Dunvegan Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Dunvegan Primary School
Dunvegan
Isle of Skye
IV55 8GU

Telephone: 01470 521 307

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 June 2026

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003017202

About the service

Dunvegan Primary School Nursery - Sgoil-Àraich Dhùn Bheagain - is located in Dunvegan on the Isle of Skye. The service provides early learning and childcare provision through the medium of Gàidhlig (Gaelic). The service is registered to provide care for up to 20 children aged between two to those not yet attending school to attend at any given time, of whom no more than three will be aged under three years. At the time of the inspection, nine children were registered at the service. The service is located in a stand alone building in the primary school grounds. Children have direct access to outdoor play spaces, toilets, kitchen and a play room.
The manager of service is also the manager of Carbost Primary School Nursery and Struan Primary School Nursery. Struan Primary School Nursery has cancelled their registration.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 June between 08:45 and 16:15 and 24 June between 08:50 and 13:00 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 evaluations we:

- spoke with or spent time with children using the service
- received two completed questionnaires from families using the service
- spoke with three families during the inspection
- spoke with staff and the manager of the service
- 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.

Key messages

• Children experienced warm, nurturing care from staff who knew them well.

• Children benefited from positive outdoor and nature-based learning experiences.

• Families felt welcomed, listened to and included in their child's care.

• Children's experiences and improvements to the service were guided by an ambitious shared vision, values and aims which put children at the heart.

• Staff contributed well to improvements and were committed to developing the service.

• Staff breaks should be further reviewed to protect their wellbeing and ensure sustained high-quality care for children.

• Transitions between spaces should be further developed to support children's experiences.

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	4 - 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 key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on children's outcomes and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children benefited from a service with an ambitious shared vision, values and aims. These had been developed through the meaningful consultation of staff, parents, children and the local community. The vision centred on nurture, belonging and helping children to thrive. Parents described the service as a "friendly, welcoming environment". One parent told us staff had "gone above and beyond" to include their family. Children's experiences were enhanced through this shared vision which helped them feel valued, settled and part of the community.

Children experienced a caring ethos which was evident throughout the service. Parents shared that children were "visibly happy and comfortable with the staff". Staff promoted the values of the service through warm and respectful interactions. This supported children's wellbeing and helped them feel safe and secure.

Staff were reflective and committed to improving outcomes for children. They spoke confidently about what was working well and areas they wished to develop. Parents valued this approach. One parent shared that there was "open communication about improvement" and staff made them "feel listened to". This ensured families were included in shaping the future direction of the service.

Staff told us they felt supported by approachable leaders. They spoke positively about the support they received. As a result, positive relationships within the team supported consistent approaches to care.

Parents appreciated the warm welcome children received at drop-off and pick-up times. One parent described how staff welcomed their child back and encouraged discussion about home experiences. This helped children feel emotionally secure and supported.

Children benefited from staff who were motivated and committed to their roles. Staff accessed training linked to children's needs and service priorities, including the development of Gaelic-medium practice. They understood how professional learning supported children's experiences and outcomes. This promoted children's communication, confidence and learning.

Self-evaluation was embedded within the culture of the service. Staff contributed to improvement work, including the development of floor books and the shared vision. This meant that improvements were sustainable, meaningful and improved children's experiences.

Systems were in place to support the safe operation of the service. For example, regularly reviewing risk assessments and policies. Leaders had developed a quality assurance calendar to monitor important aspects of practice. Some processes remained informal and should be further developed. Formalising these systems would support more effective evaluation and identify any trends.

There were limited opportunities for staff to take breaks throughout the day. This was beginning to impact staff wellbeing. Leaders and the local authority had identified this and planned to improve arrangements for breaks. The provider should ensure all staff can take regular protected breaks throughout the day. This would support staff wellbeing and help staff remain responsive to children's needs (**see area for improvement 1**).

Areas for improvement

1. 1. To support staff wellbeing and sustain high-quality care for children, the provider should ensure staff are able to take breaks throughout the day where needed.
This should include protected arrangements which allow staff to spend time away from direct contact with children. This is to ensure staff remain rested, focused and responsive to children's needs. This should be reviewed in line with the guiding principles of The Health and Care Staffing (Scotland) Act 2019.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as good where several strengths impacted positively on children's outcomes and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children enjoyed their time in the service. They experienced a calm and welcoming environment and appeared relaxed and engaged in their play. Parents told us their children "enjoy coming" and often spoke about their experiences at home. This showed children were motivated and interested in their learning.

Children benefited from meaningful outdoor and nature-based experiences. Parents valued the "forest school and nature based" approach. They told us children learned about growing, tadpoles and butterflies through firsthand experiences. One child told us about the frogs that they had watched grow. This supported children's curiosity and understanding of the natural world.

Staff planned rich experiences which reflected children's interests. A recent visit to the castle provided exciting opportunities for learning. Children travelled by boat, explored local wildlife and learned about seals. Staff extended this learning through play experiences the following day. This helped children revisit their ideas and deepen their understanding.

Staff interactions were warm and responsive. They followed children's interests and used conversation effectively to extend learning. Gaelic language was promoted naturally through play, routines and gestures. This supported children's confidence, communication and language development.

Children were mostly supported to make choices throughout the day. This promoted their independence and decision-making skills. Outdoors, children explored seaweed, mud and imaginative play opportunities.

Indoors, children used electronic microscopes to investigate natural materials. These experiences supported children to problem solve, work together and lead their own learning.

Children's learning and achievements were captured effectively through floor books. These were a clear strength of the service. Floor books reflected children's voices, interests and learning journeys well. Parents valued opportunities to look through them and discuss children's development. One parent told us the floor books helped them understand what children had been learning. This strengthened partnership working and children's learning experiences.

Floor books demonstrated a strong balance between adult-led and child-led learning. Children were able to make links between experiences at home and learning within the setting. This showed meaningful continuity in children's learning. The team should now continue to develop displays and individual journals to better reflect this rich learning and make progress more visible.

Staff knew children well and spoke confidently about their next steps in learning. Systems were in place to assess children's learning, including Gaelic-medium and curriculum tracking . However, these approaches were not always used consistently to identify and review children's next steps. The service had recently changed online journal platforms and were reviewing how they record and review children's individual next steps and observations of their learning. We encouraged the service to continue to develop a clearer shared system to ensure all children are making good progress in their learning. This would further support staff to demonstrate children's progress more effectively.

Children are supported to achieve — 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as good where several strengths impacted positively on children's outcomes and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children experienced nurturing and responsive care from staff who knew them well. Staff treated children with warmth, kindness and respect. Children were relaxed, confident and secure in their relationships with staff. Parents described the service as "caring and supportive" and told us their children were "very happy here". This showed children felt safe, valued and respected.

Staff provided care which reflected children's individual needs and preferences. They adapted routines to support children and promote their independence. Personal care was carried out sensitively and respectfully. This protected children's dignity and supported their wellbeing.

Relationships with families were a key strength of the service. Families told us they felt welcomed, included and listened to. One parent shared, "The staff are supportive of parents as much as they care about the children attending." Another parent described the service as creating "an environment of safety and free from judgement". This meant families felt confident sharing information and were able to ask for support when required.

Personal planning was developed in partnership with families. Staff reviewed plans regularly and considered children's changing needs. Parents valued opportunities to discuss development and review progress. As a result, children experienced care that was tailored to their individual needs.

Children's transitions into the service were managed well. The service worked closely with the local community to get to know children before they started at the nursery. Families spoke positively about settling-in experiences and the support they received. Children benefited from consistent staff and predictable routines. This helped children feel secure and settled.

Mealtimes were mostly social and supportive experiences. At lunch, staff sat with children and used these opportunities to speak with children and promote the Gaelic language. This supported communication and positive relationships.

Some transitions between spaces were unsettling for a few children. For example, when children walked from the playroom outside to go to lunch. This meant children had to change into their waterproof clothes to walk to the lunch hall. This reduced opportunities for sustained play and learning. The service should continue to review transitions throughout the day to ensure they minimise the impact on children's play and are well planned. This would further ensure that children's choice and well-being are promoted at these times (**see area for improvement 1**).

Children benefited from strong links with their local community. The service involved local people and community groups in children's experiences. Children participated in gardening, cooking and wider community activities. This supported their sense of belonging and helped them learn about their local area.

The promotion of Gaelic language was strengthened through the commitment of the staff team and links with the local community. Staff used opportunities for children to use the Gaelic language in real-life contexts and were developing their own knowledge through continued professional learning. This supported children's confidence, identity and connection with others.

Areas for improvement

1. 1. To promote children's wellbeing and experiences, the provider should review mealtimes and transitions between spaces. This should include minimising unnecessary movement between spaces, increasing children's choice and ensuring mealtimes are consistently calm and relaxed.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'I can enjoy unhurried snack and meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible (HSCS 1.35) and 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me (HSCS 1.19)

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	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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