

Lismore Primary Pre Five Unit Day Care of Children

Lismore Primary School
Lismore
Oban
PA34 5UG

Telephone: 01631 760 258

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 September 2026

Service provided by:
Argyll and Bute Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003373

Service no:
CS2003014656

About the service

Lismore Primary Pre Five Unit is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children aged from 2 years to not yet attending primary school at any one time. During our inspection four children were registered with the service.

The service operates within Lismore Primary School on the Island of Lismore, 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 services, parks and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 14th and 15th September 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 one child using the service
- Gathered feedback from two families through online questionnaires
- Spoke with 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.

Key messages

- The manager and staff demonstrated a strong commitment to driving improvement and securing positive outcomes for children and their families.
- The newly appointed manager continued to establish robust quality assurance processes and a culture of self evaluation to support a high quality provision for children and their families.
- The new values for the service were meaningful to children and embedded into every day practice.
- Children were happy, confident, and actively engaged in play throughout the inspection.
- The manager and staff continued to develop the planning cycle to ensure children were supported to grow and develop at a pace that was right for them.
- Children consistently experienced warm, nurturing, and responsive care from staff who knew them well and were attuned to their individual needs.
- Transitions were planned thoughtfully to help children feel safe, secure, and confident.
- The manager and staff demonstrated a commitment to developing strong, respectful connections with families.

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 service had experienced a significant period of change, including periods of inactivity, leadership changes, and staff transitions. Despite this, the newly appointed head teacher and staff team demonstrated a strong commitment to improvement and to securing positive outcomes for children and their families. Children's wellbeing, learning, and development were central to decision making and service development.

The service had recently reviewed its vision, values and aims in partnership with children, families, and staff. This collaborative approach supported a shared understanding of the service's aspirations and priorities. Children were at the heart of the vision, with a clear focus on helping them feel included, respected and supported to achieve their full potential.

The values of the service were evident in staff interactions and daily practice. Children experienced warm, nurturing and rights-based approaches that promoted positive relationships and a strong sense of belonging. The child friendly visual of "The Nursery Day" and initiatives such as "Values Star of the Week" helped children understand routines, make choices, and develop an understanding of the nursery's values.

The head teacher was beginning to establish a culture of continuous improvement and reflective practice. Staff engaged positively in self-evaluation using national quality frameworks to identify strengths and development priorities. Improvement plans appropriately focused on strengthening observations, planning, and tracking processes to better support children's learning and progress. The service had also identified the need to further develop outdoor learning and the quality of the learning environment. As these developments progress, the head teacher and team should continue to identify clear measures of success and evaluate the impact on outcomes for children.

The views of children and families were increasingly informing service development. The head teacher recognised the value of meaningful consultation and planned further opportunities for engagement. One parent told us "All suggestions are welcomed and I would happily share any feedback with the setting". This approach will help ensure improvements remain responsive to the needs and experiences of children and their families accessing the service.

A quality assurance calendar had been created to support a more robust process for monitoring, auditing, and improvement activities. The head teacher recognised the importance of their role in the quality assurance process. We discussed formalising some processes to support the head teacher and team to gather and analyse evidence to evaluate the quality of provision and inform future improvements. A small number of policies required updating to reflect current guidance. These had been identified through quality assurance processes and plans were in place to address them.

Continuous professional learning (CLPL) systems to track professional learning and measure its impact on practice were being developed by the head teacher and team. As these become embedded, they could support staff to continue to build on their professional knowledge, skills and confidence contributing to better outcomes for children at the service.

All staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and demonstrated a commitment to professional standards. Professional learning, reflective dialogue, and participation in local authority networks supported staff to develop their practice and share effective approaches. This contributed to a culture of continuous improvement and enhanced experiences for children.

The service benefited from approachable and supportive leadership. Staff spoke positively about their roles and demonstrated a shared commitment to providing high-quality care and learning experiences. Positive relationships within the team and wider school community supported staff wellbeing and contributed to a nurturing environment for 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 happy, confident, and actively engaged in play throughout the inspection. They accessed a range of experiences that reflected their interests and encouraged curiosity, creativity, and exploration. Children demonstrated increasing independence as they moved around the environment, including outdoors, confidently making choices about their play. We observed the child present engaging in singing, stories, arts and crafts, and exploring the local community.

Staff interactions were warm, nurturing, and respectful. Staff knew children well and responded sensitively to their individual needs, interests, and stages of development. They celebrated children's achievements and used encouragement and praise to support children's confidence and self-esteem. We observed that, at times, children were accompanied closely by adults throughout their play. While staff engagement was positive and supportive, there is scope to continue reflecting on how adult involvement can best support children to lead their own learning, make decisions and sustain their play without influencing it. This will help promote greater ownership of play and further strengthen children's independence and autonomy.

Children benefited from free flow access to the outdoor environment, where they engaged in gardening activities and experiences linked to the local community. These opportunities supported children's curiosity, developing skills and connection with the world around them. Parent told us experiences in the local community, such as trips to the beach and the special garden for a picnic were their children's favourite things to do.

The service was reviewing its planning and play pedagogy approaches as part of ongoing improvements. Staff had recently introduced environmental planning processes to help ensure learning environments, experiences and provocations were responsive to children's current interests and intended learning outcomes. Floor books were used to capture children's ideas, experiences, and contributions to learning. We discussed opportunities to further strengthen the planning cycle by evaluating what children had learned, identifying what worked well and considering next steps to extend learning. This would support a clearer focus on the impact of experiences and outcomes for children.

Staff recognised the importance of providing developmentally appropriate experiences for all children and were exploring ways to further enhance planning and provision for younger children through professional learning and shared practice.

Weekly team meetings with the head teacher supported staff to further explore children's development and the curriculum which supported staffs' knowledge, skills, and confidence in this process. Support from the local authority to visit other settings with established two-year-old placements would continue to support this journey.

Observations gathered through Seesaw and children's development plans provided positive examples of child-led learning. Staff used observations effectively to recognise children's achievements and extend learning experiences. As tracking systems become further embedded across the service, they will provide a more consistent overview of children's progress and support individual next steps in learning.

Children benefited from an indoor environment rich in print, literacy and numeracy experiences which supported communication, early language development, and emerging mathematical thinking. One parent told us "The nursery is a beautiful space which has been carefully set out to reflect the children's interests and age and stage of development". The service recognised they needed to further develop the outdoor environment to provide an equally rich range of learning experiences across the curriculum. Planned refurbishment to the outdoor space presented a valuable opportunity to enhance challenge, creativity, and exploration, ensuring children experience breadth and depth in their learning both indoors and outdoors.

Staff regularly shared children's learning and achievements with families through Seesaw, daily communication, and formal parent nights. This supported families to remain informed and involved in their child's development and learning. The service had begun considering ways to strengthen opportunities for families to contribute their own observations and celebrate achievements from home. Further developing these approaches will support a more collaborative understanding of children's learning and help inform planning and next steps.

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 consistently experienced warm, nurturing, and responsive care from staff who knew them well and were attuned to their individual needs. Staff responded sensitively to children's verbal and nonverbal cues, providing reassurance, encouragement and comfort when required. Positive, trusting relationships were evident throughout the setting, helping children feel safe, secure, and valued. One parent told us "The staff are always very welcoming and warm".

The staff team demonstrated a strong understanding of the importance of attachment, wellbeing, and emotional security. Children benefited from consistent, responsive care which supported their wellbeing, confidence, and resilience. One parent told us "Really kind and nurturing environment which means my child loves going in every day". The high staff-to-child ratios enabled staff to provide individualised support and build meaningful relationships that promoted positive outcomes for children.

Children's privacy, dignity, and wellbeing were respected during personal care routines. Staff carried out care tasks in a calm, respectful and caring manner, adapting support to meet individual needs and family preferences. The refurbished toilet and changing facilities provided a clean, welcoming, and appropriate environment that supported children's personal care needs safely and with dignity.

Mealtimes were relaxed, social and nurturing experiences. Staff sat alongside children eating, creating positive opportunities for conversation and role modelling. Children were encouraged to make choices and develop their independence through self-serving food, using age-appropriate utensils and managing tasks for themselves. Established routines, including handwashing and tidying away after meals, supported children's confidence, sense of responsibility and life skills. Staff used these everyday experiences effectively to promote wellbeing, independence, and meaningful participation. Opportunities for nursery children to spend time with children attending the school also supported relationship building and familiarisation with the wider school community.

Children's personal learning plans (PLP) and "All About Me" information reflected their individual routines, needs, and interests. Detailed information gathered in partnership with families supported staff to provide personalised care and responsive support. Personal learning plans were easily accessible within the playroom, and children were actively involved in revisiting their learning and achievements. During our inspection one child was keen to share their PLP with the inspector and discuss activities they had done and their previous achievements. This demonstrated children's ownership of their plans and promoted meaningful participation. Plans were reviewed regularly with families, ensuring information remained current and continued to support positive outcomes for children.

Appropriate systems were in place to support children's health and wellbeing. While no medication records were available for review, staff demonstrated a clear understanding of local authority procedures and current best practice guidance. Information relating to allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements were recorded and shared effectively to ensure children's health needs were met safely.

Transitions were planned thoughtfully to help children feel safe, secure, and confident. Book bug sessions within the nursery provided valuable opportunities for children and families to become familiar with staff, peers, and the environment before starting. These experiences helped support smooth transitions and promoted a sense of belonging within the nursery community.

The service demonstrated a commitment to developing strong, respectful connections with families. The head teacher and staff recognised the importance of meaningful engagement and were creating further opportunities for families to participate in nursery life. Initiatives including parent evenings, stay-and-play sessions and outdoor family learning events will help strengthen collaboration, support children's transitions, and enhance shared understanding of children's learning and wellbeing.

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	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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