

Dunbeg Primary Pre Five Unit Day Care of Children

Dunbeg School
Etive Road
Dunbeg
OBAN
PA37 1QF

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 January 2025

Service provided by:
Argyll and Bute Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003373

Service no:
CS2003014641

About the service

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 01 April 2011. The service provider is Argyll and Bute Council.

Dunbeg Primary Pre Five Unit is a daycare of children service. The service operates from their own modular building and enclosed outdoor space within the grounds of the primary school, in the village of Dunbeg, close to Oban. The service operates during school term times.

1. To provide a care service to a maximum of 41 children not yet attending primary school at any one time.
 - no more than five are aged two years to under three years and;
 - no more than 36 are aged three years to those not yet attending primary school full time.

2. Adult:child ratios will be:

two to under three's - 1:5

three and over - 1:8 if the children attend more than four hours per day, or 1:10 if the children attend for less than four hours per day.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, carried out by two early learning and childcare inspectors, which took place on 29 and 30 January 2025. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Observed practice and daily life.
- Spoke with children using the service.
- Reviewed documents.
- Spoke with management and staff.
- Sent online questionnaires to parents/carers to gather their views and feedback.

Key messages

- Children were experiencing warm nurturing care and support.
- Staff engaged skilfully with children to reassure and support their play.
- Children were having fun and enjoyed seeking out resources that captured their interest, imagination and natural curiosity both indoors and outside.
- Children's personal plans should be further developed and consolidated.
- Planning approaches should be more child centred and responsive to children's individual needs.
- The service communicated and engaged well with families.
- The service had a dedicated staff team who communicated and deployed themselves very well throughout the day to support positive transitions, supervise children's safety and welfare and support their play experiences.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

We were able to see children experiencing warm, nurturing care and support. Staff knew children very well and had developed trusted and loving relationships with them through responsive, sensitive interactions that supported their wellbeing and helped them feel valued, safe and secure. A parent commented; "[My child] feels safe and supported and is happy. [They are] excited to go each day and comes back with [lots of] stories. I feel staff know [them] well and foster [their] natural curiosity while supporting [their] development in an engaging environment." Children were happy and confident about approaching staff for help. Staff were respectful of children's privacy and dignity when meeting their personal care needs. Staff engaged skilfully with children to reassure and support their play, encouraging them to make choices, share, follow their interests and promote friendships. Parents told us on their child's behalf; "I feel safe and I learn a lot", "It's fun and the staff are nice and caring" and "I like making fruit kebabs and playing with my friends".

During the inspection we discussed arrangements for children to sleep and rest. To support and enhance their emotional security, we would suggest that further evaluation of the room layout and resources is undertaken, to ensure children have access to quiet, comfortable spaces should they need to sleep and rest.

Children enjoyed a positive lunch time experience with a hot nutritious meal that was nicely prepared and presented. They received warm and nurturing support from staff who were considerate of children's needs and sat alongside them during lunch, encouraging friendly social interactions, developing conversations and supporting children well when they asked or needed help. Choice and independence was being promoted at all times. For example, children were encouraged to self-serve, practising their fine motor skills with tongs and using cutlery. They were given choice about where they would like to sit and followed a routine of washing their hands and clearing away after they had finished lunch. The environment was unhurried, relaxed and social. Staff sensitively supported children with specific dietary needs with carefully thought out arrangements that protected their rights to dignity, equality and inclusion.

We could see staff were continuing to routinely collect, record and review information to support children's health, welfare and safety needs, in partnership with parents and working alongside other professionals. A parent said; "I feel like they know my [child] well and are very aware of [their] personality, strengths, interests and areas for development". However, as highlighted from the last inspection, when we sampled children's personal plans we found that there still needed to be a stronger focus on children's support strategies and next steps linked to clearer progression pathways for their play and learning. For example, following assessments from specialists, support strategies were not always put in place that were accessible to staff and parents, could be easily linked to outcomes and used to inform planning, progression and next steps. It was also difficult to identify how this was reflected and recorded in children's learning journals. As a result, further work needs to be done to streamline and record the information that identifies and supports the 'golden thread' of children's progress, play and learning. This area for improvement will be repeated. **(See Area for Improvement 1)**

The service was communicating with parents through regular conversations, meetings with staff and other professionals who may be involved in a child's care and support. For example, the health visitor and educational psychologist. A parent commented; "The staff speak to me everyday, always update on how the day has gone, [they are] very friendly and inviting and have a great relationship with my child. [My child] has happy story's about all the staff at nursery. They always help with any issues and work with us to make sure my [child] is constantly building on [their] skills."

As highlighted from the last inspection, medicine administration procedures and storage were now in line with current good guidance. This was being monitored and audited in line with our recently updated guidance 'Management of Medication in Daycare and Childminding Services'.

Accident and incidents were being recorded and shared with parents. The head teacher continued to implement a monthly audit to track any recurring incidents. We discussed how this could be developed further to identify more readily any areas of action.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were having great fun and enjoyed seeking out resources that captured their interest, imagination and natural curiosity. For example, exploring and experimenting with real life resources in the home corner, potion station and mud kitchen. They could enjoy free flow play both indoors and outside. Staff supported children's emotional resilience through holistic and nurturing approaches to their wellbeing and right to play. A parent commented; "We are delighted with the positive start our child has had to [their] education journey and how excited and enthralled [they are] to learn in an environment where every step and achievement is celebrated equally."

Children were happy, eager to play and engaged well with the learning experiences on offer. For example, discovery play, role play, sensory and messy play and problem solving. The younger children had a range of play opportunities that were age and stage appropriate. For example, transporting schemas outdoors with wheelbarrows and block play. We observed children engaging in a variety of emergent and early numeracy, literacy and language activities. For example, songs and rhymes, reading books, mark making and concepts of volume during messy play. One parents said; "There are always new ideas for play at nursery with messy play and arts and crafts, my [child] also enjoys playing hairdressers where they get their hair done and play with the dolls". A parent told us on their child's behalf; "The outdoor area is lots of fun. Everyone is friendly. [I like] the breakfast snack and playing lots of games. The [staff] read me lots of books."

As highlighted from the last inspection, we were able to see that children were more involved in planning and making informed choices about leading their play and learning. Staff were using their knowledge and expertise, to meet children's needs through meaningful interactions, extending children's thinking and widening their skills. We were confident that staff would continue to embed their skills to support children in developing their curiosity, creativity and leading on their play and learning. A parent told us; "Our child has a love of reading and interest in text and has been involved in group activities that foster this love and support her with developing fine motor and mark making. [They have] been so proud and delighted to share these skills with us at home."

When we sampled the setting's approach to planning we found that although these approaches were child led, they needed to be more child centred and responsive to children's individual needs. For example, children's personal information folders and focussed child observations had some identified targets and next steps in place.

However, it was difficult to identify how the planning process was supporting and facilitating play and learning opportunities for children to be challenged, reach their goals and achieve their full potential. Staff need to carry out more meaningful observations to assess and identify the progression and next steps in individual children's play and learning. **(See Area for Improvement 1)**

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, development needs and progress, personal plans should be further developed and streamlined with a focus on detailed support strategies and next steps linked to clearer progression pathways.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15)

And

'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

2. To support children's play and learning and enable them to achieve their full potential, management and staff should:

- Review and further develop their approaches to child-centred planning, by ensuring appropriate levels of challenge and depth in play and learning that supports children's curiosity and creativity and enables them to lead on their play and learning.

- Consider how individualisation is captured within planning. In addition, planning should be closely linked to observations in children's profiles where meaningful next steps should be recorded. These should be monitored to ensure consistent quality of written observations.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which states that:

'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

And

'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The nursery setting had a secure door entry system and a signing in and out procedure in place. The environment was being regularly maintained and staff ensured resources were suitable and accessible to the children.

Furniture was child sized and there were some areas with soft furnishings for relaxation and comfort. Children had space to play in small groups and by themselves. There were sufficient chairs for children to be seated together during lunch.

As highlighted from the last inspection, we were able to see children benefitting from more opportunities through free play, open ended materials and loose parts play, to promote their curiosity and imagination, their sense of wellbeing, wonder and adventure. As part of the ongoing review and evaluation of children's play spaces, full consideration and account was now being taken of the experiences offered to the younger children.

Children relished being outdoors and were able to free flow outside to a recently refurbished outdoor space, that provided opportunities for risky play enablement through climbing, balancing and building with natural materials and loose parts play resources. This was supporting children's independence, awareness of risk and sense of responsibility. A parent commented; "[My child] is really enjoying the new outdoor area and the opportunity to move, take safe risks and develop her balance and jumping skills through games and obstacle activities set up by staff". We would encourage the continued development of their outdoor space through self evaluation and in partnership with children and their families.

The head teacher confirmed risk assessments for the environment and individual children would continue to be reviewed and updated to reflect the current facilities and potential risks.

Facilities to support children's personal care needs were respectful of their privacy and dignity. Staff and children were practising appropriate infection prevention and control practice. For example, children were encouraged to wash their hands on returning from outdoors and before eating with staff monitoring this to reduce spreading infection.

How good is our leadership?**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are well led

The service had made significant progress in almost all the areas for improvement we identified from the last inspection, demonstrating a strong commitment and capacity for improvement to achieve the best outcomes they could for children and their families.

The staff team participated well during the inspection process, engaging knowledgably in discussions about their practice and leadership roles. They were committed to their continued professional development, with training and good practice guidance helping them develop in their roles.

The head teacher and staff were establishing processes for self-evaluation to critically reflect on their work, through staff meetings, day to day discussions and reflections on children's experiences.

This was having a positive impact on outcomes for children and families, with staff having the opportunity to consider the child's voice through planning and the development of the service. Parents told us on their child's behalf; "I would like to play more with the building construction" and "[I would like] to paint the walls pretty colours!"

As highlighted from the last inspection, to further support and sustain continuous improvement, the head teacher was implementing and continuing to embed robust systems to monitor and evaluate all aspects of their service delivery, including a process to track staff's registration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). We would encourage the service to use the feedback following inspection, in conjunction with 'Realising the Ambition' and the Care Inspectorate: 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding, and school aged childcare', as tools for further development of self-evaluation and improvement, with high quality play placed at the heart of their improvement planning. This would further strengthen the positive impact on outcomes for children and families.

The head teacher and staff communicated and engaged well with families. Parents were given regular updates on their child's development and learning through daily conversations and planned consultations. Parents commented; "[Staff are] always friendly and welcoming [and] available to chat to about anything regarding my children and how they are getting on and any concerns", "The nursery has a regular stay and play so we can see what they are playing with and can have a chat to staff" and "Staff will always ensure that our child's achievements are celebrated with us at handover time."

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff were flexible, committed and working very well together. The nursery was appropriately staffed to meet the needs of the children. Very effective use was being made of the differing experience, knowledge and skills of the staff group to ensure children's experiences across the whole day were positive. For example, staff were actively taking the lead on their champion areas to support and sustain quality engagement with children. These leadership roles and responsibilities had been developed in consultation with the head teacher, with careful consideration being given to staff strengths and preferences to support and develop the skills mix within the team.

As highlighted from the last inspection, the head teacher had reviewed and was closely monitoring the deployment of staff. For example, over the lunchtime period staff breaks were planned to minimise the impact on children whilst enabling staff to rest and be refreshed. As a result, we were able to see staff communicating and deploying themselves very effectively throughout the day to support positive transitions, supervise children's safety and welfare and support their play experiences.

The service had a dedicated staff team that was very responsive to children's needs. They felt well supported by the head teacher. A positive atmosphere of mutual trust and respect was promoting a happy, secure and supportive environment for children and their families. A parent commented; "The staff are always great with my [child], I always feel [they are] safe, happy and cared for." Staff also told us; "My relationship with parents and carers is of paramount importance. By working together, we can create a positive and nurturing environment that supports each individual child" and "We are a brilliant setting with a fantastic team and happy nurtured children and I'm proud to be a part off it!"

Staff were all registered with the SSSC and undertaking qualifications where necessary to meet their conditions of registration. Regular team meetings enabled staff to talk about their work, discuss children's learning and progress and plan opportunities that were appropriate to children's age, interests and stages of development.

Annual appraisals provided an opportunity for staff to reflect on their role and discuss plans for future learning. Through the implementation of the national induction resource the head teacher was supporting staff to refresh and further develop their skills and knowledge.

We would also suggest staff would benefit from regular individual support and supervision sessions, in addition to their annual appraisals to support their wellbeing and ongoing professional development.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To support children's wellbeing, development needs and progress, personal plans should be further developed and streamlined with a focus on detailed support strategies and next steps linked to clearer progression pathways.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15) and 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

This area for improvement was made on 19 May 2023.

Action taken since then

See comments under quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support. This area for improvement will be repeated.

Previous area for improvement 2

To keep children safe and healthy, management should review the storage and recording of medication procedures and ensure medication is audited, in line with current guidance.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

This area for improvement was made on 19 May 2023.

Action taken since then

See comments under quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support. **This area for improvement has been met.**

Previous area for improvement 3

To further support children's play and learning staff should:

- Involve children more in planning and making informed choices about leading their play and learning.
- Continue to build as a team on their experience and expertise, to fully meet children's needs through high quality interactions, extending children's thinking and widening their skills to support them in developing their curiosity, creativity and leading on their play and learning.

This is to ensure care, play and learning is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

This area for improvement was made on 19 May 2023.

Action taken since then

See comments under quality indicator 1.3: play and learning. **This area for improvement has been met.**

Previous area for improvement 4

To support positive outcomes and improve all the children's play experiences management and staff should:

- Provide children with more opportunities through free play, open ended materials and loose parts play, to promote their curiosity and imagination, their sense of wellbeing, wonder and adventure.
- Continue to review and evaluate the layout of children's play spaces both indoors and outside with full consideration being given to the experiences for the younger children.

This is to ensure care, play and learning is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27); and 'As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment' (HSCS 1.32).

This area for improvement was made on 19 May 2023.

Action taken since then

See comments under quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities. **This area for improvement has been met.**

Previous area for improvement 5

To further support and sustain continuous improvement throughout the service, the head teacher should embed robust systems that include the tracking of staff registrations with the SSSC, to monitor and evaluate all aspects of their service delivery.

This is to ensure management and leadership is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11) and 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 19 May 2023.

Action taken since then

See comments under quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are well led. **This area for improvement has been met.**

Previous area for improvement 6

To ensure positive outcomes for children management should monitor and review the deployment of staff in general and over key times, for example at lunchtimes.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15) and 'People have time to support and care for me and to speak with me' (HSCS 3.16).

This area for improvement was made on 19 May 2023.

Action taken since then

See comments under quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment. **This area for improvement has been met.**

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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