

# Carradale Primary Pre Five Unit Day Care of Children

Carradale Primary School  
Carradale  
Campbeltown  
PA28 6SD

Telephone: 01583 431 244

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
6 February 2026

**Service provided by:**  
Argyll and Bute Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003373

**Service no:**  
CS2003014632

## About the service

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011. The service provider is Argyll and Bute Council.

The service operates from a single-story school building in the village of Carradale on the Kintyre peninsula of Argyll and Bute. The conditions of registration include providing a care service to a maximum of 10 children three years and over. The age range of the children will be from three years to those not yet attending primary school.

At the time of the inspection, there were four children registered, all of whom were present during the inspection.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, carried out by one early learning and childcare inspector, which took place on 5 and 6 February 2026. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and any intelligence gathered. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Observed practice and daily life.
- Spoke with children using the service.
- Reviewed documents.
- Collected survey feedback from parents.
- Assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.
- Spoke with the staff and management.

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.

As part of this inspection, we undertook a focus area. We have 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 enjoyed a range of play experience, both indoors and outside in the garden and in the local community.
- Children enjoyed a family style lunch time experience, supporting their emotional and social development.
- Staff were knowledgeable and committed to providing high quality care and learning.
- A range of quality assurance and self evaluation processes were in place to ensure a consistent approach to improvement.
- Families were welcomed into the service, where a warm and supportive environment encouraged positive relationships and regular communication.

## 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	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 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.

The values set by the setting were clearly aligned with what was observed during the inspection. The aims focused on a strong sense of belonging to both the local and wider community. This was reflected in practice as children were actively involved in the Festival of Light at the nearby village of Skipness.

The values also highlighted the importance of building resilience, promoting children's rights, and providing opportunities to extend and challenge children's learning. This was consistently demonstrated through planning approaches that supported children in progressing towards their identified next steps. The introduction of Helicopter Stories and the collaborative creation of rules with children further demonstrated how these values were meaningfully embedded across daily practice. These values were supporting the development of children's self confidence and helping them to reach their full potential.

Staff were appropriately registered and qualified, and they spoke enthusiastically about the training they had undertaken. Professional Review and Development (PRD) meetings were supportive and centred on identifying strengths in practice, whilst also encouraging staff to reflect on the impact of their training. Staff highlighted the support they received and their ongoing professional development as key strengths within the service.

One staff member told us, "The training has helped keep me aware and knowledgeable, and provided me confidence in my ability to recognise issues, concerns or disclosures and how to act appropriately and professionally if an incident was to ever arise".

An improvement plan was in place and had been created collaboratively with the staff team. It clearly identified priority areas for development, based on national priorities and the setting's own reflective discussions. The plan was current, inclusive, and shared with parents in an appropriate format on the noticeboard. This ensured that everyone remained informed and meaningfully involved in the ongoing improvement journey.

There was clear evidence that previously identified areas for improvement had been actioned. For example, wellbeing indicators had been incorporated into children's plans, and a children's rights based approach had been introduced. Children's voices were actively listened to within the play space, including opportunities for voting and contributing to decisions about their experiences. This demonstrated the setting's commitment to improvement priorities and ensuring children experienced a nurturing, responsive, and high quality environment that supported their learning and wellbeing.

Policies were up to date, regularly reviewed, and supported by clear records confirming that staff had read and understood them. Policies and practice reflected current best practice, legislation, and evidence based guidance, ensuring staff had access to the information needed to deliver consistent, high quality. We suggested further reviewing of the medication policy to reflect the most recent guidance.

There was clear evidence of several newly added policies, demonstrating the service's continued commitment to reviewing, updating, and strengthening its policy framework to ensure robust and effective practice for the benefit of staff and children.

## Children play and learn 4 - Good

### Quality indicator: Playing, 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.

Children were highly engaged in a variety of activities in the setting. For example, children preparing protein balls as snacks for their upcoming trip. The children were confident and content, chatting with staff and with each other. This was supporting children's language skills and sense of wellbeing.

Staff were highly responsive and attuned to children's needs. Their interactions promoted independence and confidence, with help provided sensitively when required. For example, expanding children's learning through play or offering additional resources to encourage further engagement. Staff also demonstrated a strong understanding of when to step back and allow uninterrupted play. This was helping children build deeper engagement in their learning.

The setting respected the rights of the children, encouraging the voice of the children to be valued and influence practice. Floor books and planning documents included children's comments, highlighting their interests and influencing the flow of play. This reflected an embedded commitment to child led learning and contributed positively to children's social and emotional development.

A range of play experiences were on offer. For example, tuff trays, mark making, role and small world play, and a range of curious, open ended materials. Indoor and outdoor free flowing play was a significant strength, with the changing area conveniently located near the rear exit. The outdoor area offered a mix of loose parts, ride on toys, and resources that encouraged exploration and appropriate risk-taking. One parent told us "My child enjoys a variety of activities, like painting, playing outside, story time, and music sessions. The teachers always make these experiences fun and supportive, helping my child learn new skills and explore their interests".

Going forward, we suggested further evaluation of the indoor play spaces using guidance such as "Space to Grow and Thrive". For example, creating cosier areas using lamps, fairy lights, plants and soft materials would help create more inviting, calming spaces.

The provision was rich in opportunities for emergent literacy, language and numeracy skill development. Practitioners demonstrated skill in encouraging higher order thinking and extending learning. For example, when staff identified gaps in children's understanding of using real money, they enriched learning by taking the children to the local shop, creating a meaningful and practical learning experience.

Staff made thoughtful use of Makaton and other communication aids, including visual timetables, calendars and timers. These contributed to an inclusive, supportive learning environment where children were enabled to communicate and develop language skills confidently.

Staff described their planning and assessment processes clearly, demonstrating how they support children to progress in their learning. Children's learning journals contained observations linked to the tracking of children's learning experiences. We suggested observations could be further evaluated against developmental milestones. This would allow for clear identification of next steps to inform planning and supporting children to reach their full potential.

## 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.

Relationships with families were being developed through a range of approaches including information sessions, digital application communication and noticeboards, as well as opportunities for parental evaluations through surveys. Staff discussed their commitment to viewing parents as partners and welcomed parents into the setting at drop off and pick up times, further supporting this partnership approach.

Staff managed transitions very well, adopting a personalised and sensitive approach in close collaboration with parents. We observed a staff member working alongside a parent to agree strategies that would help their child transition smoothly from nursery to home. This demonstrated thoughtful practice that recognised individual needs, supported consistency between home and nursery, and helped children feel safe, understood and well prepared during key transition points. One parent told us "the teachers are wonderful, caring, and always make my child feel happy and safe".

We observed nurturing relationships between staff and children. Children sought comfort through cuddles and soothing interactions when needed, demonstrating secure attachments. Staff knew children and their families very well, and personal care routines were carried out with dignity and respect. Practitioners promoted independence by asking children whether they needed the toilet and supported them with hand washing afterwards. This encouraged children's independence and reinforced good hygiene practices, contributing to effective infection control.

Children's plans were detailed and meaningful. We noted that one child's plan clearly outlined strategies which staff were actively implementing alongside additional supportive approaches. Staff spoke passionately about the ways they support children and families and demonstrated a strong understanding of individual needs. Staff described strategies they used with other children that were not currently recorded. We suggested introducing an accessible format for all children, capturing their likes, dislikes, important information and agreed strategies. This would help to support consistent, individualised care that promotes all children's wellbeing and development.

Children's plans included detailed "All About Me" information and linked with wellbeing indicators. Plans were organised and had been regularly reviewed with parents. One parent told us "I love being involved! I talk with the teachers and help with my child's plan".

Mealtimes were inclusive, relaxed and homely. Practitioners sat alongside children, creating a warm, family like atmosphere. Children confidently served food, supported one another and celebrated trying new foods. The experience was unhurried and fostered social interaction, independence and a strong sense of belonging.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very 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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