

Annual Inspection Report 2022-2023

Sandcastles Pre-school

Child Day Care Centre

12 September 2022



DHSC

We carried out this announced inspection on 12 September 2022. 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

The staff team had a good working relationship and were very supportive of each other. They share all tasks, discuss ideas and share the same ethos. This has helped develop a welcoming, friendly atmosphere.

The pre-school operates all year round and the inspection was carried out at the beginning of the new academic year and many of the children had only been at the setting for three days. The children were seen to be comfortable and relaxed with the staff team and it was easy to forget they had only been together for a short amount of time.

The pre-school was found to be clean but there were some areas that were showing signs of wear and tear and needed re-decorating. The outside area was showing the effects of continuously being exposed to the weather and needs attention.

The responsible person was not enabling the registered manager to fulfil their role. We were informed actions had not been taken when issues have been reported and the registered manager does not have complete control over the management of the setting or staff team as many tasks were the responsibility of the responsible person.

We found the following areas where the service needs to make improvements:

- Actions are needed to ensure the premises, inside and out, are maintained in a suitable state of repair and decoration.
- The responsible person needs to ensure systems are in place to support and enable the registered manager to fulfil their role.

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 has a registered manager. This means that they and the provider are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

Notice of Inspection

This announced inspection was part of our annual inspection programme which took place between April 2022 and March 2023.

Inspection activity started on 7 September 2022 and we visited the service on 12 September 2022.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information received about the service since the last inspection. We used information the provider sent us in the provider information return (PIR) and supporting documentation, notifications, complaints/compliments and any safeguarding issues.

Feedback was requested via email from six families who use the service. One response was received and the comments made were positive.

During the inspection

We spoke to both members of staff and observations were carried out using an observational framework for inspection. This was a way of observing care to help us understand the experience of children and staff.

An inspection of the premises was undertaken and a range of documentation was reviewed. This included a number of policies, risk assessments, attendance registers, medication records, planning documents and children's records.

SECTION C Inspection Findings

C1 Is the service safe?

Our findings:

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

This service was found to be safe.

Systems, processes and practices to safeguard children from abuse.

The staff team at the pre-school had attended level 2 safeguarding children training and there was a policy in place. The policy included a procedure to follow should staff have a concern about a child in their care but some information in the policy was not up to date as it referred to government departments that changed in April 2021. We were unable to confirm the frequency reviews were being undertaken as the document did not include the date the policy was last reviewed or next review date.

The registered manager had ensured the deployment of staff meant there was little to no lone working as staff were either working together in the same room or in-sight and sound of each other at all times. This ensured the children and staff team were not being placed in vulnerable situations.

Staffing ratios

Staffing levels were observed to be safe and adhered to the required adult:child ratios. The registered manager and member of staff were caring for 12 children aged 3-4 years old. After the children had eaten their lunch, an auxiliary staff member arrived to enable the staff team to take turns to have a lunch break. As both members of staff hold a relevant childcare qualification, this arrangement ensured one qualified member of staff was on duty at all times.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

The pre-school was found to be secure and arrangements were in place to ensure no unauthorised persons could access the premises.

Risk assessments had been undertaken on all areas of the pre-school and were displayed to ensure all staff were aware of them. We were informed the staff team work together to carry out and review the assessments as 'two sets of eyes are better than one'. Routine checks on the environment and equipment were up to date. Certificates and records were in place to evidence this.

We noticed missing plaster behind the kitchen door, the woodwork in some parts of the pre-school needed repainting and the carpet on the steps leading from the playroom to the hallway was beginning to show signs of wear and tear.

The pre-school as an outdoor play area to the front of the premises. The area was enclosed with wooden fencing. We observed the posts securing the fencing were rotten and need replacing and a number of fence panels needed sanding down and re-painting. The wooden shed in the area had pieces of wood missing and the safety flooring had gaps and was not in good condition. The setting's location does not benefit the condition of the play equipment available to the children. We noticed the resources that contained metal parts were rusted and the large play equipment was showing signs of being permanently exposed to the weather.

The registered manager informed us the issues had been reported to the responsible person but no actions had yet been taken.

Using medicines safely

There was an up to date policy in place and all medicines were clearly labelled, in date and stored safely out of reach of children.

Staff only administer medication once written parental permission is in place. The form parents are asked to complete prior to the staff team administering medication to a child referred to the first dose of the medication but clarity is needed as parents are not directly asked to confirm the first dose of the specific medication has been given. Staff record when they have administered medication and parents are asked to sign their acknowledgement of being informed.

In order to meet the children's individual medical needs, the registered manager has attended appropriate training to ensure they are able to administer specific medicines safely. Through discussion it was agreed that other members of staff should attend the same training to ensure medication can be safely administered should the registered manager be absent.

Preventing and controlling infection

Parents are asked not to send their children to the setting if they have an infectious illness and there was a policy in place to support this. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was available and staff members were observed wearing gloves and aprons when changing nappies and when supporting children at lunchtime.

The staff team are responsible for cleaning the setting and all rooms and communal areas were found to be clean. The carpets throughout the setting looked clean but when asked how frequently they were cleaned, we were informed they hadn't been cleaned for at least two years.

Action we require the provider to take

Key areas for improvement:

- The setting's Safeguarding policy needs to be amended to ensure all information is up to date. Review dates need to be included.
- The medication form needs to clearly request confirmation that the first dose of medication has been administered to the child.
- Training in administering specific medication needs to be attended by other staff to ensure safe practice if the registered manager's absence.
- Actions are needed to ensure the premises and equipment are maintained in a suitable state of repair and decoration.
- Action needs to be taken by the Responsible Person to ensure carpets are cleaned in order to support the efforts of the staff team in maintaining the cleanliness of the setting.

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 requires improvement in this area.

This service was found to be effective.

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

The children were being cared for by a staff team that had relevant the qualifications, knowledge and experience to support and care for them as well as promote their development and learning. The staff had attended appropriate first aid training, safeguarding training and fire awareness training. The setting’s fire warden needs to refresh their training and we were assured this would be booked after the inspection.

The registered manager and staff member work closely together and share their ideas and experience in order to develop the service. Both were proud of what they have achieved at the pre-school and the member of staff said they felt supported and valued by the registered manager.

Supporting and developing children’s care and development needs

The pre-school had a new, blended curriculum in place. We were informed the curriculum enables the team to provide learning experiences and activities that are more suited to the children’s individual needs whilst supporting the Early Years Foundation Stage principals. Long term planning had been undertaken that outlined the year’s topics and celebrations. Topics were changed monthly and a rolling list of required resources had been devised to ensure everything required for specific activities was sourced in advance. Medium planning showed what learning goals were being promoted with each topic. The learning goals covered the seven areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. The weekly planning was being implemented following the In the Moment approach where children were enabled and encouraged to explore their own interests.

The team had created a welcoming and engaging environment but the lighting in the playroom was not effective. The style of lighting meant there were areas where children were playing and working in their own shadows. The lighting did not support activities such as mark making/writing and reading/looking at books.

Resources were accessible to the children and they were observed to be absorbed in their play. As the children are all new to the setting, the staff team were in the process of carrying out baseline assessments in order to understand the needs and abilities of each individual child. There were a number of children for whom English is an additional language and the team were devising and implementing systems to support them.

The setting uses an online application to share updates, observations and information about their child’s developmental progress and a parent commented they have always been informed of their child’s care and progress.

Supporting a balanced diet

Parents provide their own child's lunch and staff were observed discussing healthy foods during lunchtime. The information shared with the children was appropriate and in keeping with their respective ages and level of understanding.

There was a healthy eating poster displayed and the kitchen was decorated with bright pictures that promoted the children's awareness of healthy foods. The registered manager had shared relevant information with the staff to ensure they were aware of the children's dietary requirements and preferences.

Action we require the provider to take

Key areas for improvement

- Action needs to be taken to ensure fire warden training is refreshed
- The lighting in the playroom needs to be improved

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 interaction between the staff team and children was observed to be relaxed, caring and respectful. The staff explained they were still getting to know the children but seeing them together, it was easy to forget the children had only been at the setting for 3 days as the team had familiarised themselves and were using the information supplied by the parents when talking with the children.

Staff were observed to respond with sensitivity and understanding when a child was grumpy because they had to wait their turn to play with one of the resources. The staff member gently but firmly explained about taking turns and sharing and spent time with the child until they were happy again.

Maintaining children's dignity, privacy and promoting independence

Due to the ages of the children attending, most, if not all, were able to independently toilet themselves and modesty doors were in place to ensure their privacy and dignity were maintained. Staff were nearby to provide support if required. Suitable arrangements were in place to support children who required assistance and was carried out respectfully and with no fuss.

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 requires improvement 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 had been shared with the staff team to ensure the individual needs of the children are being met.

As the children have only been attending for a matter of days, the staff team have planned the activities being offered but explained that as the children’s interests become known, planning will be amended and resources made available to ensure the children can follow their interests to ensure their uniqueness is valued.

There was a selection of resources available that reflected inclusion and diversity and we were informed this was an area the team were currently developing.

Responding to concerns and complaints and using to improve the quality of care

There was an up to date policy in place. We were unable to determine the frequency of reviews as the date of next review was not recorded. Examination of the policy showed some of the information was incorrect and the document also included procedures for other professional bodies to follow. The document should not include this information as they will have their own procedures in place.

A received complaint was dealt with appropriately and in line with the setting’s policy. The registered manager discussed the concern with the responsible person and documented the process, outcome and actions taken.

Supporting children when dealing with significant events

There were resources available in order to support children when a significant event occurs such as the death of someone close, parents separating or the arrival of a sibling. We were informed the situation would be discussed with the parents to ensure the staff team provided a consistent approach and to ensure cultural and/or religious beliefs were respected and acted on. Staff would be vigilant and additional observations would be carried out to ensure the child was being appropriately supported.

Action we require the provider to take

Key areas for improvement

- Action is needed to ensure the Complaints policy includes correct and relevant information and the frequency of reviews are recorded.

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 improvements in this area.

This service was found to 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.

The registered manager had a clear vision for the future of the pre-school and had begun to implement changes to meet this. We were informed the new approach with the blended curriculum had been well received by the children who have recently left to go to school as it enabled them to follow their interests and the same outcomes are expected for the children currently attending.

The staff team at the pre-school was small and they work closely together on a daily basis. This has enabled the registered manager to continuously monitor and review working practice and the staff member's well-being.

The registered manager and staff member have monthly team meetings which were clearly documented. The meetings are used to discuss children's progress, new ideas, working practice, planning and other items of interest.

We were informed the registered manager does not carry out formal one to one supervisions with the staff as this was the responsibility of the responsible person. The record of supervisions showed these have not been undertaken for a while. The records made of previous supervisions contained no information to show staff were being listened to, valued or supported. Through discussion with the staff team, we were made aware that when supervisions were being carried out, no time had been set aside for discussion. General questions were asked as the responsible person visited the setting to collect children at the end of the day.

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

Through discussion we were assured the registered manager and staff understood their responsibilities and regulatory requirements.

Through discussion, we were not assured the responsible person was clear about their responsibilities as the registered manager was limited in what they could do. We were informed the registered manager was not able to amend documentation such as child registration forms or carry out some tasks associated with her role.

Engaging and including families using the service, the public and the staff team.

Staff said they enjoyed working at the pre-school and said they felt well supported by the registered manager. The registered manager said she did not feel supported by the responsible person.

Continuous learning, improvement, innovation and ensuring sustainability.

The registered manager carries out regular audits of the premises, resources and equipment and any issues found are reported to the responsible person. We were informed issues raised were not being acted on. Information from accidents, incidents, concerns and compliments was being assessed and used to identify common trends and improve the service being provided.

Working in partnership with parents.

As well as providing information to the parents on the on-line application, the setting have recently introduced a monthly newsletter in order to keep the parents up to date about events at pre-school. The response received as a result of our feedback request said 'staff were approachable' and 'lovely people'.

Action we require the provider to take

Key areas for improvement

- The responsible person needs to implement systems that demonstrate their understanding of their responsibilities and regulatory requirements and ensure the staff team are regularly supported, valued and listened to.