Inverie Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Inverie Primary School
Inverie
Knoydart
Mallaig
PH41 4PL

Telephone: 01687 462 226

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
10 September 2026

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003013561

About the service

Inverie Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 7 children aged three years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is provided from a playroom within the building of Inverie Primary School. There is a reception area, main playroom, toilet, kitchen and snack area. Entry to the premises was secure and children had access to an enclosed outside play area to the rear of the building.

The manager of this service is also the manager of Arisaig Primary School Nursery CS2003017167.

About the inspection

This was a short announced inspection which took place on Wednesday 9 September 2026 from 11:00 until 16:00 hours. 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.

To inform our evaluations we:

- spent time with children in the service,
- spoke with the staff at the nursery,
- received completed questionnaires from staff and parents,
- observed practice and children's experiences,
- assessed core assurances, and
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assessed core assurances. These 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, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary within the quality indicator, 'Leadership and management of staff and resources'.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing, inclusive care that helped them feel safe, valued and confident.
- Warm, respectful interactions supported positive relationships and children's wellbeing.
- Children benefited from welcoming and engaging indoor play spaces that supported children's wellbeing and engagement in playing and learning.
- The provider should improve kitchen and toilet facilities to support the wellbeing and safety of children.
- The outdoor environment should be developed to provide high-quality opportunities that enrich children's playing, learning and development.
- Improvement activity including quality assurance and self-evaluation was beginning to have a positive impact on children's experiences and should be further developed to ensure it is sustained.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

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

Leadership 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

The setting had established a vision, values and aims to support its work with children and families. These had not been reviewed recently, and there was limited evidence of meaningful involvement from children and families in their development. As a result, there was not yet a fully shared understanding of how they could consistently influence practice and improvement priorities. Reviewing and refreshing them in consultation with children, families and staff would help ensure they reflect the aspirations of those involved with the setting and provide a clearer focus for practice and ongoing improvement.

The setting had started to strengthen its self-evaluation and quality assurance processes. Weekly handover meetings gave staff regular opportunities to share information, discuss children's needs and reflect on practice. This was helping to improve communication and support greater consistency in children's experiences. Leaders were also taking steps to develop their knowledge and support improvement. For example, staff had engaged with national guidance, including Realising the Ambition, and the manager had completed professional learning in pedagogical leadership. This was beginning to shape thinking about children's experiences and how practice could continue to develop.

Some monitoring and reflection had led to changes that benefited children. Quality assurance processes were still at an early stage and were not yet sufficiently embedded to provide a clear approach to continuous improvement or to fully evaluate the impact of changes on outcomes for children and families. An area for improvement was made to support the setting to further develop its quality assurance arrangements (see area for improvement 1).

Children's views were sought through daily interactions and consultation activities, and staff responded to their interests when planning experiences. This showed that children's voices were beginning to influence aspects of practice. Approaches to involving children and families in self-evaluation and service improvement were not yet well developed. As a result, there were missed opportunities to make full use of their views and experiences when identifying priorities for improvement and evaluating the quality of the service.

Support from the local authority early years team had contributed to positive changes within the setting. For example, the indoor layout had been reviewed and resources had been introduced. Improvements to the learning space had created a more welcoming and engaging environment for children and were beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of play and learning experiences. The manager reported feeling increasingly supported through local managers' meetings and professional dialogue with colleagues. Engagement with discussions around high-quality early learning and childcare practice, including the use of floor books and shared quality expectations, was helping to strengthen her understanding of early years pedagogy and leadership and this was beginning to impact positively on outcomes for children.

Hygienic practices were in place across the setting to help minimise the risk of infection, and staff had received training in infection prevention and control, and food safety. Staff were clear about their responsibilities in these areas. The provider had identified that the kitchen and toilet facilities did not meet current best practice guidance for infection prevention and control. We agreed that the layout of these areas, along with the absence of handwashing facilities within the playroom, did not support the prevention

of infection. In addition, kitchen and bathroom surfaces were constructed from materials that could not be effectively cleaned. This had the potential to impact children's health and wellbeing. We made a requirement for the provider to make arrangements to ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing are protected (see requirement 1).

Requirements

1. By 30 April 2027, the provider must ensure that children experience an environment which is safe and clean. To do this, they must, as a minimum:

a) Review the kitchen and bathroom environment for potential risks and take action to address these; and

b) Provide suitable facilities to minimise the risk of spread of infection;

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of the Social Care and Social Work and Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/2010). This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19).

Areas for improvement

1. To support consistently high-quality outcomes for children, the service should strengthen leadership and quality assurance arrangements to ensure leaders can effectively evaluate all aspects of service provision and use this information to drive continuous and sustainable improvement.

This should include, but is not limited to: a) implementing robust quality assurance processes that effectively monitor practice, evaluate impact on children's outcomes, and support consistency across the service; and b) establishing a cycle of self-evaluation that involves staff, children and families in identifying strengths, areas for development and meaningful actions for improvement

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that, '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

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 happy, engaged and motivated in their play and learning. They benefited from positive relationships with staff, who knew them well and responded sensitively to their interests, ideas and cues. Staff demonstrated flexibility in their approach, adapting experiences to maintain children's engagement and support success in learning. They also made effective connections between children's experiences at home and within the setting. For example, a child's interest in brambles from home was extended through creative experiences, promoting curiosity, creativity and a strong sense of belonging. As a result, children experienced learning that was meaningful and relevant to them.

The indoor learning environment was warm, welcoming and well organised. Children independently accessed a wide range of age-appropriate resources that supported creativity, mark making, construction, imaginative play, sensory exploration and relaxation. The use of natural and real-life materials enriched play experiences and encouraged children to explore and investigate. Children were confident in making choices and directing their own learning, demonstrating growing independence and engagement.

Children also benefited from regular opportunities to learn beyond the setting. Staff made good use of the local community, including visits to shops, woodland areas and other local places of interest. These experiences helped children make connections between their learning and the world around them while developing their understanding of nature and their local environment. Staff built effectively on children's observations and interests during these experiences, helping to deepen learning and extend children's knowledge.

Staff interactions were consistently warm, nurturing and respectful, creating a positive atmosphere for learning. Children appeared secure in their relationships with staff and confidently shared their ideas, sought support and participated in conversations. Staff supported learning through practical experiences and discussion, enabling children to develop skills across different areas of learning. For example, children demonstrated sustained concentration and enjoyment during a baking activity as they weighed ingredients, counted, measured and mixed batter. These experiences supported early numeracy development in meaningful and engaging contexts while also building confidence and fine motor skills.

Children had opportunities to develop early writing skills through a range of resources and experiences. There was scope to place greater emphasis on other aspects of literacy, such as sharing stories, songs and rhymes. This could further enrich children's communication and language experiences and support progress in early literacy development.

Children's views were valued and influenced aspects of planning through discussions, floor books and everyday interactions. Staff demonstrated a commitment to following children's interests and responded flexibly to changing levels of engagement. Parents told us that they valued this approach, with one parent telling us, "He particularly enjoys playing outside & going for adventure walks. All the staff are very friendly & spend lots of time with him." Observations and learning journals were used to record and share children's experiences with families, supporting communication about progress and achievements. There was scope to make greater use of observations and information from families to identify the specific skills and interests the children were developing, rather than focusing on the activities they had taken part in. This would support more targeted planning and help to ensure learning builds progressively on children's strengths and interests. Similarly, staff did not always maximise opportunities to extend children's thinking, language and problem-solving skills through open-ended questioning and sustained shared thinking. Enhancing these aspects of practice would further strengthen children's learning and outcomes.

The outdoor environment had limited resources and was not laid out in a way that promoted curiosity or high-quality opportunities for playing and learning. Staff had identified this as an area for development and were working with local authority partners to make improvements to the space. Plans to increase opportunities for physical play and create more inviting areas for literacy and relaxation were appropriate and demonstrated a commitment to improvement. Providing a greater range of open-ended resources could provide enhanced opportunities for creativity, investigation, problem-solving and child-led learning. We made an area for improvement to support this continued development.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children have access to stimulating experiences that promote creativity, investigation and child-led learning, the provider should further develop the outdoor play and learning environment.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: '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)

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

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 experienced warm, nurturing and responsive care from staff who knew them well and supported their wellbeing effectively. Relationships across the setting were positive and respectful, helping children feel secure, valued and confident. Children approached staff readily for support and conversation, and staff responded sensitively to their individual needs and preferences. As a result, children appeared settled, happy and engaged in their play and learning.

Children's rights, choices and independence were well supported in daily practice. Staff listened carefully to children's views and responded flexibly to their preferences. For example, when children discussed going for a walk, staff involved them in decisions about how to prepare and encouraged them to manage tasks independently. Children were supported to change shoes, and get ready to access outdoor play, helping them to develop confidence and a sense of responsibility.

The setting supported children's wellbeing by providing opportunities for both group interaction and quieter, solitary play. Children moved confidently between experiences and routines, demonstrating that they felt safe and comfortable within the setting. Transitions throughout the session were calm and well managed. Positive links with the primary class helped children become familiar with the school environment and supported continuity in their experiences.

Staff supported children's emotional wellbeing and social development effectively through positive role modelling, gentle encouragement and meaningful interactions. Children were encouraged to build relationships, communicate with others and develop social confidence. Links with the primary school and plans to increase opportunities for children to interact with peers from other settings provided valuable opportunities to widen children's social experiences and prepare them for future transitions.

Mealtimes were relaxed and sociable occasions that contributed positively to children's wellbeing. Staff sat alongside children, creating opportunities for conversation, promoting positive relationships and supporting their safety. Children were encouraged to follow good hygiene routines, such as handwashing before meals, helping them develop healthy habits and an understanding of personal responsibility.

Personal plans were in place for all children and were reviewed regularly. These reflected children's strengths, interests and preferences, supporting staff to provide care that was responsive to individual needs. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of the information recorded and used this effectively to support children's wellbeing and engagement. There was scope to further recognise and celebrate children's cultural backgrounds and home languages to strengthen children's identity, sense of belonging and family

engagement. Children's involvement in reviewing their own plans was limited. Increasing opportunities for children and families to contribute to personal planning would help ensure plans remain current and fully reflective of children's changing needs and interests.

Staff had established positive and trusting relationships with families and recognised them as important partners in children's care and learning. Information was shared through daily communication and learning journals, helping families remain informed about their child's experiences and progress. A staff member told us, " As well as chatting to parents at home time and in the morning we also keep them informed with dojo daily updates. Families can also come into nursery to view Learning Journals and Floor books and stay and play." Developing approaches that create further, more regular opportunities for informal discussion and shared reflection could strengthen these partnerships further. Enabling families to become more actively involved in nursery life, personal planning and collaborative activities could support improved outcomes for children and families.

Complaints

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

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good

Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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