

Small Isles Primary Pre Five Unit Day Care of Children

Small Isles Primary School
Craighouse
Isle of Jura
PA60 7XG

Telephone: 01496 820 244

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 June 2021

Service provided by:
Argyll and Bute Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003373

Service no:
CS2003014664

About the service

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (also known as GIRFEC). Set up by Scottish Government, GIRFEC is a national approach to working in a consistent way with all children and young people. It is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. The approach helps services focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people - and what they can do to improve. GIRFEC is being woven into all policy, practice, strategy, and legislation that affect children, young people and their families.

There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC. They are: safe; healthy; achieving; nurtured; active; respected; responsible; and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI indicators. We use these indicators at inspection, to assess how services are making a positive difference for children.

As part of this inspection, we took into consideration Key Question 5 - Operating an early learning and childcare setting (including out of school care and childminders) during Covid-19 with a specific focus on Quality indicator 5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff. We will report on the overall performance of this indicator in Theme 1 Quality Care and Support.

Small Isles Primary Pre Five Unit has been registered with the Care Inspectorate since 1 April 2011 to provide a care service to a maximum of 10 children aged three to those not yet attending primary school. The provider is Argyll and Bute Council.

The service is based in Craighouse, Isle of Jura, and shares a large learning space in Small Isles Primary School. The pre five area caters for children aged three years to those not yet attending primary school. Children have opportunities to explore and extend learning through accessing local beaches, nature walks, and an outdoor play area can be accessed at the front of the school.

The aims of the service include the following:

- ensure children are happy and confident in a caring school which is safe and secure,
- make everyone feel welcomed and valued,
- encourage children to take responsibility for their learning,
- encourage children to show respect for themselves, one another, the community, and the environment,
- support children to develop the knowledge and understanding to enable them to make healthy choices,
- support children to develop resilience and perseverance in all aspects of school life.

We compiled this report following an unannounced inspection carried out by one early learning and childcare inspector.

What people told us

We received feedback from three parents through email. All parents were happy with the pre-five unit and the care their child received. Individual comments included:

"We feel like there is very good communication from the nursery, we enjoy seeing the pictures and videos on Seesaw which show what our son has been doing during the week and what he has been learning. We sometimes receive email updates and if anything was urgent, we would receive a call.

We also have calls throughout the year in which we are able to chat about our son's progress and ask any questions we might have".

"I think the staff of the Pre5 unit (and the whole school for our older ones) have carried out the past year amazingly. I am sure it has not been easy, but they have kept the emotional wellbeing of our children at the centre and managed to continue their learning during an interrupted school year all while following all necessary protocols".

"The manager and staff are a fantastic team, and they have a great parent teacher relationship".

"The staff have shared all required information and made it easy for us as parents to understand what is required. They have also kept us informed of the procedures they carry out within the setting with things such as cleaning and hand washing".

"Our son loves going to school and has thrived in the setting there. There is a wonderful range of activities to help them learn new skills and develop existing ones ranging from painting shapes to counting favourite objects, drawing, and writing, water play and outdoor games".

"The staff are great at using the children's interests in their learning. They have a great outdoor setting and do a lot of outdoor learning which is a fantastic experience for young children".

"We are very happy with the communication from our sons Pre5 unit. We receive weekly updates via Seesaw with photos and videos and descriptions of what the children have been doing that week. We get termly updates and reports and regular newsletters".

"Our son only started his journey 2 months ago, but I am so thankful for the warmth and support that he has been embraced with. The staff really know our son so well already as they take the time to listen and respond".

"The staff allow the children the opportunity to guide the learning and explore, which grasps their attention and makes learning fun! Our son loves school, being part of the 'bigger school' too where he loves seeing and chatting to the older children. It's a lovely place to grow and learn and I cannot thank the team enough for our son's wonderful start to school life".

"Our son thoroughly enjoys his time at the Pre5 unit, we feel very lucky he is at Small Isles. He participates in lots of play indoors and spends lots of time outdoors too. We see from Seesaw, and he tells us that he plays, paints, bakes, plays with play dough, sand and water and with all the toys. He also sits for learning activities and story time, songs etc - we can see he is learning so much through his day-to-day play".

"The headteacher was at the school before our son started and the pre 5 unit has always been well run and felt like an important part of the school. We have found the head teacher to be a complete asset to Small Isles and very approachable for any contact we have had with him".

Self assessment

The service completed and returned a self-evaluation Key Question 5 operating an early learning and childcare setting (including out of school care and childminders) during Covid-19 in advance of the inspection.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	3 - Adequate
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

We observed children in a caring learning environment where most children were supported to reach their potential. We found children's physical and emotional wellbeing was promoted by a warm and enthusiastic staff team, who knew the children well. Children were happy and active throughout the inspection accessing areas on offer. We observed a range of adult directed and freely chosen activities which were supporting children to develop key skills. Children were confident at approaching staff for support, help and reassurance at appropriate times. As a result, children were developing positive attachments with the staff team.

We found friendships were encouraged and supported through positive interactions from staff and implementation of promoting positive behaviour. We observed opportunities for all children to play cooperatively, share and take turns which in turn promoted social skills.

We found there was opportunities for children to develop their independence skills at snack and lunch. Children were actively involved through discussions, with staff being supportive and encouraging when choosing what they wanted to eat. Staff also used this as a time to develop conversations, relationships, and peer support. We found this supported children in evaluating their likes and dislikes, whilst offering some self-control over their choices. However, staff and management should continue to review the meal-time arrangements and environment to ensure suitable crockery, utensils and napkins are available to create a homely environment. Consideration should be given to the use of table covers when tables are for multi-purpose use.

Personal plans were written in partnership with parents and gave a good overview of children's current needs. Relevant steps were identified, and other agencies were involved when needed to support children's needs. Staff used information gathered from parents to plan appropriate care and support for children. Children's personal profiles showed some good evidence of quality learning experiences based on children's early level developmental milestones. We found children's needs were being met through partnership working with parents.

There was a strong focus on working with parents and ensuring that they were well-informed and involved in their children's care.

The service communicated daily with parents at handover times, and we viewed evidence that parents were given information about what their child had eaten at snack and lunch. Online journals 'SeeSaw' were found to be a good resource that enabled staff to communicate with parents. Posts were viewed as informative and reflected real time learning, development, and progress of children. Parental engagement through the app enabled parents to keep in touch with staff and support them in their child's early level development.

We reviewed evidence of the recent transition programme for children starting in August 2021. We found the staff and management had developed a creative video for new start children and families ensuring positive links were established and appropriate information shared. Parents feedback included, "Thank you so much for the delightful video clip my son was mesmerised, we are looking forward to seeing everyone" and " What a thoughtful thing to do, my son watched it four times already and joins in loudly. It appears that he is very much looking forward to joining you".

We were satisfied that the service had implemented appropriate Covid-19 procedures to support a safe environment for children and staff. For example, effective social distancing measures were in place for adults when required, such as moving around the environment. We saw staff wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to reduce the risk of spreading infection. We found children were supported to understand the need for good hygiene and we observed handwashing taking place by all staff and children regularly throughout the session.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The premises provided a welcoming environment and evidence of children's learning was displayed throughout. We found the Pre five room to be clean, bright and well ventilated, ensuring a comfortable environment for children and staff. We observed children making some independent choices: for example, we saw children using large building blocks to create a railway, dressing up as superheroes and playing in the sand filling and emptying.

Staff explained that resources were cleaned at the end of the session, along with table tops and surfaces. A cleaner came into the service at the end of the day and robust cleaning was undertaken to ensure a clean and safe environment. We found risk assessments and procedures were in place and updated as needed. Staff told us they were kept up to date with guidance by management and they also took responsibility for reading updates that were issued.

All children had daily access to a natural environment outdoors and have been making more opportunities to investigate the local area through taking nature walks to surrounding areas, accessing the beach situated across from the service and visiting the playpark. We found this was developing an exciting range of learning opportunities where children can run, climb, balance, explore and investigate. Staff were supporting children to think about and manage risky situations allowing children to develop their skills in problem solving and be more willing and confident to try out new experiences.

Through discussions, management and staff recognise the layout of the playroom still needs attention including the storage and accessibility of resources and furnishings. In addition, we have asked the manager to offer free flow access to outdoors to ensure children can independently access outdoor play. During the inspection we found storage of resources outside requires to be reviewed. Management and staff should identify appropriate watertight storage facilities to ensure resources are free from mould and easily accessible.

(See recommendation 1)

We found the changing area located within the toilet cubical was not an appropriate facility or environment for children requiring personal care. Facilities must provide children with a safe, clean environment and appropriate equipment, while promoting privacy, dignity and, for older children, independence. We discussed this with the manager and requested as a matter of priority a suitable area is identified. The changing experience should be a relaxed, happy and social routine that provides valuable opportunities for interactions between staff and children on an individual basis.

Following inspection the head teacher has confirmed an area has been identified and changes will be implemented. We have been informed the time frame for the required refurbishment will be summer 2022. Following further discussions with the head teacher we have agreed temporary arrangements that can be put in place prior to refurbishments. We have requested a full risk assessment be carried out and submitted to care inspectorate to support temporary changes. (See recommendation 2)

We found accident and incidents were recorded and shared with parents, records sampled confirmed that appropriate treatment was given to children when required.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. Management and staff should continue to review the layout of the indoor and outdoor environment. Priority should be given to;
 1. The storage and availability of resources enabling children to choose from and access a wide range of experiences.
 2. Providing children with free flowing access to outdoor play throughout the day.

3. Continue to review the pace and balance of the day in order to meet children's individual needs and promote positive learning outcomes.

4. Outside resources are stored within an appropriate watertight storage facility.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state 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 for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity'. (HSCS 2.27)

'I have enough physical space to meet my needs and wishes'. (HSCS 5.20)

'I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities everyday, both indoors and outdoors'. (HSCS 1.25)

'I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices'. (HSCS 5.21)

2. To improve the infection, prevention and control measures and to respect children's privacy and dignity the provider and manager should ensure appropriate space and personal care facilities are available at all times. In addition, cleaning materials, changing mat and toilet training aids should be stored inline with National guidance Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (Day Care and Childminding Settings).

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'If I require intimate personal care, this is carried out in a dignified way, with my privacy and personal preferences respected'. (HSCS 1.4)

'The premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs and wishes'. (HSCS 5.16)

'My environment is relaxed, welcoming, peaceful and free from avoidable and intrusive noise and smell'. (HSCS 5.18)

'I have enough physical space to meet my needs and wishes'. (HSCS 5.20)

'If I require intimate personal care, there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed'. (HSCS 5.4)

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Throughout the inspection, staff were welcoming and engaged well with the inspection process.

We found staff were working well together creating a warm, nurturing environment for children and families. We observed good communication throughout the team and nice interactions enabling children to feel safe and secure. Staff regularly shared relevant information supporting them to meet children's individual needs.

We recognised that there had been recent changes in the staff team. However, through effective working relationships we found these changes had not impacted on outcomes for children. Staff felt supported by management and were knowledgeable about the improvement plan and areas for improvement. They spoke positively of changes over the past year and look forward to further developments while showing commitment to improvements within the service.

We found systems were in place to carry out annual appraisal meetings with staff. These helped to set targets for staff to meet and to identify their training needs to further assist them in their role within the service. All staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and if required were working towards an appropriate qualification for their registration. Staff showed commitment to their professional development and learning demonstrating some knowledge of current best practice. Staff had accessed some effective training with learning undertaken beginning to influence change and improvement. Management should continue to support staff to access training and self-learning to embed the initiatives that provide positive outcomes for children. We sign posted staff to the SSSC open badges and Care Inspectorate Hub to support learning further. This will benefit staff when training is difficult to access.

Staff knew children and their families well and understood the importance of building trusting relationships. We found relationships with parents to be positive, staff valued the connections they had with families and endeavoured to involve them more in the future life of the centre. Parents commented positively on the staff team and the care and support their child received. Parents told us they feel involved in their children's learning and staff regularly ask for information on their children's current interests and what they would like to learn.

We found effective systems were in place to safeguard children. Staff demonstrated a good knowledge and awareness of how to keep children safe and protected. The team received regular child protection training to help them keep children safe and protect them from harm. This approach ensured that children were valued, safe, and secure.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

We found management engaged well during the inspection process, taking on advice and support, demonstrating a commitment for improvement. We acknowledge there have been a change in management, and we recognise the manager has worked hard to develop the service over the previous year, developing relationships with staff and parents.

The management team were confident in their abilities and approach when working in partnership with families. Management were available throughout the day to enable parents to communicate and update the service with key information about their child. We found management along with staff and parents were reviewing and have implemented clear policies and procedures to support the daily operation of the service. Management had gathered views from parents and reported changes accordingly. Parents and staff told us management were approachable, visible, and supportive as well as available to discuss any concerns.

We found management had developed an improvement plan identifying service priorities. We can see some progress had been made on priorities identified for example, developing outdoor environment to engage and support learning. Management should now develop a monitoring calendar and continue to monitor staff practice this will support areas of improvement and positive impacts on outcomes for children. We look forward to following up the services progress at the next inspection.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

The pace and the balance of the day should be reviewed in order to meet children's individual needs and promote positive learning outcomes. The headteacher and staff should continue to review the environment, both inside and outside, to ensure they provide a dynamic, fun, stimulating and enabling environment. Children should be given the time and space to develop their ideas, flourish and be creative.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling'. (HSCS 1.30)

'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials'. (HSCS 1.31);

and

'As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment'. (HSCS 1.30)

This recommendation was made on 25 June 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

We observed children during outdoor play and saw children enjoyed actively playing with a variety of resources on offer for example the bikes and climbing frame. Children were observed playing in the secure Pre 5 play area, developing conversations with peers while they created hot chocolate with soil and water. We found these experiences were supporting children's curiosity, enquiry and imagination.

During the inspection we found this recommendation to be met. However, management and staff should continue to review balance and pace of the day while reviewing and reflecting on the environment. See recommendation 1

Complaints

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

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
2 May 2019	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 3 - Adequate Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership Not assessed
8 Dec 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 5 - Very good
23 Dec 2013	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 6 - Excellent Management and leadership 6 - Excellent
25 Oct 2012	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment 4 - Good Staffing 6 - Excellent Management and leadership 6 - Excellent
15 Nov 2011	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 4 - Good
21 May 2010	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 4 - Good

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