

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

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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> |   |
|            | 1.1                      | The main purpose of this report is to provide an update to Community Services Committee on the inspection of the Education functions of Argyll and Bute Council. The report presents an overview of the follow up inspection visit by Education Scotland on 20 June, as outlined in the initial inspection report published by Education Scotland on 21 March 2017.   |
|            | 1.2                      | <p>Within the conclusion of the report Education Scotland confirmed that they would provide support and monitor the council's progress towards improvement and carry out a further inspection visit within three months of the publication of the report to monitor progress.</p> <p>Education Scotland notified the Chief Executive of the Council that a further inspection visit by Education Scotland would take place on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June.</p> |
|            | 1.3                      | During the inspection visit Education Scotland talked to a number of key stakeholder groups. As a result, they were able to find out about the steps which are being taken, by the Council, to improve. This report presents a summary of the findings of Education Scotland.   |
|            | 1.4                      | It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:  |
|            |                          | a) Note the inspection report published by Education Scotland on 10 August 2017 following their further inspection of the Education functions of the Council on 20 June 2017;   |
|            |                          | b) Note the action taken by the Authority in responding to the main points for actions following the conclusion of the inspection in September 2016;  |
|            |                          | c) Note the further planned inspection of the Authority in September 2017, and  |
|            |                          | d) Request the Executive Director, Community Service to bring further reports on the progress in addressing the main points for action and the further inspection outcomes to future meetings of the Community Services Committee.  |

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| <b>2.0</b> | <b>INTRODUCTION</b>                                      |   |
|            | 2.1  | The main purpose of this report is to provide an update to Community Services Committee on the inspection of the Education functions of Argyll and Bute Council. The report presents an overview of the further inspection visit by Education Scotland on 20 June, as outlined in the initial inspection report published by Education Scotland in March 2017.  |
|            | 2.2  | Within the conclusion of the report Education Scotland confirmed that they would provide support and monitor the council's progress towards improvement and carry out a further inspection visit within three months of the publication of the report to monitor progress.  |
|            | 2.3  | Education Scotland notified the Chief Executive of the Council that the further inspection visit by two members of Education Scotland would take place on Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> June.  |
|            | 2.4  | The inspection visit was carried out by Clare Lamont, HMI and Shona Taylor, HMI (the Education Scotland Area Lead Officer (ALO) for Argyll and Bute).   |
|            | 2.5  | The visit took place over the course of one full day, and scheduled meetings took place with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chief Executive;</li> <li>• The Acting Executive Director of Community Services;</li> <li>• The Acting Head of Service: Education;</li> <li>• The Council Leader and Policy Lead for Education and Lifelong Learning;</li> <li>• An Officers' Group, and</li> <li>• A Head Teachers' Group.</li> </ul> |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>                                   |   |
|            | It is recommended that the Community Services Committee: |   |
|            | a)   | Note the inspection report published by Education Scotland on 10  |

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|            |               | August 2017 following their further inspection of the Education functions of the Council on 20 June 2017;  |
|            | b)            | Note the action taken by the Authority in responding to the main points for actions following the conclusion of the inspection in September 2016;  |
|            | c)            | Note the further planned inspection of the Authority in September 2017, and  |
|            | d)            | Request the Executive Director, Community Service to bring further reports on the progress in addressing the main points for action and the further inspection outcomes to future meetings of the Community Services Committee.  |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>DETAIL</b> |  |
|            | 4.1           | The priority for the Education Service following the conclusion of the inspection had been to retain our focus on delivering high quality services that improve outcomes for all of our children and young people. The Education Vision and Strategy: "Our Children, Their Future" is a key part of this.                          |
|            | 4.2           | Following the conclusion of the initial inspection work was undertaken by Education Services to prepare a comprehensive improvement plan (Appendix 2) to respond to the actions arising from the inspection report.  |
|            | 4.3           | The improvement plan contains key headers to allow full consideration of the improvement priorities, the relevant strategies required to achieve improvement, within agreed timescales.  |
|            | 4.4           | Following consideration and agreement of Community Services Committee, and further discussion at Council the improvement plan has been implemented and work continues by Education Services to achieve the range of actions and measures contained within the improvement plan following the conclusion of the initial inspection. |
|            | 4.5           | Regular progress update on all areas contained within the Action Plan are programmed for consideration at meetings of the Councils Strategic Management Team and Community Services Committee.   |
|            | 4.6           | A further update of the improvement plan, noting progress against each of the actions and measures was presented to members of the inspection team during their inspection visit to the Authority on 20 June 2017 (Appendix 2).  |
|            | 4.7           | A number of improvements actions have been taken by Education Services since the inspection visit in September 2016. These include:  |

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|            |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The significant work of the Service in preparing and publishing the revised Education Vision and Strategy: Our Children, Their Future, with a clear focus on ambition, excellence and equality reflecting local and national priorities;</li> <li>• A conclusion of the “tackling bureaucracy workload review” undertaken by Education Scotland in August 2016 identified the “Impact of assessment and moderation facilitators” as a key strength of the Authority;</li> <li>• The formation of a Head Teacher Advisory Group, with members appointed following consultation and discussion with all Authority Head Teachers;</li> <li>• The role of centrally employed officers have been revised to provide increased support for schools and early years settings. This includes advice in curriculum areas such as literacy, numeracy and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM);</li> <li>• The appointment of two additional Development Officers, to support the development and improvement of Literacy and Numeracy of pupils across all schools in the Authority.</li> </ul> <p>Further detail on improvement actions are contained within the improvement plan (Appendix 2) for information.</p> |
|            | 4.8  | <p>During the course of the inspection visit Education Scotland primarily focused on three key discussion points with each of the individuals/groups participating in the visit. These were:</p> <p><b>1:</b> What actions have Argyll and Bute Council taken to address the main points for action outlined in the Strategic Inspection Report of the Education Functions of the Council published on 21 March 2017?</p> <p><b>2:</b> What steps has Argyll and Bute Council taken to improve strategic leadership and direction across the education functions of the Council?</p> <p><b>3:</b> What progress has Argyll and Bute Council made in improving the levels of communication, support and challenge to its schools?</p> <p>A summary outline of progress against the key questions was prepared by Education services in consultation with members of the Management Team, Centrally Deployed Officers and Head Teachers (HT), through the HT Advisory Group. The updated document was shared with members of the Inspection Team during their visit to the Authority.</p>  |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>MAIN FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION VISIT</b> |  |

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| <p>5.1</p>        | <p>Following the one day inspection visit Education Scotland prepared and published a further inspection report (Appendix 1) which outlined the following points:</p> <p>5.1.1 The Council has formulated a detailed improvement plan outlining how it will address the five main points for action detailed in the original inspection report. The plan sets out appropriate improvement actions, progress and timescales. Inspectors noted that the council had taken prompt action to develop this plan at the conclusion of inspection activity in September 2016. It is important that members of the council and staff, at all levels, buy-in fully to the plan and work together to realise the significant improvement that is needed;</p> <p>5.1.2 The Council formally published its vision and strategy document: Our Children, Their Future (OCTF) in January 2017. Strategic leadership and direction is now more clearly, underpinned by the aspirations set out within OCTF. Inspectors noted this is beginning to bring about a common purpose across the council. Education services have strengthened the central team to support the priorities outlined in OCTF;</p> <p>5.1.3 A new Head Teacher Advisory Group, selected by and accountable to their peers, has been put in place. More time is needed to establish how members' work, as strategic leaders, will help build the capabilities of education services. Moving forward, the Council must ensure that all those with leadership responsibilities work with professionalism to build high levels of stakeholder confidence;</p> <p>5.1.4 The Council is continuing its work to improve the quality of communication across its education functions. Centrally-based Officers are beginning to have more direct and purposeful engagement with schools. Revised approaches to supporting and challenging schools are being put in place with a greater emphasis on consistency and improving outcomes for children and young people. More time is needed to see if these revised processes bring about a stronger ethos of collaboration for improvement, and</p> <p>5.1.5 Argyll and Bute Council has made some early progress since the original inspection in September 2016. Much more remains to be done.</p> |
| <p>5.2</p>        | <p>The inspection report further noted that Education Scotland, as planned, will return in September 2017 to carry out further inspection of the Education functions of the Council and report on its progress in addressing the findings of the original inspection.</p>   |
| <p><b>6.0</b></p> | <p><b>CONCLUSION</b></p>  |

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|            | 6.1                 | This reports presents an overview of the follow up inspection by Education Scotland on 20 June 2016, the final inspection outcomes as outlined in the inspection report published on 21 March 2017 and, the letter published by Education Scotland on 10 August 2017 which outlines their review during the inspection visit.               |   |
|            | 6.2                 | The continuing priority for the Council and Education Service is to focus on responding to the main points for action contained within the published inspection report of 21 March 2017 and, in doing so, to ensure the delivery of high quality services that improve outcomes for all of our children and young people.                   |   |
|            | 6.3                 | The Strategic Inspection Improvement Plan sets out a range of actions to continue addressing the main points for action, each with specified timescales for their achievement, bringing further improvement across the required areas of the Service.   |   |
|            | 6.4                 | Through an ongoing programme of monitoring and reporting, at Service and Council levels the improvement plan will continue to be updated to reflect progress against each of the main points for action, areas of intervention and improvement, including the identification of impact for children, young people, staff and service users. |   |
|            | 6.5                 | The improvement plan will also be used to assist in preparing the Authority evaluation of progress against each of the five main points for action for submission to Education Scotland, an integral part of the further inspection scheduled to take place in September 2017.  |   |
| <b>7.0</b> | <b>IMPLICATIONS</b> |   |   |
|            | 7.1                 | Policy  | This report directly links to Outcome 3 in the Argyll and Bute Single Outcome Agreement: Education, Skills and training Maximises Opportunities for All.  |
|            | 7.2                 | Financial   | None.   |
|            | 7.3                 | Legal   | 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 |
|            | 7.4                 | HR  | None.   |
|            | 7.5                 | Equalities  | None.   |
|            | 7.6                 | Risk  | The outcome of the strategic inspection report on the effectiveness of the Education functions of the authority presents a significant reputational risk for the Council.   |

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|  | 7.7 | Customer Service | This report provides Elected Members with an update on the progress of the Inspection of the Education Functions of the Authority. |
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**Councillor Yvonne McNeilly**  
**Policy Lead for Education and Lifelong Learning**

10 August 2017

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## **APPENDICES**

Strategic inspection report of the Education Functions of the Local Authority,  
Education Scotland publication: 10 August 2017 **Appendix 1**

Argyll and Bute Strategic Inspection Improvement Plan **Appendix 2**