

Kilchoan Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Kilchoan Primary School
Kilchoan
Acharacle
PH36 4LH

Telephone: 01972 510 258

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 March 2025

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003017222

About the service

Kilchoan Primary School Nursery is situated within the village of Kilchoan on the west coast. The nursery building is attached to the Primary School which is on the edge of the village. The nursery consists of a playroom with kitchen area, office facilities and toilets. The playroom opened directly onto a fully enclosed outdoor space to the rear of the building which was well used by the children. Children could also access the tarred playground to the front of the school and nursery. The service also made good use of the local area for walks.

The manager explained that work is scheduled to take place to upgrade the nursery and improve the facilities. It is hoped that this will be completed by the start of the new academic year.

The service is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a daycare of children service for up to 12 children not yet attending primary school at any one time of whom no more than two are two - three years of age.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 13 March 2025 between 10:00 and 15:15. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this 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:

- spoke with three child using the service
- reviewed feedback from parents
- spoke with two staff and the manager
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced very warm, caring and nurturing support from staff who knew them very well.
- Children were very happy and engaged and having fun taking part in various activities both indoors and outdoors.
- Children's choices were supported well through a balance of planned and spontaneous play experiences and resources.
- Staff had developed good relationships with parents who felt well informed and involved in their child's experiences and learning.
- Staff worked well as a team and were committed to providing a service of a high standard.
- The manager and staff were committed to the ongoing development of the service.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very 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?

5 - Very Good

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

Quality Indicator 1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

Children were all very happy, settled and having fun as they played alongside or with friends. We observed that positive relationships had been formed between staff and the children. Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to their personal care and learning needs. This contributed to children feeling happy and secure. There was a great deal of chatter and laughter between the children and the staff. We saw staff being very nurturing, taking time to listen to and respond to children, and offering comfort, cuddles and reassurance when needed. This contributed to positive attachments being formed and children having a sense of belonging and feeling valued.

Staff were welcoming and friendly with an enabling attitude and knew children very well. To support children to be happy and confident, staff had effectively used personal plans to enhance individualised care, support and learning opportunities. Personal plans provided information to support individual children and were used consistently by staff. They were completed and routinely reviewed in partnership with parents to ensure that they reflected children's current needs and the strategies required to meet these needs. Staff could confidently discuss children and their individual needs and the strategies to support them.

Where children required further support, staff had established good working relationships with other agencies and were confident in their role in liaising with them. They worked closely with other professionals to ensure consistency in their approach. As a result, children experienced a collaborative approach to their care and development.

Children and families benefited from a service that valued the importance of establishing strong working relationships with families to support children. This ensured that children received appropriate levels of consistent care and support. There was daily communication with families at drop off and collection time, and there were opportunities for parents to spend time in the nursery. Parents were very positive about the level of information they received at collection time and stated that they were actively encouraged to give feedback and ask questions. Parents commented 'a strong 'meet and greet' and feedback at the end of the day. Good communication via emails'.

Children experienced calm, relaxed and sociable lunch and snack times where they were encouraged to develop important independence skills. The nursery children had their lunch with the primary children. Staff were focused on the children during this time and provided appropriate levels of individualised support and supervision. Staff were aware of any allergies or dietary needs which helped them to keep children safe. Staff sat and had their lunch with the children which provided opportunities to form and maintain relationships, and support language and communication skills.

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Play and learning opportunities impacted positively on children's development, health, wellbeing and happiness. For the majority of the time, children benefitted from uninterrupted play, allowing them to become absorbed in what they were doing.

The children were having fun and were engaged as they experimented and explored with a good balance of planned and spontaneous play opportunities which were in response to their interests. Children were offered good opportunities to be imaginative and creative in their explorative play and investigative learning. Play spaces were well resourced and promoted learning through real life experiences. Good use was being made of loose parts and open ended resources to enrich children's play and learning. We observed children being very happy, engaged and leading their play and learning throughout the session. The children particularly enjoyed spending time outdoors.

Planning approaches were child led and responsive to children's interests which supported children to feel involved and empowered. Carefully considered wall displays allowed the children to see what their current interests were and good use of the children's own art work, mark making and photographs brought the learning to life for the children. The children proudly pointed out which pictures were theirs. Children were given ownership of their play and encouraged to be independent. Staff supported children, allowing them to plan, lead their play and make choices at their own pace. This helped children to feel secure and settled. Children's successes and achievements were recognised and celebrated, helping them develop a sense of pride and support their self-esteem.

Staff offered individualised support to children during their play, being aware of when to engage and when to step back. Staff understood their role in supporting children's development and were adding further value to children's play and learning through their carefully considered interactions. They naturally engaged effectively with children and showed genuine interest in the children and what they were doing. Staff were able to support, extend and challenge children's thinking. Staff interactions encouraged children to think independently and to reflect. As a result, children were respected, valued and achieving.

We recognised good quality play, learning and development was taking place during the inspection. Children had the opportunity to develop their numeracy and literacy skills and mathematical language while taking part in activities across the setting. For example, staff made good use of songs, rhymes and reading books to encourage children's vocabulary and language skills. Children also had the opportunity to develop their numeracy and literacy skills and mathematical language while playing with real life and open ended resources across the setting.

Families were meaningfully engaged in their child's play, learning and development. Staff ensured that parents were well informed of children's learning, progression and next steps and were encouraged to give their feedback. Regular updates and photographs were posted on the online platform and shared with parents. These updates were very much appreciated by parents. One parent commented 'I stay up to date with her class dojo and personal learning journal and attend stay and play sessions. We have discussions about her day at home'.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very 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

Children experienced a clean, welcoming and homely nursery with plenty of natural light and good ventilation. Ensuring a healthy and safe environment for the children was a priority for the manager and the staff. There was a system to report any repairs and damaged items were promptly replaced.

There were appropriate risk assessments in place which promoted the safety of the children as well as daily checks of the premises.

Appropriate infection prevention and control practices were in place and minimised the spread of infection. For example, the setting was clean and well maintained. Food safety practices were appropriate and provided good levels of safety for children. We observed children being supported to understand the need for good hygiene and hand washing at necessary times.

Staff had created a well thought out, inviting, fun and stimulating play space. It was homely, comfortable and furnished to a high standard. The layout of the playroom ensured that all children could freely move around, and the storage of resources supported quality play and learning experiences. There were very good opportunities for children to be imaginative and creative in their explorative play and investigative learning while developing new skills. They had access to a wide range of engaging and challenging resources and activities; for example, open-ended and natural resources, loose parts, painting, messy play and water play. Staff routinely reviewed children's use of resources and areas to make sure that children were engaged and challenged.

Children were able to independently select resources of their choice and lead their own play. We saw children who comfortably moved around the room and were engaged in their play. Children were enthusiastically engaged in a musical activity they had made up. One child explained 'it's a dancing competition' while another child said 'I'm the singer'. Later, all the children were engaged in completing various puzzles.

Children's safety was well managed as staff were attentive and alert to children's movements. Tools such as updated registers and regular headcounts helped children to move safely around the setting. Effective arrangements were in place to ensure children and families' personal information was stored securely. This ensured confidentiality was maintained and complied with best practice guidance.

The children all enjoyed spending a large part of the day outdoors. Staff had a good understanding of the positive impact that outdoor play had on children's overall health and wellbeing. The playroom had direct access to the outdoor play area which allowed free flow to take place and for children to engage in physical play and activities. A range of loose parts, construction resources and active play equipment made the outdoor environment inviting for children to explore and develop their curiosities and imaginations.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very 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 led well

Children and families experienced a welcoming, warm and inclusive ethos that valued them as partners. A culture of continuous improvement was embraced by staff, which enabled children to have consistently positive experiences. This resulted in a very happy, safe and supportive environment for children and their families.

The manager promoted a positive attitude to change and recognised the importance of including all relevant stakeholders in developing a shared vision to secure quality outcomes for the children.

The management and staff demonstrated their commitment to the service and were very motivated to make improvements to ensure they continued to support children to reach their full potential. There were quality assurance systems in place, including self evaluation and an improvement plan, to ensure that the quality of the service was monitored and assessed in a focused and meaningful way.

The manager spent time with the staff and children to monitor the setting and observe staff practice to ensure children received high quality play and learning experiences. The manager also met with staff to discuss the continuous improvement of the service to secure progression and positive outcomes for children. There were regular staff meetings which provided time for the manager and all staff to reflect on their practice, identifying what they do well for children in their care, and highlight areas for development across the service. This contributed to staff feeling valued and listened to.

The community ethos of the nursery was reflected in the manager and staff's positive relationships with families. Engaging children and their families in the ongoing evaluation and improvement of the service was important to the manager and staff. They had established positive working relationships with families which supported regular communication by way of daily informal verbal feedback, via an online app as well as more formal methods such as questionnaires.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

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

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The deployment of staff was well managed and effective to meet children's needs. Although there had been some changes to staffing, there had been a consistent staff team since the start of the academic year who worked very well together. Staff promoted a very happy and welcoming environment where children were valued and respected. We observed staff being very kind and nurturing in their approach. It was evident through discussions and our observations that they were very motivated and committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming setting where all children mattered and were at the heart of the service. This was supported by the parents. Parental comments included 'Staff are really great with the kids. They are great at putting parents minds at ease and are really welcoming to the kids' and 'Excellent staff who are caring and fun'.

Staff were warm, caring and sensitive and demonstrated positive team working. They worked well together and their differing skills and knowledge complemented one another and resulted in quality interactions with children. Staff communicated effectively with each other and worked flexibly to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. This promoted a happy and secure environment where children were encouraged to lead their own play and learning.

Staff talked knowledgeably about children's individual needs, next steps and how they were being met. Staff demonstrated an awareness of when and how to effectively intervene, picking up on cues to support children's wellbeing, and extend their play and experiences. They were responsive and respectful of children during interactions and play which supported children to feel safe, secure and happy. Children enjoyed spending time with staff and were comfortable in their company.

Children benefited from effective supervision and quality engagement throughout the day. The service was appropriately staffed which allowed children to make full use of the different areas across the setting.

Staff were empowered to deploy themselves flexibly and respond to the needs of the children. This enabled staff to follow children's needs and interests without compromising the experiences of others. Transitions were seamless and well planned, with children being comfortable about what was happening next. During busier times of the day, for example mealtimes and home time, routines had been established which promoted children's safety.

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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