

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 outcome of the further inspection of the Education functions of Argyll and Bute Council published on the 26th November 2018, 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 on the 2nd Of October 2018.
- 1.4 The further inspection was indicated at the conclusion of the follow through inspection, conducted in May 2018.
- 1.5 The further inspection focussed on the progress that has been made in addressing main point for action 1 "significantly improve young people's attainment across the Authority" in the original inspection report published in March 2017.

1.6 The report notes that the authority is now making significant improvements to the quality of young people's attainment in several important measures. As a result of the improvements outlined, HM Inspectors will make no further visits to Argyll and Bute Council in connection with the original inspection

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 took place on the 2nd of October 2018.
- b) Consider the inspection report published by Education Scotland on 26th November 2018.
- c) Welcomes the progress made by the Education Service and the wider Council in responding to the main points for action.
- d) Note that improvements made have resulted in HM Inspectors making no further visits to Argyll and Bute in connection with the original inspection of September 2016.

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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 October 2018 to carry out a further visit to monitor progress. A report of this visit was published on the 26th November 2018. In this short report, Education Scotland identified that Argyll and Bute Council has continued to build on its early progress on significantly improving young people's attainment across the Authority.
- 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 main point for action 1, 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 took place on the 2nd of October 2018.
 - b) Consider the inspection report published by Education Scotland on 26th November 2018.
 - c) Welcomes the progress made by the Education Service and the wider Council in responding to the main points for action.
 - d) Note that improvements made have resulted in HM Inspectors making no further visits to Argyll and Bute in connection with the original inspection of September 2016.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Education Scotland allocated two Inspectors to undertake the further inspection on the 2nd of October 2018. The inspection team was led by Mrs Clare Lamont, Managing Inspector.
- 4.2 The Managing Inspector, 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 one day: 2nd of October 2018 and during the course of the inspection the two inspectors engaged in focus worked with:
- The two Heads of Education; and
 - Undertook a review of attainment 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 the inspection timetable

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 point 1 for action prepared in conjunction with team members and 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:

- At the broad general education stages, data provided by the authority indicates that attainment has improved from 2016 to 2018 in several important measures.
- The attainment of children and young people in reading, writing, listening and talking has improved at almost every stage which is measured (P1, P4, P7 and S3).
- There are important improvements in numeracy too, particularly at the primary stages.
- Across the authority, staff have worked well together to ensure that teachers are making more confident and accurate judgements of pupils' progress.
- Over recent years, the attendance of pupils at primary, secondary and special schools has been higher than the national average.
- The proportion of children and young people being excluded from school is well below the national average.
- Over the last five years, the attainment of young people in literacy and numeracy in Argyll and Bute Council's secondary schools has often been lower than in other Scottish schools which serve pupils with similar needs and backgrounds (the Virtual Comparator). There are positive signs of improvement in 2017 and 2018 and staff are working hard to achieve consistently higher levels of attainment across all schools.
- There are some very positive improvements in the attainment of young people in National Qualifications, particularly between 2016 and 2018.
- At S4, the proportion of young people achieving awards at National 5 (SCQF level 5) has improved and in 2018 is above the Virtual Comparator and national averages.
- At S5 and S6, more young people now succeed at Higher level (SCQF level 6) and attainment at this level has risen to be in line with or above the Virtual Comparator and national averages.

7.0 NEXT STEPS

7.1 The inspection report published in March 2017 identified a number of areas for improvement which had been agreed with Argyll and Bute Council. Four further published inspection reports June 2017, September 2017, May 2018 and November 2018 have confirmed that the council has taken appropriate action to address these areas. The council has now demonstrated that it has made positive and continued progress since the original inspection in September 2016. It has strengthened its arrangements for educational leadership, and

central officers and school-based staff continue to work with commitment to bring about a wide range of improvements. The authority now has greater capacity to continue to drive improvement in the quality of its provision

- 7.2 Education Scotland, in the conclusion of their inspection report November 2018, notes that the authority is now making significant improvements to the quality of young people's attainment in several important measures, for example, in literacy and numeracy and in the proportion of young people achieving awards at National 5 and Higher level.
- 7.3 As a result of the improvements outlined above, HM Inspectors will make no further visits to Argyll and Bute Council in connection with the original inspection.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Education Scotland carried out a further inspection of the Education functions of the Council on the 2nd of October 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 November 2018. The report notes the progress made by the Authority and that there will be no further visits by Education Scotland to Argyll and Bute Education Services in connection with the original inspection.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS

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| 9.1 | 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 endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of that school education. |
| 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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Appendix 1: Education Scotland Reports (March 2017, June 2017, September 2017, May 2018 and November 2018)

<https://education.gov.scot/other-sectors/education-authority/688165>