

**A summary of the Care Inspectorate Inspections of Day Care of Children,
August 2023 - June 2024**

Report by Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer

Report for Information

1 Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

- (i) Note the content of the summary of the inspection reports.
- (ii) Congratulate the pupils, parents and staff connected with these reports.
- (iii) Pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for noting purposes. Tuesday 4

2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

The report outlines inspection activity by the Care Inspectorate in 17 Early Learning and Childcare settings across Midlothian

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3 Background/Main Body of Report

A range of funded providers were inspected including private nurseries and local authority settings and this report provides a summary of the outcomes of the undernoted inspections in Early Learning and Childcare settings for two, three and four year olds as carried out by the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland. The settings that were inspected by the Care Inspectorate in this period were:

- Paradykes Primary School Nursery
- Kings Parks Primary School Nursery
- St Davids Primary School Nursery
- Tynewater Primary School Nursery
- Mount Esk Nursery School
- Wizkidz
- Hopefield Castle
- Happy Days Dalkeith
- Chapter One Treetops
- Chapter One Shawfair
- Danderhall Playgroup
- Happy Days Hardengreen
- Little Hawthorns
- Cranston Country Nursery
- Scallywags
- Midlothian Sure Start – Gorebridge
- Newbattle Community Nursery

Settings that had inspections from Education Scotland were:

- Lasswade Primary School Nursery
- Woodburn Primary School Nursery
- Scots Corner Early Learning and Childcare setting
- Strathesk Primary School Nursery
- Revisit to Sacred Heart Nursery class

3.1 A total of 17 CI Inspections and 5 HMIE inspections took place in the time period from August 2023 to June 2024. The reports were published in that time period and are hyperlinked in information at the end of this report for all Elected Members and Church Representatives on the Cabinet for their information. Reports are published on the Care Inspectorate website <http://www.careinspectorate.com/>.

3.2 The Care Inspectorate use “A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare” February 2022 to inspect settings. The key questions are:

- How good is our care, play and learning?
- How good is our setting?
- How good is our leadership?
- How good is our staff team?

The key quality indicators focused on are:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| QI 1.1 | Nurturing care and support |
| QI 1.3 | Play and learning |
| QI 2.2 | Children experience high quality facilities |

QI 3.1	Quality assurance and improvement are led well
QI 4.1	Staff skills and knowledge
QI 4.3	Staff deployment

3.3 Inspection Evaluations

A setting will be inspected on all indicators. A six-point scale is used to describe the quality of the setting:

6	Excellent	Outstanding or sector leading
5	Very Good	Major strengths
4	Good	Important strengths, with some areas for improvement
3	Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
2	Weak	Important weaknesses – priority action required
1	Unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses – urgent remedial action required

3.4 National Standard

In order to meet the National Standard settings must be evaluated as Good or above by the Care Inspectorate. Where a setting does not receive evaluations of good or above, the local authority places that setting in a service improvement period. The service improvement period allows the central education team officers to closely monitor progress over the period of time until the next CI inspection. Being in the service improvement period also affects the payment process for the setting.

3.5 Summary of inspection grades (See Appendix B for the inspection grades for individual settings).

Quality Indicator	Total no. of settings inspected	Excellent	Very good	Good	Adequate	Weak	Unsatisfactory
How good is our play and learning?	17	1	4	8	3	1	0
How good is our setting?	17	0	3	11	3	0	0
How good is our leadership?	17	0	6	8	3	0	0
How good is our staff team?	17	0	6	8	2	1	0

Midlothian Council officers are currently liaising with the Care Inspectorate around the evaluations for Mount Esk Nursery School. A challenge has been submitted to increase two of the evaluations from Very Good to Excellent.

3.6 The following common key strengths were indicated by the inspection teams:

How good is our care and support:

Almost all of our settings in Midlothian provide warm, nurturing support for our children. This session there has been a stronger focus on children's learning through effective interactions and questioning which will lead to better outcomes for our children.

How good is our setting:

Almost all of our indoor and outdoor spaces provide stimulating and challenging learning environments. In the best settings, the spaces are developmentally appropriate and offer a wide range of experiences to support and challenge our children.

How good is our leadership:

This has been an area of focus for our practitioners and impact of recent network and training sessions has been identified. Quality assurance processes, self-evaluation and effective monitoring of practice is beginning to improve outcomes for our children.

How good is our staff team:

The evaluations for this quality indicator show an improvement in practitioners' knowledge and skill with 32% of evaluations at very good and 88% at good. Strong attachments; good knowledge of children as learners and individuals; and an understanding of nurturing relationships were highlighted through the inspection process.

This session, 90% of the children accessing funding were attending settings that had at least good evaluations across the 4 inspection themes or the setting was still awaiting their first inspection (as of June 24).

3.7 The Care Inspectorate has a duty to support improvement and this informs how and when they make requirements and recommendations to a setting following an inspection.

- A requirement is a statement which sets out what a care service must do to improve outcomes for people who use services and must be linked to a breach in the Public Service Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, its regulations, or orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration.
- A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions that a care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service, but where failure to do so would not directly result in enforcement.

4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

4.1 Resource

Resource implications related to this report are to note the impact on the central education team staffing to support settings through a service improvement period.

4.2 **Digital**

There are no digital implications.

4.3 **Risk**

The Care Inspectorate visit a sample of Early Learning and Childcare settings each year to find out how they are performing. A report is published which informs parents about the key strengths of the setting, its capacity for further improvement and sets out the main points for action.

Following the publication of that report further visits may be made to the setting by Midlothian Council's central education officers to assist improvement and monitor progress.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of progress by Midlothian Council's central education officers is the control measure in place to reduce the risk of failure of the setting to demonstrate its capacity to improve. For funded providers a time framed improvement action plan is established in line with the partnership contracts. If a setting does not show improvement after an extended service improvement period the council would consider whether they are able to continue in partnership with the setting. Termination of a contract would affect the number of places Midlothian Council are able to offer.

4.4 **Ensuring Equalities (if required a separate IIA must be completed)**

The Improvement Plans will be screened for equalities implications.

4.5 **Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)**

See Appendix A

Appendices

Appendix A – Additional Report Implications

Appendix B – Background information/Links

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

Themes addressed in this report:

Getting it right for every Midlothian child
Improving opportunities in Midlothian

A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- Holistic Working
- Hub and Spoke
- Modern
- Sustainable
- Transformational
- Preventative
- Asset-based
- Continuous Improvement
- One size fits one
- None of the above

A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- One Council Working with you, for you
- Preventative and Sustainable
- Efficient and Modern
- Innovative and Ambitious
- None of the above

A.4 Delivering Best Value

Noted within.

A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Copies of the reports have been made available to Elected Members, parents and carers of children currently in the settings and other interested parties.

A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The provision of high quality, early learning and childcare supports the delivery of two of the GIRFEMC outcomes for 2023 to 2024:

- Children and young people are supported to be healthy, happy and reach their potential.
- Inequalities in learning outcomes have reduced.

The settings will continue to improve their work in line with their improvement plans and Midlothian Council's central education officers will continue to challenge and support the settings in relation to developing and implementing a range of quality improvement strategies.

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The Education (Scotland) Act aims to take preventative action in order to close the attainment versus deprivation gap by implementing key policies and programmes which are designed to target support to children and young people from disadvantaged communities.

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

The Improvement Plans allow for sustainable development and improvement.

APPENDIX B

Summary of Care Inspectorate Inspections

Setting	Local Authority (LA) or Funded Provider (FP)	Date of inspection	How good is our care, play and learning	How good is our setting	How good is our leadership	How good is our staff team
Chapter One Shawfair	FP	June 23	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Chapter One Treetops	FP	August 23	Good	Good	Good	Good
Cranston Country Nursery	FP	November 23	Good	Good	Good	Good
Danderhall Playgroup	FP	April 24	Good	Good	Good	Good
Kings Park Primary Nursery Class	LA	December 23	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Happy Days Dalkeith	FP	May 24	Weak	Adequate	Adequate	Weak
Happy Days Hardengreen	FP	July 23	Adequate	Good	Good	Good
Hopefield Castle (2 inspections)	FP	August 23	Adequate	Good	Adequate	Good
Little Hawthorns Loanhead	FP	November 23	Good	Adequate	Good	Very Good
Midlothian SureStart Gorebridge Family Learning Centre	FP	April 24	Good	Good	Good	Adequate
Mount Esk Nursery School	LA	July 24	Excellent	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Newbattle Community Nursery	FP	May 24	Good	Good	Good	Good
Paradykes Primary School Nursery	LA	March 24	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Scallywags	FP	February 24	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good

St Davids Primary School Nursery Class	LA	October 23	Good	Good	Very Good	Good
Tynewater Primary School Nursery Class	LA	February 24	Good	Good	Good	Good
Wizkidz	FP	January 24	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate

Summary of HMIE Inspections August 2023 – June 2024

Setting	Local Authority (LA) or Funded Provider (FP)	Date of inspection	1.3 Leadership of change	2.1 Safeguarding and child protection	2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	3.1 Ensuring well-being, equality and inclusion	3.2 Securing children's progress
Lasswade Primary School	LA	February 24	Very Good	Not graded	Good	Good	Good
Scots Corner Early Learning and Childcare	LA	June 24	Good	Not graded	Good	Very Good	Good
Strathesk Primary School Nursery Class	LA	June 24	Not graded	Not graded	Good	Not graded	Good
Woodburn Primary School Nursery Class	LA	April 24	Good	Not graded	Good	Good	Good