

**REPORTS BY CARE INSPECTORATE AND EDUCATION SCOTLAND OF EARLY LEARNING AND
CHILDCARE PROVISIONS 2024-25**

Report by Chief Officer, Education and Children's Services

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to provide the outcomes of the Comhairle's Early Learning and Childcare settings engagement with the Care Inspectorate and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Care Inspectorate joint inspection visits from June 2024 to June 2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Settings within Comhairle nan Eilean Siar are subject to inspections from the Care Inspectorate as a single agency and, in addition, joint inspections from His Majesty's Inspectorate and Care Inspectorate together.
- 2.2 As part of their work, the Care Inspectorate regularly inspect the quality of care in ELC to ensure it meets the quality standards. Where it is found that improvement is needed, they support services to make positive changes. Inspection criteria and quality indicators are incorporated within the quality standards. The Care Inspectorate review the Quality of Care and Support; the Quality of the Environment; Quality of Staffing; and Quality of Leadership and Management. The number of indicators reviewed can vary from a minimum of two to a maximum of four during their visits.
- 2.4 Self-evaluation for self-improvement is a key feature of improving the Early Learning and Childcare experience for children and their families. Self-evaluation is at the heart of everything that settings do and focuses on the quality of provision, in relation to the national key guidance and quality frameworks promoted nationally.
- 2.5 In the period from June 2024 to June 2025, eleven Local Authority ELC settings have been inspected by the Care Inspectorate. One Local Authority Nursery was jointly inspected by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and the Care Inspectorate. One Partner Nursery and two partner Childminder have also been inspected by the Care Inspectorate during this time.
- 2.6 The full reports are available on the Care Inspectorate website <https://www.careinspectorate.com>

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle note the Report and continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings to implement continuous improvement in keeping with the Quality Frameworks.**

Contact Officer: Mary Clare Ferguson, Chief Education Officer, mcferguson@cne-siar.gov.uk
Appendix: None
Background Papers: None



IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	None
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Assets and Property	Some inspection reports have identified requirements or recommendations for improvements to settings within the estate that are being undertaken.
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	None
Equalities/Child Rights	Applicable UNCRC Articles: 28 – A Right to Education 29 – Goals of Education Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education (2017)
Corporate Strategy	Support Children, Families and Young People: - Raise ambition and attainment, in particular to address inequalities.
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	None

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The Care Inspectorate is a scrutiny body which supports improvement. They examine the quality of care in Early Learning and Childcare Settings to ensure they meet the expected high standards. From their visits if they identify areas for improvement, they will support the service to make positive changes.
- 5.2 As well as external scrutiny, self-evaluation for self-improvement is a key feature of improving the Early Learning and Childcare experience for children and their families. Self-evaluation is at the heart of everything that settings do and focuses on the quality of provision, in relation to the national key guidance and quality frameworks promoted nationally:
- Realising the Ambition – Education Scotland
 - How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare – Education Scotland
 - Quality Framework – Care Inspectorate
 - Health and Social Care Standards – Scottish Government
 - The National Standard – Scottish Government
 - The principles of 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC)
 - United Nations Convention of Rights for the Child (UNCRC).
- 5.3 Care Inspectorate Inspected against the following four key areas:
- Key question 1: How good is our care, play and learning?
 - Key question 2: How good is our setting?
 - Key question 3: How good is our leadership?
 - Key question 4: How good is our staff team?



- 5.4 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education inspected against the following quality indicators:
- Learning, teaching, and assessment.
 - Securing Children's progress.
 - Leadership of change.
 - Ensuring well-being equality and inclusion
- 5.5 Each key area/quality indicator is assessed on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent. After every inspection, an inspection report is published showing the findings.
- 5.6 Where a setting requires support the Care Inspectorate will make recommendations for improvement and issue requirements for change. The ELC Setting will be required to create an action plan and a return visit may be made to check that the recommendations have been met. The Care Inspectorate and the authority will work to support the setting, offering advice, guidance and sharing good practice to ensure positive and improved outcomes.

DETAIL

- 6.1 The settings inspected in the 2024-25 academic year were graded as follows:

Care Inspectorate

Settings /Childminders	How good is our care, play and learning?	How good is our setting?	How good is our leadership?	How good is our staff team?
Stornoway Primary Nursery	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Sgoil Àraich an Taobh Siar	Good	Good	Good	Good
Sgoil Àraich Uig	Good	Not Inspected	Adequate	Not inspected
Sgoil Àraich nan Loch	Good	Adequate	Good	Good
Sgoil Àraich an Tairbeart	Adequate	Good	Weak	Adequate
Sgoil Àraich Bhaile a'Mhanaich	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Sgoil Àraich Bhagh a'Chaisteal	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Cothrom Og Nursery (Partner)	Good	Good	Very Good	Good
Saoghal Beag Sgoil Àraich	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Sgoil Àraich an Iochdair	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Sgoil Àraich an t-Òib	Good	Good	Adequate	Good

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education

Settings	Learning, Teaching and Assessment	Securing Children's progress	Leadership change of	Ensuring wellbeing and inclusion
Stornoway Childcare Centre (Partner)	Good	Very Good	Not inspected	Not inspected
Sgoil Àraich an t-Òib	Satisfactory	Good	Good	Satisfactory



CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Early Years Service is committed to providing high quality early learning and childcare within all our settings. Inspections are an important part of our Quality Assurance process to assist us in identify areas for improvement through self-evaluation for self-improvement. Self-evaluation is a continuous, reflective process throughout our settings where settings are encouraged to examine the quality and effectiveness of their work.
- 7.2 Following the recent inspections, improvement plans have been implemented in collaboration with the Care Inspectorate, the management team, and staff to address the identified requirements and recommendations. The level of support given to the setting will be determined by both the service's inspection grades and the report.

