

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

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** The main purpose of this report is to advise Community Services Committee of the outcome of the further inspection of the Education functions of Argyll and Bute Council and to confirm the progress made by the Authority in addressing the main points for action contained within the initial inspection report of 21 March 2017.
- 1.2** 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.
- 1.3** Education Scotland notified the Chief Executive of the Council that HM Inspectors would undertake a further strategic level inspection of the Education functions of Argyll and Bute Council during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2018
- 1.4** The further inspection was indicated at the conclusion of the follow through inspection, conducted in September 2017 and outlined within the formal inspection report published by Education Scotland published on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2017. Specifically the report noted that "further inspection activity would be carried out by Education Scotland by the end of 2018".
- 1.5** The further inspection focussed on the progress that has been made in addressing the main points for action identified in the original inspection report published in March 2017. Education Scotland published their findings from the further inspection in a formal report on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2018, noting the overall progress made by Council and Education Services in responding to the main points for action.

**1.6** The report notes that overall, the Authority has continued to build on its early progress across a number of key aspects of the leadership of the Education Service and has made positive and continued progress since the original inspection in September 2016. The Education Service has a strong capacity to enhance educational leadership.

## **1.7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- a) Note the further inspection of the Education Functions of Argyll and Bute Council which commenced on 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2018;
- b) Note the timetable and programme associated with the inspection;
- c) Consider the inspection report published by Education Scotland on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018;
- d) Note the progress made by Education Services and the Council in responding to the main points for action contained within the initial published inspection report of 21 March 2017;
- e) Note that Education Scotland have informed the Education Service that they will undertake a one day inspection visit on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Of October 2018, and
- f) Request the Heads of Education brings a further progress report to a future meeting of the Community Services Committee.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The main purpose of this report is to advise the Community Services Committee of the outcome of the further inspection of the Education functions of the Council.
- 2.2 Education Scotland returned to the Council in May 2018 to carry out a further visit to monitor progress. A report of this visit was published on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2018. In this short report, Education Scotland identified that Argyll and Bute Council has continued to build on its early progress across a number of key aspects of leadership of the Education Service. They also indicated that as previously planned a further inspection of the Education Functions of the Council would be carried out by the end of 2018.
- 2.3 The main points for action identified in the initial inspection report noted that the Authority should:
1. Significantly improve young people's attainment across the Authority;
  2. Improve the use of data, ensuring greater rigour;
  3. Continue to improve the quality of educational provision with consistently higher levels of support and challenge from central officers and elected members;
  4. Improve relationships and communication, promoting a more positive ethos amongst all stakeholders; and
  5. Improve the quality of strategic leadership and direction at all levels within the Education Authority.

The further inspection focused on the progress that has been made by the Education Authority and Education Services in addressing these main points for action, with the published report identifying the overall level of progress. The short report does not include evaluations based on the six-point scale.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- a) Note the further inspection of the Education Functions of Argyll and Bute Council which commenced on 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2018;
- b) Note the timetable and programme associated with the inspection;
- c) Consider the inspection report published by Education Scotland on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018;
- d) Note the progress made by Education Services and the Council in responding to the main points for action contained within the initial published inspection report of 21 March 2017;
- e) Note that Education Scotland have informed the Education Service that they will undertake a one day inspection visit on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Of October 2018, and
- f) Request the Heads of Education brings a further progress report to a future meeting of the Community Services Committee.

### **4.0 DETAIL**

4.1 Education Scotland allocated two Inspectors to undertake the further inspection on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2018. The inspection team was led by Mr. Alastair Brown. Managing Inspector.

4.2 The Managing Inspector, supported by a member of the inspection team met to discuss the plan for the inspection with the Chief Education Officer.

4.3 The planned inspection footprint took place over the course of two days: 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2018 and during the course of the inspection the two inspectors engaged in a range of inspection activities including:

- Individual interviews with the Chief Executive. Council Leader and the Policy Lead for Education, the Executive Director, Customer Services and the two Heads of Education;
- Focus groups of, staff and learners, and
- A review of inspection evidence.

4.4 A range of preparatory work was undertaken by Education Services to support the inspection including:

- The preparation of the self-evaluation position statement,
- 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 Chairs;
- Preparation of the inspection timetable, including co-ordination of meetings, focus groups, visits, and
- Scheduling diary arrangements for all groups.

## **5.0 SELF-EVALUATION PROFILE**

- 5.1 Education Services provided a summary self-evaluation report outlining the progress made by the Education Authority in responding to the inspection main points for action prepared in conjunction with representatives of the Head Teacher Advisory Group which was submitted to Education Scotland a week prior to the inspection

## **6.0 INSPECTION OUTCOME**

- 6.1 Following the conclusion of the further inspection, Education Scotland published a short report highlighting the progress made by Council and Education Services in responding to the main points for action. The following provides a summary of the content of the report:

### **6.1.1 Update on Strategic Inspection of the education functions of Argyll and Bute Council**

- Argyll and Bute Education Service has built on its earlier progress with how it collects and uses data.
- Staff at all levels have continued to increase their skills and confidence in the use of data
- There is now a clearer shared understanding that rigorous and high quality data analysis is required for improved outcomes
- Central officers and elected members now have increased knowledge and capacity to provide higher levels of support and challenge
- Central officers have provided Performance Data Meetings and information sessions for elected members
- A carefully structured annual programme of quality improvement school visits by central officer is carried out and provides a more consistent approach
- School visits have a clear purpose and provide opportunities to engage with children and young people.
- Individual members of the central team have an increasingly clearer understanding of the performance of link schools.
- A sound evaluative process to identify risk has been put in place
- The Education Service continues to improve relationships and communications
- There is a more positive ethos
- The vision and strategy Our Children, Their Future (OCTF) continues to be an important driver resulting on a focus of improved outcomes
- Argyll and Bute Council has continued to build on its early progress across a number of key aspects of leadership of the Education Service
- Argyll and Bute Council budget decisions demonstrate a confidence in the work of the central team to take forward improvements.
- Under the strong leadership of the Chief Education Officer, staff have a sustained and strengthened their efforts to embed improvements at all

levels.

- The two recently appointed Heads of Education have a strong capacity to enhance educational leadership across the authority

#### 6.1.2 Areas for continued development

- It will be important to continue to build the capacity of both central officers and school staff to make effective use of data as a tool for improvement.
- The education service needs to address any identified risks promptly and effectively to ensure improvements are secured

## 7.0 Next Steps

7.1 Education Scotland, in the conclusion of their inspection report, notes that the Authority has made positive and continued progress since the original inspection in 2016. As planned Education Scotland will return later in 2018 to carry out a further visit, focusing on how well the council is improving the quality of young people's attainment, and report on its continued progress.

7.2 Education Scotland will carry out further inspection activity by the end of 2018 to monitor and report on the continued progress made by the Council. Further inspection activity will take place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2018.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 Education Scotland carried out a further inspection of the Education functions of the Council on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2018. To support the inspection Education Services prepared and submitted a self-evaluation summary of progress against the main points for action for submission to Education Scotland the week before the inspection.

8.2 Education Scotland published their inspection report on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2018. The report notes the progress made by the Authority.

8.3 A further update on the inspection will be provided at a future Community Services Committee meeting.

## 9.0 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Policy                      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.

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| 9.2 | Financial        | None.   |
| 9.3 | Legal            | None.   |
| 9.4 | HR               | Resourcing of the planned inspection presents additional, short term resource implications for the Council.   |
| 9.5 | Equalities       | None.   |
| 9.6 | Risk             | The outcome of the further inspection of the Education functions of Argyll and Bute Council may significantly enhance or detract from the Council's reputation and attractiveness as an area to work and live in. |
| 9.7 | Customer Service | This report provides Elected Members with an overview of the inspection of the Education Functions of the Authority.  |

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Appendices: Appendix 1 – *Education Scotland Further Strategic Inspection of the Education Functions of Local Authorities Argyll and Bute Council: 31 July 2018*