

Arinagour Primary Pre Five Unit Day Care of Children

Arinagour Primary School
Arinagour
Isle of Coll
PA78 6TA

Telephone: 01879 230 376

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
17 March 2026

Service provided by:
Argyll and Bute Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003373

Service no:
CS2003014622

About the service

Arinagour Primary Pre Five Unit is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 8 children not yet attending primary school. Of which no more than 3 are aged 2 years to under 3 years. The manager is also the manager of Kilninver Primary Pre Five Unit. During our inspection three children were registered with the service.

The service operates within Arinagour Primary School on the Isle of Coll, Argyll and Bute. The building has a secure entrance and spacious playroom. Children benefit from direct access to a secure outdoors space and gardens. The service is close to local shops, parks and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 16th and 17th March 2026. 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 two people using the service and two of their family.
- Spoke with three staff and management.
- 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 the core assurances.

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

- The team demonstrated a strong commitment to driving improvement and securing positive outcomes for children and their families.
- The service had a clear vision that placed children at the centre of it's work, supporting them to achieve their full potential.
- The newly appointed manager continues to establish robust quality assurance processes.
- Children were having fun and actively leading their play and learning at nursery.
- Staff were strongly committed to child led learning, skilfully facilitating and extending play to nurture children's sense of wonder and discovery.
- The environment was well organised, welcoming, and thoughtfully designed to support exploration, creativity, and problem solving.
- Children were consistently treated with warmth, kindness and compassion by responsive and patient staff.
- Relationships with families and the wider community were strong, respectful, and meaningful.

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	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 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 service had experienced a significant period of transition, which included phases of inactivity, the appointment of new head teachers, and additional staff joining the team. We found the newly appointed head teacher and team demonstrated a strong commitment to driving improvement and securing positive outcomes for children and their families.

The service had a clear vision that placed children at the centre of its work, supporting them to achieve their full potential. The shared values of "ambition, respect, and kindness" were well understood and consistently demonstrated across the setting by all members of the nursery and school community. These values were further reinforced by the children's own contribution to developing a room charter, which helped embed expectations around being "ready, safe, and kind." Staff interactions consistently reflected a respectful and nurturing ethos. This helped children to feel welcomed and valued in the service.

Children's rights were meaningfully promoted, contributing to a positive, inclusive environment. Staff empowered children to lead their play, learning and influence decision-making which helped drive improvements. Children were excited to show us the new resources they had chosen for the nursery and tell us about the changes to the environment they had made in celebration of Chinese New Year. Families' views were actively sought through face-to-face discussions, questionnaires, and parent committee meetings. Effective communication ensured families were included in the review and design of the service. Parents we spoke to told us they had recently been involved in reviewing the vision, values and aims of the service. And helped set the priorities within the current improvement plan.

The Acting Head Teacher had developed an improvement plan collaboratively with the team, identifying relevant priorities such as strengthening parental engagement. The head teacher and staff should continue to reflect on how identified priorities will be achieved and evidenced in practice. There was scope to widen staff leadership opportunities by encouraging team members to take ownership of, or lead, specific aspects of the improvement agenda. This shared approach would support the continuous improvement of the service.

The service demonstrates early but positive signs of building effective quality assurance processes. The newly appointed head teacher had developed a quality assurance calendar which was at an early stage of implementation. While some gaps in practice were identified, such as notifications the service must submit to the Care Inspectorate, the service had recognised these areas during our discussions and were keen to establish clear, actionable plans to address them. This provided reassurance about the service's capacity for sustained improvement.

All staff were appropriately registered with the regulatory body, Scottish Social Service Council and adhered to professional codes of practice. Staff had engaged in relevant professional reading to support their ongoing professional learning and development. We encouraged the team to link with other early learning and childcare settings to engage in professional discussion to support and inform their practice. This would

support the small team to form a community of practice to sustain a high standard of practice and skill in the service.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Playing, 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 were highly engaged and enthusiastic in their learning, demonstrating curiosity, confidence, and enjoyment across a wide range of play experiences. They took part in active, imaginative, and expressive opportunities, including dance, small world play, and exploring feelings through their emotion tree. Staff were strongly committed to child led learning, skilfully facilitating and extending play to nurture children's sense of wonder and discovery. Warm, responsive interactions created a joyful and nurturing environment where children felt valued and supported. Parents we spoke to told us there was "always a great range of activities available."

A well balanced blend of adult initiated and freely chosen play provided rich opportunities for children to develop early literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, and expressive arts skills. Children were excited to show us the pictures and bookmarks they had recently created for world book day. Children confidently shared their ideas about what they wanted to explore next, and these were captured meaningfully in floorbooks. Staff used these conversations to shape future learning, demonstrating effective listening and responsiveness to children's thinking. Parents told us activities were "always led by the children's interests."

The environment was well organised, welcoming, and thoughtfully designed to support exploration, creativity, and problem solving. A wide variety of natural and open ended materials encouraged children to investigate and experiment. Staff regularly evaluated and adapted learning spaces based on children's interests, ensuring the environment remained relevant, stimulating, and engaging. Digital tools were used purposefully to enhance play and enrich learning experiences. Seasonal and cultural events, such as Chinese New Year, were reflected in the environment, offering meaningful contexts for learning.

Indoor spaces provided high quality opportunities for emergent language, literacy, and numeracy development. Children also benefited from experiences within the local community, including visits to the library and a Christmas meal at a nearby hotel, helping strengthen their sense of belonging and connection to their island. We encouraged staff to build on the strong indoor practice by further developing the outdoor learning environment to ensure consistently high quality experiences across all areas.

Staff interactions were consistently nurturing, caring, and attuned to children's verbal and non verbal cues. Practitioners demonstrated a strong awareness of when to sensitively intervene and when to step back, supporting children's independence, autonomy, and social emotional growth. Staff offered creative and thoughtful scaffolding to extend thinking and challenge children in their play. Children's achievements were recognised and celebrated meaningfully through displays, individual learning journals, and floorbooks, promoting pride and motivation.

Planning approaches were flexible, responsive, and firmly grounded in children's interests and developmental needs. Staff knew children well as individual learners and used ongoing, purposeful observations to inform next steps. They confidently discussed children's progress, and focused sessions

provided targeted support in literacy and numeracy. Children's progression was documented thoughtfully, reflecting their strengths, achievements, and growing skills.

While planning processes were comprehensive, including online seesaw posts, individual learning plans, and daily and monthly records, we encouraged the team to streamline documentation to reduce duplication without compromising quality. Children's and families' voices were clearly evident across planning materials, highlighting a collaborative approach to shaping learning experiences and ensuring that children remained at the centre of decision making.

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 consistently treated with warmth and compassion. Staff were highly attuned to children's emotional needs and responded with sensitivity and care. Secure attachments and relationships between children and staff were evident, contributing to a strong sense of emotional safety and wellbeing. Staff had established trusting and loving relationships with children to nurture, support their wellbeing and help them feel valued, safe, and secure. One parent told us, "Staff genuinely care about the children and how they are." Another parent told us, "Children are safe and always well cared for."

Care routines were flexible and tailored to children's individual preferences and needs, including sleep and personal care. Individual sleep mats and blankets were available for child should they be required. Staff provided safe and sensitive care, guided by children's wishes and parental requests, ensuring children's right were respected. A dedicated changing area had been created to ensure children's personal care needs were met in a dignified and respectful way.

Mealtimes were inclusive, relaxed, and homely. Practitioners sat alongside children, helping to create a warm, family-like atmosphere. Children confidently selected and served their own meals and drinks and were fully involved in choosing and preparing snack options. These unhurried experiences promoted social interaction, independence, and a strong sense of belonging. Meals were nutritious, culturally appropriate and aligned with Setting the Table guidance. Water was readily available throughout the day. Staff noted that noise levels could occasionally increase when many children were present, though this was not observed during the inspection we asked all staff to be mindful of the this and the impact it could have on mealtimes.

Staff knew children, their siblings, and families very well. Personal plans contained relevant core information about children's individual needs, interests, and preferences. Staff recorded information about any changes or developments in children's health, wellbeing, and safety needs. This information was then discussed and reviewed at least every six months with families. There was opportunity to clearly document strategies to support children further, such as a child who was currently being supported to develop social skills and turn taking. We asked the team to consider where this information is recorded then reviewed to ensure strategies remain suitable and supportive.

Relationships with families and the wider community were strong, respectful, and meaningful. The team had created a warm and welcoming environment where children and families felt valued. Parents could engage with the service on a regular basis through stay and play sessions, tea parties, sports days and special events in the nursery and school community.

Families spoke very positively about the nursery, the care their children received, and the range of opportunities available to them. Drop off in the playroom, Seesaw updates, newsletters, termly reviews and effective day to day communication all contributed to families feeling connected to the service and their child's journey.

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	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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