



Securing the future... • *Improving services*
• *Enhancing quality of life* • *Making the best use of public resources*

Council Building
2 High Street
Perth
PH1 5PH

08/03/2022

A meeting of the **Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee** will be held virtually on **Monday, 21 March 2022 at 09:30.**

If you have any queries please contact Committee Services on (01738) 475000 or email Committee@pkc.gov.uk.

THOMAS GLEN
Chief Executive

Those attending the meeting are requested to ensure that all notifications are silent on their device and other devices are in silent mode.

Please note that the meeting will be broadcast online and recorded. The recording will be publicly available on the Council's website following the meeting.

Members:

Councillor Caroline Shiers (Convener)
Councillor John Duff (Vice-Convener)
Councillor John Rebbeck
Councillor Fiona Sarwar
Councillor Lewis Simpson

Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee

Monday, 21 March 2022

AGENDA

MEMBERS ARE REMINDED OF THEIR OBLIGATION TO DECLARE ANY FINANCIAL OR NON-FINANCIAL INTEREST WHICH THEY MAY HAVE IN ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCILLORS' CODE OF CONDUCT.

- 1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- 3 MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE SUB-COMMITTEE OF LIFELONG LEARNING COMMITTEE OF 1 NOVEMBER 2021 (copy herewith) 5 - 6**
- 4 STANDARDS AND QUALITY IN SCHOOLS, LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES/ DAY CARE OF CHILDREN 7 - 14**
Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)
(copy herewith 22/58)
- APPENDIX 1 - SUMMARY OF CARE INSPECTORATE DAY CARE OF CHILDREN INSPECTION 15 - 18**
- APPENDIX 2 - PERTH GRAMMAR SCHOOL - LETTER 19 - 22**
- APPENDIX 3 - NORTH MUIRTON PRIMARY SCHOOL - LETTER 23 - 26**

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

EXECUTIVE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE LIFELONG LEARNING COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee of the Lifelong Learning Committee held virtually on Monday 1 November 2021 at 10.00am.

Present: Councillors C Shiers, J Rebbeck, F Sarwar and L Simpson.

In Attendance: S Johnston, Head of Education and Learning, A Carr and J Chiles (all Education and Children's Services) and D Williams (Corporate and Democratic Services).

Also in Attendance: A Brown, M Pasternak and L McGuigan (all Corporate and Democratic Services)

Councillor C Shiers, Convener, Presiding.

Apologies: Councillor J Duff

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Convener welcomed all those present to the meeting. Apologies for absence were as noted above.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minute of meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee of the Lifelong Learning Committee of 2 November 2020 was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

4. STANDARDS AND QUALITY IN SCHOOLS, LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES/DAY CARE OF CHILDREN

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (21/200) setting out the key findings following inspections and evaluations of early learning and childcare settings undertaken by Care Inspectorate on the day care of children since the Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee on 2 November 2020.

Resolved:

- (i) Having heard from the relevant officers on the key findings of the inspection and following consideration and questions from the sub-committee, the reports as appended to Report 21/200 be noted as follows:
 - (a) Summary of Care Inspectorate Day Care Inspections (Appendix 1)
 - (b) Thrive Childcare and Education Corner House (Appendix 2)

- (c) Perth College Nursery (Appendix 3)
- (d) Milnathort Primary School Nursery (Appendix 4)
- (e) Morrison's Academy Nursery (Appendix 5)

DRAFT

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee

21 March 2022

STANDARDS AND QUALITY IN SCHOOLS, LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES/DAY CARE OF CHILDREN

Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)
(Report No 22/58)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report sets out the key findings following inspections and evaluations of early learning and childcare (ELC) settings undertaken by the Care Inspectorate on the day care of children since the Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee on 1 November 2021. It also reports on follow-through inspections undertaken by Education Scotland in 2021.

1. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 This report sets out the key findings and areas for improvement following inspections of Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) ELC settings (including partner providers) by the Care Inspectorate.
- 1.2 Specifically, the report sets out the findings of inspections which have been published by the Care Inspectorate since the Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee on 1 November 2021.
- 1.3 **Early learning and childcare inspections**
 - 1.3.1 ELC settings are subject to inspections from the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland and can experience joint inspections where both scrutiny bodies evaluate the quality of the provision.
 - 1.3.2 For ELC inspections conducted by Education Scotland, the following How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare (HGIOELC) Quality Indicators (QI) are evaluated on a six-point scale:

How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare (HGIOELC) Quality Indicators (QI)	ELC Full Model	ELC Short Model	Evaluated
1.3 Leadership of change	√		√
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	√	√	√
3.2 Securing children's progress	√	√	√
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	√		√
2.2 Curriculum	√		
2.7 Partnerships	√		
Additional QI chosen by ELC setting	√		

- 1.3.3 Regulated care services in Scotland have been inspected using a framework of quality themes, quality statements and the Health and Social Care Standards. Services are visited on an unannounced basis at least every three years. Services are given evaluations based on the findings at each inspection and these are made public via the Care Inspectorate's website.
- 1.3.4 Services are measured against the [National Care Standards](#) and quality themes:
- Quality of Care and Support;
 - Quality of Environment;
 - Quality of Staffing; and
 - Quality of Management and Leadership.
- 1.3.5 Each quality theme is graded on a 6-point scale in which 1 = unsatisfactory, 2 = weak, 3 = adequate, 4 = good, 5 = very good and 6 = excellent.
- 1.3.6 Following the publication of Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare Providers: Principles and Practice, all ELC setting must gain evaluations of good or better to be able to provide funded ELC in partnership with the local authority.
- 1.3.7 Following an inspection, the Care Inspectorate may set out a series of:
- **Recommendations:** Statements that set out actions the care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service; and
 - **Requirements:** Statements which set out what is required of the care service provider to comply with relevant legislation.
- 1.3.8 Care service providers must submit an action plan to the Care Inspectorate addressing any requirements and recommendations identified. Progress against the action plan is monitored by the Care Inspectorate through annual return and self-assessment forms submitted by the care service provider, and through subsequent inspection.
- 1.3.9 A new quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school aged childcare was published by the Care Inspectorate in July 2021 and has been used in test inspections, without published grades, before full implementation. A date is to be confirmed for full roll out of this framework.

1.4 Education Scotland Inspections

- 1.4.1 In September 2021, Education Scotland announced that they will adopt a phased approach to resuming scrutiny activity during 2021/22. However, in December 2021, taking the ongoing challenges schools face dealing with COVID-19 and stakeholder views into account, an adjusted plan was announced. From mid-February 2022, if COVID-19 conditions allow, HM Inspectors will carry out 'recovery' visits to support the education sector as it continues to respond to the impact of the current pandemic. They will not report on specific quality indicators or give grades as part of the visit.

- 1.4.2 In this report, follow through reports related to inspections that took place before the COVID-19 pandemic are considered.

2. RECENTLY PUBLISHED REPORTS

2.1 Education Scotland Inspections

- 2.1.1 Since the Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee on 1 November 2021, there have been two follow up reports published by Education Scotland.¹ These are:

- **Follow Through Inspection of Perth Grammar School**

Perth Grammar School was inspected in November 2019 and reported to the Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee on 2 November 2020 ([Report No. 20/205 refers](#)). A Follow Through Inspection took place in November 2021 and Education Scotland will make no more visits in connection with it. The inspection letter can be found in Appendix 2. At the time of the 2021 pupil census (September 2021), Perth Grammar School had 787 secondary school children enrolled. The school had a staffing complement of 69.6 Full time employees (FTE) teachers and 21.2 FTE non-teaching staff.

- **Follow Through Inspection of North Muirton Primary School**

North Muirton Primary School was inspected in November 2019 and reported to the Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee on 2 November 2020 ([Report No. 20/206 refers](#)). A Follow Through Inspection took place in November 2021 and Education Scotland will make no more visits in connection with it. The inspection letter can be found in Appendix 3. At the time of the 2021 pupil census (September 2021), North Muirton Primary School had 231 primary school children and 67 nursery children enrolled. The primary school had a staffing complement of 16.4 FTE teachers and 11.94 FTE non-teaching staff.

2.2 Care Inspectorate Inspections - Day Care of Children

- 2.2.1 A total of 11 inspections have been undertaken and published² by the Care Inspectorate since the Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee on 1 November 2021. 2 of these inspections were undertaken using the new quality framework under test, and as a result, grades are not published. A follow up visit took place in 1 setting.
- 2.2.2 Of these reports, none required to be reported as an exception (where any grading has been awarded an evaluation of unsatisfactory, weak, or excellent).
- 2.2.3 For the 9 published inspections in total, of the 36 indicators inspected, 1 received an 'adequate' grading, 13 received 'good' evaluations and 22 received 'very good' evaluations.

¹ As of 18 January 2022

² As of 31 December 2021

- 2.2.4 Craigie Park Nursery was inspected in July 2021 ([Care Inspectorate report for Craigie Park Nursery](#)) and awarded weak and unsatisfactory quality gradings. Support was provided by the Early Years Team. A decision was made to terminate their contract for the delivery of funded hours of ELC with a final termination date of 15 October 2021. The owner closed the business on 8 October 2021.

2.3 Care Inspectorate Inspection - Childminding Services

- 2.3.1 From academic year 2019/20, childminders commenced providing funded hours within the Council's ELC expansion plan for 1140 hours. All registered childminders are inspected by the Care Inspectorate and graded on four quality themes:

- Quality of Care and Support;
- Quality of Environment;
- Quality of Staffing; and
- Quality of Management and Leadership.

- 2.3.2 Inspections of those childminders that have funded places in partnership with the Council will be included in this report by exception, as with other childcare settings. No inspections require reporting in this way to date. Performance and benchmarking information will be developed as numbers of these increase.

3 PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

3.1 Inspections: Day Care of Children

- 3.1.1 This section provides a summary of the performance of ELC settings in inspections carried out by the Care Inspectorate. A total of 11 Day Care services across Perth and Kinross have been inspected by the Care Inspectorate since the beginning of the financial year 2021/22.
- 3.1.2 Table 1 below gives a summary of the evaluations for each quality theme. A summary list of inspections as well as benchmarking over a longer time period (since financial year 2017/18) against national and comparator data can be found in Appendix 1. This also includes an analysis of overall evaluation statistics to give the current position of inspections.

Table 1: Number of Day Care of Children evaluations received in PKC from 2021/22 to date.

QI Grading	Quality of Care & Support	Quality of Environment	Quality of Staffing	Quality of Management & Leadership	All QIs
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0
Very Good	7	4	7	4	22
Good	2	5	2	4	13
Satisfactory	0	0	0	1	1
Weak	0	0	0	0	0
Unsatisfactory	0	0	0	0	0
Total	9	9	9	9	36

- 3.1.3 There is an expectation from PKC that ELC funded providers meet “good” evaluations in all quality indicators. Therefore, where an ELC provider receives less than a “good” evaluation, the Quality Improvement Officer for the ELC establishment works with the Headteacher/Manager/Leader to develop an action plan which will secure improvement in the areas of identified need.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Inspection reports provide further information on the standards and quality in our ELC settings and schools. This report sets out the outcomes of Care Inspectorate reports of ELC settings inspected and published since 1 November 2021, and follow-through reports from Education Scotland for two schools previously inspected in 2019.
- 4.2 It is recommended that the Committee:
- (i) Considers and comments as appropriate on the contents of the report.

Author

Name	Designation	Contact Details
Sharon Johnston	Head of Education and Learning	ECSCCommittee@pkc.gov.uk 01738 475000

Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Sheena Devlin	Executive Director (Education and Children Services)	4 March 2022

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	None
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	None
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objectives No. (i) and (ii).

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Objectives.

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;

- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objective No. (i) and (ii).

- 1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Vision, Values and Priorities in respect of the following key Priority area:

- Best Start

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 Not applicable.

Workforce

- 2.2 Not applicable.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 Not applicable.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 This section reflects that the proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- (i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

This section reflects that the proposals have been considered under the Act and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

- 3.3 Not applicable.

Legal and Governance

3.4 Not applicable.

3.5 Not applicable.

Risk

3.6 Not applicable.

4. Consultation

Internal

4.1 Relevant Heads of Service and Service Managers within Education and Children's Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

External

4.2 Not applicable.

5. Communication

5.1 Schools and ELC settings communicate the findings of the inspection reports with their parents and stakeholders using their own communication channels. Other continuing engagement activities undertaken by Care Inspectorate or PKC will also be reported to parents and stakeholders via the settings own reporting processes.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

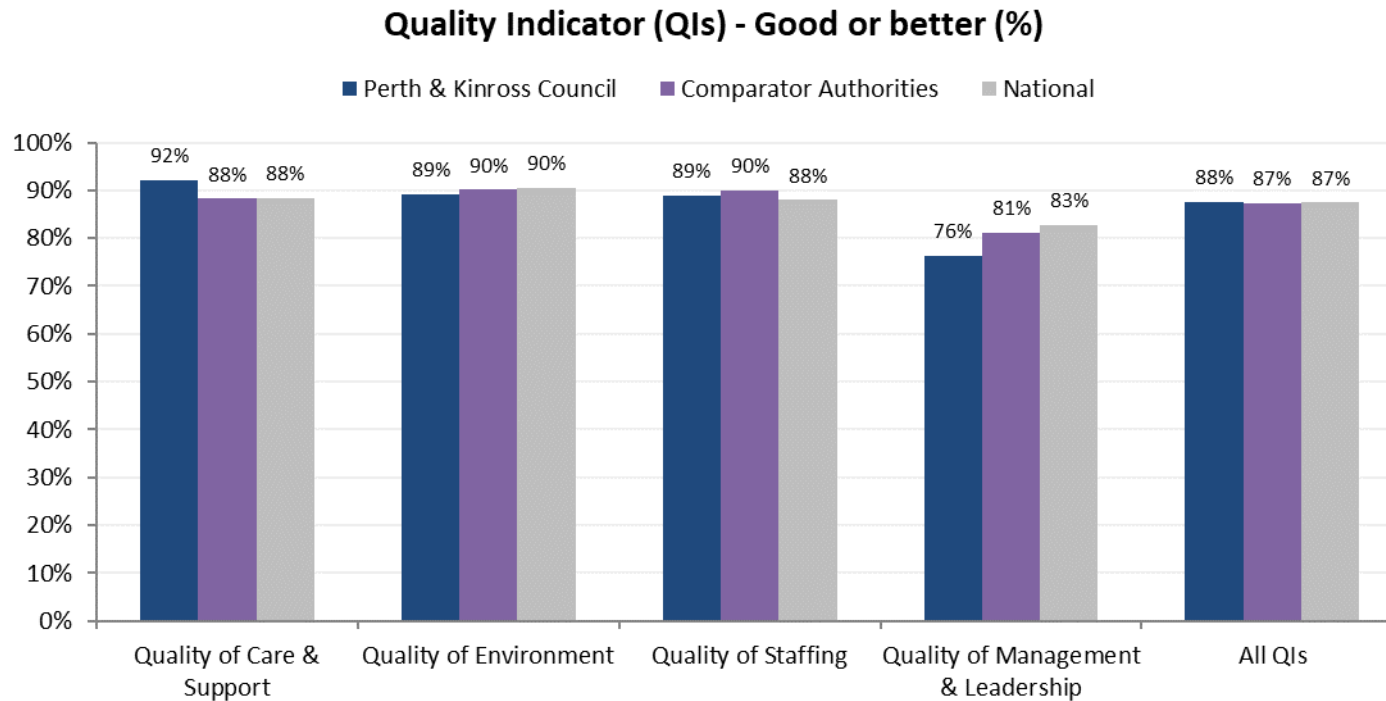
2.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

3. APPENDICES

3.1 Appendix 1 – Summary of Care Inspectorate Day Care of Children Inspections
Appendix 2 – Perth Grammar School - Education Scotland Letter
Appendix 3 – North Muirton Primary School - Education Scotland Letter

Appendix 1: Summary of Care Inspectorate Day Care of Children Inspections

National and Comparator Authority Benchmarking 2017/18 to date (Comparator and National Data as of 31 December 2021)

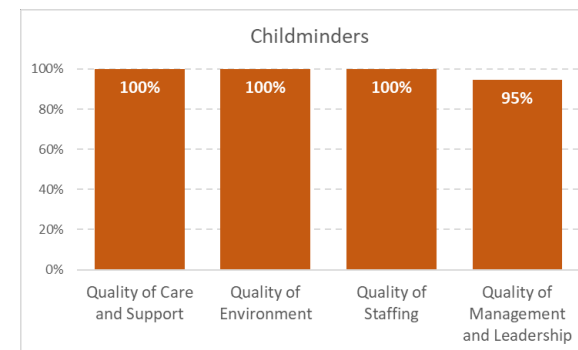
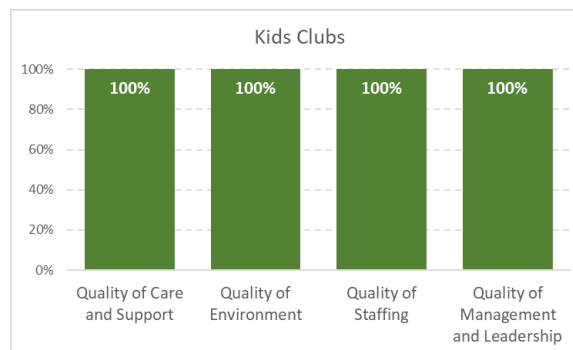
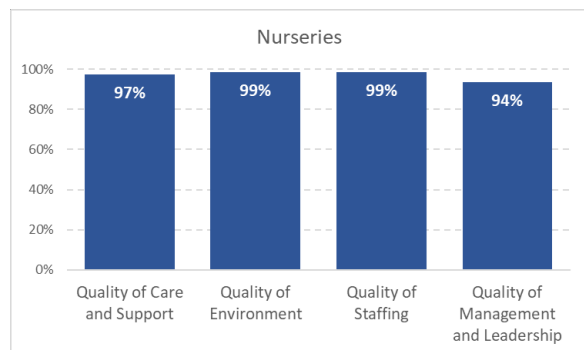


Overall, most ELC settings perform well. PKC perform consistently better than comparator authorities, and at national level when inspected by Care Inspectorate for the 'Quality of Care and Support'. Almost all inspections show that settings are strong in ensuring wellbeing, equality, and inclusion. Most inspections are good or better for the 'Quality of Environment' and 'Quality of Staffing'.

The majority of inspections are good or better for the 'Quality of Management and Leadership', however, due to staff changes, these indicators fell below our comparators and at national level. A new ELC leadership programme was developed to address this.

Current Position

The chart above illustrates the aggregated individual results of inspections over a five- year period. Some settings will be inspected more than once during this period, and some Quality Indicators are not covered in every inspection. The accumulated result of all these inspections is the current position of all Early Learning and Childcare services in Perth & Kinross - shown in these charts, which summarise the proportion of settings that currently have a *Good or better* rating, based on the latest inspection for each indicator.



Inspections in Financial Year 2019/20 and Later

*New inspections since the last Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee.

Local Authority

Service Name	Inspection Date	Quality of Care & Support	Quality of Environment	Quality of Staffing	Quality of Management & Leadership
Arngask Primary School	10/12/2019	Very Good	Very Good	-	-
Balbeggie Primary School	05/02/2020	Good	-	Good	-
Balhousie Primary School	27/08/2019	Very Good	Good	-	-
Blair Atholl Primary School	16/09/2019	Very Good	Very Good	-	-
Braco Primary School	30/10/2019	Very Good	-	-	Good
Breadalbane Academy	29/10/2019	Good	Good	-	-
City of Perth Early Childhood Centre	11/11/2019	Adequate	Good	Adequate	Adequate
Dunbarney Primary School	11/02/2020	Good	Good	-	-

Service Name	Inspection Date	Quality of Care & Support	Quality of Environment	Quality of Staffing	Quality of Management & Leadership
Fossoway Primary School	05/06/2019	Very Good	Very Good	-	-
Goodlyburn Primary School	02/05/2019	Good	-	-	Good
*Guildtown Primary School Nursery	22/11/2021	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Good
Kinnoull Kids Club	19/12/2019	Good	-	-	Good
Kinross Primary School	25/11/2019	Very Good	Very Good	-	-
Letham Kids Club	14/05/2019	Good	-	-	Good
Letham Primary School	04/03/2020	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Milnathort Primary School	09/05/2019	Very Good	Good	-	-
Moncreiffe Primary School	21/01/2020	Good	Good	-	-
Newhill Primary School Nursery	10/03/2020	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Good
North Muirton Kids Club	01/05/2019	Very Good	-	-	Good
North Muirton Primary School	24/03/2020	Good	Good	Adequate	Adequate
Oakbank Primary School	20/11/2019	Very Good	-	-	Very Good
Pitlochry High School	31/01/2020	Very Good	-	Very Good	-
Rattray Primary School	24/06/2019	Good	Good	Good	Weak
Robert Douglas Memorial Primary School	24/02/2020	Very Good	-	-	Very Good
Stanley Primary School	06/09/2019	Good	Good	-	-
*St. Ninians Episcopal Primary School Nursery	09/11/2021	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Good
Village Kids Club	07/05/2019	Good	Good	Very Good	Good

Partner Providers

Service Name	Inspection Date	Quality of Care & Support	Quality of Environment	Quality of Staffing	Quality of Management & Leadership
Apple Tree Nursery	23/07/2019	Good	Good	-	-
*Busy Bees Nursery	22/11/2021	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Good
Cheeky Monkeys	05/04/2019	Very Good	-	Very Good	-
Cornerstones Nursery	30/07/2019	Adequate	Good	Good	Adequate
*Craigie Park Nursery [#]	21/07/2021	Weak	Unsatisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
Dunning Stepping Stones [#]	24/02/2020	Very Good	-	-	Very Good
Fair City Munchkins	06/03/2020	Very Good	-	Very Good	-
Four Seasons Nursery [#]	30/08/2019	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Honeypot Children's Nursery - Luncarty	17/02/2020	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Humpty Dumpty Community Nursery - Scone	12/09/2019	Very Good	-	-	Very Good
*Lauriston Nursery	17/09/2021	Good	Good	Good	Adequate
*Little Scallywags Nursery	11/09/2021	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
*Little Steps Childcare	11/08/2021	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Muirton Community Nursery	04/09/2019	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Netherton Montessori Nursery [#]	31/01/2019	Very Good	Very Good	-	-
Paint Pots Nursery ^{**}	11/02/2020	Very Good	Good	-	-
*Perth College Nursery	05/10/2021	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Good
*Rosemount Nursery School Ltd	23/07/2021	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good
*Swansacre Playgroup	27/08/2021	Good	Very Good	Good	Very Good
The Red Squirrel Children's Nursery	20/06/2019	Very Good	-	-	Very Good
The Wendy House	24/09/2019	Very Good	-	Very Good	-
Thrive Childcare and Education Corner House Perth	03/06/2021	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak

- Setting now closed.

** - Paint Pots Nursery now operating as Thrive Childcare and Education.

21 December 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of Perth Grammar School, we said that we would engage with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff, stakeholders and the local authority and carried out a visit to the school. This engagement helped us learn more about how young people and their families have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches that have been working well to support young people's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed with the headteacher and local authority officer the school's progress in taking forward the recommendations from our original inspection.

This letter sets out what we found during our visit.

Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

The school's handling of the pandemic reflects well national expectations and guidance. Routines across the school continue to promote a safe learning environment. Despite the challenges arising from the pandemic, senior leaders have continued to focus on taking forward the school's improvement agenda. Careful planning enabled staff to respond flexibly to the changing circumstances and to deliver blended and remote learning. Overall, young people followed their normal curriculum, subject to any required adjustments.

Young people adapted to the challenges of remote learning and were supported well by their teachers and school staff. A range of supports were introduced to ensure that any issues could be addressed promptly. Through the period of disrupted learning, identified groups and young people who required additional help were supported effectively in school. Support teams provided valuable support to young people and their families on an individual level.

Staff ensured that all learners had access to digital resources and the internet to promote equity. Staff monitored closely the engagement of young people in online learning, with additional resources being made available. Regular communication with the parent body and contact with families offered further ongoing support.

In conversation with learners, almost all young people feel that they have been supported well during the pandemic and in handling the challenges of blended and remote learning. The posting of online learning resources offered young people reassurance and made it easier to keep in touch with classwork while isolating. In response to issues highlighted by young people on their return to school, staff developed health focused initiatives to address these concerns. This response is being received well by young people. Teachers are alert to addressing any gaps in young people's learning. Senior leaders and the local authority are confident that approaches developed in handling the pandemic will continue to feature as the school moves forward to improve experiences and outcomes for all learners.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

The school's core values of pride, respect and ambition are key drivers of change. They are promoting higher aspirations and increased expectations for all members of the school community. Staff are working well together to deliver high quality learning and teaching. Shared professional learning by staff is impacting positively on individual practices and whole school approaches.

Senior leaders are working well to improve approaches to the analysis of attainment data to ensure that the needs of all learners are met. There are now effective systems in place to monitor attainment data for all young people. As a result, senior leaders are now better able to identify gaps in attainment and put in place measures to support learners. There have been significant improvements in the school's approaches to monitoring and tracking young people's progress. Improved systems are now enabling staff better access to data. As a result, staff have increased confidence in the use of data to improve attainment. While significant progress has been made in a range of attainment measures, senior leaders acknowledge there are still improvement areas to be addressed to fulfil their aspirational vision for all young people.

Senior leaders recognise that some curricular areas are further forward in developing their approaches to assessing the progress of young people. A few faculties require to make further improvements to their planning and assessment in the broad general education.

Moderation activities are supporting teachers in developing their understanding of progress within and achievement of a level. This is helping teachers to plan lessons to meet the needs of learners. Assessment evidence in literacy and numeracy is moderated through working groups. A newly formed school attainment board analyses data from all curriculum areas. This information is providing senior leaders and staff with a clearer overview of the progress of young people.

Senior leaders have used effectively their allocation of Pupil Equity Funding to support young people with attendance, literacy and numeracy. Staff are working proactively to improve attendance rates. The introduction of pupil care and welfare officers has supported this effort well.

Improved conversations surrounding setting goals and targets, and reviewing progress are helping young people focus on their learning. Achieving consistency in the quality and the regularity of these conversations across all classes will be necessary to secure improved outcomes.

The views of young people are being actively captured through a developing programme of surveys, focus groups and sampling. This information is being used effectively to evaluate the quality of learning and engagement. Once fully developed and embedded across all areas of the curriculum, this will provide senior leaders and principal teachers with a rich source of information to inform priorities and plan improvements.

Young people recognise that the ‘pupil voice’ has been strengthened. They are very positive about having opportunities to share their views and, most importantly, see their impact on improving the life of the school. They appreciate the opportunities that they have to express their opinions and feel ready to be even more involved in the school’s decision making processes.

The school continues to develop effective approaches to recognising and celebrating achievement. The successful online awards ceremony, drama and musical productions have supported young people to demonstrate their accomplishments.

In general across the school, there is a calm purposeful atmosphere that is helping to reinforce a positive learning environment. The positive interactions between learners and relationships between young people and their teachers provide a strong base for learning. In the sample of learning observed, most young people behave well and engage in their learning. They respond promptly to the direction and instruction of their teachers. Teachers offer clear explanations of key learning points. There is evidence of technology being used effectively by teachers to model an answer or provide a stimulus for an activity. Senior leaders recognise the need to continue to promote the good practice that is evident in certain subject areas to ensure greater consistency across all learning.

What happens next?

Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. Staff are addressing the recommendations from the original inspection successfully, although we recognise that the school needs some more time to implement fully its priorities for improvement. We have asked Perth and Kinross Council to provide us with further information about the school’s progress within one year of the publication of this letter. We will work together with local authority officers to agree what will happen next. Perth and Kinross Council will continue to inform parents about the school’s progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service.

Charles Rooney
HM Inspector

18 January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of North Muirton Primary School, we said that we would engage with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried out a visit to North Muirton Primary School. Our engagement helped us learn more about how children and their families, have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches that have been working well to support children's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed with the headteacher and local authority officers the school's progress in taking forward the recommendations from our original inspection. As part of our visit, we saw the new arrangements for the early learning and childcare (ELC) provision for North Muirton Primary School, which has moved to Balhousie Primary School. This is in preparation for the planned merger of these two schools in a new building, which should be completed by April 2023. As the headteacher of Balhousie Primary School is the current registered manager for Balhousie and North Muirton ELC, we are not able to provide comment on the quality of provision in this report. However, we did talk with practitioners and the North Muirton Primary School senior leadership team about strategic improvements within the ELC. It is clear significant progress has been made since the original inspection.

This letter sets out what we found during our visit.

Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

Senior leaders and staff were committed fully to supporting children and families by providing advice and practical help not only with learning but with wellbeing and pastoral care throughout the first lockdown. They went above and beyond to ensure all children had what they needed for their learning, making it very easily accessible. Staff ensured children had access to well-prepared learning activities via the school's digital platform. They offered paper learning packs and other resources for collection from the school playground and the local shop. Staff maintained regular contact with children and parents, with senior leaders monitoring learners' engagement. Where issues arose, staff were prompt to take action, making doorstep visits to offer assistance or to help families access support for wider needs. The headteacher issued clear guidance on remote learning to staff during lockdown periods. This ensured shared expectations and a level of consistency across the school and ELC setting. Senior leaders, recognising the potential impact of the situation on everyone's mental health, took action to alleviate social isolation, stress and anxiety. They created 'together time' videos and activities each week to help children, families and staff feel connected. The school became a focal point for the community as they worked to bring positivity during a challenging time.

Staff, now back in school, make good use of the whole-school assessment framework to identify where children are in their learning. They use a range of data and assessment evidence to plan appropriate next steps and address any gaps that emerge in their learning. Parental engagement with children's learning is greater as a result of remote learning. Staff

and pupils are now more confident in their use of digital technology and make greater use of outdoor spaces for learning. Teachers continue to work collaboratively, using evidence-based approaches to support children's progress.

The ongoing impact of COVID-19 places significant pressure on senior leaders and staff. Staff recognise that children may require ongoing support with anxiety and mixing socially with others to re-engage with learning in school. They implement a range of strategies to support all children, with a focus on nurture and social, emotional and mental wellbeing. Staff implement clear plans and targeted interventions for identified children requiring additional support to meet their individual needs. Staff and pupil COVID-19 related absence make the day-to-day running of the school challenging.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

The school is making good progress overall in the key areas for improvement identified during the original inspection. Since then, the senior leadership team has undergone several changes, however the focus and drive to improve outcomes for children has remained strong throughout. The headteacher took up post shortly after the original inspection. She provides very effective leadership and strategic direction, demonstrating determination in her ambition for the whole school community. The headteacher maintains a relentless focus on improving outcomes for children. Ably supported by the senior leadership team, she ensures that the school continues to move forward despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. Senior leaders empower others, encouraging shared leadership very well. They have gained the trust and respect of all staff. The 'this is it' guidance, developed collegiately by staff, provides advice and clear expectations of practice. This supports improved consistency in the quality of learning and teaching across the school very well. All staff are fully committed to professional learning. They embrace opportunities for leadership and collaboration. The local authority supports teachers and practitioners to improve their pedagogy. Increasingly, staff are becoming reflective in their practice. Most children across the school engage well with the variety of learning experiences on offer. They enjoy opportunities to lead and take responsibility for their own learning and talk about their next steps with growing confidence. Staff should continue to develop children's independent learning skills and ensure that all activities are set to provide appropriate support, pace and challenge for all.

Staff make effective use of the new assessment framework to gather a wide range of assessment evidence to measure children's progress. This helps to identify any gaps in learning. Teachers consider assessment at the planning stages and review assessment evidence against National Benchmarks to inform further planning. They should continue to develop approaches to high-quality assessment that allow children to demonstrate their skills and learning in new and unfamiliar contexts. Staff develop a shared understanding of standards, progress and achievement through regular conversations about assessment and opportunities for staff to plan collaboratively. Staff use progression pathways effectively to support planning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff should continue, as planned, to develop their use of progression pathways in all curriculum areas. They should also continue to develop the North Muirton Achievement Framework to promote and track children's participation, skills and wider achievements.

Senior leaders use a robust quality assurance calendar to monitor practice across the school.

They sample children's work and participate in meaningful conversations about assessment standards to support increasingly robust professional judgements in literacy and numeracy. Class teachers now analyse and use the wide range of assessment data available more effectively. This helps them to plan appropriate next steps at an individual and whole class level. Senior leaders meet regularly with staff to talk about children's progress as part of the robust monitoring and tracking process now in place. This gives a clear overview of progress across the whole school as well as in key aspects of learning and development. As a result, senior leaders and staff identify, and put in place, additional support or challenge which may be required. Staff implement planned interventions and strategies promptly with clear measures in place to assess the impact on children's progress. Data provided by the school indicates that despite the disruption caused by COVID-19, attainment in literacy and numeracy has continued to improve across the school over the past two years.

What happens next?

Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst these have had a significant impact on the work of the school, it is commendable that staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. They have remained committed to improving practice and are implementing plans to support recovery. As a result, we will make no more visits to the school in connection with the original inspection. Perth and Kinross Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service.

Susie Smith
HM Inspector

