
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	3 September 2024
Report By:	Ruth Binks Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/32/24/MR
Contact Officer:	Michael Roach Head of Education	Contact No:	01475 712891
Subject:	Education Scotland Inspection Report – St Columba’s High School		

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 short inspection of St Columba’s High School.
- 1.3 St Columba’s High School was inspected in March 2024, using Education Scotland’s short inspection model. The inspection focused on progress being made within the school relating to the quality of learning and teaching and how well the school raises attainment and secures progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
- 1.4 The report published on 14 May 2024 outlines four key strengths of the work of the school which includes:
- The headteacher, senior leaders and staff have worked very successfully to develop a common approach to planning learning, teaching and assessment. This results in young people building on their prior learning well with tasks and activities being set at the right level of difficulty for young people.
 - Staff have developed high quality, creative and engaging approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. As a result, young people are engaged and highly motivated in their learning.
 - Staff check for understanding and use this information very well to support young people’s learning and attainment.
 - Young people benefit from a very extensive range of activities and programmes which support wider achievement within school. Young people’s achievements are encouraged, recorded and celebrated by school staff very well as a central part of the school’s culture.
- 1.5 Education Scotland highlighted two areas for improvement which include:
- Continue to build on highly effective practice in learning, teaching and assessment.
 - Continue, as planned, to improve the quality of passes for young people in the senior phase.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Education & Communities Committee notes the Education Scotland report on St Columba'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 Columba's High School was inspected in March 2024. Education Scotland staff, alongside 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:

- 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment
- 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

3.3 The inspection team also reviewed QI 2.1 Safeguarding and Child protection. This QI is 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 MESSAGES

4.1 St Columba's High School has received a very positive report overall from Education Scotland which outlines the progress made in two key areas. There are two 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. As well as this, two areas of good practice have been identified and these will be written up by Education Scotland and shared nationally.

4.2 In assessing the quality indicators, Education Scotland found them to be the following:

2.3	Quality of learning and teaching	Very Good
3.2	Raising attainment and achievement	Very Good

4.3 The inspection team found that the headteacher, supported well by three senior leaders, has worked very well with staff, young people and the wider school community to develop a positive, nurturing and inclusive climate for learning.

4.4 They found that in almost all lessons there is a calm and supportive learning environment where young people are eager to learn. Almost all young people are well behaved, courteous and are proud of their school.

4.5 The 'St Columba's lesson' model is fully embedded across the school. The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, has worked with young people and staff to develop this very strong approach to planning consistently high-quality experiences for young people.

4.6 In 2022/23, almost all young people achieved Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) third level or better in literacy and third level or better in numeracy by the end of S3. These high standards have been maintained over time. Sustained and collaborative planning of progression through the BGE is supporting strong attainment in the BGE. Very strong curricular transition between St Columba's High School and its cluster primaries is allowing teachers to set appropriate expectations and standards from S1. This work is one of the areas of good practice referred to in 4.1.

4.7 Almost all young people benefit from one or more wider achievement activities run by school staff. The number of young people involved has risen over time and it is an important strength in the school's provision of high-quality experiences for young people.

- 4.8 Teachers have developed an innovative approach to 'skills for the future'. As part of this, all learners in S3 choose a selection of bespoke skills-based courses which are focused on developing the skills required in the future workplace. Young people are confident in talking about general and specific skills they are developing across the wider curricular offer.
- 4.9 Almost all young people have moved onto a positive destination in 2022/23 and for each of the previous four years. Young people are supported well to these destinations and young people benefit from a culture of high expectations. As a result of the school's very strong and targeted focus on equity, all leavers in SIMD deciles 1 and 2, all those in receipt of free school meals, and all those with an additional support need moved onto a positive destination in 2022/23.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

SUBJECT	YES	NO
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.
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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 Columba's High School | Inspection Report | Education Scotland](#)