



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023**

**SUBJECT: EDUCATION SCOTLAND CONTINUING ENGAGEMENT
PROGRESS REPORT: MILLBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the outcomes of the recently published report on a Moray school following scrutiny activity by Education Scotland.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee 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. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) scrutinise and note the contents of this report and Education Scotland continuing engagement findings following local authority reporting;**
- (ii) note that following review of evidence, Education Scotland will publish no further reports in relation to the October 2018 inspection of Millbank Primary School, where HM Inspectors are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve; and**
- (iii) commend senior leaders and staff for positive improvements secured over time for learners and the wider school community including during the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in a very favourable end inspection outcome with considerable progress noted by HM Inspectors**

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 When a school is inspected by Education Scotland or where continuing engagement visits are subsequently undertaken by Education Scotland, a report is published which gives commentary on the school's performance. Education Scotland provide such reports in the form of a parent/carer letter published on their website. Reports on Education Scotland activities are reported regularly to Committee, where possible at the first available opportunity following publication.

3.2 Millbank Primary School was first inspected by Education Scotland HMIE in October 2018 using [How Good Is Our School? version 4 Quality Indicator framework](#), with letter to parents published in February 2019. At that time, the school received the following evaluations against Education Scotland [six-point scale](#):

| | |
|---|--------------|
| QI 1.3 Leadership of Change | Satisfactory |
| QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment | Satisfactory |
| QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion | Weak |
| QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement | Weak |

3.3 During this visit and in the parent letter following, a number of key strengths were highlighted:

- Relationships between staff and children resulting in children who are happy, well-behaved and polite. They have pride in their school, are willing to learn and ready to take on more responsibility;
- The work of the headteacher in consulting children, families and staff to develop the school's values, vision and aims. This has led to the headteacher and staff creating a positive school culture.

3.4 Following discussion with staff and The Moray Council, the following areas for improvement were also agreed at that time:

- Develop more strategic leadership at all levels within the school and in doing so strengthen the use of self-evaluation processes which leads to an increased rate of change and improved outcomes for all children;
- Staff should work collaboratively to ensure children experience consistently high quality learning, teaching and assessment which provides an appropriate level of pace and challenge in children's learning. Children should be given opportunities to lead their own learning and be more involved in evaluating their own progress and next steps;
- Raise attainment for all children. Approaches to raising attainment should include making effective use of relevant data and more robust tracking and monitoring of children's progress in learning and achievement;
- Implement revised approaches to health and wellbeing and inclusion to better support children's wellbeing and progress. In doing so, ensure all

staff and children know, understand and use the wellbeing indicators as an integral feature of school life;

- Develop progressive curriculum pathways for all curriculum areas which are relevant to the school's context, and which offer children opportunities to develop appropriate knowledge and skills.

- 3.5 Continuing engagement visits followed in February 2020 (parent letter published: July 2020) and November 2021 (parent letter published: February 2022), highlighting strengths and progress made against areas outlined in para 3.4 as well as areas for further development. A Moray Council Quality Improvement Manager joined the Education Scotland HMI team in November 2021 as part of the scrutiny visit.
- 3.6 In February 2022, Education Scotland noted from the November 2021 inspection that the school had understandably been responding to the challenges resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst these had a significant impact on the work of the school, there had been notable improvements under the direction of the current leadership team. Senior leaders and staff had implemented well-considered plans to support recovery. They had also increased the pace of change in taking forward areas for improvement from the original inspection.
- 3.7 While notable progress had been made, Education Scotland also recognised that as a result of the pandemic, the school needed more time to realise fully the impact of recently implemented strategies on children's achievement and attainment. As a result, Education Scotland requested that Moray Education provided them with further information about the school's progress in continuing to raise attainment for all children within one year of the publication of their February 2022 letter. Education Scotland continued to work together with local authority officers to agree what would happen next.
- 3.8 On the request of the Head of Education (Chief Education Officer), a local authority scrutiny and review visit leading to production of a local authority report was undertaken in mid-December 2022 as requested by Education Scotland HM Inspectors in their February 2022 letter, where further information in relation to the school's progress in continuing to raise attainment for all children was requested by Education Scotland HMI as noted in para 3.7.
- 3.9 Following local authority report visit to Millbank Primary School in December 2022 it was noted that good progress continued to be made following the original inspection in 2018 and subsequent continuing engagement visits in 2019 and 2021.
- 3.10 Response to Covid-19 and return to school following both periods of lockdown ensured learners were supported to engage and participate in learning – both Remote Learning and subsequent in-school learning – where strong wellbeing supports have been enacted in an equitable manner for all children and families. Positive change has resulted to school ethos, quality of learner's experiences, leadership at all levels, learning and teaching.

- 3.11 Senior leaders, working with staff and a range of partners are well placed to plan, analyse and track interventions. The school have improved mechanisms in order to identify attainment gaps with planned interventions in place and under development in order to address these gaps. Clear actions for improvement have been acted upon with next steps identified for further improvements over time.
- 3.12 Following December 2022 local authority report visit, officers reported confidence that Millbank Primary School has capacity for continued improvement with ongoing support and challenge from the local authority. This would continue to be managed at pace under the leadership of the Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher and in collaboration with all staff.
- 3.13 In March 2023, Education Scotland Head of Scrutiny met with local authority officers in order to review local authority report findings and evidence. Following review, Education Scotland are now confident Millbank Primary School has the capacity to continue to improve and they will publish no further reports in relation to the 2019 Education Scotland inspection report.
- 3.14 Moray Education will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its normal arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service and continue to work with the school in order to ensure progress continues.
- 3.15 The Education Scotland HM Inspectors progress report letter published in May 2023 following local authority visit in December 2022 and Education Scotland scrutiny meeting in March 2023 is contained within **Appendix 1**.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

Reflective of priorities within the Corporate Plan with particular regard to (3) provide a sustainable education service aiming for excellence and (4) day to day service delivery in line with council values of ambitious, improving and responsive. With regards to the 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan LOIP), (2) building a better future for our children and young people in Moray through equity of learning experience offered across our schools; supporting ambitious and confident children, able to reach their full potential.

b) Policy and Legal

It is the duty of the council to secure improvement and the quality of school education which is provided in schools managed by Head Teachers and to raise standards of education (Section 8 of Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000).

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

c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this 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

None.

g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality/Socio Economic Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform Committee on school performance following external scrutiny/validation activity.

h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

No climate change or biodiversity implications have been determined due to the scrutiny based nature of activities reported and no findings related to such implications contained herein.

i) Consultations

Senior Officers in Education, Communities and Organisational Development, Equal Opportunities Officer, Human Resources Manager, 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 Committee is invited to scrutinise and note the contents of this report, including very positive progress made by Millbank Primary School since initial inspection in October 2018. HM inspectors through continuing engagement visits following in February 2019 and November 2021 noted considerable progress underway during the Covid-19 pandemic including two extended periods of national lockdown, with subsequent local authority report visit in December 2022 reporting further progress and positive impact of school improvement activities.

5.2 Millbank Primary School staff are committed to working in support of all of their children and families, in partnership across their wider school community in order to lead and implement changes required for maximising pupil successes and achievements. Committee is further invited to commend the work of the Senior Leadership Team and staff across the school in work undertaken to date, leading to confidence by HM Inspectors and Moray Education in their capacity to improve, as they continue on their school improvement journey.

Author of Report: Stewart McLauchlan, Quality Improvement Manager
Background Papers: [Millbank Primary School Progress Report – May 2023](#)
[Millbank Primary School Local Authority Report](#)
[How good is our school? 4th edition](#)
[Education Scotland six-point scale](#)
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