



Childcare Inspection Report on

Amanda Reed

Pontypool



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Description of the service

The child minder was registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in February 2005. She provides home based child care for up to ten children under 12 years old and lives near Pontypool. She operates from Monday to Friday providing a flexible service to meet the needs of families including school holidays. This is an English language service where there is a little use of the Welsh language within resources and activities.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

The child minder provides a good 'home from home' service. She gives children lots of choice in their activities and encourages them to share their views and do things for themselves. She knows the children well and ensures they have fun with her while promoting their learning and development. Children benefit from a healthy lifestyle and affection is freely given. The child minder's home is well maintained, safe and secure. The children are cared for in a comfortable, child friendly environment, with access to a good range of resources and suitable experiences. The child minder keeps effective policies and procedures and keeps her training up to date.

2. Improvements

The child minder had met the recommendation made at the last inspection which was to provide separate hand towels for children. We were told that there had been no significant changes to the environment, other than renewing and adding to the resources for children's use, responding to children's interests and in keeping with her routine risk assessments.

3. Requirements and recommendations

We found that the child minder did not meet legal requirements in one respect but found that this did not affect the care of the children. The child minder took immediate steps to address the matter, which was to provide a Disclosure and Barring Service check for a member of the household who had turned 16 years of age.

We made some recommendations to develop the service and improve outcomes for children including some revision to paperwork and record keeping.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children's views are valued by the child minder and they are able to influence their activities. Children feel welcomed, very much at home and have formed good relationships with the child minder. They are able to develop their self-help skills and undertake activities which build their confidence and self-esteem. Children enjoy a good variety of activities at the child minder's home and in the community.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children can make choices and they are encouraged to express their views.

We observed children helping themselves to toys, games and activities that were easily available to them. We saw that younger children's comments and statements were encouraged and responded to by the child minder, and all children were included in general conversation. A younger child enthusiastically told us about Father Christmas taking the crisps they had left out for him last year and about a particular car which was 'superfast'. Children spent some time chatting with the child minder while making pictures with glue, paint and stickers. They described some hand shaped stickers as "*These are happy hands. [Child] likes wiggle hands*". They showed their picture to the child minder, saying "What do you think of this then, Mandie?" Another child told us they liked playing with the Polly Pockets and play dough. They chose a specific programme on television to watch while relaxing just before home time.

Children are listened to by the child minder and are able to make choices within the activities she provides.

1.2 To what extent do children feel safe, happy and valued?

Children are settled and relaxed in their care because the child minder knows them well and has developed good bonds of affection with them.

As a child arrived from school they quickly made themselves at home, spontaneously giving the child minder a hug. They chatted about the chocolates from their Advent calendar and events in their family. They asked to play with their favourite activity and cleared a jig saw away to make space on the table. They later 'secretly' changed the date of an Advent calendar on the wall, as a 'surprise' for the child minder, confident that it would be seen as a mischievous joke. Children were relaxed and talkative with the child minder and received lots of praise for their efforts in craft activities. We spoke to an older child who was confident about who they might talk to if they had any concerns while with the child minder.

Children feel secure and comfortable in their care with a child minder who creates a relaxed environment.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children interact appropriately with others.

Children are learning to manage their behaviour and socially accepted ways in which to behave. Children were confident, well behaved and polite with the child minder, cheerfully accepting prompts to say please at times. They were seen to interact well with the child minder's own family members, chatting about their day in school and commenting on their paintings and craft. Children showed care and respect for the toys and resources. They competently helped to tidy away toys which showed that they were used to helping with this and they enjoyed doing so.

Children's emotional security and wellbeing are enhanced by the positive relationships fostered by the child minder.

1.4 To what extent do children enjoy their play and learning?

Children are able to enjoy a good variety of play based activities which suit their interests and are appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Children's learning was integral to their play. We observed a younger child enjoying lots of praise as they were encouraged to name shapes and colours within their craft activity. However, the opportunity to introduce or confirm the words in Welsh was not made use of. A child was keen to find out if their picture using paint and glue was dry enough to take home, because they were clearly proud of their efforts. An older child was happily involved with the childminder changing the display of autumn activities to winter and Christmas themed display in the play room.

Children enjoy a good range of play and learning experiences with the child minder who recognises the importance of children's play opportunities for their overall development.

1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent?

Children are confident in their surroundings and they know where things are. Resources are organised so that they can mostly help themselves and be independent in their play.

When a child asked how to do something, they were encouraged to work things out for themselves, with prompts such as "*What did you do before?*" Children used the toilet and hand wash facilities independently or were given support to tend to their own personal needs. Children were prompted about changes, such as "*Half an hour, then tidy up time*" and we saw they were confident to ask for specific items if they wanted something that was not already set out. They were able to develop concentration skills with individual activities such as playing with small world toys and some crafts with little intervention from the child minder.

Children develop confidence and independence with a child minder who encourages children to do things for themselves and gives them time to carry out their chosen activities.

2. Care and Development

Summary

The child minder uses her experience caring for children to inform her practice while applying a good 'home from home' approach to her service. The child minder is able to identify children at risk and has the confidence to follow good safeguarding procedures. She treats children with warmth and respect and has realistic expectations of them. Good hygiene routines are carried out. The child minder is aware of how children in her care are developing and is able to plan for their individual needs effectively, although we made some recommendations about recording her observations. She provides activities that she knows the children will engage with and will promote their learning and development.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

The child minder keeps a clean and safe home. She is experienced in her role and has suitable procedures in place for keeping children safe and healthy.

The child minder knows what action to take in the event of a safeguarding situation and keeps up to date with training. We looked at her safeguarding policy and noted that it has recently been updated to meet current recommendations. The child minder holds current Paediatric First Aid and food hygiene practice training. Dietary requirements are noted and she is registered with the local authority. Parents provide main meals for their children, supporting the healthy eating policy and procedure and the child minder always provides plenty of fruit and milk or water. Children were routinely prompted to wash their hands before snack time. The child minder keeps several pets, including a dog. We observed that children's access to the animals was carefully monitored, although there was not a policy and procedure in place to support how children learn to care for and handle animals. Fire drills and smoke detector checks were practised regularly, logged appropriately and discussed with older children. Accident, incident and medication recording systems were all in place and the child minder was clear about what action to take in the event of an emergency. Internet safety was taken into account via a policy and procedure, and children have no access to the internet except when two older children bring their own mobile phones and their use is strictly monitored by the child minder.

The child minder maintains effective systems to promote children's health and welfare.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

The child minder applies a consistent approach to children about what is and is not, acceptable and takes into account the age, stage of development and needs of each child.

We observed children receiving lots of individual attention, and being given gentle and appropriate prompts to be helpful, and were praised for their efforts and kind acts. Lots of examples of children's work were displayed, acknowledging their efforts. The child minder

was calm and clear in her explanation to a child who wanted a specific film which was long and usually saved for school holidays. When a child asked for a specific activity the child minder asked what the rule is when they play with it. The child was quick to show they understood that it had to be kept on the table, because a younger child may put small parts in their mouth. The child minder told us that she discusses the house rules with children. This is in line with her policy and procedure on managing children's behaviour.

The child minder sets and holds realistic expectations of children's behaviour and celebrates their achievements.

2.3 How well do practitioners promote children's play, learning and development and meet their individual needs?

The child minder provides care which is child centred and meets children's individual needs in a cheerful and caring atmosphere.

She uses her experience to promote children's learning within their play. She keeps an appropriate range of toys, activities and resources that are suitable for the children who attend. This is an English speaking service and the child minder told us she has very little Welsh herself. The child minder described her weekly routine which was arranged to take account of children's attendance at school and nursery. The child minder takes children to some local play sessions where pre-school children can socialise with others and enjoy group activities such as music and sensory experiences. They may go out and about in local parks or a play centre. The child minder has a system in place to note daily events and record personal care about younger children, which are shared with parents. She is mindful of children's developmental progress, which she shares verbally with parents. However, she does not have a formal system in place to observe children and plan for their next steps in play and learning through long, medium and short term activity plans.

Children's play and learning are promoted by the child minder who has skills and knowledge to meet their individual needs.

3. Environment

Summary

The child minder ensures that her home is safe, secure and child friendly. Children are given a good range of resources and experiences that support and enhance their learning and development. The child minder provides a good environment in which children can learn, play and relax safely and she takes steps to minimise risks to children.

Our findings

3.1 How well do leaders ensure the safety of the environment?

Children are looked after in a safe, clean and secure environment and the child minder carries out regular risk assessments and cleaning routines, including a daily visual check throughout the play space.

We were told that daily cleaning takes place, and regular deeper cleans are planned and carried out. The front door was kept locked during the inspection and the garden access was kept secure. We saw the first aid kit and a fire blanket were easily available, although the fire blanket was not fixed to the wall. A record of accidents was kept, which showed that only minor accidents had occurred and had been dealt with appropriately. Toilet and hand wash facilities were on the ground floor and children can use them independently. The child minder maintains relevant insurances and the annual gas safety certificate for her home. She had an e-safety policy and procedure to cover children's access to, and use of, the internet, mobile phones and computer games. She was registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and takes account of recent developments in regulations about data protection and was clear about how she keeps and shares information securely.

The child minder is clear about her responsibility for maintaining a safe environment for children.

3.2 How well do leaders ensure the suitability of the environment?

The child minder's home is welcoming and furnished comfortably, enabling children to relax, play and do many things for themselves.

Children can use play space in a living room and the large open plan kitchen and dining area which gave access to the garden. They were able to help themselves to toys and activities from the shelves or those left out, such as vehicles, construction toys, books, small world and home corner and role play resources. There were board games for older children to enjoy. Children could play outside on the grass or decking. We were told that the trampoline is being removed and outdoor play equipment and sand pit were available. The child minder keeps some resources stored separately, rotating their use to meet the needs of children and support interests and activities. Children can choose some activities they want in order to follow their particular interests, and the child minder told us that she had

recently bought a straws construction activity and modelling clay that children had specifically asked for.

Children are cared for in a home from home environment which provides good play and learning opportunities.

3.3 How well do leaders ensure the quality of resources and equipment?

Children have easy access to furniture, equipment and a good range of toys and materials that are kept in good condition and meet children's needs.

The child minder checks the toys and equipment she uses daily and more formally within the annual written risk assessment. Toys and resources were also checked for wear and tear as they were used, or tidied away. Deep cleaning of all toys and play space was planned and carried out regularly.

The child minder maintains good routines to ensure resources are suitable for children's use.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The child minder runs her service so that it mostly meets the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care (NMS) and relevant regulations. She is organised and keeps her paperwork in a clear and accessible system. Parents are given the information they need to make an informed choice about using the service. The child minder keeps her training up to date. She sets up ways to reflect on her practice and includes parents and children's views in the process. We made some recommendations in this section.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The child minder manages her service mostly effectively although she was non-compliant with the Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010 in one respect. She had maintained current Disclosure and Barring Service certificates (DBS) for herself and household members, although a younger child had recently turned 16 and their DBS had not yet been applied for. The child minder phoned CIW and asked for the forms during the inspection. Her statement of purpose was clear and she confirmed that she shared her policies and procedures with parents. However, we made recommendations to revise some of them. Appropriate contracts were discussed and shared with parents setting out the expectations of both parties. Daily registers were completed and she kept good, clear records and systems.

The child minder delivers consistent care to children and works to make improvements.

4.2 How effective is self-evaluation and planning for improvement?

Children's outcomes are enhanced because the child minder takes a professional and reflective approach to operating her service.

She reviews her service annually and we looked at the latest summary and the questionnaires completed by parents earlier this year. We saw that parents were very satisfied with the care their children received and had made no suggestions for improvements. Parents commented that *"Amanda is very professional and considerate; 100% satisfied with the service"*. The child minder told us she asks children about what they want to do while with her, but has no formal system in place for them to contribute to her review of care. The child minder told us that she lacked some confidence in her own use of Welsh. She meets informally with a local child minder to share practice ideas and updates. The child minder told us she has undertaken training on the General Data Protection Regulations in addition to maintaining required training and had recently implemented the system to support families with the Welsh Government's 30 hours free child care. Recent changes to her practise include a deliberate reduction of using plastic in the household which she had discussed with children. She has replaced paper towels with fabric re-usable

ones; removed the plastic soap dispenser and started using a local milk supplier who uses glass bottles.

The child minder reflects on her service and takes steps to improve it for children and their parents.

4.3 How effective is the management of practitioners, staff and other resources?

The child minder ensures that children's needs are met by setting clearly defined roles and responsibilities for herself while providing the service.

She is clear that no-one else who may be present at her home is given any responsibility for the children and they are always supervised by herself. We observed they were familiar with the child minder's husband, cheerfully chatting to him at the end of his working day. The child minder told us that she chooses to care for a maximum of five children at any one time, so that she can be confident that each child receives the attention they need. All parental consents are in place for children who may attend community group sessions with the child minder.

Arrangements for people who may be present and resources are effective and ensure the smooth-running of the service.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

The child minder works closely with parents to ensure their children's needs are met.

The child minder provides parents with the information needed to make informed choices about their child's care. Discussion with her showed that she knows the children and their families well and she has cared for several children and their younger siblings over a number of years. She described the settling-in process for parents and children which takes place over short visits until the contracted arrangements can begin. Parents told us the service is *"Excellent; very reliable; we heard about Mandie years ago from friends"*. Another said their child *"Loves it here and wants to live with Mandie! Definitely a home from home and very flexible"*.

The child minder understands the importance of working in partnership to ensure that children receive the support they need.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non-compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Areas of non-compliance at this inspection

The registered person was notified of non-compliance with Regulation 20 (4)(a) of the Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010 by failing to have an enhanced criminal record certificate in place for her daughter who has reached 16 years of age.

We did not issue a Non-Compliance Notice because we did not find that this had an impact on the well-being of the children. In addition the child minder told us that her daughter holds a DBS in relation to her college course and children are always supervised. The child minder took steps to resolve the matter during the inspection.

5.3 Recommendations for improvement

In order to develop the service and improve outcomes for children we discussed the following matters with the child minder:

- Revise the statement of purpose to fully meet NMS 1.2;
- revise the complaints procedure to include a statement that parents of a child sponsored by the Local Authority can use the Local Authority's complaints procedure should they wish. It should also clarify the action to take in the event of a concurrent investigation and CIW's role in the event they receive a complaint about a registered service;
- develop a complaints procedure that older children can use;
- provide a policy and procedure about how children may have access to pets in the household;
- revise the behaviour management policy and procedure to include a statement that CIW will be informed about any changes to it within 28 days;
- record how children contribute their views to the annual review of service;
- track children's progress and use the observations to help plan next steps in their play and learning; and
- consider resources to promote children's awareness of a diverse and multicultural society and the Welsh language.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This inspection was announced at very short notice and undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. The inspector undertook one visit to the service of approximately four and a half hours. We gave feedback of our findings to the child minder at the end of the visit. There were two children present during the inspection between the ages of three and six years. Evidence for the report was gathered using the following methodology:

- we looked at the range of paperwork the child minder keeps about her service – including policies and procedures, risk assessments, contracts, children’s records, accident records and safety certificates;
- we observed the children interacting with the child minder and choosing their activities;
- we spoke with children and their parents; and
- we spoke with the child minder about how she runs her service and her plans for the future.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

About the service

Type of care provided	Child Minder
Registered Person	Amanda Reed
Registered maximum number of places	10
Age range of children	Under 12 years
Opening hours	8.00 – 18.00 five days a week including school holidays
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	22 June 2015
Dates of this inspection visit	03 December 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of people /children who use, or intend to use their service. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's ' <i>More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care</i> '.
Additional Information: none	