

# Summarised inspection findings

**Lochgilphead Joint Campus and Pre-Five Unit**

Argyll and Bute Council

18 June 2024

## Key contextual information

Lochgilphead Primary School Pre-Five Unit is part of Lochgilphead Joint Campus. It is situated within the same building. The setting provides early learning and childcare (ELC) placements for children living within the town of Lochgilphead and surrounding rural areas. Children can attend the setting from the age of three until starting primary school. The setting is registered to provide places for 28 children at any given time. Children attend during term time. They can access full-time or half-day sessions within their 1140 hours entitlement. A few children have split placements with other ELC settings in the local area. Currently, there are 28 children on the roll.

The head of campus has overall responsibility and accountability for the setting. The acting head of teaching and learning is the designated manager. A Lead Childcare and Education Worker (CCEW) is responsible for the day to day running of the setting.

There are two adjoining playrooms. Children have direct free access to a small outdoor area. A CCEW was appointed in January 2024. She is supported by four CCEWs. A classroom assistant provides cover for lunch provision every day. In addition, regular support across a range of curriculum areas from a Cluster Lead CCEW is provided by Argyll and Bute Council. A Cluster Lead CCEW for Argyll and Bute Council provides regular support across a range of curriculum areas.

1.3 Leadership of change	Weak
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community</li><li>strategic planning for continuous improvement</li><li>implementing improvement and change</li></ul>	

- The head of campus and acting head of teaching and learning’s strategic leadership is not having a significant impact on the work of the pre-five unit. As a result, the strategic overview is led by a local authority action plan. As a priority, senior leaders need to continue to engage with local authority colleagues. This should ensure there is clarity on individual roles and responsibilities for improving the quality of provision for children and families.
- The pre-five unit shares the same vision and values as the joint campus. Senior leaders plan to review the values with parents and carers to better reflect the local context, the joint campus and rural area. Practitioners need to improve how they enact the values through their everyday interactions with the children, parents and each other. Children need to develop further their awareness of the values in a developmentally appropriate way.
- The Lead CCEW has correctly prioritised a number of key areas. These include a review and update of policies and practices, how staff are deployed, professional learning needs and changes to the environment and resources. She is respected by practitioners and has established a positive ethos within the team, modelling effective practice.
- Senior leaders promote shared leadership for all staff, including practitioners in the pre-five unit. All practitioners have recently taken responsibility for leadership roles. These roles include

a communication champion, cycle training and targeted interventions to support children's communication skills. As planned, practitioners should build on this work to extend their knowledge and improve the quality of their interactions. Children are able and ready to take more responsibility for leading their own learning. They would benefit from inclusion in wider school leadership opportunities, linked to pupil voice groups at the primary stages. This will ensure they feel included in decisions that affect them and develop further their confidence and teamworking skills.

- Senior leaders' current approaches to quality assurance are not supporting improved experiences and outcomes for children. They need to reinstate annual professional reviews and implement planned monitoring activities. This should include regular tracking meetings with practitioners and learning walks. Senior leaders should ensure that the monitoring and evaluating of learning, teaching and assessment is more thorough. Children's experiences should be improved as a result.
- Practitioners are increasingly reflecting on their practice, supported by the lead CCEW. This is helping build capacity for improvement. Practitioners' use of self-evaluation, national guidance and improvement frameworks are at an early stage. As planned, senior leaders should ensure self-evaluation processes are thorough and become embedded in practice. It would be beneficial for practitioners to consider creative ways to include parents and children in future self-evaluation activities. This will enable parents to be involved meaningfully in improvements to the setting. Practitioners would benefit from further opportunities to look outwards to other settings to deepen their understanding of high-quality provision.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

Weak

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

- Children experience a welcoming ethos in the setting. This helps them feel safe and happy. A few children sustain engagement in their learning for short periods of time. Practitioners should ensure all children have appropriate support and challenge to develop their creativity, curiosity and problem-solving skills to deepen their learning through play. Senior leaders and practitioners have recently made changes to the environment. These improvements are at the early stages of supporting children to have greater ownership and use of resources during play. Practitioners should continue to develop rich experiences in literacy and numeracy. This would be alongside a deeper understanding and delivery of other contexts of the curriculum.
- Most practitioners are developing their use of commentary alongside children as they explore resources through play. In a few examples, children are enabled to sustain their interest for longer periods of time. Practitioners need to develop further their use of open-ended questions to extend and deepen children's learning. Their next steps would be to focus professional learning on the role of the adult in supporting children's learning.
- The lead CCEW has developed helpful guidance for practitioners and families to help them understand behaviours being displayed by children. This aims to support the reasons, predictors and functions for certain types of behaviour in children. In addition, the guidance includes instructions for recording individual children's behaviour. Practitioners' use of the guidance will develop further their knowledge, understanding and practice in this area.
- Practitioners increasingly use digital technology to support children's learning and respond to their interests. Children use programmable toys to develop positional language, an interactive board to encourage awareness of direction and tablets to consolidate aspects of their learning.
- Practitioners observe children playing and record these observations in Learning Journey books. These books are shared with parents and carers. Practitioners need to ensure observations on individual children's learning are linked to planning and tracking processes. There is a need to ensure practitioners and senior leaders can more accurately evidence progress over time. Overall, the quality of observations is inconsistent, and do not capture significant learning for every child. Practitioners should plan time for children to look at their Learning Journey books and discuss what they are learning through their play. There is a need to support children to understand the skills they are developing as they play.
- Senior leaders and practitioners use developmental overviews to show progress in children's learning. More recently, senior leaders and practitioners have completed more detailed literacy and numeracy trackers. Senior leaders and practitioners should now be able to implement more accurate professional judgements to measure and check all children's progress. They need to develop a shared understanding of national standards through more opportunities for

moderation within the primary stages and across settings in the cluster. Assessment information about children's progress is not yet accurate

- Senior leaders and practitioners have updated planning approaches this academic year. They use documentation that captures planned activities and responsive plans to record children's interests. These do not yet link to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes and developmental milestones. Senior leaders should ensure that plans clearly outline adult interactions to extend further learning and levels of engagement. Senior leaders and practitioners should continue to review the balance of adult-led, adult initiated and child-led experiences. As planning processes continue to be implemented, it will be important to ensure they meet the learning needs of all children. Practitioners require continued support from senior leaders to help them to develop a clearer understanding of how to plan effectively and record children's learning. This should include a shared understanding of the use of floorbooks to evidence children's learning and capture their voice.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Senior leaders track developmental milestones for all children. They use local authority documentation to track literacy and numeracy CfE experiences and outcomes. Senior leaders share this information in line with local authority expectations twice a year. Practitioners are supported by senior leaders to plan individual next steps. They are at the early stages of linking planning to the learning experiences on offer. Senior leaders and practitioners should use local authority progression frameworks to track children's learning for health and wellbeing and, in time, across all curricular areas.
- Practitioners work in partnership with parents, when children start at the pre-five unit, to ensure a smooth settling in process. Children are supported in their transition to P1 through regular involvement with whole-campus activities, tours of the school to meet staff, information sessions for parents and carers and 'settling in' days. In addition, the P1 teacher visits the setting weekly to support pastoral transitions. A well-established cluster transition project effectively supports children and families from a number of settings. Senior leaders need to develop further links with other settings to support children's learning and progress when they have a split placement.
- Senior leaders continue to develop outdoor learning experiences and use of local community spaces. This is supported by the cluster lead CCEW, alongside weekly sessions led by a primary teacher. This will support children to develop further their sense of place, understanding of nature and the environment.

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

- Practitioners encourage families to attend sharing of learning sessions and open afternoons with their child. In addition, parents attend sessions to support them with strategies to help children to read, sing and play with their children. Parents comment positively on these opportunities.
- Senior leaders plan to reintroduce a social media platform to share information about children's experiences with parents and carers. Practitioners have evenings for parents and carers twice a year to discuss children's progress. In addition, they share information about weekly activities, learning and school events through posters displayed in the entrance area. Parents also receive information through a noticeboard. They contribute feedback on developments in the setting and make improvement suggestions.

## 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 that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

Weak

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

- Children experience warm and nurturing relationships with practitioners. Most children play well together, enjoy the company of others and demonstrate kindness to their peers. The lead CCEW has very recently introduced additional resources to help children describe how they feel and why. Practitioners require further training on how to help a minority of children manage their emotions and social situations more effectively. There is a need to provide consistent support for children to enable them to reflect on their actions and recognise how they impact on others.
- Practitioners display the national wellbeing indicators in the setting. Most children are not yet familiar with the national wellbeing indicators. Practitioners need to use the language of the indicators consistently through relevant and meaningful contexts to help children's understanding. Children are developing their awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They are encouraged to manage their own risk when playing outdoors. They now need more opportunities to explore the local environment. This will increase real-life experiences and raise further awareness of the wider world, and how to keep themselves safe within it.
- Children make their lunch choices with their parents and carers. Senior leaders are developing a visual interpretation of the lunch menu. This makes the menu more accessible and easily understood by children. At lunchtime, children develop their independence well and have a positive social experience as they help set tables, serve themselves and eat a variety of food.
- Practitioners undertake relevant training to support children who may experience barriers to learning. Practitioners, in their role as key workers, consult with parents to develop personal care plans to identify children's care and welfare needs. These plans are updated regularly but need to be shared and signed by parents and carers to comply with statutory regulations. Children, who require additional support with their learning are skilfully helped by support assistants. They implement strategies and approaches outlined in child's plans, which effectively meet children's wellbeing needs. Senior leaders should collaborate with partner agencies to ensure all children who require a plan, have one created within appropriate timescales. Senior leaders should also make sure all practitioners are clear about the strategies identified within plans and implement them consistently.
- Practitioners provide experiences throughout the year to raise awareness of cultural events and festivals. They are aware of the need to increase resources to support children's understanding of the diverse world in which they live.

### 3.2 Securing children's progress

Weak

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

- Overall, children are not making expected progress in CfE early language, numeracy and mathematics. Most are making effective progress in their developmental milestones. The tracking of children's progress over time is not yet sufficiently robust to reflect accurately the progress children are making as a result of their experiences in the setting. Children are capable of making greater progress in their learning.
- Most children who require additional support with their learning have individual plans. These outline actions and interventions. All children make effective progress after attending the planned group sessions through targeted interventions. These focus on children's listening, reading and comprehension skills.
- The majority of children communicate effectively, with a minority requiring support to verbalise and communicate their needs. Children enjoy reading with older children at the primary stages. They would benefit from more opportunities to listen and enjoy stories and a wider range of books. A few children create increasingly detailed pictures. Most children need more opportunities to write regularly for a purpose, and independently create their own text and pictures. A few are developing their awareness of letters and sounds, and are developing their letter formations.
- A few children can recognise and order numbers to ten. The majority of children can recognise and name a few two-dimensional shapes. Children are beginning to use the language of measurement during play and in real-life contexts. Children explore three-dimensional objects and positional language through block play and the use of programmable toys. They are increasingly aware of the passage of time, routines and seasons. Most children would benefit from opportunities to develop their skills further in information handling and the recognition and use of money.
- Most children develop their gross motor skills well as they take part in planned physical activity in the school gym hall. They can run, jump and balance on apparatus with increasing confidence. A few children understand the impact exercise has on the body. The majority of children develop their independence and fine motor skills as they dress themselves for outdoors. In addition, they take part in hygiene routines, including handwashing and regular toothbrushing. A few use scissors effectively and are developing their use of cutlery while eating lunch. Most children share and take turns well as they play in pairs or small groups. Most children understand and are developing their responsibility skills by helping to tidy up and

prepare for snack. Practitioners should continue to develop children's awareness of their emotions and feelings.

- Practitioners praise and encourage the use and sharing of 'achievement cheques' completed by parents and carers. These are displayed in the entrance area on a display called 'Look what we can do!' They are then transferred to individual Learning Journey books. These achievements are not yet linked to skills for learning and life. Senior leaders should create an overview of children's achievements, which will ensure that no child is at risk of missing out.
- Practitioners are aware of children and families' individual circumstances and know the local community context well. They subsidise costs relating to trips and use the joint campus, local community partners and spaces wherever possible. This helps reduce the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on children's experiences.

## 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.