

Kilmodan Primary Pre Five Unit Day Care of Children

Kilmodan Primary School
Glendaruel
Colintraive
Dunoon
PA22 3AE

Telephone: 01369 820 280

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 October 2025

Service provided by:
Argyll and Bute Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003373

Service no:
CS2003014653

About the service

Kilmodan Primary Pre Five Unit is a daycare of children service. The service is based within Kilmodan Primary School, located in Glendaruel, a rural area near Dunoon. The provider of the service is Argyll and Bute council.

Kilmodan Primary Pre Five Unit is registered to provide care to a maximum of ten children aged 3 years and over.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 30 September and Thursday 2 October 2025. This 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke/spent time with 5 people using the service and 15 of their friends and family
- received 3 completed questionnaires
- spoke with three staff and the management team
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

During this inspection we gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident, relaxed and having fun.
- We observed staff who were, kind, caring, nurturing and in tune with the children in their care.
- Staff created an environment where children felt safe, secure, and valued.
- The manager and staff team were passionate about delivering the best outcomes from their children, families and their community.
- A key strength was the close working relationship the service had with parents and the local community.
- The service should review their current planning cycle along with developing provocations and reflecting on how they document children's progress.
- Management should develop a more formal monitoring process, actively involve staff in the development of the improvement plan and implement a robust quality assurance system.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

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

Leadership 4 - Good

Quality Indicator - leadership and management of staff and resources.

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

The management team along with staff, parents and children have worked hard to create a service that strive to deliver best outcomes for the children, families, partners and the wider community. This was evident through the newly developed vision, values and aims that include a whole school and community approach.

The service recognised the importance of parental and community involvement and actively sought parents' views through informal daily interactions at drop-off and pick-up times, newsletters, parents' evenings and through the school open door ethos. A key strength was the close working relationship the service had with the local community, supporting events such as the Community Tea room, open days, stay and play session, and links with the community gardens. As a result, families and the community felt included, informed, and connected. Parents told us, 'They are very understanding and empathetic and we get on really well. They listen to any concerns and try and help with any issues. 'The staff are always friendly, approachable, and supportive.'

There was a good mix of skills and qualifications within the team. The service delivered an induction programme that supported staff in developing their knowledge and confidence. Staff spoke positively about their induction and commented, their team along with management were supportive. All staff had been safely recruited and were registered with the Scottish social services council (SSSC).

The service used some processes for self-evaluation. The manager had developed a yearly calendar of events highlighting meetings and events on a weekly basis over the year. This included, stay and play sessions, care plan reviews, meetings with outside agencies and professionals. This was supporting the management team, and staff to be clear on weekly and daily events and enabling them to plan and be organised to support the service to operate smoothly.

A quality assurance calendar was in place to support management. This highlighted various tasks that were to be undertaken throughout the year. Regular audits were carried out on children's personal plans and any documented work within the big books, as well as planning. This helped to ensure that developments to the service were child focused and promoted positive outcomes ensuring that quality learning through play was at the heart of improvement planning.

Following the service's local authority review the nursery has began to implement changes and had taken on board some suggestions. For example focusing on reviewing planning, tracking and recording of observations within the nursery, and for staff to be supported in professional learning on providing pace and challenge in literacy and numeracy. We could see how these aims would be achieved through the service's standards and quality report as well as their improvement plan. We can see evidence of some progress that has been made on priorities identified.

Moving forward staff should begin to review, reflect, and implement the new 'quality improvement framework,' A quality improvement framework for early learning and childcare sectors: early learning and

childcare 2025'. The team would benefit from using the challenge questions and start to think about how this can be implemented as part of their improvement journey moving forward. We discussed the service documenting their journey to support them to identify what they are doing well, how they know and what they are going to do now, this should also be linked to the health and social care standards (HSCS), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and realising the ambition.

We would ask that management now look at developing a more formal monitoring process along with staff being actively involved in the development of the improvement plan. Staff should continue reflecting and reviewing the impact on children's care, play, and learning to ensure the pace of change is sustained and the service continues to deliver positive experiences and outcomes for children, families, and the nursery as a whole. (See area for improvement 1)

Areas for improvement

1. To support continued best outcomes for children and families. Management should develop and implement robust quality assurance systems this should include but not limited to

- a) formal monitoring of staff practice and engagement.
- b) monitoring of children's play and learning experiences.
- c) documenting and evaluating play and learning as a whole team approach.

This is to ensure that management and leadership is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality Indicator - Play, learning and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Throughout the inspection children were happy, engaged and actively leading their own play and learning. We observed a balance of adult directed and freely chosen activities which supported children to develop some key skills in arts and crafts, literacy, numeracy, health, and wellbeing. Outdoor play was a key focus for the children and staff, children had free flow access and staff encouraged children to explore, investigate, and develop their imagination within the areas set up outside. The children had weekly forest visits where they experienced and developed important skills and knowledge around nature, safety, and the world around them.

The nursery polytunnel was a key part of the children's play, learning and development, including the recent transition programme between nursery and Primary 1. Staff had creatively developed a programme for children to grow vegetables, nurturing plants, and taking responsibility while developing skills for life and learning. We observed staff skilfully question children with "what if" or "I wonder" questions, which extended children's learning, skills and helped them to consolidate their learning through play. Parents told us, 'They have loads of opportunities inside and outside and staff go above and beyond to make sure they have a huge variety. The most positive aspects are the supportive teachers, fun activities, and opportunities to socialise with other children.'

Staff were using a variety of approaches to respond to children's cues to support development of self-regulation, confidence, creativity, and curiosity. For example, Staff skilfully supported children during play and mealtimes to understand others feelings, regulate and communicate their own feels and recognise when they needed support. We observed staff who were in tune with the children in their care. They were responsive and caring with their interactions supporting children to communicate in a positive way through having supportive conversations and nurturing approaches. As a result, children engaged well with each other, recognised and considered others feels, sharing, taking turns, and playing cooperatively using their imagination and curiosity to develop their play and learning.

Through sampling evidence of children's play, learning and development, it was evident that children within the service were having opportunities to develop their imaginative play and curiosity, through having fun and exploring the experiences on offer, inside, outside and within the surrounding community. Staff had developed individual scrapbooks for the children that were capturing children's play, learning and development along with close family links and achievements. The team also used floor books to support with documenting experiences of children's learning. As a result, we could evidence some progress and development of children's play and learning.

A system for planning was in place and staff advised that they had recently reviewed their current process. However, we found the approach was not consistent enough to track and show progression, depth or clear tracking of children's progress. We discussed staff being more responsive in their planning and developing strands of learning that are based on and respond to individual children's interests. This would further deepen and enhance children's learning through enriching their experiences, and support children to lead on their own play and learning through more responsive play-based experiences.

We would continue to encourage staff and management to keep developing play and learning through focused observations, making effective assessments, while developing provocations and reflecting on how they document children's progress and achievements. This will support the service to have clear lines of development through documenting the breath, progression, and depth of learning. (See area for improvement 1)

Areas for improvement

1. To support best outcomes for children in quality play and learning the manager and staff should review the current planning cycle along with developing provocations and reflecting on how they document children's progress and achievements. This should include, but not be limited to, high quality observations, meaningful next steps, and evidence of progression in learning.

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

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator - Nurturing care and support

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children were happy, confident, and having fun. They experienced warm, nurturing, and responsive care from staff, which helped them feel welcomed and loved in the setting. Staff were kind, caring and respectful, creating an environment where children felt safe, secure, and valued. This was evident on the first day of inspection when we arrived children had been actively helping staff make snack, there was a lovely atmosphere in the playroom, and it had a home from home feeling. Children were gathered for snack which was a sociable gathering for everyone, and they enjoyed eating their freshly cooked snack along with the home-grown cucumber from the nursery polytunnel. As a result, children were very relaxed, happy, settled and confident.

Staff knew children well and spoke confidently about their personalities, interests and how they were supporting individual needs. For example, encouraging children to be creative, through allowing them to mark make and draw with chalk on the playroom floor, building a den using soft furnishings and supporting children's sensory needs, allowing them to be barefoot when they wished. Staff described how they encouraged children's interests outdoors through growing plants and vegetables and weekly access to the forest. This was fostering engagement, developing children's imagination, curiosity, and creativity. Parents told us, 'The nursery is amazing, and my child gets so much from it.' and 'I appreciate the caring staff and the creative learning opportunities.'

There were diverse spaces available that supported children to socialise, play in small groups, or play alone if they wished. Staff had created an environment that was warm, and welcoming, with natural materials and cosy areas to rest, relax and recharge. As a result, we found this positively impacted on children's ability to regulate their emotions, build social skills, and develop confidence. For example, we observed staff skilfully intervening and having supportive conversation about feelings and sharing when children did not always agree with sharing resources. Staff gave children space and time, listening to children's views and opinions but then also supporting children to have reflection time with a story and a cuddle. This was a lovely observation of children who were comfortable, relaxed, able to regulate their emotions and build on their social skills through the interactions of staff who cared and listened. Parents told us, 'They are so kind and open with me and always make me feel welcomed and engaged.' and 'Thank you for providing such a caring and supportive environment.'

The service knew children and families very well and had created a warm, welcoming environment where families felt valued and supported. Staff welcomed families' insights about their children's interests and achievements, helping to enhance children's care, play, learning and development. Families were supported to be part of their child's time at nursery through stay and play, book bug sessions, and care plan reviews. As a result, strong connections with families increased their engagement with the service, positively impacting on the quality of children's experiences.

Children experienced sociable, calm, and unhurried mealtimes. Staff used these daily routines as valuable opportunities to promote children's involvement, independence and enhance their overall experiences. Staff

supported children to set tables and serve themselves, encouraging responsibility and choice. Children's food choices were nutritious and considered specific dietary needs, allergies or intolerances. Children were encouraged to stay hydrated and had access to their water bottles throughout the session.

Although staff could describe how they supported children and information was recorded in personal plans, we identified inconsistencies across the recording of information processes. It was not always clear how staff would support and enhance children's health, wellbeing and safety or foster their play and learning. In line with legislation, the management team and staff should streamline information and develop a consistent approach across the service. This will ensure children's information is clear, concise and supports positive outcomes for all children.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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