

**INSPECTION OF THE EDUCATION FUNCTIONS OF ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
(INEA)**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The main purpose of this report is to advise Community Services Committee of the planned inspection of the Education functions of Argyll and Bute Council.
- 1.2 Education Scotland have notified the Chief Executive of the Council that an announced inspection of the Education Services by Education Scotland will commence the week beginning 19th September 2016, with an anticipated conclusion with the publication of a public report by the end of November 2016.
- 1.3 Section 9 of the 'Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000' charges Education Scotland (formerly HM Inspectorate of Education) on behalf of the Scottish Ministers, to provide an external evaluation of the effectiveness of the local authority in its quality assurance of educational provision within the Council and of its support to schools in improving the quality of Education.
- 1.4 Evaluations are based on a framework of quality indicators (published in Quality Management in Education 2), which embody the Government's policy on Best Value. The framework is based on six high level questions which can be answered by evaluating the quality of education across ten Key areas. The revised version of QMIE 2 (revised June 2016) will be used throughout the inspection.

The quality indicators are:

What key outcomes have we achieved?

Key Area 1 – Key Performance outcomes

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

Key Area 2 – Impact on service users

Key Area 3 – Impact on staff

Key Area 4 – Impact on the community

How good is our delivery of the education processes?

Key Area 5 – Delivery of the education processes

How good is our management?

Key Area 6 – Policy development and planning

Key Area 7 - Management and support of staff

Key Area 8 - Partnerships and resources

How good is our leadership?

Key Area 9 – Leadership

What is our capacity for improvement?

Key Area 10 – Capacity for improvement

- 1.5 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 also provides a framework for improvement planning that requires education authorities to set out and report on improvement objectives related to the National Performance Framework (NPF), national priorities and associated measures of performance

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- Note the proposed INEA inspection of the Education Services of Argyll and Bute Council;
- Note the timetable associated with the inspection and
- Request the Executive Director of Community Service brings a report confirming the outcome of the inspection to a future meeting of the Community Services Committee.

**INSPECTION OF THE EDUCATION FUNCTIONS OF ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
(INEA)**

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The main purpose of this report is to advise the Community Services Committee of the planned inspection of the Education functions of the Council.
- 3.2 Education Scotland have notified the Chief Executive that an announced inspection of the Education Services by Education Scotland will commence the week beginning 19th September 2016, with an anticipated conclusion with report publication by the end of November 2016.
- 3.3 The *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000* places a duty on education authorities to provide children and young people with school education and (in terms of raising standards) requires authorities to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of that school education. The Act also places a duty on HM Inspectors to provide external evaluation of the effectiveness and performance of education authorities in relation to their education functions.
- 3.4 HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspected the education functions (INEA) of each local authority in Scotland between 2000 and 2005. These inspections used *Quality Improvement in Education (QMIE)*, published in 2000. A second cycle of local authority inspections (INEA 2) began in 2006. These were more streamlined and had a greater emphasis on outcomes and leadership. These inspections used the quality indicators in *Quality Improvement in Education 2 (QMIE2)*, published in 2006. Around half of Scotland's 32 authorities were inspected in this way.
- 3.5 Following the publication of the Crerar Review (*The Report of the Independent Review of Regulation, Audit, Inspection and Complaints Handling of Public Services in Scotland*) in 2007, HMIE put in place a process of validated self-evaluation (VSE). This was a voluntary process which aimed to support and challenge education authorities to improve the quality of their provision and their learners' outcomes and, importantly, was not a form of scrutiny.
- 3.6 As a result of the recommendations from Crerar, Local Area Networks (LANs) representing all key national scrutiny organisations were established for each council area and a process of Shared Risk Assessment (SRA) has been in place since 2009. Audit Scotland oversees this work nationally and LANs

share evidence about each local authority, deciding on any necessary scrutiny activity depending on any areas of risk identified.

- 3.7 A Local Scrutiny Plan is published annually for each local authority area. Education Scotland plays a key role in the SRA process, using information gathered from establishment and service-level inspections as well as authority-wide data on, for example, young people's achievements.

In March 2016, the published Local Scrutiny Plan for Argyll and Bute Council indicated that a scrutiny response was required. The strategic level inspection of the education functions of the council, outlined below, constitutes this scrutiny response.

The inspection will evaluate the quality of education services using an agreed framework of quality indicators (published in **Quality Management in Education 2**), which embody the Government's policy on Best Value. The framework is based on six high level questions which can be answered by evaluating the quality of education across ten Key areas. The revised version of QMIE 2 (revised June 2016) will be used throughout the inspection.

These are:

What key outcomes have we achieved?

Key Area 1 – Key Performance outcomes

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

Key Area 2 – Impact on service users

Key Area 3 – Impact on staff

Key Area 4 – Impact on the community

How good is our delivery of the education processes?

Key Area 5 – Delivering and improving the quality of services

How good is our management?

Key Area 6 – Policy development and planning

Key Area 7 – Management and support of staff

Key Area 8 – Partnerships and resources

How good is our leadership?

Key Area 9 – Leadership

What is our capacity for improvement?

Key Area 10 – Capacity for improvement

- 3.8 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 also provides a framework for improvement planning that requires education authorities to set out and report on improvement objectives related to the **National Performance Framework (NPF)**, national priorities and associated measures of performance.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- Note the proposed INEA inspection of the Education Services of Argyll and Bute Council;
- Note the timetable associated with the inspection, and
- Request the Executive Director of Community Service brings a report confirming the outcome of the inspection to a future meeting of the Community Services Committee.

5.0 DETAIL

- 5.1 Education Scotland have allocated a team of eight inspectors to work on the inspection process led by a Managing Inspector, Mr. Alastair Brown. The Managing Inspector and the Acting Executive Director of Community Services recently met to discuss the plan for the forthcoming inspection.
- 5.2 The planned inspection footprint is anticipated to be extensive, requiring a significant level of resource both in advance and during the inspection week. The main inspection activities are as follows:
- The formal inspection will take place over the course of 1 week: 19th – 23rd September. This will include the inspection team contacting and interviewing officers of the Education Authority and elected members. They will also meet with a range of users and partners of the Education Authority.
 - The inspection will be primarily a Strategic Inspection focusing on a number of quality Indicators from QMIE2 (revised version, as previously noted):
 - 1.1 Improvements in performance;
 - 2.1 Impact on Learners (may include aspects of 3.1 Impact on Staff);
 - 5.1 Delivering and improving the quality of Education Services;
 - 9.2 Leadership and Direction, and
 - 9.4 Leadership of Change and Improvement.
- 5.3 During the course of the inspection week all eight inspectors will engage in a range of inspection activities including:
- Individual interviews with Chief Officers and their Managers, the Policy Lead for Education, Senior Elected Members, Key Strategic Partners;
 - Focus groups of staff, partners, parents and learners;
 - Observation of a number of strategic meetings;
 - Planned school/service visits;
 - Review of inspection evidence, and
 - Attendance at relevant Council meetings scheduled to take place during the course of the inspection week.

The timetable for the week of inspection is currently being prepared by the Executive Director and members of both Education Services and Community & Culture Services teams.

- 5.4 A range of preparatory work is currently underway to support the impending inspection. Both Education and the respective Officers from Communities & Culture Service are undertaking a range of activities. These include:
- The preparation of the self-evaluation position statement for submission to Education Scotland by 6th September 2016;
 - Identification of relevant supporting evidence;
 - Preparation of various communications, e.g. Committee reports, notification and advice for Head Teachers, Teachers/Staff, Members, Partners, Parent Council Chair;
 - Preparation of the inspection timetable, including co-ordination of meetings, focus groups, visits, and
 - Scheduling diary arrangements for Chief Officers, Elected Members.

5.5 The current timetable is as follows (this however may be subject to change):

- Pre inspection notification from Education Scotland 28th June 2016, initial meeting;
- Issue of inspection questionnaires to Education Services for distribution w/c 15th August 2016;
- Submission of self-evaluation summary by Education Services to Education Scotland - 6 September 2016;
- Inspection week 19th – 23rd September 2016;
- Inspection feedback to Chief Executive, Policy Lead for Education, Executive Director and Head(s) of Service week beginning 3rd October 2016;
- Draft inspection report issued to Argyll & Bute (Chief Executive) Early-Mid November 2016. Comments from the Council to Education Scotland within seven days of issue draft report and
- Inspection report publication date late November 2016.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Education Scotland will carry out an inspection of the Education functions of the Council commencing week beginning 19th of September 2016.

6.2 A report will be published by the end of November 2016.

6.3 An update will be provided at a future Community Services Committee.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

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| 7.1 | Policy | The <i>Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000</i> places a duty on education authorities to provide children and young people with school education and (in terms of raising standards) requires authorities to endeavor to secure improvement in the quality of that school education. |
| 7.2 | Financial | None |
| 7.3 | Legal Set | None |
| 7.4 | HR | Resourcing of the planned inspection presents additional, short term resource implications for the Council |
| 7.5 | Equalities | None |
| 7.6 | Risk | The evaluation of the quality of education provision by Argyll and Bute may significantly enhance or detract from the Council's reputation and attractiveness as an area to work and live in. |
| 7.7 | Customer Service | This report provides elected members with an overview of the planned evaluation of Service performance. |

Ann Marie Knowles

Acting Executive Director of Community Services

Cllr Rory Colville

Policy Lead for Education and Lifelong Learning

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For further information contact:

Anne Paterson

Acting Head of Services: Education

Tel: 01546 604333

Email: anne.paterson@argyll-bute.gov.uk