

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver's coat of arms. The crest is a shield divided into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant shows a sailing ship on the water. The top-right quadrant shows a stag's head with antlers. The bottom-left quadrant shows a beaver. The bottom-right quadrant shows a grizzly bear. Above the shield is a crown with four maple leaves. A banner at the bottom of the shield contains the motto "A NE FOR A".

Agenda Item 11

Summary of Scrutiny Activity – Early Learning and Childcare

Falkirk Council

Title: Summary of Scrutiny Activity – Early Learning and Childcare
Meeting: Education, Children and Young People Executive
Date: 9 November 2021
Submitted By: Director of Children's Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the performance of early learning and childcare settings that were inspected by Care Inspectorate between August 2020 and September 2021.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **The Education, Children and Young People Executive is asked to note the evaluation given to each establishment.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Early Learning and Childcare settings are subject to external scrutiny through inspection by two national bodies: Education Scotland (Her Majesty's Inspectorate) and Care Inspectorate. The outcome of inspection activity is summarised in reports giving evaluative information and gradings using the 6-point evaluation scale.
- 3.2 In March 2020, Education Scotland suspended its inspection activity. Education Scotland officers engaged with local authorities and individual settings in support of continuous improvement activity.
- 3.3 In Falkirk, Education Scotland colleagues supported the delivery of the ELC Quality Associates Programme for senior leaders in the Early learning and Childcare sector. reports provide an overall evaluation of the quality of educational establishments.
- 3.4 Between April 2020 and June 2021, Care Inspectorate continued to engage in scrutiny work of ELC settings. The focus of this scrutiny work was centred on settings' work during the pandemic. Care Inspectorate devised a quality indicator for this purpose: Key Question 5: How good is the quality of care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?

3.5 Scrutiny activity on Key Question 5 took place as follows:

- All settings were required to complete the self-evaluation toolkit on Key Question to support dialogue with Care Inspectors during regular telephone calls.
- A sample of settings across Scotland were asked to submit their completed Key Question 5 self-evaluation for evaluation. Eight settings in Falkirk were sampled as part of this process. All eight of Falkirk settings were given positive feedback with identified areas of effective practice.

3.6 Unannounced 'virtual' inspections were carried out between January 2021 and March 2021 with these moving to a blended model of on-site and virtual inspection activity from April 2021. Three Falkirk settings were inspected as part of this process. Overall evaluations were awarded as follows:

Date	Methodology	Establishment	Overall Evaluation
February 2021	All virtual	Sacred Heart	Very Good
April 2021	Blended	Glenburn	Good
September 2021	Blended	Larbert	Good

3.7 Care Inspectorate also resumed the previous model of unannounced themed inspections in August 2021. Rannoch ELC Centre so far has been the only setting inspected under this model. Evaluations are as follows:

- Quality of Care & Support Good
- Quality of Environment Adequate

3.8 In addition, and within the same timeframe, Care Inspectorate has been carrying out test inspections of its new Quality Framework. These inspections are also unannounced. Head of Muir is the only Falkirk ELC setting to have participated in this test. No benchmarked evaluations have been awarded during the testing period. Positive evaluative feedback was provided by inspectors, which is helpful in support of continuous improvement.

4. Considerations

4.1 This report provides an overview of the performance of early learning and childcare settings as judged by Care Inspectorate between August 2020 and September 2021. Full reports are available:

- Care Inspectorate <https://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/inspection-reports>

4.2 Across Falkirk establishments that were inspected during this period, almost all have been graded as good or better across the range of quality indicators.

- 4.3 Reports from settings where an evaluation with any grade of satisfactory or below will be taken to Scrutiny Committee. Improvement will be monitored closely by central officers and an action plan submitted to Care Inspectorate.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The views of children, parents and staff were routinely gathered by Care Inspectorate as part of the inspection process.

6. Implications

Financial/Resources

- 6.1 None

Legal

- 6.2 None

Risk

- 6.3 None

Equalities

- 6.4 None

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 6.5 None

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Falkirk's early learning and childcare settings, in conjunction with central support officers, continue to work together to deliver positive outcomes for children and young people.

Despite the obvious challenges presented by the pandemic, there is clear evidence of effective practice and continued innovative in key areas of performance.

Effective practice is shared widely through a range of platforms. Where areas for improvement are identified, there is appropriate support and challenge.

We are continuing to further develop and enhance our improvement strategies in support of this agenda.

Director of Children's Services

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Appendix
None

List of Background Papers:
None