



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE 6 OCTOBER 2021**

**SUBJECT: MORAY EDUCATION EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To update Committee on the Improvement of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) services across Moray as assessed by Care Inspectorate under [Key Question 5](#) – Operating an early learning and childcare setting (including out of school care and childminders) during COVID-19.
- 1.2 To update Committee on progress to meet the National Standards including scrutiny activity during COVID-19 pandemic and to highlight future plans to support the ELC service further in improvement.
- 1.3 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section III (D) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to all the functions of the Council as an Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- i) **consider and note the progress to meet the National Standard in ELC;**
- ii) **consider and note the interim inspection process from Care Inspectorate; and**
- iii) **note that plans are in place to further support those settings who are still not meeting the standards.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Care Inspectorate carries out inspections of care services, including day care of children's services. Providers are inspected against the National Care Standards and a Framework of Quality Themes and Statements. All of our ELC services across Moray are expected to meet National Care Standards.

To meet the National Standard ELC services have to achieve grade 4 (good) or above in each of the Quality themes.

- 3.2 In Moray we have 62 ELC services of which 24 are Local Authority and the remainder are Private funded settings run in Partnership with the local authority.
- 3.3 At the meeting of Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee on 23 September 2020 an information report was provided for Members which detailed that at the time of the repurposing of scrutiny there were 9 ELC services in Moray not meeting the National Standard.
- 3.4 COVID-19 led to the first lockdown of Moray ELC's in March 2020 to June 2020 (Session 2019/2020). As a result, Care Inspectorate and HMiE paused all scrutiny visits.
- 3.5 Care Inspectorate recognised the need to maintain quality and repurposed their scrutiny in the form of an audit tool entitled [Key Question 5](#) – Operating an early learning and childcare setting (including out of school care and childminders) during COVID-19.
- 3.6 Of the 9 ELC services previously reported as not meeting National Standards, under the quality themes 8 of them received scrutiny under Key Question 5. They are;

Pilmuir Nursery, Forres
Spring Nursery, Kinloss
Kinloss Nursery, Kinloss
Keith Play Centre, Keith
St Sylvesters Nursery, Elgin
Stramash Nursery, Elgin
Rainbow Castle Nursery, Elgin
Ark Childcare, Elgin

- 3.7 All eight services have been graded using the audit tool entitled [Key Question 5](#) – Operating an early learning and childcare setting (including out of school care and childminders) during COVID-19. The settings all achieved grade 4 or higher.
- 3.8 The remaining service that was previously not meeting the National Standard was Mortlach Nursery, Dufftown. On 10 March 2020, prior to COVID-19 scrutiny, Care Inspectorate issued a final report for this service. The grades were good across all four quality themes.
- 3.9 Each of these 9 services received enhanced support from Continuous Improvement Officers (CIO's), Teaching and Learning Field Officers, Early Intervention Field Officers and Early Years Officers. The growth of the ELC central team, along with relational working, training and virtual supports has impacted on the improvement of recent grades.

- 3.10 The CIO's have been working East and West to ensure consistency of quality is maintained whilst also supporting and line managing the local authority nursery managers due to the pressures the peripatetic role is presenting.
- 3.11 The Teaching and Learning (T&L) Field Officers have tailored their support to the needs of individual services particularly focussing on Quality Observations and Interactions – as advocated in our recently endorsed Play Strategy document. The T&L Officers have supported services with the use of progressions in Literacy and Numeracy for pre-school children. This provides a clear indication for Primary 1 colleagues of progress of learning to date and how this can be supported to continue to improve attainment.
- 3.12 The Early Intervention (EI) Field Officers have been working closely with settings to support the staged intervention process and ensuring needs of children are met across the Early Level, including transition into Primary 1. Early Intervention Field Officers have worked closely with Education Support Officers (Additional Support Needs) to develop a training package for Early Level colleagues, which has further reinforced the improvement of ELC services. This training package includes work on Learner Profiles to support transitions and ensure transparency of need across the Early Level.
- 3.13 The support from both Early Intervention and Teaching and Learning Officers has been recognised by ELC services as a positive move to help them improve. Primary colleagues across the Early Level have collaborated with ELC colleagues to ensure a consistent approach to transition and this will continue to develop over the remainder of this academic year. The transition work recognises the 2-18 journey and links to attainment.
- 3.14 The overall improvement reflects positively on the ELC expansion and the investment that has been made. The increased uptake of the 1140 hours has allowed practitioners to work closely with families to fully understand their needs.
- 3.15 The ELC team are cognisant that we need to continue this improvement and ensure, now that standard scrutiny from Care Inspectorate has resumed, we continue to support services to achieve grade 4 and above across all four quality themes.
- 3.16 Of the 8 services scrutinised under Key Question 5 Stramash challenged the Care Inspectorate around their previous grades from November 2019 and were successful in having all four quality areas improved as per the table below;

Quality theme	2019	2021
Care and Support	3 – adequate	5 – very good
Environment	3 – adequate	4 – good
Staffing	3 – adequate	4 – good
Management and Leadership	2 - weak	4- good

- 3.15 The summary of inspection findings for all 8 services is contained in **Appendix 1.**

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

This report relates the priority 'Provide a sustainable education service aiming for excellence' from the Corporate Plan and to 'Building a better future for our children and young people in Moray' from the LOIP.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Care Inspectorate inspects all registered services regulated under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, which includes nursery classes and playgroups.

The authority has a duty to provide a quality early learning and childcare place for every 3 and 4 year old whose parents wish it and for eligible 2 year olds.

(c) Financial implications

None arising directly from the report.

(d) Risk Implications

That ELC services fail to make improvements outlined by Care Inspectorate and therefore breach contractual obligations with Moray Council by not meeting National Standard.

The pressure on our peripatetic managers given the extensive support required for year round settings could impact negatively on ability to lead improvement.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform Council on performance.

(h) Consultations

Head of Education (Chief Education Officer), Senior Project Manager ELC, Continuous Improvement Officer (West), Continuous Improvement Officer (East) and Principal Teacher Early Years Education Service, Human Resources Manager, Equal Opportunities Manager and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 That Council scrutinises and notes the contents of this report.

Author of Report: Hazel Sly, Early Years' Service Manager

Background Papers: SPMAN-1315769894-154 and
SPMAN-1315769894-155