



Item: 9

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 11 September 2024.

Education Scotland Inspection – Firth Primary School.

Report by Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Overview

- 1.1. In March 2024, Education Scotland undertook a short model inspection of Firth Primary School and Nursery Class.
- 1.2. The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:
 - The approaches staff in the primary school take to develop children's reading and writing skills. They motivate children successfully in reading and writing which is impacting positively on children's attainment.
 - The strong focus of staff on developing their professional skills and abilities. As a result, children enjoy learning within stimulating learning environments.
 - The highly relevant leadership opportunities children in the school have through pupil voice groups. Children are developing very well a wide range of skills for learning, life and work through these groups.
- 1.3. The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the Headteacher, the Service Manager (Early Learning and Childcare) and the Service Manager (Primary Education):
 - In the school and nursery, continue to develop approaches to assess children's progress and attainment. This will support staff to identify clearly the progress children make and increase their understanding of national standards.
 - In the school, the headteacher and teachers should monitor carefully the impact of all interventions, including those supported by Pupil Equity Funding, on children's progress. This will help them to identify the interventions which are making the biggest difference for children.
 - In the nursery class, staff should increase opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills to ensure they make the best possible progress. To support this work, staff should develop further their approaches to evaluating the quality of children's learning experiences.

- 1.4. The evaluations given to the quality indicators for the primary school are as follows:
 - Learning, Teaching and Assessment – good.
 - Raising attainment and achievement – good.
- 1.5. The evaluations given to the quality indicators for the nursery are as follows:
 - Learning, Teaching and Assessment – good.
 - Raising attainment and achievement – satisfactory.
- 1.6. HM Inspectors are confident in the school’s capacity to continue to improve and will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.
- 1.7. The areas for improvement, outlined above, will be taken forward by the school and nursery as part of the school improvement planning process and will feature on the plan for Firth Primary School and Nursery Class over the next few years to ensure that they are embedded in practice.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
 - i. Scrutinise the inspection letter in respect of Firth Primary School and Nursery Class, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, issued by Education Scotland on 28 May 2024, in order to obtain assurance.

For Further Information please contact:

Morag Miller, Service Manager (Primary Education), Extension 2438, email:

morag.miller@orkney.gov.uk.

Catherine Diamond, Service Manager (Early Learning and Childcare), Extension 3220,

email: catherine.diamond@glow.orkneyschools.org.uk.

Implications of Report

1. **Financial** – Not applicable.
2. **Legal** – Not applicable.
3. **Corporate Governance** – Not applicable
4. **Human Resources** – Not applicable.
5. **Equalities** – Equality Impact Assessment is not required for performance reporting.
6. **Island Communities Impact** – Island Communities Impact Assessment is not required for performance reporting.
7. **Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
 - Growing our economy.
 - Strengthening our Communities.
 - Developing our Infrastructure.
 - Transforming our Council.
8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
 - Cost of Living.
 - Sustainable Development.
 - Local Equality.
9. **Environmental and Climate Risk** – Not applicable.
10. **Risk** – Not applicable.
11. **Procurement** – Not applicable.
12. **Health and Safety** – Not applicable.
13. **Property and Assets** – Not applicable.
14. **Information Technology** – Not applicable.
15. **Cost of Living** – Not applicable.

List of Background Papers

None

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Letter from Education Scotland.

28 May 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In March 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate visited Firth Primary School and Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

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

- The approaches staff in the primary school take to develop children's reading and writing skills. They motivate children successfully in reading and writing which is impacting positively on children's attainment.
- The strong focus of staff on developing their professional skills and abilities. As a result, children enjoy their learning within stimulating learning environments.
- The highly relevant leadership opportunities children in the school have through their pupil voice groups. Children are developing very well a wide range of skills for learning, life and work through these groups.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Orkney Islands Council.

- In the school and nursery, continue to develop approaches to assessing children's progress and attainment. This will support staff to identify clearly the progress children make and increase their understanding of national standards.
- In the school, the headteacher and teachers should monitor carefully the impact of all interventions, including those supported by Pupil Equity Funding, on children's progress. This will help them to identify the interventions which are making the biggest difference for children.
- In the nursery class, staff should increase opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills to ensure they make the best possible progress. To support this work, staff should develop further their approaches to evaluating the quality of children's learning experiences.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Firth Primary School and Nursery Class.

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Raising attainment and achievement	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Securing children's progress	satisfactory
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale	

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the early learning and childcare setting using the quality indicators from [A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare](#). The framework supports settings, providers and inspectors to assess what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each setting, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well early learning and childcare settings are doing. The Care Inspectorate evaluations are also used by local authorities when considering how settings are meeting the national standard for funded early learning and childcare.

The Care Inspectorate's evaluations for the early learning and childcare setting are:

Detailed evaluations	Evaluation
Key question 1: How good is our care, play and learning?	good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	good
1.3 Play and learning	good
Key question 3: How good is our leadership?	good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	good

Requirements made by the Care Inspectorate for the early learning and childcare setting.

As a result of the inspection, no requirements were made.

Area for improvement made by the Care Inspectorate for the early learning and childcare setting.

As a result of the inspection, the following area for improvement have been made.

To help safeguard and protect children from harm and abuse and provide families with the support they need, the provider should at a minimum ensure the manager and staff have the required skills and knowledge in relation to recognising and responding to child protection concerns.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I am protected from harm because people are alert and respond to signs of significant deterioration in my health and wellbeing, that I may be unhappy or may be at risk of harm.' (HSCS 3.21)

This letter and a more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at: [Details](#) | [Find an inspection report](#) | [Find an inspection report](#) | [Inspection and review](#) | [Education Scotland](#)

What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Orkney Islands Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Helen Mulholland
HM Inspector

Lorraine Hendry
Care Inspector