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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Education &amp; Communities Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>3 September 2024</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Ruth Binks Corporate Director Education, Communities &amp; Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>EDUCOM/30/24/MR</b>
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Education Scotland Inspection Report – St Stephen’s High School</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform the Education & Communities Committee of the outcome of the Education Scotland full inspection of St Stephen’s High School.
- 1.3 St Stephen’s High School was inspected February 2024, using Education Scotland’s full inspection model. The inspection focused on progress being made within the school relating to the leadership of change, the quality of learning and teaching, ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion and how well they raise attainment, securing progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
- 1.4 The report published on the 14th of May 2024 outlines four key strengths of the work of the school which includes:
- The highly effective leadership of the headteacher is supporting the culture of improvement within the school. His leadership is raising the aspirations of staff and young people.
  - Staff use a range of approaches to learning and teaching to engage young people in their learning. Young people know the purpose of learning and what they need to do to be successful.
  - Young people have a strong sense of belonging and feel valued and included in the life and work of the school. They benefit from nurturing, positive and respectful relationships with their teachers and peers based on Gospel values.
  - Strong attainment for leavers and for those at S4 in both literacy and numeracy.
- 1.5 Education Scotland highlighted four areas for improvement which include:
- Staff should continue to build on their leadership capacity. They should actively seek ways to consistently contribute to aspects of school improvement.

- Teachers should ensure they plan tasks and activities that are set at the right level of difficulty for all young people. This includes providing greater levels of challenge for young people when appropriate.
- Senior leaders and pupil support teachers should ensure they support young people better to improve their wellbeing. This should also include strengthening approaches to support planning to ensure that young people meet their personal targets.
- Review the curriculum to ensure that young people are building on prior learning more effectively and benefit from a wider range of courses and programmes in the senior phase. This has the potential to raise attainment by S5 and S6.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Education & Communities Committee notes the Education Scotland report on St Stephen's High School.

**Ruth Binks**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Education, Communities & Organisational Development**

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 As part of Education Scotland’s inspection programme for 2023/24, St Stephen’s High School was inspected in February 2024. Education Scotland staff and associate assessors from other education authorities, evaluated the education provision provided within the school.
- 3.2 The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages, identified key strengths and areas for improvement.

The framework for this inspection included reviewing quality indicators which enabled Education Scotland to evaluate:

- 1.3 Leadership of change
- 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment
- 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion
- 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- 3.3 The inspection team also reviewed QI 2.1 Safeguarding and Child protection, 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways and 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement. These QIs are not graded as those above.
- 3.4 The report was published on 14 May 2024. It has been issued to staff, parents, local elected members and the Convener and Vice-Convener (Education).

### **4.0 HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY MESSAGE**

- 4.1 St Stephen’s High School has received a positive report overall from Education Scotland which outlines the progress made in the key areas outlined above. There are four areas for improvement across the school as noted in 1.5 which endorse work already under way and support the school to continue to progress these.
- 4.2 In assessing the quality indicators, Education Scotland found them to be the following:
- |     |  |              |
|-----|--|--------------|
| 1.3 | Leadership of change                       | Good         |
| 2.3 | Learning, teaching and assessment          | Good         |
| 3.1 | Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion | Satisfactory |
| 3.2 | Raising attainment and achievement         | Good         |
- 4.3 The inspection team found that the headteacher provided highly effective leadership and was held in high regard by staff, learners and parents across the school community.
- 4.4 They found that the school leadership team was benefiting from clearer direction and leadership and now holds key strategic responsibilities which support the implementation of areas of focus within the school improvement plan. Senior leaders were collaborating closely with middle leaders to effect improvement in departments and faculties. Staff said they felt empowered to lead improvement, particularly within their curriculum areas.
- 4.5 Senior leaders and staff were working well together and have established a strong sense of community in a nurturing, inclusive and supportive learning environment. Almost all staff felt valued and indicated that the school’s vision and refreshed values were beginning to underpin their work more consistently in classes.
- 4.6 The inspection found that in almost all classes, young people benefitted from positive and respectful relationships with staff and each other. There was a calm, orderly and purposeful learning environment in the school which supported young people well to participate in their learning. Young people appreciated the support they receive from teachers and other staff. They valued the support offered to them through the extensive range of study support programmes and wider learning activities beyond the timetabled school day

- 4.7 In almost all lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions were clear and the purpose of learning was shared with young people. Teachers have developed a "holding screen" which provides an overview of learning intentions, success criteria, skills and alignment to rights of the child. At the start of the lesson, teachers displayed these for young people.
- 4.8 Inspectors found that the wellbeing of young people is supported by positive, caring and nurturing relationships across the school community. Positive relationships have been enhanced by the recently developed 'Nurturing Relationships for Success' policy. Young people felt ownership of this policy, having been involved in its creation alongside parents and staff. Most young people felt that staff and their peers treat them fairly and with respect. Almost all young people felt that staff help them to be responsible for their own behaviour.
- 4.9 Staff and young people are at an early stage of developing a shared understanding of the language of wellbeing and the wellbeing indicators. A whole-school approach to the use of wellbeing indicators has the potential to help staff to monitor all young people's wellbeing and evidence wellbeing outcomes.
- 4.10 The Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme does not include clear and progressive learning across the BGE and is not on offer in the senior phase. As a result, young people are not building on their prior learning well and there are gaps in their learning. Young people are unable to articulate how they are progressing with wellbeing or how to take steps to improve their outcomes.
- 4.11 The school is further developing their approach to tracking and monitoring the needs of young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN). Support plans should contain appropriately specific and measurable targets to ensure young people are receiving the right level of support at the right time.
- 4.12 Staff adopt a nurturing approach to resolving issues of disruptive behaviour. Professional learning on 'trauma informed practice' is resulting in fewer immediate referrals of young people directly to senior leaders. There has been a significant reduction in exclusions in the latest academic session 2023-24.

#### 4.13 **Next steps**

The Education Service will work with the Senior Leadership Team at St Stephen's, including the newly appointed Headteacher, to ensure that the 2024/25 school improvement plan addresses the areas for improvement as noted on the Education Scotland report. There is now follow up visit relating to this inspection; however, the school will report on its overall progress as well as progress towards the areas for improvement in the Standards and Quality report for 2023/24 and again in 2024/25. Both reports are shared with parents and available from the school's website.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Financial		N
Legal/Risk		N
Human Resources		N
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)		N
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		N
Environmental & Sustainability		N
Data Protection		N

## 5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

## 5.3 Legal/Risk

N/A.

## 5.4 Human Resources

N/A.

## 5.5 Strategic

N/A.

## 5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

### (a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
N	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required

### (b) Fairer Scotland Duty

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
N	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty.

## 5.7 Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
N	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

## 5.8 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
N	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

## 5.9 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
N	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

## 6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 N/A.

## 7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 See all documents relating to this inspection here: [St Stephen's High School | Inspection Report | Education Scotland](#)