

Summarised inspection findings

Colgrain Primary School Nursery Class

Argyll and Bute Council

19 November 2024

Key contextual information

Colgrain Primary Pre-Five Unit is located within Colgrain Primary School. The setting has three individual playrooms. All children have access to a secure outdoor area. It is registered for 56 children aged three to starting primary school and ten children aged two to three years old. Currently there are 30 children aged from age three years to starting primary school and five children aged two to three years old on the register. The pre-five unit operates during term-time with children receiving their entitlement to 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC). Children attend from 8:50 am to 2:45 pm each day. The acting deputy headteacher is the named manager of the pre-five unit and is supported by a lead practitioner in daily leadership of the unit. There are nine childcare and education workers, one modern apprentice and one classroom assistant. Children who are aged two years old have very recently joined Colgrain Primary Pre-Five Unit on a temporary basis.

1.3 Leadership of change

very 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

- Staff recently updated the vision, values and aims in consultation with all stakeholders ensuring they are relevant to the setting. Practitioners and children demonstrate the nursery values successfully in their interactions with each other. Practitioners implement the school and nursery vision 'Inspiring all to flourish' in a meaningful way. All practitioners have high standards and aspirations for themselves, all children and their families. They encourage and support children well to be confident and be leaders of their own learning. Practitioners skilfully build on children's interests from home. For example, practitioners support children well to create their own town in the block play area and children share the skills they have learned confidently.
- Senior leaders provide very effective strategic direction and guidance to practitioners. They foster a culture of professional enquiry successfully and create worthwhile opportunities for practitioners to engage in high quality professional learning. The lead practitioner is a strong role model for staff. She networks with colleagues in the local authority to improve practice and engages practitioners regularly in nursery improvement processes. Practitioners value having a professional buddy for peer support and feel empowered by senior leaders to lead improvements. This culture supports continuous improvement well and has positive impact on children's outcomes.
- Practitioners work very well together as a team. They are highly reflective of their practice. They engage effectively in regular professional dialogue to develop further their own leadership skills. All practitioners have leadership roles linked to the nursery improvement plan. For example, they lead on aspects of literacy, numeracy, wellbeing and on improving the environment. Practitioners articulate confidently the impact of this work. A next step will be to develop their skills and confidence in measuring the impact of improvements on children's learning.

- Senior leaders use a range of data successfully to inform their self-evaluation and quality assurance processes effectively. Senior leaders and the lead practitioner implement a robust quality assurance calendar. Practitioners engage very well in regular, planned opportunities to reflect on the quality of their work. This results in a brisk pace and shared responsibility to implement change.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- Children and staff have very positive relationships with each other. Practitioners support younger children, who have recently joined the nursery, to settle well in highly effective ways. Most children are calm, focused and very happy as they learn and play. Practitioners are caring and nurturing. They know all children and families very well and respond very effectively to their individual needs. Children's voice is highly visible in the environment. For example, children record their views about their learning and share their knowledge confidently. As a result, most children are highly motivated, inquisitive and confident individuals.
- All practitioners interact well with children, acting respectfully upon their views. Almost all practitioners use conversation very well to help children sustain their focus during their play. Most practitioners are highly skilled in the use of questioning. They support children very effectively to extend and share their learning.
- Practitioners have a strong understanding of play pedagogy. They provide creative learning spaces that are well resourced and inviting. This gives children time and space to play and be curious, creative and independent learners. As a result, children develop their literacy and numeracy skills well. As planned, senior leaders should build on this to increase the opportunities for children to explore their local community. Practitioners provide children with many valuable opportunities to use digital technology. Older children confidently use digital resources which enhances their knowledge and develops their digital skills well.
- Practitioners observe children carefully during play. They gather detailed information to help them understand clearly children's significant learning. Practitioners and senior leaders meet regularly to share observations, plan for children's emerging interests, and discuss children's progress. They use local authority assessment frameworks very effectively. The lead practitioner participates in worthwhile moderation with staff in the learning community. She ensures that practitioners use key documents which support them to confidently make accurate professional judgements about children's progress.
- Practitioners plan children's learning over different timescales using the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). They actively encourage children and families in planning their own learning. Practitioners work in strong collaboration to plan an effective blend of intentional and responsive learning experiences alongside developmental milestones. These experiences are of a high-quality and meet the needs of individual children well. Practitioners support the youngest children effectively and have a strong understanding of children's individual needs and how best to support these.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- Practitioners implement a flexible progressive curriculum through play effectively, using CfE experiences and outcomes. The curriculum is underpinned by national practice guidance, whole school values and children's rights. Practitioners promote very strong nurturing attachments for all children.
- Practitioners respond to children's interests and work closely with parents to provide a wide range of experiences to extend and scaffold learning. They effectively use a monitoring tool to track children's engagement and wellbeing. As a result, practitioners have a strong understanding of how to best adapt the learning environment to meet children's learning needs effectively.
- Teachers from the school and practitioners work collaboratively to plan a wide range of successful transition opportunities. These are ongoing and take effective account of children who require an enhanced transition. These positive experiences ensure children experience continuity and progression across the curriculum.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners have positive respectful, open relationships with all families. They welcome parents warmly into the setting and encourage them to join in 'stay and play' sessions. Parents value these opportunities which support well their understanding of how to help their child at home and build on their learning in nursery. Practitioners and senior leaders continue to increase opportunities for parental partnerships to support children's experiences.
- Practitioners share information well on children's learning and development with parents in a variety of ways. This includes informal chats at pick-up times, a communication book, newsletters, an online platform, a planning wall and parent's meetings. Parents have many opportunities to contribute towards their child's learning and comment on their learning targets.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very 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

- Practitioners place a strong emphasis on developing and supporting children's wellbeing. They support and value children as unique individuals. As a result, children have a strong sense of belonging. Children talk confidently about the national wellbeing indicators and what it means to be responsible.
- Practitioners use an individualised programme successfully to promote and support positive attitudes, relationships and emotional awareness. This supports all children to demonstrate kindness and respect for each other very effectively. Practitioners support children very effectively to develop an understanding of their rights. A minority of children use the language of rights demonstrating their increasing understanding of what their rights mean for them. For example, when building models, children discuss confidently their right to share their views and why their views are important. A next step is to continue to support all children to understand their rights and what they mean for them.
- Children enjoy the lunch routine. Practitioners sit with children and engage in conversation enabling all children to develop well their communication skills in a positive social environment. All children demonstrate their leadership skills and organisational skills well when setting up for lunches. They are becoming increasingly independent as they self-select their food and pour their milk or water and would benefit from more opportunities like this.
- All staff know their statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding and child protection. Staff work with health partners very effectively to address individual children's needs. For example, practitioners work well with speech and language partners to implement effective strategies which help children's communication and language skills. As a result, children make very good progress in communication and language. All children have wellbeing targets. They articulate their feelings and know what they need to help them if they feel upset. This is developing children's emotional resilience successfully.
- Practitioners actively promote inclusion and equality very well throughout the setting. They treat all children and families with respect and promote the diverse cultures within the nursery, local community and beyond. Practitioners provide a wide range of valuable resources and displays for children which are relevant to their real-life experiences. This supports all children to understand better their individual family circumstances.

3.2 Securing children's progress

very 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
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- Children make very good progress in communication and early language. Almost all children are confident in asking questions, following instructions, and listening well during group discussions. Children enjoy writing their name and other texts for a range of meaningful purposes in the stimulating literacy rich environment. Children access books frequently to extend their learning successfully. Most older children are starting to scribe their own name and use print in the environment, for example labelling resources to create storytelling props. Younger children enjoy exploring books and singing songs.
 - Children's progress in mathematics is very good. Almost all older children use numbers confidently in their play counting to 10 and beyond. A few children use one to one correspondence to count objects. Most children explore shape and measurement with interest using accurate mathematical language. Almost all children enjoy using numbers during real life experiences.
 - Children make very good progress in health and wellbeing. They access confidently outdoor equipment and enjoy balancing on a range of surfaces. Children develop their gross motor skills well in weekly gym sessions. All children would benefit from more access to larger physical equipment. Almost all children are independent at mealtimes and get themselves ready for outdoor play. Practitioners have plans to resume the opportunities for children to grow fruit and vegetables for snack.
 - Practitioners use a robust tracking system to record children's progress and engagement in early language, early mathematics and health and wellbeing. This supports them well to identify children's next steps in learning. Children make very good progress over time across the curriculum.
 - Children's views are respected and valued. They discuss and make decisions about changes to their environment to meet their needs. For example, children risk assess and discuss changes to the literacy area. This is giving children autonomy of their learning.
 - Practitioners use praise and encouragement very well. They share and celebrate children's nursery achievements successfully on the 'Proud Wall' environment and on online platforms. Parents also share their children's achievements outside the nursery in this way. This is building children's confidence and helping them to recognise and celebrate their success.

- Practitioners and senior leaders use their detailed knowledge of children's individual needs well. They identify clearly children who require additional support with their learning. They plan and deliver interventions promptly to reduce potential barriers to learning. Senior leaders signpost families to other agencies to ensure they receive the support they require. Practitioners use recommended strategies from speech and language service to support children's communication skills successfully. As planned, practitioners and senior leaders should continue to further improve their use of data to plan and evaluate interventions.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children received a high standard of nurturing care and support from staff who knew each child and their family very well. Staff were warm, caring and loving towards children. They were responsive to children's individual needs, treating them with respect and sensitivity. These individual needs were documented well through personal plans developed in close conjunction with families. This reinforced the commitment of staff to work in collaboration with families to obtain information about children's health, safety, wellbeing needs and individual care routines. Arrangements were in place to ensure these were reviewed with families to set wellbeing targets for their children on a termly basis. Enhanced recording of these reviews would better highlight the impact of these discussions on outcomes for children.

Children had developed secure attachments with staff. Staff interactions were patient, gentle and nurturing. Children were kind and nurturing towards each other, holding hands, sharing, and developing friendships. Staff delivered programmed activities to support children to build emotional resilience. Children's views and opinions were respected and central to the daily routine. Staff supported children well to understand their rights.

Effective arrangements were in place to ensure that children requiring additional support, received the right support at the right time in a way that was sensitive to their needs. Effective partnership arrangements were in place with external agencies and professionals facilitating joint working to meet children's identified needs and support children to realise their potential.

Children enjoyed healthy snacks and meals. Snack time was pleasant and sociable with opportunities for children to make choices and develop independence skills. The youngest children enjoyed a pleasant, calm and unhurried lunch within the familiar setting of their playroom. Older children had lunch in the school dining hall. Children ate well and were familiar with the lunchtime routine, but more opportunities for independence would have enhanced their experience.

Effective arrangements were in place to ensure staff understood children's dietary and health needs. Revised procedures for the storage and administration of medication were in place and we confirmed these were followed to keep children safe.

Each day staff confirmed the UV rating for the day to ensure children were sun safe when playing outdoors. Dependent upon the rating, staff applied appropriate sun cream or ensured children wore hats to protect them.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

1.3 Play and learning

We observed a calm relaxed approach to the pace of the day which supported high levels of engagement and very positive experiences for children. Children confidently made choices and led their own play & learning. Most staff used skilled questioning techniques and provocations to extend learning. Robust planning reflected children's ideas & interests and clearly demonstrated how staff responded to and promoted creativity, inquiry & curiosity.

The youngest children were well supported and very secure in their attachments with staff in their playroom, which was very new to the setting. Staff had concentrated on settling children into their

new environment. Children confidently explored the playroom and outdoor area and enjoyed the resources and activities offered. Staff acknowledged that now children were settled and secure, additional work was needed to ensure more choice, depth and challenge for children in this age range.

Some staff discussed children's individual schemas and the importance of their role in supporting these schemas to develop children's learning. Boxes and resources had been provided within the playrooms to support schematic play and enable staff to scaffold children's learning effectively.

Children were learning self-regulation and how to manage and express their emotions. They were enjoying opportunities to become responsible through taking on small duties and tasks to help staff and their peers.

Learning journals, online and in folders, were accessible and clearly showed children's learning, child voice, photos and artwork. Staff captured and recorded observations to capture children's progression in learning and development. Families enjoyed accessing online learning journals and to see the individual progress their children were making.

Staff recognised the role of celebrating achievements in raising attainment. The lead practitioner supported staff well to ensure children received the support they needed to reach their potential. Staff discussed the importance of celebration and fun in building children's confidence and self-esteem.

Children were having fun and making very good progress in their learning and development. They told us they enjoyed coming to the service and were observed to be relaxed, happy and well cared for within the setting.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The setting was welcoming, comfortable and furnished to a high standard with very good natural light and ventilation. The accommodation was clean, well-maintained and attractive. This reinforced the strong message to children and their families that they matter.

Children were confident, safe and secure in the setting and moved freely between playrooms and the outdoor area. They demonstrated a clear sense of ownership and pride in their setting. Children and families enjoyed a warm and personal welcome to the setting each morning.

The bright, welcoming entrance hall providing attractively displayed and useful information for families underlined the lovely welcoming ethos families received. There was a calm and relaxed atmosphere throughout the setting.

Children could freely explore their environment in the knowledge that comprehensive risk assessments were in place and staff understood how to keep them safe. Staff talked confidently about the arrangements that were in place to ensure children's safety and supported children to keep themselves safe. Children had developed their own risk assessments for their play areas. Staff recognised the benefits children derived from setting their own safety limits and participating in risky play.

The outdoor area was well-developed and resourced to provide children with fun, stimulating and interesting experiences. Bikes and scooters offered children opportunities to develop their gross

motor skills. More regular use of the wider school outdoor facilities, which were rich in opportunities for physical development, would enhance children's experience.

Playrooms were laid out attractively and effectively with high quality resources. Staff had taken time to ensure areas were interesting and appealing to children. Children could self-select from resources at child height. Wall displays were attractive and contained photographs and child voice, which facilitated discussion with children about their learning.

There were effective systems in place to control and prevent the spread of infection within the service to protect staff and children. Nappy changing facilities complied with best practice guidance but would be enhanced by some child centred decoration. Children and staff demonstrated very good hand washing practices and children understood how this help to protect them from germs. The addition of handwashing visuals within the children's toilets would have reinforced this. The pedal bins within the children's toilets needed to be replaced, as children could not open these without using their hands creating a small infection risk.

Appropriate systems were in place to manage electronic information in line with general data protection requirements managed by the local authority.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The strong senior leadership team was fully committed to continuous improvement within the school as a whole and viewed the early learning and childcare setting as a vital and integral part of the school. The leadership team worked very well together to provide effective support to the service, staff, families and children. The ethos of the service was warm and welcoming and families valued the accessibility of the leadership team.

Priorities for improvement for the setting were set out within the service improvement plan, which was underpinned by relevant local and national guidance and legislative frameworks. Significant improvements had been made since our last inspection, which had a measurable, positive impact on outcomes for children and families.

Staff recognised the important role they played in self-evaluation and told us their views and opinions were valued and respected. They were keen to discuss individual leadership areas with us and highlight the developments and improvements they had introduced to improve outcomes for children since our last visit.

There was clear allocation of roles for monitoring quality across the setting with effective monitoring systems in place to assess quality.

A Partnership with Parents policy was in place outlining the ways families could be included in the service. The leadership team was committed to partnership and collaboration with children and families and, where possible, involved them in discussions to identify ways the service could improve.

Families told us that they were very happy with the service and knew how to make comments and suggestions, if needed. They were very positive about their opportunities for involvement and engagement with the setting particularly during Stay & Play sessions.

Appropriate arrangements were in place to record details of any accidents and incidents occurring and to pass this information on to families. Some staff were trained in first aid to ensure they had the skills and confidence to react to any accidents or health issues arising. Accident and incident reports were audited monthly to ensure patterns and hazards could be identified and addressed promptly. Records showed where action had been taken and we could see where risk assessments had been revised to address new hazards.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

4.3 Staff deployment

The setting was appropriately staffed each day to ensure the wellbeing of children in the service. Staff recognised the importance of compliance with prescribed adult: child ratios indoors and outdoors to keep children safe. Effective arrangements were in place to ensure staff absences and vacancies caused minimal disruption to children's care.

Staff told us they felt their contribution to the service was highly valued. They felt very well supported in their roles, benefiting both from the support of their colleagues and the accessibility of the leadership team. The team worked very well together and demonstrated effective communication within the service and with families. Staff valued the support of their peers in their daily routine. They were sensitive and aware of the need to support each other.

These staff relationships made an important contribution to the effectiveness of the service. Staff had a shared vision for the service and enjoyed their roles, valued their relationships with children and families and wanted to have fun at work. Families found staff approachable, friendly and happy to help.

Staff communicated effectively with their colleagues throughout the day in a way that was sensitive to the needs of children. Staff worked co-operatively together to ensure effective supervision and positive engagement with children across the day. The continuity of care across the day made for smooth transitions for children. Children were always safe and well-supervised.

Each member of staff had a professional buddy to offer peer support and development. Effective induction processes ensured new staff were equipped to work well with the setting. The lead practitioner mentored all new staff and was very visible within the playrooms to offer support, role modelling, etc.

Staff participated in continuous professional development to underpin their skills and experience and routinely reflected on the impact of this on their practice. They talked about the positive impact of recent learning on outcomes for children.

A sensitive and personalised settling in process before children officially started, ensured children were matched with the most appropriate keyworker and group, leading to consistency and continuity of care for each child and good communication with families.

Throughout our visit, staff treated children with respect. Children had very positive relationships with staff. Staff knew children very well and responded considerately and patiently to their needs, conversations and questions. Interactions were well timed and enhanced children's experiences. Staff were fun, enabling and empowering children to feel secure within the setting.

Care Inspectorate evaluation: very good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and one area for improvement. From this, one area for improvement has been met. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and no areas for improvement.

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.