

Summarised inspection findings

Dalmally Primary School Pre Five Unit

Argyll and Bute Council

21 February 2023

Key contextual information

Dalmally Pre Five Unit is based within Dalmally Primary School, Dalmally, Argyll and Bute. The setting has one playroom, free flow access to outdoors and access to the wider school grounds. The setting operates term-time only and is registered for 16 children aged from two to those not yet attending school. At the time of inspection, the setting had five children on the roll. During the inspection visit there was a maximum of three children at any given time. Staffing consists of one full-time and one part-time childcare and education workers who are responsible for the day to day running of the setting and two part-time support staff. The setting implemented 1140 hours in 2019, with children accessing funded hours over a variety of days and hours.

1.3 Leadership of change

good

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 headteacher has overall responsibility for the setting. She meets regularly with the staff team to review individual children's needs, reflect on practice and discuss the implementation of identified changes. The setting is an integral part of the school. Children in the setting engage regularly in a range of shared experiences across the calendar year. The school and setting share a vision, values and aims. Staff demonstrate the values through daily practice, with a key value being fun. They should continue to share the values in a meaningful and relevant way with all children.
- Staff work very well as a team to get it right for all children and conduct their roles in a professional manner. They demonstrate enthusiasm and a strong sense of commitment to their role. They seek out actively relevant professional learning to ensure they are meeting children's individual needs. For example, changing the approach to planning in order to plan for children on an individual basis. This is having a positive impact on children's outcomes. Communication amongst the staff team is a strength, which results in a consistent approach to meeting children's needs.
- The headteacher is supportive to the staff team and meets them annually to discuss their performance and career. The staff team work very well together and respect each other's skills and knowledge. They engage in a range of professional learning, which they share amongst the team. Staff have identified informal leadership roles across the setting. It would be helpful to recognise these further to allow all staff to have a sense of responsibility and ownership of a specific area. There is evidence of a supportive coaching and mentoring approach amongst the team. This approach ensures a consistent approach to learning and engagement across the setting.
- The school and setting share an improvement plan, with relevant priorities helpfully identified for the setting. Staff participate in creating the improvement plan, which identifies areas of priority linked to current practice. All staff are responsible for taking forward the priorities, ensuring that the pace of change is manageable. Current improvement priorities linked to

planning are evident in practice. Staff should continue to evaluate their progress in achieving their priorities and agreeing their next steps.

- Staff are very reflective in their practice and continually engage in professional dialogue. They should continue to develop further their approaches to self-evaluation to ensure they effectively capture the impact of well-informed, planned changes. Moving forward, staff should continue to work closely with the headteacher to systematically monitor and evaluate the quality of provision.

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 staff and children are nurturing across the setting. The setting has a warm, welcoming ethos where children feel valued, safe and secure. Staff model respectful and positive behaviour which supports children to be kind and caring towards their peers. Staff respect children's voice in the setting, with their thoughts and views sought throughout the day.
- Children engage well in a wide range of learning experiences, which staff tailor to meet their individual needs. There is a blend of adult-initiated, child-led and spontaneous play opportunities. Staff should continue to reflect on the balance of adult-led and child-led opportunities throughout the day. The well-considered environment supports children to explore a wide range of resources indoors and outdoors. Children free flow outdoors, where the inviting outdoor space contains a mix of loose parts, natural and man-made resources. Children enjoy their time outdoors. Staff support their curiosity well, for example, using microscopes to explore frost and ice.
- Staff develop continually their knowledge and understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. This is evident in their practice. Staff interact in a sensitive manner to promote children's self-esteem and confidence. Skilled questioning and interactions between staff and children extend learning well. Staff listen actively to children and allow them time and space to develop their learning. Children respond well to the routines, which support their learning. These allow children to develop a positive sense of achievement and success. Children access a range of digital technology to enhance and support their learning.
- Staff record children's voice, capture observations and create appropriate next steps for all children. Children's folders, floorbooks and online learning journals capture these well. Staff should continue to strengthen their observations and capture effectively significant learning for all children. Children enjoy sharing their folders and reflect on past experiences well. Parents share in children's progress and next steps regularly through online learning journals, children's folders, the floorbook and daily informal chats. Staff should explore formal opportunities to discuss children's learning with parents.
- A clear, easy-to-follow system for planning, tracking and monitoring children's learning is in place. This takes full account of local authority guidance. Staff track effectively literacy and numeracy, alongside developmental milestones for all children. Staff have adapted successfully their approaches to planning, recognising the flexible nature required to meet individual children's needs. They should continue to evaluate and reflect on their approaches as planned. This will ensure approaches do not become overly bureaucratic.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Staff provide a curriculum that is based firmly on play and takes full account of children's developmental age and stage. In addition, they plan regular opportunities for children to access experiences such as Bookbug, emotion programmes and learning Gaelic. Staff have created an environment where they value stories, songs and rhyme. Staff take full account of children's prior learning, using their 'All about Me' documents well to capture information from home.
- Staff plan for children with a focus on developing the key areas of literacy and numeracy. They use children's developmental milestones information to ensure continuity and progression for all children. As planned, they should revisit the national practice guidance, Realising the Ambition: Being Me, to consider developing further age-appropriate experiences for very young children.
- Staff are responsive to individual children's needs, providing individualised support throughout the day. Staff manage transitions across the day well and give children verbal and visual prompts to support planned routine changes. Enhanced transitions are meeting children's needs effectively as they transition into the setting and on to P1.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Staff use a range of approaches to communicate with parents. Staff engage well with parents at the start and end of each day. Throughout the week staff share children's learning regularly with parents through informal discussions and daily online sharing of experiences. This allows parents the opportunity to share and discuss their child's day in a timely manner.
- Online learning journals and detailed newsletters share learning, things to do at home and next steps. Parents value this opportunity to engage in their child's learning. Staff should consider implementing a more formal arrangement for sharing children's learning and next steps. For example, parents would benefit from more regular formal meetings.
- Prior to the pandemic parents had opportunities to spend time in the setting through stay and play, Bookbug and outings to the community orchard. Opportunities to engage have restarted with parents joining in with younger siblings, children from school and children in the setting. Children enjoy regular outings to the local park.

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

- The wellbeing of all and getting it right for children and families is a strength in the setting. Staff develop caring relationships with all children and families. They show a high level of care for individual children. As a result, children feel safe and secure. Children self-register each day. This focuses on children's emotional wellbeing as they are able to share how they feel with staff.
- Staff have a shared understanding of the national wellbeing indicators and use these well in their daily practice. They support children well to understand them in a meaningful way using helpful characters as an aid. Staff are beginning to involve children in learning about their rights. They should keep supporting children to be aware of their rights by continuing to promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Daily opportunities for children to access outdoor play supports children to develop resilience and engage in risky play. All children enjoy the freedom to run, play games and investigate their environment, which develops their sense of curiosity and inquiry well. Access to the wider school environment provides opportunities to use the gym hall and the outdoor classroom. As a result, children experience a wider range of experiences, for example, navigating a large obstacle course in the gym hall.
- Children enjoy preparing and eating healthy snacks. They are developing their independence well as they serve themselves and take responsibility as the 'special helper' at lunch. Children enjoy the responsibility of wheeling the dinner trolley from the school kitchen to the playroom. They enjoy a relaxed lunch and socialise well with staff and each other. Staff support them very well through a consistent approach and effective engagement strategies.
- All staff understand their statutory duties and take part in training to help keep children safe. Personal plans are in place for children who may require additional support with learning. All children have an 'All about Me' which contains helpful information from home. This ensures staff provide consistency and continuity for all children through the sharing of key information. Staff should continue to review these in line with recent guidance to ensure they contain all relevant information.
- Staff have created a very inclusive ethos. They treat parents and children with fairness and respect. They value and celebrate diversity and are aware of their responsibility to challenge discrimination. Regular meetings enable staff to discuss children's progress and identify barriers to learning. This informs personalised planning for all children. Moving forward, staff should continue to ensure the range of resources within the playroom reflects the world in which children live.

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

- Children are making good progress in early language and communication. They use visuals, gestures and spoken language to share their views and needs. Children listen well to stories and respond well to questioning. Children recognise their name with support through a range of learning opportunities. Mark-making opportunities, indoors and outdoors, enable children to develop early writing skills well. Staff should continue to provide age and stage appropriate experiences to develop further children's skills in early language and communication.
- Children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They develop their skills as they demonstrate counting in their daily routines. Children recognise and count numbers to 10, with a few children counting upwards to 20. Children estimate and count as they make playdough. Most children identify shapes in their environment and all recognise a variety of colours. Children enjoy playing with coins and continue to develop their numeracy and mathematic skills well in a range of contexts. Staff should continue to provide age and stage appropriate experiences to develop further children's skills in numeracy and mathematics.
- Children's progress in health and wellbeing is good. Children share how they are feeling through gesture and words. Children regulate their emotions well with support and as a result, almost all engage well in their learning. Staff encourage children to make their own healthy snack, with children developing very good hygiene skills. Children develop their confidence and independence well as they participate in weekly sessions in the gym hall and run freely outdoors.
- Children are making good progress over time since starting the setting. Staff continue to evidence this clearly in their trackers, online learning journals and children's folders. Staff meet with the headteacher to review and monitor children's individual progress at regular points throughout the year. This contributes to informing children's next steps in learning, which staff take forward in a timely manner.
- Staff recognise and celebrate children's successes and achievements well through praise and encouragement. Attractive displays within the setting share children's achievements. The online learning journal shares children's learning and achievements with home. Staff should continue to encourage parents to share achievements from home.
- All staff have a good understanding and knowledge of the needs of children and families. They are aware of and understand the unique challenges within their local community. They use

individualised plans to record targeted interventions for individuals and groups. Staff use visual cues and symbols well to help meet the needs of children who require support to communicate. Staff are aware of children who require further support in specific areas of learning and support them well on an individual basis.

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.