

Kirn Primary Pre Five Unit Day Care of Children

Kirn Primary School
Clyde Street
Kirn
PA23 8EH

Telephone: 01369 702 509

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 January 2026

Service provided by:
Argyll and Bute Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003373

Service no:
CS2003014655

About the service

Kirn Primary Pre Five Unit is a daycare of children service. The service is based within Kirn Primary School, located in Clyde street, Kirn, Dunoon. The provider of the service is Argyll and Bute council.

Kirn Primary Pre Five Unit is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children from 3 years of age to those not yet attending primary school.

Any other conditions unique to the service:

2. Staffing ratios as stated in the National Care Standards - Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 (Appendix A) must be maintained at all times.

A minimum of two adults must be present at all times.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 28 January and Thursday 29 January 2026. 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 28 people using the service
- received five 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, and able to lead their own play and learning.
- Staff were warm, nurturing, caring, and knew children well.
- The staff team were dedicated, passionate, open, and honest.
- Management and staff have worked hard to ensure positive outcomes for children, families, partners, and the wider community.
- A more formal monitoring process is needed to support staff practice and engagement.
- The outdoor environment needs further development for safety and improved learning opportunities.

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	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very 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 5 – Very Good

Quality Indicator: leadership and management of staff and resources.

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.

Throughout the inspection, the team responded well, taking on advice and encouragement whenever suggestions were made. We found that relationships within the team were strong, and both management and staff showed clear commitment to developing the service. As a result, the team worked effectively together to establish a shared vision and to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and families. Parents told us: 'All staff are approachable and friendly and happy to give you time to chat if needed, my child talks fondly of all staff.' 'Staff are always warm and welcoming.'

We found the staff team to be passionate, open, and honest, and they reflected deeply on the journey they had undertaken over the past few years. The team met weekly to review, reflect on, and improve practice, as well as to discuss children's progress and next steps. This approach gave the team valuable opportunities to use reflection to drive positive change. As a result, we are confident that the service will continue to grow and progress.

Since the last inspection, the service had moved through a period of change; however, we recognised that the management team, alongside staff, had worked hard and were striving to create a service that delivered the best outcomes for children, families, partners, and the wider community. Management and staff were in the early stages of refreshing and updating the service's vision, values, and aims, ensuring that these reflected the voices and aspirations of children, families, and the wider staff team.

The service recognised the importance of parental and community involvement and actively sought parents' views through daily informal interactions at drop off and pick up times, newsletters, questionnaires, and the service's open-door ethos. We would encourage the service to provide feedback to parents after gathering their views, for example by using a "you said, we did" approach, to demonstrate that parents' voices are valued.

The management team had developed quality assurance processes. Through discussions with the manager and lead practitioner, we could see their vision for taking the service forward and the priorities they had identified, such as improving literacy, numeracy, planning, the environment, and the quality of engagements. During the inspection, we saw that improvements had begun to develop and progress, and we would encourage continued monitoring and observation of staff practice and delivery of experiences to ensure that improvements are sustained. A quality assurance calendar was in place to support management, outlining the various tasks to be undertaken throughout the year. Regular audits were also carried out to support staff and management as part of the service's quality assurance process.

The management team now need to develop a more formal process for monitoring staff practice, engagement, and delivery of experiences, ensuring that staff are accountable and receive the support and training required to continue delivering high quality outcomes for children and families.

There was a good mix of skills and qualifications within the team. All staff had been safely recruited and were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Staff new to the service were supported

through assigned mentors and the use of national induction resources. This helped them develop clear roles and responsibilities and supported them in learning and delivering high quality outcomes for children and families.

Children play and learn 5 – Very Good

Quality Indicator: Play learning and developing

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 appeared happy, had fun, and engaged well in their play alongside their peers. They interacted positively and played cooperatively, developing friendships and leading their own learning, with staff providing appropriate support when needed. Children benefited from a variety of experiences and resources that supported their numeracy, literacy, curiosity, creativity, sensory exploration, and imaginative play. For example, creative play with paint in the arts and craft area, water play outdoors, the outside café in the mud kitchen area and tasting and learning about butter nut squash. Staff were reading and singing with children throughout the session individually and as part of a group at the end of the day. Parents told us: 'We have seen such a big improvement with our child's speech really great to see and hear.' Our child has certainly benefited from the ELC, especially in terms of vocabulary and speech.'

Outdoor play formed a key part of children's learning. Staff planned areas of interest that promoted children's creativity, curiosity, and imagination, and the outdoor environment offered experiences that supported physical development. For example, children were balancing and climbing on an assault course and also using the bikes as part of their play on pedals. Staff provided appropriate supervision and encouragement, helping children to challenge themselves safely and develop physical skills, problem solving abilities, and teamwork. Children accessed the outdoors independently, putting on all-weather suits and boots and freely moving between indoor and outdoor spaces. This allowed them regular, flexible opportunities that enhanced autonomy, supported physical wellbeing, and enabled them to benefit from the learning experiences the outdoor environments offered.

However, the outdoor area required further development to ensure it remained a safe place to play. Consideration is needed regarding the sand area, drainage issues causing water to accumulate, and the condition of surfaces where trip hazards were present. Softer or padded ground surfaces should also be considered.

A planning system was in place, and staff advised that this was a work in progress. We found the approach was in the early stages of showing how staff documented progression, depth, or clear tracking of children's learning. We discussed the importance of continuing to plan responsively and developing strands of learning based on individual children's interests.

Online profiles for children were in place with the service using the platform 'Seesaw'. This was being used to document and track children's learning and development. Some staff were more confident than others in recording and tracking progress; however, we found strong evidence across floor books, reflective logs, Seesaw, and children's files. This now requires streamlining to ensure consistency and clarity. This would support the service in demonstrating clear lines of development, capturing the breadth, progression, and depth of children's learning.

We would encourage staff and management to continue developing play and learning through focused observations, effective assessment, and thoughtful provocations, while reflecting on how they document children's progress and achievements. At times, staff interactions became more task focused, particularly during mealtimes. We observed some missed opportunities for meaningful interactions, which affected the quality of children's play and learning experiences. We asked that this be monitored to ensure children continue to experience high quality learning opportunities across all areas.

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.

Throughout the inspection, children experienced warm and nurturing approaches from all staff. Staff presented in a caring and kind way and knew the children well. Children had formed strong relationships with staff, and we observed them seeking cuddles and reassurance. They involved staff in their play, which demonstrated that children felt secure in their surroundings. Parents told us: 'We have a good relationship with all staff. Trusting adults who take time getting to know children'.

Staff spoke confidently about children's individual likes, dislikes, and current interests and chatted with them about extended family members, showing they knew families well. As a result, children appeared happy and confident.

Individual profiles and plans were in place for all children, and staff gathered key information to support children's health, welfare, and safety needs. Staff identified and tracked children's next steps in play and learning. We discussed with the service streamlining this information to make next steps and supports easier to identify.

Risk assessments and individual support plans were in place for children who required additional support. The service worked with relevant agencies, such as health visitors and education visitors, which supported the delivery of positive outcomes for children and families.

Staff worked hard to create a warm, welcoming environment where families felt valued and supported. They welcomed families' insights about their children's interests and achievements, which helped enhance children's care, play, learning, and development.

Families were supported to be part of their child's nursery experience through interactions at daily drop off and collection, as well as through stay and play sessions, playdough making activities, book bug sessions, and care plan reviews. These strong connections with families increased engagement and positively impacted children's experiences. Parents told us: 'The staff are always welcoming and encourage participation from parents.' 'Every day when we drop off or pick up, we are welcomed into the nursery room which gives you the chance to check in with your child's key worker, pass on any info and vice versa.'

We sampled medication stored within the service and found it had been managed appropriately in line with best practice guidance, Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services. Management agreed to ensure they used the most up to date forms, policies, and templates in line with Argyll and Bute procedures.

Mealtimes were sociable, relaxed, and unhurried, allowing children to eat at their own pace. Children received a hot meal choice each day, such as pizza with crispy potatoes, salad, and vegetables, as well as macaroni. Children enjoyed the food provided and were encouraged to be independent by self-serving food and drinks. Some staff ate with the children and encouraged conversations about experiences, achievements, and family life. Snack consisted of fruit and water we would ask the provider to implement the option of a carbohydrate at snack time in line with best practice guidance 'Setting the Table'.

Children were supported to stay hydrated and had access to fresh water throughout the session. Children brought their own water bottles, which they accessed independently.

Staff respected children's privacy and dignity by being mindful when children required changing. Children received support when needed and were encouraged to be independent.

Staff created areas where children could socialise, play independently, or play with others. They also provided resources and spaces to help children regulate their emotions and develop social skills. We would encourage staff to continue developing an enhanced area with resources that could engage more than one child at a time.

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

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