Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Sandy Feet Day Nursery

Dew Road, Port Talbot, SA12 7HE

07834537061

The inspection visit took place on 29/09/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	Sandy Feet Day Nursery Limited
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	27
Main language(s):	Welsh and English
Flying Start service:	Yes
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	No
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The provider makes an effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture or is working towards a bilingual service.

Ratings:

Well-being	Good
Care & Development	Good
Environment	Good
Leadership & Management	Excellent

Summary:

Children are confident, engaged and valued. They make choices independently, enjoy strong relationships with staff and freely explore their environment. Interactions are positive and nurturing, supporting a strong sense of belonging. Children show enthusiasm, empathy and curiosity, actively leading their play while developing confidence and all-round skills.

Staff promote children's health, safety and well-being through positive interactions, effective safeguarding practices and a broad range of play and learning opportunities. They know children well, adapt their approach to individual requirements and support children's development and progress.

Leaders ensure the indoor and outdoor environments are safe and secure. They provide a warm, welcoming and child friendly environment. Leaders ensure that good quality resources and equipment are available and reflect the ages, stages of development and individual needs of the

children attending.

Leaders are dedicated and passionate about providing the best care service possible. They manage staff exceptionally well and have an effective self-evaluating system to identify improvements for the service. Leaders and staff have a good relationship with parents/carers, keeping them regularly updated about their child.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children are very confident communicators as their wants, moods and needs are fully considered. They can access toys and resources independently and are offered support when requiring things just out of reach. Children have good opportunities to make choices and decisions about their play and learning. They freely move around their environment, exploring the different play areas confidently. Children's opinions and interests are highly valued, and staff act upon these interests. For example, when children show an interest in animals, staff asked "*shall we find some more*?" and went with the children to find more resources.

Children clearly have a strong sense of belonging, going to staff for reassurance and comfort or to share their play with them. They are forming strong relationships as their feelings, likes, dislikes and needs are acknowledged. Children are very familiar with the routines of the setting. For instance, the youngest children hold their hands out ready for hand washing before snack.

Interactions between children and adults are consistently good. Children communicate confidently through verbal and non-verbal means, and adults respond positively. Children express empathy and are sensitive to the needs of others. For example, when a child went looking for additional blocks, another child offered some of theirs so they could continue to build. Children co-operate well, sharing toys and resources and pushing each other on the sit on rides, around the outdoor area.

Children are enthusiastic and interested in their play and learning. They enjoy a good range of interesting opportunities and can choose to relax and have quiet times. Children take part in activities resulting in a great feeling of achievement and high self-esteem. They are enthusiastic to show or talk about what they have been doing. For instance, while outside children excitedly called staff over to look at a ladybird, with lots of discussion around what they looked like and what they did. Children are self-motivated to initiate their own play and to influence their tasks and activities because child led activities predominate.

Children consistently follow their own instincts, ideas and interests. They have freedom to explore the toys, resources and play areas. Children experience a variety of age and developmentally appropriate opportunities that promote their all-round development. They are actively interested and engaged. For example, babies copy sounds as a story is read and older children clear an area ready for a dance party. Children have some opportunities to develop their independence skills enabling them to do some things for themselves successfully.

Care & Development — Good

Staff understand and implement policies and procedures to promote healthy lifestyles, physical activities, personal safety and well-being. They ensure children have regular access to the outdoor area which supports their physical play. Many practitioners implement appropriate cleaning and hygiene practices. They ensure children wash their hands before food and follow good nappy changing practices. Staff have a strong understanding of their responsibilities to protect children. They confidently explained what they would do if they had any child protection concerns. Leaders have a robust set of clear policies and procedures to ensure the service runs effectively and to promote positive practices across the setting. However, staff do not always consistently implement the policies fully. Staff ensure that records about accidents, incidents and administered medicines are fully completed and shared with parents. They offer a range of healthy snacks and lunches and have a clear understanding of children's individual dietary needs.

Staff understand the behaviour management policy and consistently implement positive behaviour management strategies. They consistently use phrases such as "*that is amazing*!", "*da iawn*" (well done) and "*that's fantastic*". The interactions are positive demonstrating warmth and kindness. Staff communicate well with children, asking questions, checking in with children and responding to children's requests. They are responsive; they listen and respect children's views which promotes children's sense of belonging. Staff act as good role models at all times, modelling positive interactions and supporting each other. They are sensitive to the needs and experiences of individual children and ensure that they adapt their approach to suit the children.

Staff are committed to providing a broad range of play and learning activities, adapting the learning environment to children's interests and ensuring there are resources to support their play. Staff know the children in their care well. For example, they are aware and talk about children's likes, dislikes, achievements and where they need assistance. This supports their understanding of children's individual development. They plan well for the next steps and regularly review children's progress, keeping parents informed. Staff recognise when children may have additional needs. They are aware of the appropriate action to take in order to support children's emerging needs.

Environment — Good

Leaders ensure the environment is safe and secure for children, staff and visitors. Staff follow effective policies and procedures to maintain safety throughout the setting. They control access to the premises and record all visitors on arrival. Staff complete registers accurately, ensuring they can account for everyone on the premises and identify which staff members are caring for specific children at any time. Leaders and staff complete regular risk assessments and daily safety checks to identify and address any hazards promptly. Leaders maintain up to date safety checks for the building and appliances. Staff practise and record fire drills frequently, helping staff and children know how to evacuate the building safely in an emergency. Leaders maintain secure areas through appropriate fencing and gated access. These measures support children's safe enjoyment of outdoor play.

Leaders provide a warm and welcoming environment where children, staff and visitors feel comfortable and valued. They maintain the premises to a good standard, and the neutral colour scheme creates a calm and relaxing atmosphere where children are happy to play, learn and explore. Staff mostly use the indoor and outdoor environments well to promote children's learning and development. However, leaders do not always ensure that the available indoor space is effectively and consistently used. Leaders told us that this is not normal practice. Leaders ensure separate rooms for the various age ranges cared for. The areas within the playrooms allow children to choose whether they want quiet time such as the book corner, to complete craft work, undertake floor play activities or role play in the dressing up area. There is a suitable baby room, with plenty of space for babies to play and rest comfortably. The outdoor area is stimulating and has a garden cabin for all-weather learning and play to meet children's needs. This enhances provision to support children's overall learning well. The toilets are child-sized and support children to develop their independence skills well. There is a suitable nappy change area.

Leaders provide resources and equipment that reflect the ages, stages of development and individual needs of the children attending. They equip rooms with appropriately sized furniture, storage and equipment that promote children's comfort and independence. Staff organise resources so children can access many materials independently and make choices about their play. The environment promotes exploratory and imaginative play through natural materials, including water and loose parts. Leaders and staff create inviting and engaging learning areas for the children. Outdoors children access a variety of resources that support active, creative and exploratory play. For example, they develop their physical skills by climbing low-level trees under close supervision and develop their creativity and imagination through playing in the mud kitchen.

Leadership & Management — Excellent

Leaders are dedicated and passionate about providing the best care service possible. They have a clear vision for the setting and care they offer. Leaders provide a high level of leadership and demonstrate strong knowledge and understanding of the regulations, which they implement effectively. Leaders organise children's paperwork and daily records, such as registers, extremely well and update them consistently to ensure they reflect current information. All documentation is kept securely and is easy to access when required. Leaders are proactive in keeping up with best practice and relevant training. The statement of purpose generally reflects the current setting and gives parents/carers the information they need to decide if it is the right setting for their child.

Leaders have an effective procedure in place to self-evaluate the setting and care provided. The views of parents, children and staff are considered appropriately when reviewing the service. Leaders identify strengths and areas for development relevant to priorities. For example, leaders use self-evaluation to identify and implement improvements, including further developing the use of the Welsh language, enhancing staff training and improving the environment.

Leaders manage staff exceptionally well and this is a real strength of the setting. It leads to a team of happy and dedicated staff. They ensure all required suitability checks are in place and that staff have completed, or are in the process of completing, all required training. Staff engage positively in appraisal processes and value professional development opportunities, such as Welsh language training, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) training and various procedure quizzes to identify any gaps in knowledge. Leaders respond positively to external advice and collaborate effectively with other agencies, demonstrating a strong commitment to continuous improvement.

Leaders and staff have a good relationship with parents/carers. They keep them updated and informed about the setting and their child. Regular information and photos are shared throughout the day via an online system. Positive feedback includes, *'all staff who work there are wonderful, they really do go above and beyond to ensure the children are at the forefront of everything they do', 'I have full trust in the girls there, the environment is one of encouragement, empowerment and nurturing' and 'they focus on providing child centred learning experiences and support their wellbeing fully. It is the closest childcare to parenting we have found'*. Leaders and staff have positive partnerships with outside agencies, and this supports them in providing excellent care and tailored support to children when needed.

Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

CIW has no areas for improvement identified following this inspection.

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

National Minimum Standards

Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

We expect the provider to take action to address these and we will follow these up at the next inspection.

Standard	Recommendation(s)
	No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection

Best Practice

Where we think it helpful, we may make best practice recommendations. These are to encourage settings that are doing well to become even better at helping children thrive.

Recommendation(s)
Support staff to ensure implementation of consistent best practices.
Further develop and effectively use the play space available.

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