

# Inspection Report

## 2023-2024

## Sandcastles Kindergarten

Child Day Care Centre

29 November 2023

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



**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 29 November 2023. The inspection was led by an inspector from the Registration and Inspection team.

### **Service and service type**

Sandcastles Kindergarten 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. These were in regards to ensuring the resources in the kindergarten develop the children's awareness of inclusion and diversity and enabling the staff team to continuously develop their professional knowledge and skills.

As a result of the setting's last inspection, the responsible person took action to address the issues found in the children's toilets. Unfortunately this has not improved the area or the rectified the issues.

The responsible person has implemented a system to ensure she undertakes regular one to one supervisions with the registered managers in all the nurseries owned by the company. As well as carrying out the supervisions, each visit will enable the responsible person to conduct performance reviews in order to assess the quality of care being delivered.

The staff team had established good relationships with the children and their families and a number of parents said they found the staff to be approachable and friendly. The children were receiving a caring service that encouraged their independence, confidence and learning.

Staffing levels were safe and were in keeping with the minimum staffing ratio requirement. The team worked well together and knew the children in their care. They were positive about working at the setting and felt supported by the management team.

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

- 'The setting are very good with not only [name] but from what we've seen they are great with all the other kids. The atmosphere is very chilled and all the staff are so kind and welcoming'
- 'I am not feeling anxious or worried when I leave my child in the nursery'
- 'I think they have very friendly welcoming environment, and staff know their kids'
- 'Very friendly, approachable and development of the child is brilliant'

Some points were raised by parents that were discussed with the management team.

### **About the service**

Sandcastles Kindergarten is situated on the sea front in Douglas. They are registered to care for 38 children aged 0 to 11 years. The setting has an office, three playrooms, a self-contained baby wing, children's toilets, kitchen/dining area and outdoor play facilities. Parents provide a packed lunch for their child and the setting provides snacks for the children.

### **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 inspection was part of our annual inspection programme which took place between April 2023 and March 2024.

Inspection activity started on 14 November 2023 and an unannounced inspection was undertaken on 29 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 documentation, notifications, complaints/compliments and any safeguarding issues.

Feedback was sourced via email from 23 families who use the service. Five responses were received.

### **During the inspection**

The setting's deputy manager was the person in charge on the day of inspection as the registered manager was not at the setting. We spoke with three members of staff, the deputy manager and the setting's responsible person and observations were carried out using an observational framework for inspection. This is a way of observing care to help us understand the experience of staff and children.

An inspection of the premises was undertaken and a range of documentation was reviewed. This included policies, attendance registers, supervision records, children's records and documentation in relation to health and safety. The files for three new members of staff were examined in relation to recruitment and induction.

**Our findings:**

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that children were protected from abuse and avoidable harm. The service does not require any improvements in this area.

This service was found to be safe.

**Staffing ratios and recruitment**

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

Staffing levels were observed to be safe and in keeping with the required adult: child ratios. Examination of the setting's attendance records showed ratios have been consistently maintained on other days.

There were three members of staff who had commenced their employment at the setting since the last inspection. Examination of their files showed the provider had carried out all pre-employment checks to ensure each was suitable to work with children prior to their respective start dates.

Staff new to the setting are given a four week induction. During this period, they are given information about the setting's disciplinary procedure and regular support meetings with management are undertaken in order to ensure each new member of staff are supported through the process. One member of staff told us about their induction, how they found it 'a lovely experience' and how she 'felt confident at the end of it'. She explained that members of the team sometimes stayed behind at the end of the day in order to give her additional information and how the team quizzed her throughout the day ('in a fun way') to ensure she was aware of systems, routines and procedures.

**Improvements lessons learned**

When speaking to staff at the setting, we asked if they were aware of their responsibility to raise and report any concerns they may have and whether they understood the need to record safety incidents. Staff were clear in their awareness of their responsibilities and all gave detailed responses to our questions.

#### **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 not require any improvements 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.

Management informed us ‘initially, children learn behaviour through observation and imitation therefore ensuring staff are modelling good behaviour/play and practice is of utmost importance.’ Throughout the inspection, we observed the staff team to be positive role models to the children. They gave praise and encouragement and the relationship between them and the children was relaxed and respectful.

The setting had a Behaviour policy in place that outlined their approach to managing the children’s behaviour. Some information had not been included in the policy but the management team amended the policy during the inspection and informed us the amended document will be shared with the staff team. This will ensure staff have a clear procedure to follow when managing unwanted behaviour.

## 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 staff team were caring and respectful to the children and treated them with kindness and compassion. There was lots of conversations taking place and staff were heard using language that was appropriate to the ages and level of understanding of the children. The responses made by staff members also demonstrated they were actively listening and interested in what the children were saying.

Staff working with the younger children used gentle tones reinforced with lots of facial expressions, eye contact and gestures. They sat on the floor with the children and encouraged them to have a voice through making noises and babbling. The staff responded to the sounds made and unique conversations were being had. The babies were comfortable with the team and their interactions were caring and playful.

When speaking with the staff team it was clear they enjoyed what they did and were passionate about ensuring the children were happy and enjoying their time at the kindergarten. One member of staff told us she enjoyed working at the kindergarten and found the children to be a 'lovely little bunch'.

Parents told us they had 'observed positive interaction between my child and the staff', were 'very happy with the care and support being provided' and felt the staff 'know each child very well'.

#### **Maintaining children's dignity, privacy and promoting independence**

The management team had ensured information about the children attending the setting has been shared with the staff team. This enables the team to be aware of each child's own preferences and needs. The team incorporate children's preferences and interests into their planning and 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 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.

Parents of the children aged under two are also asked to provide additional information to enable the staff team caring for them to know how their babies like to sleep, whether they use a comforter, what they find comforting, what foods they like/dislike and if they have a bottle. This information was displayed on post-it notes in the room.

When asked how well they felt the staff team knew their child, all parents who responded told us the staff team knew their child well. One parent told us ‘the staff are brilliant and really know [name], both about [child]-self and [child] routine. They are great’. Another said ‘I think due to the nursery size being relatively smaller than some other childcare providers, it allows staff to get to know kids better’.

The resources throughout the setting did not reflect diversity or inclusion. This meant the children’s awareness was not being promoted and the environment did not ensure all children were valued or able to develop a sense of belonging. We spent time discussing what resources are available and the importance of ensuring all children feel valued with the person in charge.

#### **Action we require the provider to take**

Key areas for improvement

- Action is needed to ensure all persons at the setting feel valued and the children’s awareness of diversity and inclusion is promoted. [This improvement is required in line with Regulation 13 of the Care Services Regulations 2013 – Service recipients plan.](#)



### 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 does require improvement 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.**

During this inspection we spent time observing the relationships between the staff team. We observed a team that work well together, shared tasks fairly and were supportive of each other. One member of staff told us 'we've got an amazing team here now. All the girls are so good to help you' and another told us 'we work well together. There's always lots of banter'.

Staff told us they were not aware of any disagreements amongst the team and stated 'if there has been it was handled well because it didn't affect anything and I hadn't noticed.'

Management told us 'we are very lucky with our current team that issues between staff are extremely rare however, if there was a conflict between staff, management would promptly facilitate a resolve.' Management would also have 'check-ins' with the team members to ensure the conflict is resolved.

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

The registered manager was not present at the time of the inspection. This meant the setting's deputy was person in charge on the day and was being supported by the setting's responsible person. The deputy was enthusiastic and keen to improve her understanding of the inspection process and asked to accompany us as we toured the building.

The setting has had cause to notify the Registration and Inspection team and another regulatory body of an incident since the last inspection. This was reported appropriately and within the required timescales. When this has happened, the manager shared details of the accident with the team as an area of learning.

#### **Continuous learning, improvement, innovation and ensuring sustainability.**

The management team have devised a system to ensure the responsible person visits the managers of the company's other settings in order to carry out regular supervisions. A yearly calendar was displayed in the office and meeting dates had been scheduled throughout the year. The responsible person explained that, as well as undertaking the supervisions, she will also be keeping in touch with all the managers via face time. Documentation was in place to ensure there would be a clear record of each supervision

There has been confusion in the past due to the setting not archiving old documents. The responsible person explained they were in the process of saving the most recent version of their policies in an electronic file and will be deleting all old versions. Once this is complete, they will be doing the same with all other forms and documents used at the setting.

We were given a copy of the setting's training matrix that showed that, as well as completing all mandatory training, staff had attended additional training to ensure the children's medical needs could be met. There was no evidence to show staff had undertaken other training that enables them to continuously develop their professional knowledge and skills.

At the time of the setting's last inspection, issues were identified in regards to the state of repair and decoration in the children's toilets. The responsible person explained she had employed an outside contractor to address and rectify the areas found. We found the tiled splashbacks had been painted but the paint had been scratched off in places and had also bubbled and was peeling off. A number of sinks had paint on them as did the sealant around the edges.

We also found that one of the toilets was leaking, there was a rusted pipe in one of the cubicles, the paint on the door frame was chipped and the sealant around the base of one of the toilets needed replacing. There was also a build-up of dirt around the base of the cubicle posts.

Two cubicles had been locked and were not being used by the children. We were informed they were being used to store items as, due to the number of children currently attending, they are not required. Discussion was had in regards to ensuring resources are appropriately stored.

When in the children's dining area, we noticed the radiator was beginning to show signs of rust and that there was a large crack in one of the walls.

### Action we require the provider to take

Key areas for improvement

- Action is needed to ensure staff are encouraged to continuously develop their professional knowledge and skills. [This improvement is required in line with Regulation 16 of the Care Services Regulations 2013 – Staffing](#)
- Actions is needed to ensure the premises and equipment are maintained in a suitable state of repair and decoration. [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.