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**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON 9 MARCH 2022**

**SUBJECT: INFORMATION REPORT: EDUCATION SCOTLAND PROGRESS  
VISIT TO ST THOMAS RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the key findings and outcomes following Education Scotland progress visit to St Thomas RC Primary School in November 2021.
- 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. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 In February 2020 – with subsequent report publication in July 2020 – St Thomas RC Primary School was inspected by Education Scotland. During this initial visit, a team of Education Scotland's Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) talked to parents/carers and children, worked closely with the Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and staff. Inspection activities included visits to lessons, focus group discussions and review of school evidence and attainment data.
- 2.3 St Thomas RC Primary School was subject to a full model inspection. Education Scotland HMIE used selected Quality Indicators (QIs) from "How Good Is Our School? 4<sup>th</sup> edition" (HGIOS4), rated using the six-point evaluation scale.

2.4 Education Scotland focus QIs for the Secondary full-model inspection where six-point scale evaluations are arrived at are:

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

There is further focus on Empowerment using a theme identified by the school with overall evaluative commentary provided (no evaluative grading is arrived at for this focus area).

2.5 In addition, full model inspections incorporate themes from other QIs to capture the evidence needed to promote improvement and provide evidence to inform national policy development. These themes which are also ungraded are:

- QI 2.2 Curriculum (Learning Pathways theme)
- QI 2.7 Partnerships (impact of Parental Engagement)

Inspections also have focus on safeguarding with further narrative provided on findings and any recommendations resulting.

2.6 A report to parents and carers following the inspection takes the form of a short letter. It highlights strengths and aspects for development. It includes a table indicating the QI evaluations against the six-point scale.

The following evaluative gradings were achieved by St Thomas RC Primary School in February 2020:

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

2.7 As a result of inspection findings, Education Scotland HMIE identified that the school required additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. However, due to disruption caused by the Coronavirus pandemic, Education Scotland paused all inspection activities from March 2020.

2.8 In October 2021, notification was received from Education Scotland HMIE that scrutiny activities and visits would recommence to some schools and early learning and childcare setting across Scotland. Those schools and settings identified by Education Scotland HMIE were those where previous visits as outlined in section 2.7 above required further engagement, pre-pandemic.

2.9 Planning and discussion between Education Scotland HMIE, the school and local authority followed in October 2021 and led to Education Scotland HMIE working in partnership with Moray Education, carrying out a visit to the school in November 2021.

- 2.10 Education Scotland HMIE worked closely with Moray Education and the Primary Advisor (PA) who joined with the Education Scotland team on their visit activities, talking to parents/carers of children and working closely with the Senior Leadership Team and staff. Visit activities also included virtual and face-to-face presentations and discussions with key staff, lesson visits, virtual and face-to-face focus group discussions with a range of stakeholders, review of school evidence and attainment data analysis.
- 2.11 The engagement visit and associated activities also helped Education Scotland HMIE learn more about how young people and their families have been supported through the Covid-19 pandemic by the school. Approaches that have worked well to support young people's health and wellbeing, learning and progress were further shared. Discussions with the Head Teacher and PA focussed in on the school's progress in taking forwards the key recommendations from original inspection.
- 2.12 Following November 2021 Education Scotland HMIE visit and associated activities, Education Scotland HMIE highlight that St Thomas RC Primary School has responded to the challenges resulting from Covid-19 which have had a significant impact on the work of the school, with staff implementing plans to support recovery.
- 2.13 Education Scotland highlight that staff have worked hard and been effective in implementing plans to support recovery.
- 2.14 Under the clear leadership and direction of the Head Teacher, staff have addressed successfully the recommendations from the original inspection. As a result, Education Scotland HMIE will make no more visits to the school in connection with the original inspection.
- 2.15 The Council will continue to inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of local authority schools.
- 2.16 The Education Scotland HMIE visit letter published in January 2022 following visit in November 2021 is contained within **Appendix 1**.

### **3. 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.

**(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 etc 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**

There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

**(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, Paul Connor, Principal Accountant, the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Human Resources Manager, the Head Teacher (St Thomas RC Primary School) and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

**3. CONCLUSION**

**3.1 That Committee scrutinises and notes the contents of this report and;**

**3.2 That Committee acknowledges work undertaken by the school during the Covid-19 pandemic to support young people's wellbeing and learning while also progressing key recommendations from February 2020 inspection.**

Author of Report: Stewart McLauchlan, Quality Improvement Manager

Background Papers:

[Education Scotland HMIE Visit Letter \(January 2022\)](#)

[Education Scotland HMIE Inspection Report \(July 2020\)](#)

[How Good Is Our School? 4<sup>th</sup> edition](#)

[Education Scotland six-point scale](#)

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