

# Summarised inspection findings

**Kilniver Primary School and Pre-Five Unit**

Argyll and Bute Council

19 March 2024

## Key contextual information

Kilninver Pre-Five Unit is part of Kilninver Primary School, south of Oban in Argyll. Children attend from a wide rural area to the south of Oban, including Kilmelford and other smaller settlements. The setting has one playroom, with access to the wider school building and grounds. The playroom is also used to serve lunches to children from the setting and from P1 to P4. Children receive their entitlement to 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) by attending termtime, between 9.20 am and 3.20 pm. Most children attend whole days for part of the week. The setting is registered for 10 children, aged from three years to those not yet attending school, to attend at any one time. At the time of inspection there were six children on the roll. Children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 5 to 7.

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the Pre-Five Unit, known to parents as the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting. Across the day, staffing currently includes two childcare and education workers and a classroom assistant. The team has had significant change over the last four years. The current team has been established since August 2023 and includes practitioners redeployed from other settings.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

**satisfactory**

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The staffing in the ELC setting has been unstable for the last few years with annual changes. This has constrained the capacity for change. The current team works very well together and is resilient in a period of uncertainty. They have quickly established strong working relationships and are developing a shared understanding of high-quality early learning and childcare. The values of respect, friendship, and ambition are shared with the whole school community. The values underpin the work of the setting with practitioners demonstrating a strong commitment to them. They should continue to share the values in meaningful and relevant ways with children. Practitioners and families are now ready to establish the vision and aims. It will be important to keep these under review to reflect the aspirations of current children, parents, and practitioners.
- The headteacher has leadership responsibility for the setting. She should work with the team to identify what is important for the setting to ensure effective leadership of change. Working together, building on the strengths of practitioners, they should use national guidance and current thinking to develop a shared understanding of high-quality ELC. This will help identify priorities for improvement that secure positive outcomes for children.
- The headteacher and practitioners have a range of skills and experiences that they bring to the team. It will be important to identify priorities for professional learning that help them improve outcomes for children. The headteacher should support practitioners to access opportunities for professional learning. Professional learning towards additional qualifications is beginning to build staff confidence. Practitioners are very reflective of their practice and identify how they

are helping children progress in their learning. They have shared their effective practice, for example, how they use floorbooks, with colleagues, including teachers in the school. It would be helpful for the team to visit other settings to explore high-quality ELC in different contexts. This will also help motivate and inspire practitioners and inform continuous improvement.

- Practitioners are at the early stages of developing leadership roles across the setting. Children have leadership responsibilities including 'danger spotting' in their play and caring for the environment. Children are also part of the whole school 'clan' system that provides some pupil voice and includes them in decision-making. There is capacity for practitioners and children to lead and take forward more improvements. Sharing the leadership of change in this way would build capacity for improvement overall. Parents and families could also be invited to play a more active role in the improvement process.
- The headteacher and practitioners have worked together to identify priorities for improvement. The current priority is the development of outdoor spaces. They should ensure that the action plan contains relevant and well-considered priorities. The success of their identified actions needs to be measurable. Practitioners are at the early stages of using formal self-evaluation tools to reflect on the quality of provision. As this develops, it should help them check and review the impact of changes. As the staff team's use of self-evaluation becomes established, this should inform priorities that reflect a shared agenda for continued improvement. Children could also be more involved in evaluating the quality of their experiences.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

Good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Relationships between adults and children are consistently positive, nurturing and support children to feel valued, safe, and secure. Children enjoy their experiences and demonstrate confidence and motivation in their learning. Practitioners have created an ethos that demonstrates a strong commitment to children's rights and values children as individuals. Practitioners are very respectful of children, listening carefully to their views and wishes. Children are supported to learn in an unhurried, relaxed and child-centred way. This is supporting children to increasingly lead their own learning.
- Practitioners are highly responsive to the interests of children. Children engage well with the range of interesting experiences that promote curiosity and inquiry. Practitioners provoke learning through stimulating provocations. They should ensure when introducing adult-initiated learning that this does not limit children's creativity. Practitioners have developed an attractive learning environment indoors and work hard to mitigate the impact of multi-purpose use of the playroom over lunch times. They should continue with plans to develop further the outdoor space with the planned focus on open-ended, natural resources and promotion of literacy and numeracy. Children have access to interesting and varied outdoor environments that provide physical challenge and opportunities to manage risk. The headteacher should work with practitioners to develop free flow access to the outdoor spaces. This will help provide spontaneous opportunities for children to make choices about where they will play and develop their role in leading their own learning.
- Most practitioners' interactions with children are calm and sensitive, with a focus on promoting confidence and independence. Practitioners could continue to develop the consistent use of high-quality questioning and commentary to support, extend and challenge children's learning. Children access a range of digital technology to enhance and support their learning. This includes researching areas of interest. Practitioners could develop this further, for example, by enabling children to create content and access resources independently.
- Practitioners know children very well as individuals and as part of their family unit. They make detailed observations of children's learning and use local authority recording tools to identify what children know, can do and what they need to learn next. This is an effective, very personalised approach. Practitioners' observations are recorded in comprehensive learning journey folders and through the extensive and effective use of floorbooks. Practitioners should ensure that the identified next steps in learning are significant for each child and support them to make the best possible progress. Building on the success of floorbooks, children and their families could be more involved in reflecting on learning and identifying what they will learn next. Children's learning journey folders would support this very well.

- Practitioners monitor children's progress at key points across the year. The headteacher should work with practitioners to ensure this process identifies consistently where children may have potential barriers to their learning or require additional challenge.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners provide a varied curriculum that is play-based and very responsive to children's interests. They make good use of the outdoors and aspects of the local community to ensure all curriculum areas are well planned for. They should ensure that they track coverage of the experiences and outcomes to ensure children receive their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. Practitioners could involve parents and other partners, in developing and delivering a curriculum in the unique context, in interesting and innovative ways. This should build on what children already know and can do to ensure experiences add value to learning.
- Practitioners provide a curriculum that broadly reflects national practice guidance. They use local authority developmental milestones and progression pathways to promote progression across the curriculum. Practitioners work with staff across the early level to provide transitions that are responsive to the needs of individuals. They should develop this further to ensure a clear focus on sharing skills and teaching approaches. This will help ensure children make sustained progress and experience continuity as they move across the early level and beyond.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners share children’s learning with families informally through daily discussions and using an online platform. They should build on the established positive relationships they have with families to create a stronger learning partnership between home and ELC. This should include increased sharing of learning through more regular access to the playroom, learning journey folders and floorbooks. Parents would also welcome increased opportunities to play and learn with their child, both at home and in the setting. They could be invited to more ‘stay and play’ sessions which could involve other professionals sharing skills and occupations.

## 2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Ensuring the wellbeing of children is a priority of the setting. Practitioners provide a high level of respect and care for children within a nurturing ethos. This creates a strong sense of family and community. Practitioners support children well to understand, and increasingly develop emotional literacy, supported by a planned programme. Children use a range of strategies to help them manage their feelings including breathing techniques and using appropriate vocabulary. Parents speak positively of the relationships they and their children have with practitioners.
- Practitioners promote the wellbeing indicators in their conversations with children. Children understand the importance of keeping themselves safe and healthy, for example through experience of using a range of tools and an oral health programme. Children are beginning to understand they have rights through discussions. Practitioners should continue to support children to be aware of their rights by promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in meaningful ways.
- Children benefit from, and enjoy, the freedom of outdoor spaces. They are curious, enjoy exploring the natural world and have a well-developed understanding and general knowledge. Children recognise the effect that energetic activity has on their body.
- Children are aware of healthy food choices and are independent in routines, such as snack and lunch, where they serve themselves. They are capable of taking on increased responsibilities in routines. Practitioners eat with the children, encouraging good table manners and respect for others. This results in a relaxed, high-quality dining experience, alongside older school children.
- Practitioners understand their statutory duties and responsibilities in keeping children safe. The headteacher, with practitioners, should ensure appropriate plans, developed with parents, are in place to ensure the individual care and learning needs of children are met. This should include all changes that can impact on children's progress and wellbeing. This targeted approach will help reduce barriers to learning.
- Practitioners have created a very inclusive ethos. They treat children with a high level of respect and ensure they receive the support they need to access early learning and childcare. They value and celebrate diversity. This includes meaningful learning about other countries, cultures, and celebrations. Practitioners should continue to promote children's awareness as global citizens, particularly their understanding of diversity outwith their immediate experience.

### 3.2 Securing children's progress

good

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Almost all children are making good progress in early language and communication. They listen very well to adults and each other. Children are familiar with a range of texts and traditional rhymes, which they retell confidently. They enjoy creating and illustrating their own stories. They are ready for more in-depth exploration of texts. Most children use a well-developed range of vocabulary to share their ideas and would benefit from increased challenge to extend this further. They recognise their name confidently and the majority are beginning to identify letter names and their associated sounds. Children benefit from developing fine motor control to help them be ready to mark-make and develop increasing control of a pencil. They enjoy exploring mark-making and writing for different purposes.
- Almost all children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They apply their understanding of number as they count and recognise numerals in routines. A few children would benefit from the challenge of exploring larger numbers. They recognise two-dimensional shapes and could be developing an understanding of properties as well as exploring three-dimensional objects. Children explore simple information handling as they monitor traffic passing the nursery and create simple pictograms. They are now ready to develop and apply their understanding across a wider range of meaningful contexts, including outdoors.
- Children's progress in health and wellbeing is good. Using a planned programme, children are developing an understanding of their emotions and strategies to help calm themselves. They have well-developed gross motor control and demonstrate stamina, resilience, and perseverance as they negotiate uneven terrain in the outdoor space. They describe confidently how to keep themselves safe, for example when using electrical appliances.
- Children are making good progress over time. Practitioners provide a very individual approach to support which is ensuring children make progress at their own developmental stage. They should now consider how more able children could be challenged to make increased progress because of their ELC experiences.
- Practitioners recognise and celebrate children's successes and achievements meaningfully through praise and encouragement. Children are becoming responsible citizens and effective contributors as they participate in a local Christmas tree festival and perform for their families. Working with families, practitioners should ensure they capture children's achievements from out with nursery. This will ensure that children's skills are recognised and built upon through ELC experiences.

- Practitioners have a sound knowledge and understanding of the needs of children, their families, and the local context. They understand the unique challenges within their local community and work hard to provide an inclusive ethos that promotes equity. Practitioners, working with the headteacher, should make effective use of all available data and information, including that relating to socio-economic backgrounds. This will help them plan support and any required interventions to ensure all children make the very best progress.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.