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**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON 26 JANUARY 2022**

**SUBJECT: INFORMATION REPORT: EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION  
OF ST SYLVESTER'S NURSERY, ELGIN**

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

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform and note the progress made at St Sylvester's nursery, an Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting in Moray, following an inspection revisit in October 2021 by Education Scotland.
- 1.2 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 the Committee scrutinises and notes the content of this report.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 When a setting is inspected by Education Scotland a report is published (by Education Scotland) which gives commentary on the settings performance. Where Education Scotland are not confident that the setting has the capacity to continue to improve they will make a return visit within a designated timescale, in connection with the original inspection.
- 3.2 In October 2017 and, as previously reported to Children and Young People's Services Committee on 3 April 2019, paragraph 16 of the minute, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited St Sylvester's Nursery for two days. During the visit, Education Scotland inspectors talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the Nursery Manager and staff. Education Scotland gathered evidence to enable them to evaluate aspects of the quality of leadership and children's achievements. A report on Education Scotland's findings from their visit was subsequently published in December 2017.

- 3.3 The Education Scotland Inspection team at that time used selected Quality Indicators (QIs) from “How good is our early learning and childcare” (HGIOELC), rated using the six-point scale. These are:
- QI 1.3 Leadership of Change
  - QI 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways
  - QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- 3.4 A further QI was chosen by the nursery, in the case of St Sylvester’s it was QI 2.7, Partnerships. The inspectors had a focus on safeguarding as is the case in every inspection. These were not graded.
- 3.5 In October 2017, St Sylvester’s Nursery were rated as weak for QI 1.3, 2.2 and QI 2.3. Education Scotland liaised with Moray Council thereafter regarding the setting’s capacity to improve and intimated their intention to carry out a further inspection of the setting in discussion with Moray Council.
- 3.6 Education Scotland returned to inspect St Sylvester’s Nursery in November 2018. At this time the setting was receiving support from the Early Years Field Officer however it was noted that there was not substantial progress made from the October 2017 inspection.
- 3.7 Following the November 2018 inspection intensive ongoing support from local authority officers was provided to include development of the quality of learning and teaching and the environment.
- 3.8 Education Scotland returned to inspection St Sylvester’s Nursery in October 2019. The inspection findings indicated that St Sylvesters had some capacity to continue to improve however Education Scotland would make a further return visit within a year of their report being published in January 2020.
- 3.9 Following the October 2019 inspection the intensive support from local authority officers continued until 4 March 2020 when the COVID pandemic meant the service had to close for lockdown.
- 3.10 During the period of closure St Sylvester’s Nursery team continued to engage with children and families, through the virtual world, with opportunities for online play and learning as noted in the summary report contained in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.11 In August 2020 St Sylvester’s Nursery re-opened under the National Guidance; [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): early learning and childcare services guidance](#).
- 3.12 Subsequently, in August 2020, the local authority Early Intervention Teacher for Elgin Academy Associated Schools Group (ASG) ensured that a robust support programme was developed, working within the COVID-19 guidance.
- 3.13 During this period, whilst working under the National COVID-19 Guidelines, further support was offered through telephone and email by the Continuous Improvement Officer (West) and the Teaching and Learning Teacher for Elgin Academy ASG.

- 3.14 In October 2020 the Teaching and Learning Teacher was able to resume intensive support with a focus on key areas for improvement including observations, interactions and self-evaluation.
- 3.15 Throughout the period of scrutiny, from 2017, St Sylvester's Nursery was run and managed by Care and Learning Alliance (CALA) and supported by a peripatetic manager.
- 3.16 In February 2021 St Sylvester's Committee chair and staff team recognised that CALA were no longer required and the Nursery successfully appointed a full time, permanent manager.
- 3.17 Following the change of management St Sylvester's Nursery was scrutinised on 1 June 2021 by Care Inspectorate under [Key Question 5: Operating an Early Learning and Childcare Setting during COVID-19](#).
- 3.18 The scrutiny resulted in an overall grading of Good (4) as noted in **Appendix 2**.
- 3.19 In August 2021 Education Scotland advised that scrutiny of all services would resume and that St Sylvester's Nursery would be included due to the ongoing engagement.
- 3.20 Education Scotland returned to St Sylvester's Nursery on 6 October 2021 as part of blended scrutiny within COVID 19 guidelines. Two inspectors supported the process both face to face and virtually.
- 3.21 The inspection findings, noted in **Appendix 1**, highlighted that St Sylvester's Nursery have improved and that there will be no further requirements for additional visits.

#### **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**

This report relates to Section 66 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, which concerns the inspection of educational establishments.

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**

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

**(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) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

There are no climate change or biodiversity implications arising directly from this report.

**(i) Consultations**

Head of Education (Chief Education Officer), 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: <https://education.gov.scot/media/4v3hddqg/stsylvestersnursery-fv-letter-7-12-21.pdf>

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