support had improved but was not yet fully consistent signalling a need to continue to develop staff skills. Improvements to planning has improved children's experiences. Inspectors were pleased with the improvements in the environment and now feel that children access a more welcoming play space. Quality assurance practices had been improved and are now effectively improving children's outcomes and experiences. The staff were pleased that their hard work had been recognised and understand that they are at the early stages of improvement and that the changes now require to be fully embedded.

The ELC was in **Category 3** prior to the inspection and will remain in **Category 3** until we are satisfied that all priorities are fully embedded. The team will receive regular visits and support from the Locality Lead and QIO who will provide challenge, monitor progress and gather evidence to inform the progress report to be sent to Education Scotland in 12 months.

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

The link to the Education Scotland Report can be found [here](#)

### 3.5 Education Scotland Inspection of Community Learning and Development (CLD)

Education Scotland visited the local authority week beginning 13 May 2024. Inspectors talked to learners and community representatives, CLD leaders, managers, staff, volunteers, and other key stakeholders to help evaluate the effectiveness of Aberdeen City's CLD partnerships' approach to self-evaluation and planning for improvement, and consider progress made against identified priorities in the CLD plan.

Inspectors found that senior leaders and partners have a clear understanding of the needs of learners and communities across the city. The alignment of priorities across the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP), Health and Social Care Partnership and Children's Services Board is helping to demonstrate CLD's effective contribution to key priorities in Aberdeen. Thematic and project partnership work is well-developed and based on increasing understanding of each other's roles and expertise. The use of regular evaluation is helping the service improve learning programmes and training opportunities are supporting staff to develop the skills required to meet changing needs.

Work with partners is well developed with data and intelligence sharing helping to identify and target changing needs in the community. Inspectors noted that the data for all measures of engagement is higher than pre pandemic figures demonstrating the increased reach of the service.

Those facing additional challenges in their lives such as illness, disability, bereavement and the effects of poverty are supported well by CLD providers. Staff and volunteers offer a wide range of adult learning opportunities and are skilled in encouraging local people to participate, this is reducing social isolation and loneliness for many. Adults undertaking community payback orders are supported well by staff to improve their life skills helping many of these learners be more optimistic about their futures.

Well-supported volunteers are helping displaced Ukrainian refugees to socialise and maintain important aspects of their culture and language. The work done with partners and volunteers to establish the Ukrainian Hub at Rosemount was highlighted as an example of highly effective community development and support to volunteers and this will be shared further nationally as an Education Scotland effective practice case study.

The Family Learning Team and their partners work well together to provide families facing challenges with the support they need when they need it. The 'Fit Like?' programme is providing early intervention and effective, bespoke whole-family support.

There is a clear focus on alleviating the impacts of poverty through training and employability programmes and money and benefits advice across a range of partners. English for speakers of other languages learners are successfully using the communication skills they are gaining in other contexts.

Targeted support to young people on flexible learning pathways by youth workers, delivered in schools and community settings, is highly valued by young people, parents and teachers.

Two areas for improvement were noted:

- The strategic leadership and governance of CLD requires improvement. There is insufficient collective ownership by partners of the governance and planning for CLD. As a result, senior leaders do not have clear strategic oversight. Staff and partners do not see the 2021-24 CLD plan as being a principal focus of their work. There is not yet sufficient input

or influence from community representatives or young people and adult learners in CLD strategic planning. Shared self-evaluation across partners is not yet embedded. Taking a more joined-up approach could support more efficient use of resources and avoid any duplication of effort. It may also help to develop a fuller understanding of the impact of CLD.

- Whilst a broad range of learner data is captured and reported, this is not yet analysed in context or against targets. There is a need to set clear, shared measures of success across all CLD partners. Consistent sharing of data from the full range of partners involved in delivering CLD would help to demonstrate further its impact.

The whole CLD team were delighted with the positive feedback and areas of progress identified. Education Scotland will not return for a further visit. They have requested a Local Authority progress report against the action point identified within 12 months. The report can be found [here](#).

### 3.6 **Care Inspectorate Inspections**

The Care Inspectorate has now resumed their standard inspection model and no longer prioritise the inspection of settings deemed to be at higher risk.

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 **Countesswells ELC**, a Local Authority setting, received an unannounced inspection on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024. This was the first inspection since opening in August 2023. Inspectors found that children were cared for by nurturing and friendly staff and that staff work well together to ensure children's experience across the day is positive and that they are safe. The bright, airy, and spacious environment was recognised as a strength, as was the support and encouragement children were given to ensure they were actively involved in leading their learning. Inspectors noted that the service is well led highlighting the motivation and enthusiasm of the manager.

Self-evaluation and quality assurance procedures are well developed.

<b>Aspect being inspected</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
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 newly formed team are delighted with the inspection feedback and have clear plans in place outlining how they will continue to develop the setting. The Locality Lead will continue to offer support, and the setting will move from **Category 3** (because it was a new setting) to **Category 2** to ensure ongoing support for the relatively new team.

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

- 3.9 **Little Acorns**, an NHS Funded Provider setting based in the grounds of Cornhill hospital, received an unannounced Care Inspectorate inspection on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024. Inspectors noted that children were very well supported by staff who were consistently responsive to their needs. Little Acorns has established very good connections with the wider community, resulting in a range of positive experiences for the children. The team, along with the support of families, had worked hard to develop the wooded area into a rich play and learning environment for the children. Inspectors identified that the manager leads the service very well and is committed to developing the service by empowering the staff team and creating many opportunities for families. The children and families are 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	Evaluation June 2024
How good is our care, play and learning?	Very Good (5)
How good is our setting?	Very Good (5)
How good is our leadership?	Very Good (5)
How good is our staff team?	Very Good (5)

The team at Little Acorns are delighted with the very positive report and will continue to work together to provide high quality experiences for children and their families.

Little Acorns will remain in **Category 1** of the Quality Improvement Framework. The full report can be found [here](#)

- 3.10 **Riverbank ELC**, a Local Authority setting, received an unannounced visit from the Care Inspectorate on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024. Inspectors noted that the improvements identified during the last inspection had been maintained. Staff provided children with cuddles, reassurance and praise. Inspectors reported that families were welcomed into the playroom during arrival and departure times. Inspectors noted that opportunities to explore and extend literacy and numeracy should be further developed, alongside developing approaches to gaining the meaningful views of families and children.

Aspect being inspected	Previous evaluation April '23	Recent Evaluation May 24
How good is our care, play and learning?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)
How good is our setting?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)
How good is our leadership?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)
How good is our staff team?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)

The team are pleased that the improvements made have been recognised and will continue to work to the plan to realise further improvements.

Riverbank was in **Category 3** prior to the inspection and will remain in **Category 3** until we are satisfied that all improvements are fully embedded. A copy of the action plan can be found in Appendix A  
A copy of the full report can be found [here](#)

- 3.11 **Kirkhill ELC**, a Local Authority setting, received an unannounced visit from the Care Inspectorate on the 14, 15 May 2024 with a return on the 17 May. During the visit inspectors spent time talking to children and staff, observed children's experiences and reviewed policy documents. Parent feedback was limited as only 5 responses were received.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation July '23	Recent Evaluation May 24
How good is our care, play and learning?	Adequate (3)	Adequate (3)
How good is our setting?	Weak (2)	Good (4)
How good is our leadership?	Adequate (3)	Adequate (3)
How good is our staff team?	Adequate (3)	Adequate (3)

Concerns were raised with the HT and the central team during lunch service on the first day of inspection around supervision of the lunches. Children leaving the table whilst still eating were a choking risk and one child picked food off the floor. Inspectors agreed to give the setting time to review procedures and arranged to return on the Friday to reinspect the lunchtime routine. Prior to the inspectors returning on Friday 17 May the recently appointed HT, who is also the nursery manager, reviewed practice and updated the procedures to establish improved routines around mealtimes. She ensured all staff were fully briefed and monitored the lunch service personally to ensure new procedures and routines were followed. The same approach was taken in relation to procedures around completion of medication forms. When inspectors returned, they were assured by the actions that had been taken to address the concerns.

Inspectors identified that children experienced kind and caring interactions from staff and significant improvements in the physical environment with children having access to well maintained and organised spaces and a wide range of good quality resources. They noted however that quality assurance processes should be further developed to support the improvement of the service and suggested that the deployment of staff be considered as staff were not always effectively deployed to meet the changing play and personal needs of the children throughout the day

The locality lead will continue to visit the ELC fortnightly to ensure new procedures and routines are being maintained .

The ELC was in **Category 3** prior to the inspection and will remain in **Category 3** until we are satisfied that all procedures are fully embedded. They will receive regular visits and fortnightly support from the Locality Lead who will provide challenge and monitor progress.



A copy of the action plan can be found at Appendix B. The full report can be found [here](#)

- 3.12 **Muirfield ELC**, a Local Authority setting, received an unannounced visit from the Care Inspectorate on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024. The inspectors commented on recent challenges in relation to staffing and felt that the team had worked hard to minimise the impact on children.

They noted that children were cared for by staff who knew them well and used kind, nurturing approaches. Although ongoing improvements to the environment supported positive play experiences, more development was still required, particularly outdoors. Inspectors noted improvements around safety and commented the new procedures developed by the service were effective. It was noted that quality assurance processes were developing, and the team were able to identify where practice could be improved, and the management team had a clear and realistic plan of how to achieve this.

Aspect being inspected	Previous evaluation Nov '23	Recent Evaluation May 24
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?	Adequate (3)	Good (4)
How good is our staff team?	Adequate (3)	Good (4)

Although the setting has made some good progress over the past 6 months work is still required in order to overtake identified priorities.

Muirfield will remain in **Category 3** of the Quality Improvement Framework receiving regular support and challenge and fortnightly visits from the locality lead until we are satisfied that all improvements are fully embedded in practice.

A copy of the plan can be found at Appendix C The full report can be found [here](#)

- 3.13 **J Puddleducks**, a funded provider setting based in the Dyce area of Aberdeen, received an unannounced visit from Care Inspectorate on 30 April and 1 May 2024. Inspectors noted that children benefitted from warm and nurturing interactions from staff and were having fun while playing indoors and outdoors during their time at the service. The environment promoted children's choice and supported them in leading their own play. Staff were committed to promoting positive outcomes for children; however, time and support is required to develop skills, knowledge and understanding for less experienced staff.

A system of self-evaluation, quality assurance and planning for improvement had been implemented and had led to some improvements within the environment however managers require to develop this further to achieve consistent and sustainable improvements across the service.

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

Staff are pleased that their work around improving the service had been recognised however there needs to be a continued focus on self-evaluation to ensure continuous improvement .

The Locality Lead Officer will support the service through regular visits and contact to offer support and challenge.

Puddleducks will move from **Category 3** to **Category 2** of the Quality Improvement Framework.

A copy of the plan can be found at Appendix D

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

- 3.14 **Danestone ELC**, a Local Authority setting, received an unannounced inspection from Care Inspectorate in May 2024. During the inspection major concerns were raised in relation to children's health, safety and wellbeing. These concerns were reported to the Local Authority. In response to this the locality lead and a practitioner from Autism Outreach were based in the setting full time until the end of term and supported staff to develop a detailed plan which was submitted within 24 hours of receiving the concerns reporting the immediate actions that had been taken to address the health and safety requirements. Representatives from the local authority continue to support the setting.

Inspectors found that children were not always supported to maintain high standards of infection prevention and control practices and that staff did not always demonstrate an understanding, or recognise, or respond appropriately to children's individual needs. Some families reported not experiencing a warm and welcoming ethos. Most children had fun at points during the day and enjoyed playing with their friends and the outdoor space. Most staff interactions did not sustain children's interests or extend their learning

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

Prior to the unannounced visit the setting was in **Category 2** of the Quality Improvement Framework however following the inspection they will move to **Category 3**.

The setting will continue to have weekly visits from the Locality Lead to model practice and offer intensive support to ensure they meet all of the remaining areas for improvement. The QIO will oversee the action plan through regular support and challenge meetings with the Head Teacher and members of Senior management in the setting.

Copies of the initial and ongoing action plan can be found at Appendix E The full report can be found [here](#)

- 3.15 **Forehill ELC**, a Local Authority setting, received an unannounced inspection from Care Inspectorate in June 24. Inspectors reported that children were happy, confident and settled and were leaders of their own play and learning. Daily access to fresh air and outdoor experiences supported children's health and wellbeing. They found the staff team worked well together to meet children's needs, and used their skills and knowledge to ensure good quality outcomes for children. Quality assurance and improvement planning processes could be further developed to support effective evaluation and reflection.

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

Staff are pleased that the improvements made have been recognised and will continue to develop their approach to self-evaluation and improvement. The setting will remain in **Category 2** of the Quality Improvement Framework to ensure their improvement journey continues. The full report can be found [here](#)

- 3.16 **Dyce ELC**, a Local Authority setting, received an unannounced 2 day inspection in June 2024. Inspectors reported that children were happy and having fun playing with their friends and staff. Staff were caring, respectful and provided comfort and reassurance to support children's wellbeing. Children could choose to play indoors or outdoors throughout most of the day as both areas were accessible and were well staffed. Early literacy and numeracy development was encouraged by staff in children's play and learning. Spaces for children met their development needs and play areas were interesting and inviting. Families were meaningfully involved in influencing change within the setting with increasing opportunities available for children. Staff communicated very well with each other and worked well together. Observation and assessment of children's learning continued to be an area of improvement identified by the service.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation Sept 21	Recent Evaluation June 24
How good is our care, play and learning?	Good (4)	Good (4)

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

The team are delighted with the very positive inspection feedback and will continue to offer the high quality experiences for children and their families as well as continuing to work on their identified priorities.

Dyce ELC will remain in **Category 1** of the Quality Improvement Framework and will share their successes with other settings across the city. The full report can be read [here](#)

### 3.17 **Thematic Review of Disabled Children & Young People.**

The Care Inspectorate have concluded their national thematic review in relation to Disabled Children and Young People. Aberdeen City was one of four local authority areas where the Care Inspectorate undertook a “deeper dive.” This activity involved 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. The findings of these deeper dive activities will inform the final report although not be attributed to the specific local authority.

The Care Inspectorate have provided verbal feedback on their findings of their inspection activity at a local level. This will support our ongoing improvement work as well as our preparation for a future Joint Inspection of Services to Children and Young People in need of Care and Protection. In addition, the learning will feed into the statutory Children’s Services Plan. The final report was due to be published by the Care Inspectorate in May 2024 but has been deferred until ‘mid-August’ to ensure it is published at the same time as an easy read/accessible version.

### 3.18 **Thematic Review in relation to Care Experienced Young People**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April the Local Authority, as the lead agency, was notified by the Care Inspectorate that they were undertaking a national thematic review of the experiences of young people leaving care in Scotland and the extent to which their rights are upheld. The review will run from April 2024 with a report being published in November 2024.

All 32 local partnerships were asked to complete a survey. The Corporate Parenting Group had oversight of this, but it required input from Health; Housing; Education as well as Children’s Social Work. This had to be submitted by **22 May 2024**. The self-evaluation survey will support our ongoing improvement work as well as our preparation for a future Joint Inspection of Services to Children and Young People in need of Care and Protection. In addition, the learning will feed into the statutory Children’s Services Plan.

In addition to the survey the Thematic Review will also include:

- a literature review, including any national research and publications and additional published reports.
- feedback from focus groups with scrutiny partners, a professional interest group and regulated care service inspectors.

- analysis of relevant national data.

A “deeper dive” across four local authority areas will be undertaken. The following key elements will form this part of the thematic review.

- a focused meeting with the lead professionals for five selected young people in each area: this will combine a case discussion with access to records.
- individual meetings with the five young people
- focus groups of senior leaders, champions boards and corporate parenting boards.
- a review of relevant local documentation.

The thematic review will result in the publication of a single national overview report in November 2024. The report will identify what is working well across Scotland but also whether anything is getting in the way of best practice drawing on the perspectives of young people, families, and staff supporting care experienced young people.

### 3.19 Thematic Review in relation to Social Work Governance

On the 15 July, the Care Inspectorate announced they were undertaking a national review of social work governance and assurance. The aim is to gain an overview of approaches to ensuring governance and assurance arrangements are in place in order to provide public assurance that social work duties are being appropriately discharged. The review will explore how staff are supported to carry out their roles and broach any concerns. The review will consider the extent to which social work leaders influence decision making and have strategic oversight of significant risk relating to key areas of legislative responsibility including adults, children and justice.

The approach of the review will involve the undernoted activities, a timeline for which is set out in the document attached at the end of this briefing.

- A national staff survey, focussing on front line social work staff and their first line managers. (Each local authority will be provided with a copy of the staff survey results to support any local improvement activity),
- Review of core documents that demonstrate governance and assurance approaches,
- A structured interview with a few core staff from each local authority area, including Chief Social Work Officers,
- Three themed focus groups, where each local authority will be invited to send two middle or senior managers.

The Care Inspectorate have intimated that the approach will be proportionate, mindful of the impact inspection activity has on staff. The Care Inspectorate will produce a single national report in spring 2025. While they will not be evaluating partnerships on their performance, they will report on what is working well across Scotland, identifying potential areas for improvement.

#### 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	High levels of assurance are taken	L	Yes

	reputational risk to the Council	Quality Improvement and Inspection visits		
<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. 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
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	<i>No assessment required. I confirm this Shona Milne , Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning .</i>
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	No DPIA is required.
<b>Other</b>	

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## 11. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Riverbank CI Action Plan  
Appendix B - Kirkhill CI Action Plan  
Appendix C - Muirfield CI Action Plan  
Appendix D - Puddleducks CI Action Plan  
Appendix E - Danestone Initial Action Plan  
Appendix F – Danestone CI Action Plan  
Appendix G – Midsocket Action Plan

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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