

21 January 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In November 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate visited Shortlees Primary School and Early Childhood Centre. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- There is a very strong sense of teamwork amongst staff. Led ably by the headteacher and senior leaders, staff develop very positive relationships with children and their families. In the school, this is resulting in a calm and purposeful climate for learning.
- Children are very proud of their school. Almost all children interact well with each other, staff and visitors.
- Across the school and early childhood centre, staff have developed strong approaches to ensuring equity. These are having a positive impact on children's attainment and achievement.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from East Ayrshire Council.

- Staff in the primary school should continue to raise attainment by developing further their approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.
- Staff in the early childhood centre and at early primary stages should continue to review children's learning spaces and evaluate the balance of child-led and adult-directed learning opportunities. They should maximise children's independence, creativity and curiosity and allow them to follow their own interests and take greater ownership of their learning.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4<sup>th</sup> edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

## Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Shortlees Primary School and Early Childhood Centre

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
<b>Learning, teaching and assessment</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Raising attainment and achievement</b>	<b>good</b>
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale</a>	

Quality indicators for the early childhood centre	Evaluation
<b>Learning, teaching and assessment</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Securing children's progress</b>	<b>good</b>
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale</a>	

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the early learning and childcare setting using the quality indicators from [A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare](#). The framework supports settings, providers and inspectors to assess what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each setting, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well early learning and childcare settings are doing. The Care Inspectorate evaluations are also used by local authorities when considering how settings are meeting the national standard for funded early learning and childcare.

## The Care Inspectorate's evaluations for the early learning and childcare setting are:

Detailed evaluations	Evaluation
<b>Key question 1: How good is our care, play and learning?</b>	<b>adequate</b>
<b>1.1 Nurturing care and support</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>1.3 Play and learning</b>	<b>adequate</b>
<b>Key question 3: How good is our leadership?</b>	<b>adequate</b>
<b>3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well</b>	<b>adequate</b>

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no areas for improvement. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and two areas for improvement.

### Areas for improvement made by the Care Inspectorate for the early learning and childcare setting.

As a result of the inspection, the following areas for improvement have been made.

#### Area for improvement 1

To improve the quality of children's experiences, staff should ensure that children are meaningfully involved in leading their play and learning through a balance of planned and spontaneous experiences and resources. Children's choice should be promoted, and their learning and development extended through provocations (resources or activities that promote thoughts, creativity and learning) and skilful staff interactions.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors' (HSCS 1.25).

## Area for improvement 2

To support continuous improvement of the service, management should continue to develop their quality assurance processes, including monitoring and improvement planning. This should include, but is not limited to, monitoring of medication, accident/incident and risk management, infection control, play spaces and planning for children's learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17) and 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This letter and a more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:

[Shortlees Primary School and Early Childhood Centre | Inspection Report | Education Scotland](#)

## What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. East Ayrshire Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

As a result of the Care Inspectorates findings and evaluations, further scrutiny intervention will be considered to support improvements in the early learning and childcare setting.

Stuart Cathro  
HM Inspector

Eileen McColgan  
Care Inspector