

Inspection Report

2023-2024

Sandcastles Pre-school

Child Day Care Centre

1 November 2023

**Under the Regulation of Care Act 2013 and
Regulation of Care (Care Services) Regulations 2013**



Isle of Man
Government
Kelleys Eilan Vannin

DHSC

We carried out this inspection under Part 4 of the Regulation of Care Act 2013 (the Act) as part of our regulatory functions. We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements, regulations and standards associated with the Act. We looked at the overall quality of the service.

We carried out this unannounced inspection on 1 November 2023. The inspection was led by an inspector from the Registration and Inspection team.

Service and service type

Sandcastles Pre-school is a child day care centre. This means they provide day care for one or more children under the age of eight for more than two hours in the same day and is not a private dwelling.

People's experience of using this service and what we found

To get to the heart of people's experiences of care and treatment, we always ask the following five questions:

- Is it safe?
- Is it effective?
- Is it caring?
- Is it responsive to people's needs?
- Is it well-led?

These questions form the framework for the areas we look at during the inspection.

Our key findings

Areas of improvement were identified as a result of this inspection.

As a result of the setting's last inspection in September 2022 a number of areas of improvement were identified. The provider submitted an action plan outlining what actions they would be taking to address the issues found. At this inspection we found not all stated actions had been implemented.

Due to issues found, we were not assured the responsible person understood the responsibilities of her role.

Staffing levels were found to be safe and the children were receiving a care service that promoted their holistic development.

The team worked well together and knew the children well. They had established good relationships with the families of the children and parents told us they were happy with the care being given.

The feedback received from the families using the setting was positive.

- 'They are very good with children'
- 'I am very happy with the care my [child] receives'
- 'They are very good at keeping me updated on all aspects of my [child]'s time at pre-school'

- 'My child seems to be making many new friends'

There was one point for consideration raised by the parents but the team had already identified the issue themselves and had taken steps to address it.

At this inspection we found some improvements had been made in response to the previous inspection.

About the service

Sandcastles Pre-school is located on the promenade in Douglas. They are registered to care for 16 children aged two years and above. The pre-school has two activity rooms, toilets, a kitchen/dining area and an office. The children have access to an outdoor play area situated at the front on the premises. Parents provide their child's lunch and the setting provides morning and afternoon snacks.

Registered manager status

The service does not currently have a registered manager. There was a suitably qualified named person acting up in the role until an applicant is recruited.

Notice of Inspection

This inspection was part of our annual inspection programme which took place between April 2023 and March 2024. Inspection activity started on 23 October 2023. An unannounced inspection was undertaken on 1 November 2023.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we received about the service since the last inspection. We used the information the provider sent us in the provider information return (PIR) and supporting documents, notifications, complaints/compliments and any safeguarding issues. In light of information submitted, we had discussions with the setting's responsible person in regards to the arrangements that were put in place when the registered manager left the setting.

Feedback was sourced via email from eight families who use the service. Three responses were received.

During the inspection

We spoke with one member of staff and the acting manager. Observations were carried out using an observational framework for inspection to help us understand the experience of staff and children.

We reviewed a range of documentation including children's care records, policies and health and safety information. The file for one new member of staff was examined in relation to recruitment and induction and an inspection of all rooms and communal areas was undertaken.

Our findings:

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that children were protected from abuse and avoidable harm. The service requires improvement in this area.

This service was found to not always be safe.

Staffing ratios and recruitment

Staffing levels were observed to be safe and in keeping with the required adult: child ratios. Examination of the setting's attendance records for the four weeks prior to the inspection showed ratios had been maintained on other days.

Evidence was available to show that all staff held a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and that online checks were being undertaken on those that have signed up for the update service.

There was one new member of staff who had commenced their employment at the setting since the last inspection. Examination of their file showed the provider had carried out all pre-employment checks to ensure they were suitable to work with children. Prior to commencing at the pre-school, the member of staff had worked at the setting's sister kindergarten. The acting manager carried out a four week induction to the pre-school to ensure the member of staff was aware of the pre-school's routines, policies and procedures.

Systems, processes and practices to safeguard children from abuse.

Examination of the submitted staff training matrix showed some staff had not refreshed their safeguarding training since 2018. This contradicted the evidence we saw during our last visit which showed staff training was in date. During our visit, we requested a copy of the most recent version of the matrix and the document seen showed training was out of date and this was discussed with the acting manager.

At the time of the setting's last inspection, their Safeguarding procedure did not include up to date information or evidence of when reviews had taken place. During this inspection it was noticed some information in the revised policy was still incorrect and this was highlighted to the acting manager who made the necessary amendments to the document.

Improvements lessons learned

Both staff confirmed they were aware of their responsibility to raise and report any concerns they have and the need to record and report any safety concerns.

Action we require the provider to take

Key areas for improvement:

- Action is needed to ensure Safeguarding training for the staff team is kept up to date [This improvement is required in line with Regulation 6 of the Care Services Regulations 2103 – Safeguarding](#)

- Action is needed to ensure training records are accurate and contain up to date information
This improvement is required in line with Regulation 14 of the Care Services Regulations 2013 – Records

Inspection Findings

C2 Is the service effective?

Our findings

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that children’s care, learning and development are supported and achieving good outcomes. The service does require improvement in this area.

This service was found to be effective.

Supporting and developing children’s care and development needs

As part of supporting the children’s developmental needs we spent time assessing how the staff team are developing the children’s awareness of right and wrong in keeping with their age and level of understanding. The setting had a Behaviour policy in place that outlined their approach to managing behaviour and throughout the inspection we were able to observe staff being positive role models to the children. They gave praise and encouragement and took time to give clear, age appropriate explanations to the children when needed.

Staff encourage the children to use ‘kind hands’ and ‘kind words’ and, with support, are encouraged to resolve their own conflicts. Should a child upset their friend, staff would have a discussion about how the other person feels and ask the child to apologise. This is supported by the use of an ‘emotion face chart’ which is a visual aid designed to help children manage their behaviour.

Staff skills, knowledge and experience to deliver effect care and support

The pre-school’s registered manager left the setting in January 2023 and the second member of staff working at the setting at the time became the acting manager. Examination of evidence submitted prior to our visit showed that for a short period of time after the manager left, the person assuming the role did not meet the criteria to be acting manager as they did not have the required post qualification experience. This was discussed with the setting’s responsible person and has now been resolved.

The training matrix showed staff had attended a courses to enable them to support children’s medical needs but not all mandatory training was up to date.

Action we require the provider to take

Key areas for improvement

- The responsible person needs to ensure that staff recruited for a managerial position have the required post qualification experience so as to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge for the role [This improvement is required in line with Regulation 16 of the Care Services Regulations 2013 – Staffing](#)
- Action is needed to ensure all mandatory training is attended and kept in date. [This improvement is required in line with Regulation 16 of the Care Services Regulations 2013 – Staffing](#)

Inspection Findings

C3 Is the service caring?

Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved and treated children with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect. The service does not require any improvements in this area.

This service was found to be caring.

Ensuring children are being treated with kindness, respect and compassion

The team had created a calm and welcoming environment and were observed treating the children with respect and kindness. The relationship between the staff and children was relaxed and comfortable and there was on-going conversations throughout our visit. Staff spoke to the children about things familiar to them such as recent family events, their pet and a recent party attended. Time was given for the children to speak and the responses made by the team demonstrated they were interested in what was being said.

Maintaining children's dignity, privacy and promoting independence

The acting manager had ensured the information provided by the parents in regards to their children's needs, interests and preferences had been shared with the staff team. Information displayed showed staff take the children's preferences, interests and needs into account when planning the daily activities.

Inspection Findings

C4 Is the service responsive?

Our findings:

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the service met children’s needs. The service does not require any improvements in this area.

This service was found to be responsive.

Delivering personalised care

Prior to children starting at the setting, parents are asked to provide information in regards to any cultural needs, languages, dietary preferences/requirements and or any medical conditions their child may have. This information is shared with the staff team to help them get to know the children and ensure they are aware of each child’s needs.

Staff were aware of each child’s own characteristics and abilities and the relationships and interactions observed were relaxed and comfortable. Parents told us they felt ‘the staff know my [child] very well’ and ‘they are very good with children, giving time’.

The setting is continuing to build on their resources in order to promote the children’s awareness of diversity, equality and inclusion. A number of cultural celebrations and traditions are being included in the year’s planning and we were informed the staff team are ‘doing lots of reading and research’ in order to extend their knowledge.

C5 Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Well-led – this means we looked for evidence that service leadership, management and governance assured high-quality, person-centred care; supported learning and innovation; and promoted an open, fair culture. The service requires improvement in this area.

This service was found to not always be well-led.

Clear vision and strategy in place to deliver high-quality care and promote a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering which achieves good outcomes for children.

During this inspection we spent time observing the relationship between the staff team. It was a small team who worked well together, shared day to day tasks and were supportive of each other. Staff spoken to, told us they 'liked working here' and felt they were 'a good team'.

Staff told us there hadn't been any disagreements or upset amongst the team but felt confident they would be able to talk to each other in order to work together to sort things. The acting manager agreed and said that if a disagreement could not be settled, she would ask the setting's responsible person to step in and mediate.

Governance framework in place that ensures responsibilities are clear and that quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements are understood and managed.

The acting manager explained the steps she is taking to develop her knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities and regulatory requirements of her current role.

The acting manager carries out regular supervisions with her team and provides feedback about their work performance. We were told that although the team talk every day, it is an opportunity to have open discussions.

During the setting's last inspection, action was needed by the responsible person to improve their supervision and support for the person in charge of the pre-school. During this inspection evidence was available to show the responsible person visited frequently but sent manager's from the company's other child day care setting's to the pre-school to carry out observations on the staff and one to one supervisions with the acting manager were still not being undertaken.

The acting manager has had cause to notify the Registration and Inspection team of an infectious illness since the last inspection and these have been reported appropriately and within the required timescale. When this has happened, the team have taken the required steps to minimise the risk to children, staff and families.

Continuous learning, improvement, innovation and ensuring sustainability.

Examination of the setting's training matrix did not demonstrate that management are ensuring staff continue to update and/or extend their knowledge and skills in order to drive improvement.

The staff were positive about working at the setting and told us they felt supported by the acting manager. The team recently discussed using the small, cosy room as a sensory room

as they feel it will benefit some of the children and help them to calm down and have quiet time.

During our visit we noticed the paint on wood panelling by the window was chipped and in need of attention.

Action we require the provider to take

Key areas for improvement

- The responsible person needs to ensure they undertake regular supervisions with the acting manager in order to ensure they are supported. [This improvement is required in line with Regulation 16 of the Care Services Regulations 2013 – Staffing](#)
- Action is needed to ensure there are resources available to support the development of the team's knowledge and skills in order to drive improvement. [This improvement is required in line with Regulation 16 of the Care Services Regulations 2013 – Staffing](#)
- Action is needed to maintain the premises in a suitable state of repair. [This improvement is required in line with Regulation 20 of the Care Services Regulations 2013 – Fitness of premises for service recipients](#)

If areas of improvement have been identified the provider will be required to produce an action plan detailing how the areas of improvement will be rectified within the timescales identified. The R&I team will follow up and monitor any actions undertaken.