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

**SUBJECT: EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION OF FORRES ACADEMY**

**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 inspection 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 findings of Education Scotland following their inspection visit; and**
- (ii) **note that following a future revisit from Education Scotland (anticipated April 2024), a further paper will be brought to Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee in order to provide update on school progress with improvements required.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 When a school is inspected by Education Scotland and/or the Care Inspectorate a report is published which gives commentary on the school's performance. These reports are presented regularly to Committee, where possible at the first available opportunity after publication.

3.2 In January 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Forres Academy. During their visit, Education Scotland inspectors talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, teaching and wider support staff. Forres Academy was subject to a full inspection model visit spanning over five days in total.

3.3 The Education Scotland Inspection team use selected Quality Indicators (QIs) from "[How good is our school? 4th edition](#)" (HGIOS4), rated using Education Scotland's [six-point scale](#).

3.4 Education Scotland focus QIs for the Secondary school (full inspection model inspection) are:

QI 1.3 Leadership of Change

QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

QI 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

QI 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion

3.5 Inspectors make evaluations of these QIs using the six-point scale. The first three of these QIs feed directly into the evidence base for the National Improvement Framework.

3.6 Full establishment inspections also include focus on Safeguarding and themes from other QIs to ensure Inspectors continue to capture the evidence needed to promote improvement and provide evidence to inform national policy development. These are not assigned a rating and are:

QI 2.2 Curriculum (Learning Pathways theme)

QI 2.7 Partnerships (Partnerships in evaluating the impact of parental engagement)

3.7 Following ongoing dialogue between Education Scotland and the local authority, Education Scotland published Forres Academy's Inspection Report on 25 April 2023 with the following gradings:

QI 1.3 Leadership of Change	Weak
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

3.8 The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- The members of staff, who are working in a way that helps young people to feel included and valued;
- The clubs and activities on offer to young people, which help them to develop a range of skills. The provision at the local college, which helps young people to achieve positive outcomes and skills for life and work.

- 3.9 The inspection team agreed the following areas for improvement with the Headteacher and Moray Education:
- Improve the strategic leadership of change and improvement across all areas of the school. Leadership at all levels needs to be focussed on improving outcomes for learners;
  - Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers should focus on meeting the needs of individual learners. Class lessons need to be more engaging and young people should be involved in leading their learning;
  - Improve approaches to supporting young people's learning and wellbeing. This includes the planning and review of supports for learning. Young people and their parents should be fully involved in decisions that affect them;
  - Improve attainment for young people from S1 to S6. Teachers should track progress at all stages and make sure learner's progress is understood by young people and their parents.
- 3.10 The Education Scotland Inspection report and summary of inspection findings for the school can be viewed at the links noted. This is the information that is provided to parents and the school showing the findings of Education Scotland:
- [Inspection Report](#) (the brief letter to parents/carers of the school, outlining the key strengths, areas for improvement and evaluation of key QIs using Education Scotland's six-point scale, following inspection visit);
  - [Summarised Inspection Findings](#) (an extended summary report providing more detailed evaluative findings on each QI following inspection visit, further to the Inspection Report, used to guide improvement activities);
  - [Additional Inspection Evidence](#) (containing pre-inspection questionnaire summary results for questionnaires issued to key stakeholders).
- 3.11 Following inspection, Education Scotland have advised that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. Education Scotland will liaise with Moray Council regarding the school's capacity to improve.
- 3.12 Education Scotland will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within one year of the publication of the inspection letter (anticipated on or around April 2024). Education Scotland will discuss with Moray Council the details of this inspection and when they return to inspect the school they will once again write to parents/carers informing them of the progress the school has made.
- 3.13 As a result of inspection outcomes, an action plan was developed in order to frame key actions for improvement and structure reporting on progress and impact of changes now required. This was initiated following review of the inspection findings.

- 3.14 Interim supports were also put in place in order to support initial improvements and add capacity in support of leadership of change required. This included support from a Quality Improvement Officer in order to release senior leaders to work on initial improvement work, on-site support from the Education Support Officer (ASN) due to absence of the Principal Teachers of Support for Learning/Additional Support Needs and additional consultancy support from a senior leader in another Moray secondary school, in relation to wellbeing and pupil support developments.
- 3.15 An experienced Head Teacher from a neighbouring local authority is providing additional support as a critical friend for school improvement activities, ensuring key actions for improvement are identified and will lead to specific and measurable outcomes. The school has appointed an additional Acting Depute Head Teacher (long term temporary) using devolved budget in order to support identified areas for improvement now required and in order to add further senior leadership team capacity.
- 3.16 Following HM Inspectors visit to Forres Academy, the Head Teacher accepts the major challenge ahead with a number of identified priorities and is committed to the extensive improvement agenda working with her leadership team, the school community and officers. A rigorous Improvement Plan has been developed to address areas for improvement and will be monitored closely. Since the inspection, the school has posted the strongest School Leaver destinations over a 5 year trend, above Moray and National comparators. There has also been appointment of a number of new staff to start in August, providing a real sense of opportunity for the session ahead. Positive work with targeted groups recognised by HM Inspectors continues, including additional support for pupils from armed forces backgrounds.
- 3.17 The Quality Improvement Manager linked with the school will continue to provide support and monitor improvements underway, with further oversight from the Head of Education (Chief Education Officer). Where required, further actions will be taken in order to ensure the school achieves key milestones identified as it progresses on its improvement journey.
- 3.18 The Education Scotland HMIE visit letter published in April 2023 following the visit in January 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 Standard in Scotland 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. Financial implications may arise in the event further supports are required over time in order to secure key improvements required over time.

**d) Risk Implications**

There are no direct 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, further noting that an action plan is in place with key improvement priorities underway in relation to the January 2023 inspection of Forres Academy. Local authority support and challenge of school improvement activities is ongoing, with revisit by HM Inspectors anticipated in April 2024 and further report to committee on school progress and outcomes to follow thereafter.**

Author of Report: Stewart McLauchlan, Quality Improvement Manager  
Background Papers: [Inspection Report](#)  
[Summarised Inspection Findings](#)  
[Additional Inspection Evidence](#)  
[How good is our school? 4th edition](#)  
[Education Scotland six-point scale](#)  
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