

**Glasgow City Council****Education, Skills and Early Years City Policy Committee****Report by Executive Director of Education Services****Contact: Jean Miller Ext: 70204****NATIONAL THEMATIC INSPECTION ON SUPPORTING IMPROVEMENT****Purpose of Report:**

To inform the committee of the outcome of the national thematic inspection carried out by HMIE on how local authorities support improvement. To make the committee aware of the feedback received during the inspection related to GCC Education Services.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to note the positive analysis of the supporting improvement work taking place across the Education Service as presented in the national thematic inspection report.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:**

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1 National Thematic Report

- 1.1 HMIE informed all local authorities (LA) in June 2024 that they would be carrying out an national thematic inspection of the role LAs play in supporting schools to improve the quality of education. The final report reflects insights gathered from all 32 local authorities, offering a comprehensive overview of the strengths, challenges, and opportunities within the education system.
- 1.2 Through the national thematic, HM Inspectors gathered evidence on the following themes:
- How local authorities support schools to improve the quality of education through implementing effective improvement planning and standards and quality reporting
 - How local authorities support schools to improve the quality of education through self-evaluation and quality assurance
 - How local authorities support schools to improve the quality of education through professional learning
 - How local authorities deliver universal support and challenge for all schools, and targeted support for specific schools to improve the quality of education
- 1.3 During the visits, inspection teams met with senior officers and central teams in local authorities to hear about local priorities and approaches to quality assurance and school improvement. HM Inspectors also met with focus groups of headteachers and school leaders, teachers, representatives of professional associations, elected members and chairs of Parent Councils.
- 1.4 The full report can be accessed using the following link;

<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-and-review/hm-chief-inspector-reports-and-guidance/national-thematic-inspections/local-authority-approaches-to-supporting-school-improvement/>

It's main recommendations are:

- Ensure that all schools receive high-quality, consistent support through robust universal provision. This should reduce variability within and across local authorities and secure equitable outcomes for learners.
- For schools requiring targeted support, implement robust action planning, monitoring and accountability. This is essential to ensure that necessary improvements for learners are secured at pace
- Prioritise leadership development for middle leaders (Principal Teachers), particularly in secondary schools, where improvement outcomes are less consistent, with a focus on the principles of self-evaluation for self-improvement.
- Establish a national professional learning programme for local authority central officers. This will help to build capacity and professional knowledge in school improvement and effective support and challenge practices.
- Develop flexible models of support that address the specific needs of rural, remote, and island schools.

- Embed local authority collaborative approaches to foster collective accountability for school improvement, ensuring these are consistently grounded in robust self-evaluation, and lead to accurate understanding of individual and collective improvement priorities.
- Improve the strategic use of data at both local authority and school levels. This includes developing staff capacity to interpret data effectively and use data-driven insights to inform self-evaluation, improvement planning, and resource allocation.

In the section **Supporting schools to improve the quality of education through professional learning** Glasgow is highlighted as an area of good practice and it states-

“The Executive Director has a clear vision to develop Glasgow City Council as a ‘networked learning city’. He has placed collaborative working at the centre of developments. Staff share this drive to work together across the city to identify priorities, find solutions and improve outcomes for all children and young people. This vision is articulated by staff at all levels. Headteachers report an increase in autonomy and feel empowered to work with others to lead and manage change and improvement. All staff acknowledge and value the role of professional learning and networking in improving the quality of education”.

2 Glasgow’s Thematic Report

2.1 As well as the national report, the lead inspector for each local authority produced a report on their findings in each of the four key areas. Glasgow’s report is a very positive one in each of the four areas. The overall analysis in the report is summarised in the following sections.

2.2 Theme 1: How do local authorities support schools to improve the quality of education through implementing effective improvement planning and standards and quality reporting?

2.2.1 The local authority has introduced new guidance to support school self-evaluation and improvement planning, which has significantly reduced staff workload, and increased confidence and skill around self-evaluation and improvement planning. Staff at all levels, report the new approach makes it easier to understand and contribute to the school improvement cycle.

2.1.2 School leaders and staff report a clearer understanding of improvement processes and have already seen positive impacts, including in the classroom, such as better attendance among targeted students. Officers have supported schools in making accurate professional judgments, especially in assessing progress in numeracy, and are piloting improvements in data accuracy. Stakeholder input, including that of children and young people, is actively used to guide improvements. While some parents are aware of school projects, many would like more information on improvement plans and how they can contribute.

2.3 Theme 2: How do local authorities support schools to improve the quality of education through self-evaluation and quality assurance?

- 2.3.1 Officers in Glasgow City Council use effective, collaborative approaches to support school staff in evaluating and assuring the quality of education. They work closely with headteachers and staff, aligning improvement efforts with local and national priorities, and promoting the “All Learners, All Achieving” agenda. Officers support professional enquiry and help staff use research and data effectively. Headteachers value the increasingly consistent support and challenge provided by Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs), noting their growing familiarity with individual schools and more probing quality assurance visits. Senior leaders, including the Executive Director, maintain a clear overview of school performance, using data to inform targeted support. School staff know the Executive Director and senior leaders expect an upward trend in attainment. Officers share good practice and innovative teaching strategies to enhance learning and improve outcomes. Glasgow’s Pedagogy Framework supports staff well to review aspects of learning and teaching. Staff use helpful self-evaluation toolkits to evaluate, and quality assure, for example differentiation and assessment. Officers ensure school staff are involved in planning and evaluating improvements, helping them identify success and address barriers to progress. Regular evaluative activities and a clear annual quality assurance calendar support this work.
- 2.3.2 Most schools perform well in national inspections. Officers analyse key inspection messages and use these to support school improvement and self-evaluation. Officers help school staff audit their own practice and school performance against national messages, standards and expectations and offer support activities.
- 2.3.3 Across Glasgow City Council, children and young people’s attainment information shows year-on-year improvements across the broad general education (BGE) and senior phase. At the senior phase, the council performs better than national and virtual comparator figures. Glasgow City Council’s exclusion figures are below national and virtual comparator figures. Attendance continues to be an area where percentages remain below those of national and virtual comparators. Officers are taking forward a range of appropriate strategies and approaches to address attendance concerns. They also lead a number of other initiatives which help headteachers and school staff to self-evaluate and quality assure. Furthermore, officers oversee particular strategic groups which involve school leaders, EdIS and school staff as appropriate. This collaboration underpins effectively Glasgow’s approach to self-evaluation, quality assurance and school improvement. School staff are empowered through the Executive Director’s collaborative style of leadership which is mirrored by the senior leadership team.

2.3.4 The Executive Director places a strong emphasis on improving outcomes for learners through a network learning system. The collaborative improvement approach, developed by Education Scotland and ADES and adapted to suit Glasgow's context, is now a core part of local authority arrangements for undertaking systematic and rigorous self-evaluation, and quality assuring school provision. Senior leaders, officers and school staff are extremely positive about this approach to improve provision stating that it enables them to share and gather effective practice in learning and teaching to improve outcomes in schools. Headteachers are clear that solutions to challenges lie in schools and that collaborative improvement enables them to identify and use these.

2.4 Theme 3: How do local authorities support schools to improve the quality of education through professional learning?

2.4.1 Glasgow City Council provides a comprehensive and responsive professional learning programme for staff at all levels, aimed at supporting school improvement and leadership development. The EdIS and GIC teams continuously adapt their offerings to meet staff needs, fostering high confidence in professional development across the workforce.

2.4.2 Headteachers meet regularly in sector and area-based groups and city conferences. They report a move within these meetings to support their increased involvement in decision-making at a strategic level. They particularly enjoy the range of external speakers who have been invited to some of their meetings. The external advisers have had a focus on leadership, curriculum and improvement planning. Headteachers report this makes them feel valued as leaders. Follow-up discussions ensure external input is translated into practical improvements, as seen in enhanced improvement planning following recent research and engagement with an external speaker.

2.4.3 Professional networks, such as Challenge Leaders of Learning (CLOL) and depute headteacher trios, foster collaboration and shared practice across schools. These initiatives have led to visible leadership development, with 46% of former CLOLs now in promoted roles. Across the local authority, staff shared the value in returning to a learning community model. Secondary schools and their associated primary schools are working together in a more planned and systematic way. This approach is further developing the collaborative approach and improving the quality and consistency of learners' experiences.

2.4.4 Glasgow City Council has a range of teams who develop and deliver professional learning with a strong focus on improving learning and teaching and raising attainment. The GIC and Glasgow Pedagogy Teams deliver both universal and targeted support, including in areas such as literacy, numeracy, and learning and teaching. Staff can participate in sessions that meet their needs and the needs of the school. Attendance at these sessions is strong, with expectations for knowledge-sharing within schools.

2.4.5 Supporting staff to share their expertise and experience is a regular feature of practice. Spotlight sessions are held online on a range of topics. The QIO team and headteachers lead short sessions on development within schools that have impacted positively on practice. School leaders are now fully involved in local authority working groups. This includes tracking and monitoring, delivery of Advanced Highers and approaches to self-evaluation. School leaders strongly value the opportunities to direct and influence work that impacts directly on schools. In particular, depute headteachers are motivated and engaged through opportunities to be involved in strategic developments.

2.5 Theme 4: How do local authorities deliver universal support and challenge for all schools, and/or targeted support for specific schools to improve the quality of education?

2.5.1 Officers, school staff, and partners deliver both universal and targeted support focused on improving outcomes for children and young people, with a strong emphasis on enhancing learning and teaching. Senior Officers promotion of a network learning organisation fosters collaboration, viewed by school staff as a key component of universal support. Effective collaboration takes place across schools, learning communities, and with external partners such as the West Partnership and Education Scotland.

2.5.2 Quality Improvement Officers are central to continuous improvement of standards and outcomes across the authority. They recognise their role in helping ensure that establishments deliver expected standards to achieve excellence and equity in education. They play a central role in school improvement, conducting planned visits focused on leadership, wellbeing, inclusion, learning, and attainment. They work closely with school staff, using established frameworks like the EdIS Supporting Improvement Framework to guide improvement efforts. QIOs also support staff through mentoring, sharing best practices, and providing valuable insights during inspections. Their contributions are well regarded and support a shared goal of “All Learners, All Achieving.”

- 2.5.3 Across all sectors, officers use information from various data effectively to identify schools and departments where targeted support is required in bespoke ways. Staff who met with HM Inspectors spoke positively about this support, including where officers have highlighted concerns. Education authority data shows the attainment of specific cohorts of children and young people is improving as a result of interventions and targeted support. Officers also assist staff in moderating assessments, with QAMSOs supporting data reliability and boosting staff confidence in assessment accuracy. The Glasgow Pedagogy Team enhances this with sector-wide and targeted support in literacy, numeracy, and digital learning.
- 2.5.4 Officers target increasingly helpful support to schools when inspections are announced, for example in child protection and data analysis. Following inspections, officers work well with individual establishment staff to address aspects for development and improvement. A number of staff work alongside HM Inspectors as Associate Assessors. Officers also use their skills very well to help support school improvement.
- 2.5.5 The new Supporting Improvement Framework includes the new focused school reviews, based on data and evidence. These reviews result in actionable plans, followed by continued QIO engagement. Family learning has been an important focus over a number of years. There is clear evidence of the positive impact of this for children and young people's progress, as highlighted in a recent HM Inspection of Community Learning and Development.
- 2.5.6 The council's Collaborative Improvement approach, launched in November 2023, empowers staff through professional dialogue and shared responsibility for improvement. Follow-up actions are jointly developed and supported by QIOs and other central teams. Through a networked learning and collaborative approach, the Executive Director and senior leaders are enabling a culture of inquiry, innovation and exploration. School staff view this as very positive and making a significant difference to helping improve outcomes for children and young people.

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 The national thematic inspection gave Education Services an opportunity to have an external partner scrutinise the work we are doing to support improvement in our schools and more fundamentally, how this impacts on improving outcomes for children and young people. It was a very thorough process which heard the views of a range of stakeholders and offered helpful advice on how to move forward in some areas. It resulted in an extremely positive report which highlighted many areas of very good practice in our city schools, support organisations and strategic leaders at all levels. One of the strongest messages from the inspection is that of how the collaborative culture developed through our 'All Learners, All Achieving' strategy empowers staff, enhances leadership capacity, and strengthens the consistency and quality of education across the city.

4 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: None

Legal: None

Personnel: None

Procurement: None

Council Strategic Plan: Grand Challenge 2 – Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens.
Mission 3: Raise attainment amongst Glasgow’s children and young people.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council’s Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.

Outcome 14: Glasgow City Council (Education Services) has continued to improve outcomes in relation to attainment and achievement for children and young people including those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, those for whom English is not their first language, those who identify as black and minority ethnic, and disabled children and young people.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

Positive impact since by supporting schools effectively we are more likely to be successful in improving outcomes for children and young people.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

The will help our city to challenge socio-economic disadvantage by continuing to focus on supporting schools to improve outcomes for our children and young people..

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

No

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal? None

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target? No

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report
Y/N No

If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to note the positive analysis of the supporting improvement work taking place across the Education Service as presented in the national thematic inspection report.