

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee

1 November 2021

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. 21/200)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report sets 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.

1. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 This report sets out the key findings and areas for improvement following inspections or evaluations of Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) Early Learning and Childcare (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 2 November 2020.
- 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. However, since March 2020, Education Scotland have not undertaken inspections due to the pandemic and therefore this report sets out only inspections carried out by the Care Inspectorate.
 - 1.3.2 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 3 years. Services are given evaluations based on the findings at each inspection and these are made public via the Care Inspectorate's website.
 - 1.3.3 Services are measured against the [National Care Standards](#) and quality themes:
 - Quality of Care and Support;
 - Quality of Environment or Information;
 - Quality of Staffing; and
 - Quality of Management and Leadership.

- 1.3.4 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.
- 1.3.5 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.
- 1.3.6 Following an evaluation or 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.
- 1.3.7 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.

2. RECENTLY PUBLISHED REPORTS

2.1 Education Scotland Inspections

- 2.1.1 Since the Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee on 2 November 2020, there have been no reports published by Education Scotland.¹
- 2.1.2 In September 2021 Education Scotland announced that they will adopt a phased approach to resuming scrutiny activity during this academic year.

Their initial focus will be on establishments that were due to have further inspection, with these visits taking place before the end of 2021. From January 2022, they will undertake a programme of individual early learning and childcare settings and school inspections.

Thematic inspections will also be carried out with a focus on supporting children's and young people's wellbeing, local approaches to recovery and outdoor learning.

2.2 Care Inspectorate Inspections

- 2.2.1 A total of 4 inspections have been undertaken and published² by the Care Inspectorate since the Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning Committee on 4 November 2020.

¹ As at 3 September 2021

² As at 3 September 2021

- 2.2.2 Of these reports, 2 required to be reported as an exception (where any grading has been awarded an evaluation of unsatisfactory, weak, or excellent). Thrive Childcare and Education, Corner House, Perth was awarded 4 weak evaluations and Perth College Nursery was awarded 1 weak evaluation. Copies of the reports are included as Appendix 2 and 3.
- 2.2.3 Both now have new managers in place to take forward the improvements through a detailed action plan. Supported by the Early Years Team, this will ensure recommendations and requirements are met within the agreed timescales.
- 2.2.4 For the 4 inspections in total, of the 16 indicators inspected, 5 received a 'weak' grading, 5 received 'good' evaluations and 6 received 'very good' evaluations.

2.3 Care Inspectorate Evaluations: Key Question 5

- 2.3.1 During the period July 2020 to July 2021, the Care Inspectorate introduced 'Key question 5: How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?', a self-evaluation resource and tool which asks settings to evaluate how well they are supporting children and families during COVID-19. It should be noted that during this period full inspections would continue to be undertaken where necessary.
- 2.3.2 Services are evaluated against the guidance [Operating an early learning and childcare setting \(including out of school care and childminders\) during COVID-19](#) which outlines key areas:
- 5.1: Children's health and wellbeing are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19.
 - 5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff.
 - 5.3: Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19. (Not applicable to childminding services who do not employ assistants).
- 2.3.3 Services have been given grades based on the findings at each evaluation and the written reports and grades are made public via the Care Inspectorate's website. It should be noted that these grades are not linked to the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare.

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 45 Day Care services across Perth and Kinross have been inspected by the Care Inspectorate since the beginning of the financial year 2019/20.

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.

Table 1: Number of Day Care of Children evaluations received in PKC from 2019/20 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	21	7	6	7	41
Good	17	18	10	7	52
Satisfactory	5	3	4	8	20
Weak	1	1	1	4	7
Unsatisfactory	0	0	0	0	0
Total	44	29	21	26	120

3.1.3 There is an expectation that ELC 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.

3.2 Key Question 5 Evaluations: How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?

3.2.1 Within Perth and Kinross, a total of 8 evaluations have been undertaken and published³ by the Care Inspectorate since July 2020. Five funded providers and three local authority nurseries have been evaluated since the beginning of academic session 2020/21. From an overall total of 24 individual indicators evaluated, 2 were deemed ‘weak’, 5 were deemed ‘adequate’, 8 received ‘good’ evaluations and 9 received ‘very good’ evaluations.

3.2.2 Of the reports, two require to be reported as an exception (where any grading has been awarded an overall evaluation of unsatisfactory, weak or excellent). Milnathort Primary School Nursery and Morrison’s Academy Nursery were awarded an overall ‘weak’ evaluation and copies of the Care Inspectorate reports are included in Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 respectively.

3.2.3 Table 2 below gives a summary of the grades for each focus area for all funded providers and nursery evaluations.

³ As at 3 September 2021

Table 2: Number of Perth and Kinross Key Question 5 evaluations received from July 2020 to date

Evaluation	5.1 Children's health and well-being are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19	5.2 Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff	5.3 Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19	All	%
Excellent	-	-	-	-	-
Very Good	4	2	3	9	38%
Good	2	4	2	8	33%
Adequate	2	2	1	5	21%
Weak	-	-	2	2	8%
Unsatisfactory	-	-	-	-	-
Total	8	8	8	24	

3.2.4 Since July 2020, across Scotland, a total of 207 childminding and daycare of childcare services have been evaluated and reports published⁴ under Key Question 5 by the Care Inspectorate. Evaluation statistics are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Number of evaluations published from July 2020 to date for Key Question 5 across Scotland

Evaluation	Overall	%
Excellent	0	-
Very Good	43	21%
Good	69	33%
Adequate	70	34%
Weak	21	10%
Unsatisfactory	4	2%
Total	207	

3.2.5 For Perth and Kinross inspections of Key Question 5 evaluated to date, 71% were graded as Good or better. This compares favourably with the national average figure of 54% for all of this type across Scotland. The smaller sample in Perth and Kinross means that some caution is required in making this comparison.

3.2.6 Where Nurseries have not received grades of good or better, the Early Years Team support the setting's management to create an action plan to ensure that any recommendations and requirements that have been identified within the report are fully considered. Central Early Years staff visit each setting to meet and discuss progress towards these targets ensuring the appropriate support is offered.

⁴ As at 3 September 2021

3.2.7 For Milnathort Primary School Nursery, two requirements were set out by the Care Inspectorate. An update on each is provided below:

Requirement and Timescale	Response/Update
<p>1. To ensure that children's care and wellbeing needs are met, and they get the right support at the right time, the provider must ensure that staff are deployed effectively throughout the day. This must be achieved by: 31 May 2021.</p> <p>This requirement was put in place because the Care Inspectorate did not deem that sufficient staff were in place over the lunchtime period.</p>	<p>Staff now have a clear process and procedures in place with a priority over lunchtime. This was actioned immediately and before the required timescale.</p>
<p>2. To ensure improvements are made that have a positive impact on the outcomes for children, the provider must ensure effective and robust quality assurance processes are developed and implemented. This must be achieved by: 15 June 2021.</p> <p>This requirement was put in place as there was a need for consistent application of a more robust quality assurance programme within the Nursery.</p>	<p>A quality assurance calendar has been further developed and implemented and will continue to be supported by the Early Years Team during session 2021/22 in collaboration with the new Headteacher. The required timescale was met.</p>

3.2.8 For Morrison's Academy Nursery, two requirements were set out by the Care Inspectorate. An update on each is provided below:

Requirement and Timescale	Response/Update
<p>1. In order to keep children safe and benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, the provider must ensure effective and robust quality assurance processes are developed and implemented. To be achieved by: 30 September 2021.</p> <p>This requirement was put in place to ensure that the quality assurance programme was specific to the Nursery.</p>	<p>A quality assurance programme has been further developed and will be implemented during session 2021/22 by the new head of Nursery. This will be progressed with the support of the Early Years Team.</p>

2. In order to ensure children are kept safe, the provider must ensure that only staff who are appropriately registered with a professional body carry out work in the service in a post for which registration is required. To be achieved by:
25 June 2021.

This requirement was put in place as one member of staff's registration had lapsed.

Staff were all registered within the agreed timescale and a process is in place to ensure this is checked regularly.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Inspection reports provide further information on the standards and quality in our nurseries. This report sets out the outcomes of Care Inspectorate reports of ELC settings inspected and published since 4 November 2020.
- 4.2 It is recommended that the Executive Sub-Committee of Lifelong Learning 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)	21 October 2021

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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 Objective No (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 (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 (n/a)

Workforce

2.2 Not applicable (n/a)

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 Not applicable (n/a)

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 (n/a)

Legal and Governance

3.4 Not applicable (n/a)

3.5 Not applicable (n/a)

Risk

3.6 Not applicable (n/a)

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 (n/a)

5. Communication

5.1 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 Perth and Kinross Council will also be reported to parents and stakeholders via the settings own reporting processes.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No following 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 – Thrive Childcare and Education Corner House
Appendix 3 - Perth College Nursery
Appendix 4 - Milnathort Primary School Nursery
Appendix 5 - Morrison's Academy Nursery