

Education, Children & Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 20 September 2022

Quality Improvement and Scrutiny

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the purpose and learning points from Education Scotland review activity.
 - 1.1.2 Note the progress made by schools as evidenced through external and internal follow-through activity.
 - 1.1.3 Note the continued hard work of teams across departments within City of Edinburgh, our staff in schools and partners, to support children and young people as part of the Covid-19 response
 - 1.1.4 Agree next steps at 5.1 – 5.4
 - 1.1.5 Agree that updates on the work detailed in this report are presented at Committee as required.

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Quality Improvement and Scrutiny

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides a summary of the review, and scrutiny, activity undertaken by Education Scotland and the CEC Quality Improvement & Curriculum Service, during the Covid pandemic (2020-21 & 2021-22) and as schools progress through the recovery phase. This has been based on an adapted model to reflect the impact of Covid on schools, and early years establishments, and to ensure activities were conducted within national and local health and safety guidance. This meant that the majority of activity was conducted virtually until the end of session 2021-22 when the lifting of restrictions made it possible to restart face-to-face activities.

3. Background

3.1 Education Scotland Scrutiny Activity

On 16 September, 2021, Education Scotland wrote to all Directors of Education to advise of the phased approach to resuming scrutiny activity. This adapted approach fully recognised the ongoing challenges faced by local authority staff, education staff, learners and communities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and took account of stakeholders' views.

This activity has focused on:

- 3.1.1 "Critical friend" support (virtual) provided to schools where continued engagement was recommended as a result of their Inspection (pre-Covid) and a progress report expected
- 3.1.2 "Critical friend" support provided to priority schools as identified by the Local Authority
- 3.1.3 Continued engagement visits to provide a progress report following inspection.
- 3.1.4 National Thematic Inspections
- 3.1.5 Covid Recovery Visits

3.2 **Quality Improvement and Curriculum Service (QICS) Scrutiny Activity**

The Quality Improvement and Curriculum Service (QICS) has continued to provide proportionate support to priority schools, identified through a range of factors included in the Capacity & Risk Register. These factors include: -

3.2.1 School self-evaluation of core quality indicators included on Standards & Quality Reports

3.2.2 School reviews and Education Scotland Inspections

3.2.3 Analysis of Quantitative and Qualitative data

3.2.4 Capacity for leadership of change and improvement

Support has been provided virtually, unless where critical support has been needed e.g. to provide additional leadership capacity or to support staff absences. It had not been possible to undertake follow-through visits until the recent lifting of Covid restrictions. This has seen a restarting of follow-through scrutiny for schools who were inspected just prior to the Covid pandemic. CEC follow-through visits would normally take place: -

3.2.5 Within 1 year of inspection where a school has been externally validated as “satisfactory” or less in any of the core Quality Indicators (1.3 Leadership of Change, 2.3 Teaching, learning & assessment, 3.1 Health, wellbeing & resilience, 3.2. Raising attainment & achievement)

3.2.6 Within 18 months of inspection for all other schools

Although this activity has restarted, there are a number for schools for whom this activity is outstanding. This will be prioritised early in Session 2022-23.

4. **Main report**

4.1 As described in the background section of the report, and in the further information provided, the tables below list the schools who have been engaged in review activity with either Education Scotland and/or the QICS. The type of activity is also stated.

Education Scotland Engagement	Setting
Critical friend support (continued engagement visit due to one or more grade of satisfactory or less (progress report expected)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colinton Primary School• Gracemount Primary School• St Crispin’s Primary School
Critical friend support (no continued engagement visit but nominated by LA priority school status due to one or more grade of satisfactory or less)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Granton Primary School
National Thematic Inspections	

Approaches to supporting children and young people's wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roseburn Primary School • Leith Academy
Local approaches to recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moffat EYC • Castleview PS • Gracemount High School
Outdoor learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Andrew's Fox Covert Primary School • Woodlands Special School
Other (CLD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover • Get into Summer • Summer Epic Days programmes
Additional virtual meetings to EYC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fox Covert EYC • Tynecastle EYC • Greendykes EYC • Calderglen EYC • Lauriston Castle Forest Kindergarten
Recovery Visits	
Continuity in learning Wellbeing of children, young people and staff Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Margaret's Pre-school and Nursery • Gracemount High School
Care Inspectorate Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme of Early Years Settings, including partner providers • "Good or better" national agenda

4.2 Summary of QICS Engagement

Follow-through session 2021-22 (grade of satisfactory or less – normal cycle of 1 year from inspection)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colinton Primary School • Granton Primary School
Follow-through session 2021-22 (normal cycle of 18 months from inspection)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boroughmuir High School • St Augustine's High School
Remaining Follow-throughs (prioritised start of session 2022-23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gracemount Primary School • Echline Primary School • Longstone Primary School • Prestonfield Primary School • Ratho Primary School
Supported Self evaluation (start of session 2022-23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holy Rood RC High School • The Royal High School • Queensferry Community High School

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pirniehall Primary School • James Gillespie's High School • Wester Hailes High School
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4.3 **Education Scotland “Critical friend” support (virtual)**

This was provided to schools where continued engagement was recommended as a result of their Inspection (pre-Covid) and a progress report expected. This focused on the recommended areas of improvement identified during the school’s inspection. The Quality Improvement & Curriculum Service also worked closely with these schools, providing prioritised support and undertaking a meeting or follow-through visit to consider the evidence of progress made with each action. Details for each school can be found in Appendix 1.

4.4 **National Thematic Inspections**

During weeks commencing 1 and 8 November 2021, Education Scotland conducted National thematic questions for the three themes detailed below: -

4.4.1 Approaches to supporting children and young people’s wellbeing

4.4.2 Local approaches to recovery

4.4.3 Outdoor learning

4.4.4 Other (CLD)

The main themes identified are as follows:

4.4.5 All schools are focusing on supporting the mental and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and their families. There is an increase in levels of anxiety and decreased confidence with peer relationships having suffered in many cases.

4.4.6 Improving health and wellbeing is a key feature of recovery or school improvement plans.

4.4.7 Effective leadership is central to covid recovery.

4.4.8 School are developing existing practices to support children and young people to make progress in their learning.

4.4.9 There has been an increase in the delivery of high quality outdoor learning experiences which develop the knowledge and skills of young people.

The findings of the inspection, for each theme, were published in a national reports which can be found via the links detailed in the background reading section.

4.5 **Covid Recovery Visits**

During February 2022, Education Scotland invited settings and schools to take part in Recovery visits. Schools were asked about their own current priorities as they responded to the impact of the current pandemic. Education Scotland were particularly interested in how practitioners are addressing the impact of Covid-19

with a particular focus on continuity of learning and wellbeing of staff and learners including what is working well, along with the challenges faced and solutions found. Visits undertaken provided evidence of the range and quality of children’s and young people’s learning experiences. The findings for each setting which took part (detailed in the table above) can be found in Appendix 2.

4.6 Care Inspectorate Visits

The Scottish Government implemented the pandemic. [Interim guidance in May 2022](#) sets out the requirements for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) providers and local authorities from August 2022. The criteria within the National Standard relates directly to the evaluations that ELC settings receive as a result of Care Inspectorate (CI) scrutiny visits.

The National Standard states that all ELC settings must ensure that they have evaluations of Good-4 or above in relation to the Quality Themes from the CI to meet the National Standard. If settings do not have or as a result of a recent inspection drop below Good-4 they will be placed into a Service Improvement Period (SIP).

Ensuring high quality of provision has remained at the heart of the expansion plan in Edinburgh. There has been a strong driver for quality within ELC in Edinburgh. A strategic 3-year plan was developed and supported by the Quality Improvement Team for all settings across the sector including: local authority, private, voluntary and independent funded providers. As part of the strategic plan there has been focused CLPL provided by the central team supporting quality improvements. The strategic plan and CLPL was based on national guidance and has been enhanced with the release of the new practice guidance, [Realising the Ambition: Being me](#) in February 2020. As part of our recovery planning from Covid a new strategic ELC Improvement Plan and framework for 2021-2024 has been developed.

Due to the pandemic the CI halted routine inspections and so a number of settings who have been working hard to improve their quality and evaluations are still awaiting an inspection and remain with evaluations below Good. This has been recognised within the Interim guidance from the Scottish Government.

As a result of this in Edinburgh we have a higher number of settings in a SIP than we would typically expect.

Settings in Service Improvement Period -August 2022

Type of Funded Provider	Number of settings in SIP	Percentage of settings in SIP
Local Authority Settings	3	2.7%
Private, Voluntary & Independent Settings	24	22.8%
Childminders	1	2.3%
Total	28	10.8%

In Edinburgh we have developed a Risk Register to capture the settings within the SIP. This is regularly monitored by the Early Years Senior Leadership Team as part of our Quality Improvement Process. There is also clear guidance including a flowchart of the procedure when a setting is within the Service Improvement Period that has been developed to monitor and support settings.

The Early Years Quality Improvement Team support and monitor progress against identified improvement priorities with the ELC settings whilst they are within the SIP.

The SIP process ends following the next Care Inspectorate scrutiny visit if the setting has improved their evaluations to Good-4 or above. The current interim guidance allows the local authority to extend the SIP for those settings that may not have improved their evaluations to Good following the next visit but have made improvements and have the capacity to further improve their evaluations to Good or above by the following inspection. If a setting has not made improvements within the SIP they will not be able to remain a funded provider.

4.7 Education Scotland Activity 2022-23

Education Scotland will be resuming the routine programme of inspections from August 2022. Inspections will start week beginning 5th September 2022. The QICS has reviewed our pre-inspection guidance and support materials to ensure settings and schools are well prepared for their inspections. This includes undertaking supported self-evaluation processes (SSEs) with schools who may be inspected in a relatively close timescale, as detailed in the QICS Capacity and Risk Register. The main factor in identifying these schools is the time since they were last inspected. Schools undertaking an SSE at the start of session 2022-23 are as follows: -

4.7.1 Holy Rood RC High School

4.7.2 The Royal High School

4.7.3 Queensferry Community High School

4.7.4 Pirniehall Primary School

4.7.5 James Gillespie's High School

4.7.6 Wester Hailes High School

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 QICS will prioritise outstanding follow-through visits at the start of session 2022-23.
- 5.2 Learning from all scrutiny activity will be held in the Capacity & Risk Register to identify priority schools for support.
- 5.3 The highest level of support will be provided to Gracemount High School to address the areas for improvement identified in the Covid Recovery visit. This will include monthly meetings with the Head teacher to discuss progress with agreed actions to raise attainment, support from the Acting Senior Education manager to review the

curriculum offer and prioritised engagement with professional learning delivered by the Edinburgh Learns Team to upskill staff in teaching and learning approaches.

- 5.4 Supported self-evaluation visits will be undertaken with schools who are likely to be inspected in the short-medium term.
- 5.5 QICS will provide intensive, targeted support to schools who are notified of inspection.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There are no financial implications contained in this report.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The Edinburgh Learns Improving Quality in Learning Board will continue to consult with a range of reference groups i.e. senior leaders, practitioners, parents/carers & young people to ensure helpful guidance and support is provided to schools to secure continuous improvements and effective self-evaluation approaches.
- 7.2 QIEOs will continue to evaluate Standards & Quality reports and share local knowledge to maintain an accurate Capacity & Risk Register to inform prioritised support. This will include an analysis of quality indicator grades (1.3, 2.3, 3.2, 3.2) which schools self-evaluate.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/HGIOS4>
- 8.2 <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/chief-inspector-report/national-thematic-inspections/health-and-wellbeing-a-thematic-review/>
- 8.3 <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/chief-inspector-report/national-thematic-inspections/local-approaches-to-recovery-a-thematic-review/>
- 8.4 <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/chief-inspector-report/national-thematic-inspections/successful-approaches-to-learning-outdoors/>

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 Education Scotland Support and QICS Follow-through Activity
- 9.2 Appendix 2 Education Scotland Recovery Visits

Appendix 1 Education Scotland Support and QICS Follow-through Activity

Colinton Primary School (Inspected April 2019)

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Securing children's progress	weak

Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale & How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale

Areas of focus related to the identified areas for improvement were: -

- Improve approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. In doing so, ensure all staff have a shared understanding of progress and achievement.
- The headteacher should provide strong strategic leadership to raise the attainment and achievement of all. In taking this forward it will be important that the school and nursery develop more robust and reliable approaches to self-evaluation.
- Increase the opportunities of children across the school and nursery to take greater responsibility for their learning and to have a greater role in school improvement.

The QICS undertook a follow-through visit to the school in October 2021. A clear indication of progress and next steps was provided in the form of an evaluated post-inspection action plan and evidence provided. The QICS team found that Colinton Primary and Nursery had made good progress in all three areas highlighted by Education Scotland in April 2019. The QIEO for the school has continued to work with the Acting Head Teacher to support and challenge progress across the school. (See Appendix 2)

Education Scotland made a continued engagement visit to the school in November, 2021. The team found that the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and that although these have had a significant impact on the work of the school, staff are implementing plans to support recovery. The concluded that the school has addressed the recommendations from

the original inspection successfully. As a result, no more visits in connection with the original inspection will be made. (See Appendix 3)

Gracemount Primary School (Inspected June 2019)

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Securing children's progress	satisfactory

Areas of focus related to the identified areas for improvement were: -

- Raise the attainment of children across all stages of the school
- Improve learning and teaching to ensure children experience consistently high quality learning. In doing so, develop approaches to planning and assessment which take account of the varying needs of all children.
- Take forward plans to monitor, track and analyse the progress, attainment and achievement of all children to ensure their progress in learning.

On 8th November members of the QICS met with the school leadership team to discuss evidence of progress in each of the recommendations. The school was found to have made good progress in each of the three recommended areas. In light of this review of evidence, a continued engagement visit was not carried out by Education Scotland. They deemed that this process confirmed that the school had addressed the recommendations from the inspection and would make no further visits in connection with the initial inspection. The QICS will undertake a follow-through visit in September 2022.

St Crispins School (Inspected June 2017)

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	satisfactory
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	good
3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, equality & inclusion	weak
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	good

As a result of the initial inspection, the following areas for improvement were identified: -

- The school needs to take immediate action to review how it manages behaviour to ensure that it protects the wellbeing of all learners.
- The school needs to focus all self-evaluation activities on improving outcomes for learners.
- Staff need to improve how they plan and deliver lessons in order to provide sufficient challenge for all children and young people.

As a result of the inspection findings it was deemed that the school needed additional support and more time to make necessary improvements and a further inspection carried out within six months of the publication of this letter (18th August, 2017). The outcome letter of this continued engagement visit was published on 16th January, 2018. Although the school had made some progress since the original inspection it was deemed that a further inspection of the school would be within one year of the publication of the letter. This continued engagement visit was undertaken with the outcome letter published on 28th May, 2019. At this point, it was again deemed that the school had made some progress but that a progress report would be requested within one year. At this point the inspection team engaged in discussions with staff and the Local Authority and carried out a virtual meeting with the school. The outcome letter, published on 1st March, 2022, stated that staff had addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, no more visits to the school would be made in connection with the original inspection.

The Local Authority also nominated one priority school for Critical friend” support from Education Scotland, although no continued engagement visit, or progress report, had been required by the Inspection team. This was due to the fact that one or more satisfactory grades were awarded for the quality indicators detailed in the table below.

Granton Primary School (inspected January 2020)

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
3.2 Securing children’s progress	satisfactory

Areas of focus related to the identified areas for improvement were: -

- Improve attainment and achievement for all children in the nursery and primary school.

- Develop further approaches to planning, assessment and moderation to ensure all children are making appropriate progress across the nursery and primary school. This should include robust tracking and monitoring of children's progress across all curriculum areas.
- Continue to improve and develop greater consistency in the quality of learning and teaching in the nursery and primary school. This should ensure that activities meet the learning needs of all children. Staff and practitioners should increase opportunities for children to be more involved in evaluating their own progress and next steps in learning.
- The QICS undertook a follow-through visit to the school in June, 2022. It was evidenced that the primary school has made progress with all of the identified areas for improvement and has developed clear plans for how this will progress in order to raise attainment and achievement of all young people. The nursery has also made progress across the identified areas for improvement. A continuing focus on observation and planning processes is required in order to ensure further improvement.

Appendix 2 – Education Scotland Recovery Visits

During February 2022, Education Scotland invited settings and schools to take part in Recovery visits. Schools were asked about their own current priorities as they responded to the impact of the current pandemic. Education Scotland were particularly interested in how practitioners are addressing the impact of Covid-19 with a particular focus on continuity of learning and wellbeing of staff and learners including what is working well, along with the challenges faced and solutions found. Visits undertaken provided evidence of the range and quality of children's and young people's learning experiences. The following EYC/Schools engaged in this process: -

- St Margaret's Pre-school and Nursery
- Gracemount High School

The outcome of each process was provided to the school and Local Authority in the form of a Note of Recovery Visit (NOV).

St Margaret's Pre-school and Nursery

Continuity of learning

- During periods of closure, senior leaders and practitioners maintained strong links with children and parents. Practitioners sent home a well-received home learning pack which included a range of ideas for home learning experiences. In addition, the packs included the setting's most popular snack and lunch recipes for parents to prepare at home. Parents also valued the way in which senior leaders shared important information about the mitigations required for setting users in relation to COVID-19.
- The team recognise that periods of closure have had an adverse impact on the early communication skills of a significant number of children. The team have taken prompt action to address this issue. For example, the additional support for learning coordinator provided a range of professional learning opportunities for the team. This learning is enabling practitioners to understand how best to support children to build their spoken language. The team also recognise that a number of children are requiring greater support to manage their emotions. They have put in place approaches which are helping children to share resources and space more effectively and to become more resilient. Toddlers and older children have free-flow access to the outdoor area which is proving to be hugely beneficial for the development of their social and gross motor skills.
- The team have developed further the use of personal learning plans and electronic journals to support children to make the best possible progress. They also use these tools to share learning with children and their families. Children are proud of their 'special books' and enjoying reflecting on previous learning.
- Practitioners support children well as they move across the setting. After periods of closure, children returned to the rooms they had been in previously with the same members of staff. Senior leaders planned these transitions in a

well-thought out way which minimised possible distress for children and families. They also put in place a range of helpful approaches to support children new to the setting to settle well during the pandemic.

- Senior leaders and practitioners are continuing to develop learning environments across the setting. Senior leaders, in collaboration with the staff team, should continue to use self-evaluation tools to create rich, exciting and stage-appropriate learning spaces. In doing so, they need to review planning approaches to ensure they reflect appropriately children's age and stage of development. In doing so, the team should ensure they are providing older children with greater breadth and depth in learning. Senior leaders should continue to develop the roles of recently appointed teachers. This is to ensure they play an integral role in promoting high quality learning, teaching and assessment across the setting.

Wellbeing of Children, Young People and Staff

- Senior leaders and practitioners demonstrate strong relationships with children, families and with each other. As a result, there is a strong nurturing ethos across the nursery. Senior leaders strengthened further approaches to communication during the pandemic leading to practitioners and parents feeling involved, consulted and informed.
- Practitioners supported children to understand emotions, develop their social skills and increase their independence skills on their return to nursery following lockdown. Parents updated their 3 | St Margaret's Nursery and Pre-School, The City of Edinburgh Council child's individual care plan on return and practitioners use this information to meet children's wellbeing needs. During the pandemic, senior leaders found it challenging to engage with external agencies to support child planning. This issue with communication is now improving. Children's understanding of the wellbeing indicators, and how these relate to them, could be developed further through curriculum provision.
- Managers place high importance on ensuring the physical and mental wellbeing of the staff team. Practitioners feel valued and supported as a result. Senior leaders used emails and social media to ensure the team remained informed throughout the pandemic. They provided access to an online wellbeing portal and health-related programmes. Managers funded six counselling sessions for each team member and provided fitness classes within the nursery setting. Senior leaders meet regularly with each practitioner to support their personal and professional learning needs. In addition, practitioners benefit from a mentor scheme. Managers fund a range of social events for the staff team. Senior leaders recognise and celebrate the success of individuals and effective teamwork through monthly awards. This strong commitment to practitioners' wellbeing supports managers to effectively recruit and retain practitioners.
- Senior leaders consulted practitioners prior to their return to work following furlough. They took a flexible approach, empowering practitioners to make the best decision for their personal circumstances. Senior leaders provided comprehensive guidance to support practitioners return to work. All practitioners spent two days engaging in professional learning prior to the full

reopening of the nursery. Managers revised working practices in light of practitioners' experiences during the pandemic. They changed the working week, enabling practitioners to work four days a week rather than five. Managers adjusted children's pick up and drop off times. As a result, practitioners can provide an appropriate handover to parents before the end of their working day.

- Senior leaders found compliance with COVID-19 mitigations easy to achieve due to the nursery building being large and spacious. They created two additional baby rooms, parent room, sensory room and an additional dining room in response to the needs arising from the pandemic. Practitioners made greater use of outdoor spaces during the pandemic to support wellbeing. A permanent extension to the outdoor play area is nearing completion.
- Managers prepared detailed safe-reopening procedures to support and inform parents about their child's return to nursery post lockdown. They supplemented this with the addition of videos of the nursery, playrooms and newly developed areas. This provided reassurance to parents and ensured a shared understanding of revised procedures due to ongoing mitigations. The addition of a parent's room and breastfeeding area provides a safe, relaxed area for parents to spend time supporting their child to settle into nursery.

Approaches to Safeguarding and Child Protection

- Managers ensure that all practitioners have a clear understanding of child protection procedures through the provision of clear guidance and regular professional learning. Professional learning is provided in partnership with Edinburgh City Council (ECC). It is delivered in person by ECC staff, online and in-house by nursery managers. Senior leaders provided a child protection update for the staff team in advance of the full re-opening of the nursery post lockdown. The induction procedure for new practitioners ensures they receive all relevant policies and an in-person induction visit prior to starting their employment.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the nursery's child protection policy and procedures reflect ECC expectations. Inspectors directed managers to the most recently published national guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021.
- All senior leaders are trained to level 4 in child protection. This ensures a depth of knowledge across the leadership team and a consistency in practice. Managers have placed clear signage throughout the nursery to ensure practitioners know how to report a concern and who to report it to. They maintain appropriate records to record, track and monitor concerns.
- A significant number of practitioners have their own child/children attending the nursery. Senior leaders are particularly sensitive to the needs of both parent and child should concerns arise.
- Managers created additional facilities on the third floor of the building in response to the required mitigations during the pandemic. They gave due consideration to the evacuation of these areas in the event of a fire. Managers

ensured that expert guidance was sought from the Fire Brigade and used the guidance received to inform nursery procedures.

- Managers ensure that effective policies and procedures are in place to support children with allergies. They have developed these in partnership with parents

Gracemount High School

Continuity of learning

- COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the continuity of learning across all year groups including a decline in Literacy and Numeracy levels of young people coming into S1. Transition arrangements have also been affected.
- Staff demonstrated commendable effort and focus to support young people in S4-S6 to continue their learning as they approached SQA certification. Staff advised that young people in these year groups had often been very anxious regarding gaps in their learning.
- Senior leaders have been effective in supporting contexts for joint working across sectors. This is having a positive effect on continuity of learning in numeracy, with further developments being taken forward in science, health and wellbeing and technologies.
- Senior leaders are implementing and reviewing their revised Attendance Management Policy to address a decline in attendance during the pandemic. They are clear in their strategy that improving positive engagements with young people will support improved attendance. Staff attendance levels are now more in line with pre-pandemic levels. As a result, staff are now in a better position to plan steps to identify and mitigate aspects of disrupted learning. Senior leaders have taken other steps taken to support continuity of learning.
- Staff have benefitted from focused and appropriate professional learning to assist them in supporting digital approaches to learning and teaching.
- The re-designed school website provides clear and useful information to support young people to continue with their learning when absent.
- Senior leaders confirm the identification of gaps in young people's learning is a priority for the school. Tracking and monitoring processes are assisting in this. Senior leaders are aware of the need to support further curriculum leaders in this area.
- Staff have access to a detailed additional support needs (ASN) database. This provides helpful advice to staff with effective ways to support learners with identified needs. To meet the needs of all learners consistently in all classrooms, senior leaders should now consider how this information is most effectively used.
- A recently established Learning Hub provides a positive, supportive environment for young people in S3-S5 to engage with their learning.
- Young people's engagement in their learning is inconsistent since the return to school in August 2021. Senior leaders and staff advise that young people

have found a return to routines and focus on learning challenging. Staff and young people report disruptions to learning happen too often.

- Senior leaders have maintained a focus on how to improve relationships, ethos and learning throughout the period of the pandemic. There has been focus on developing restorative approaches and confirming expectations of staff. This emerging work is beginning to have impact across areas of the school.
- A staff group has recently developed a Teacher's Toolkit. Its purpose is to confirm expectations and processes to support young people to engage consistently in learning. This development is in its early stages.
- Staff offer a curriculum with a wide range of vocational programmes delivered in school and through the school college partnership. Staff support young people well to engage in these opportunities and improve their access to further training and employment. Staff are proactive in promoting parity of esteem between academic and vocational programmes.
- Staff introduced a new Skills Framework prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, supported by an action plan and staff development. However, the challenge of operating under COVID-19 restrictions has delayed the roll out of this framework. Staff have comprehensive and effective arrangements for identifying and tracking school leaver destinations for young people who are at risk of leaving school without a positive destination. Where young people do not have a planned positive destination, community partners offer a wide range of options to help them engage in activities to support them as they prepare to leave school.
- Staff have strong working relationships with Skills Development Scotland and learners have good access to Careers Advisors. The Developing the Young Workforce school improvement group works effectively with partners to plan opportunities for young people to connect directly with employers.

Wellbeing of Children, Young People and Staff

- All staff work hard to support young people's wellbeing. Notably the school has received a rights respecting gold award.
- Senior leaders emphasise how central young people's rights are to the work of the school. Consequently, there is a strong emphasis on developing positive relationships. Staff have undertaken professional learning in developing consistent routines which support a positive learning environment and facilitate restorative approaches.
- The pandemic has had an impact on young people's readiness to learn and staff are keen to continue to develop their knowledge and expertise in these key approaches.
- The school has well-established approaches for staff to raise any wellbeing concerns for young people, using the wellbeing indicators. Staff also complete equality and bullying forms, which they share with the pastoral care (PC) team. The school's use of the wellbeing indicators is particularly strong in the area of targeted support. Young people should become more familiar with

these indicators. Young people report that they have an adult with whom they may discuss a concern.

- Staff are committed to supporting each other's wellbeing and praise the senior leaders for their responsiveness to staff's personal circumstances.
- Young people have access to emotional and mental wellbeing support through the school counselling service. There is a dedicated wellbeing page on the website. This contains up-to-date links to relevant advice for concerns such as resilience and digital safety.
- The Health and Safety committee has played an important role in helping the school community to feel safe and confident while mitigations were in place across the school.

Approaches to Safeguarding and Child Protection

- Senior leaders should ensure all staff are trained in safeguarding and Child Protection procedures.
- They should ensure the Child Protection policy provides details on all specific indicators of risk of child protection.
- Senior leaders should continue to review their approaches to record keeping in line with local and national expectations.
- They must make sure all care experienced young people are considered for a coordinated support plan and that the result of this is recorded.
- Senior leaders should monitor closely the impact of part-time timetables and continue support young people to return to school full-time.
- Senior leaders should continue to work with the school community to promote and ensure a safe learning environment., This includes taking action to improve the security of the building.
- Senior leaders should ensure the file dropping facility on the school provided digital tablets is not open to misuse.