



Childcare Inspection Report on

Nicola Barnes

Cardiff



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Description of the service

Nicola Barnes is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to care for 10 children up to the age of 12 years. She operates her child minding service from her home in the Roath area of Cardiff, which she shares with her husband and adult son. The premises are located in a residential area close to a shopping area and the local primary school used by the children in her care. The service operates Mondays to Fridays from 7.45 to 18.00 throughout the year. This is an English language provision.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children are relaxed and comfortable in the child minder's home. They receive individual care and attention which meets their needs. Close relationships are evident as some older children have attended the service since they were young and are very settled. The environment is inviting and safe and is organised from a child's perspective when the children are present. There are some effective management systems in place which meet the requirements of the regulations and the child minder is motivated to continually improve her service and to action additional procedures.

2. Improvements

Most policies and procedures have been updated, including the Complaints procedure. Records of fire drills now contain detailed information and identify any hazards encountered.

3. Requirements and recommendations

There were no non-compliance issues identified at this inspection.

We made a number of recommendations to improve the service which are discussed in the report and summarised at the end. These include setting up new systems to record information and modifying some existing procedures.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children are safe, content and valued within the service. They have access to a good range of interesting activities and are able to form close relationships. Children benefit from a consistent approach to their care and are comfortable and well settled.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children are supported to make choices and their decisions are respected

One child was in the early stages of learning how to communicate her needs effectively and we saw the child minder pre-empt what was required because she knew the child well. The children choose the activities that they wish to play with and are confident to ask for activities to change. We heard children request well-loved stories and this settled them as they sat comfortably with the child minder. Children asked to make pasta necklaces and this was agreed and planned for another session. Older children look forward to playing football in the park and this was planned for after school on the way home.

Children are encouraged to voice opinions and are able to influence how they spend their time.

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

Children receive consistent, supportive care from the child minder.

We saw they were familiar with the routines of the child minder's home which are arranged to meet their requirements and are changed to accommodate children's need for food and sleep. The child minder was responsive and spoke tenderly to children. We heard positive language used which included 'well done' and 'that is lovely'. The atmosphere was welcoming and children are relaxed and feel 'at home' at the service. Children are able to make valuable relationships with others as the child minder meets up regularly with a group of other registered child minders and their minded children. Some of these friendships continue into school which can ease the transition process.

Children's emotional well-being is enhanced by the close and consistent care provide.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children interact and cooperate positively.

We saw younger children were beginning to understand their feelings and develop an understanding about how their actions affected others. Children are in the process of learning to share and to play together and this was mostly successful. Some children need guidance and comfort when they do not get what they want immediately. Children generally like the company of other children and we saw them negotiating

and taking turns when dressing up and playing games. Older children have a good idea about the rules they are expected to follow and are happy to interact and play with younger children.

Children benefit and learn from experiencing positive social interactions.

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

Children are motivated and engaged in their play and keen to experience new activities.

Children told us they enjoy spending time outdoors in the park. We saw photographs which showed them involved in interesting and stimulating activities in the local community. This included visiting animals at a local wild life facility, beachcombing, making pottery and building snowmen. They are able to follow their interests and have opportunities to try new experiences. We saw children concentrating when building with blocks and they enjoyed activities such as making cups of tea in their role-play kitchen and presenting them to adults. Children are able to explore their environment freely and we saw them choose puzzles and games from the extensive range available.

Children show pleasure and a sense of satisfaction from partaking in the activities on offer.

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

Children are encouraged to develop their interests and their independence skills.

A good variety of new experiences is provided for children to support the development of confidence and independence. Children are able to direct their own play and follow their interests. Children copy and learn from other children and we noted that they gained a sense of pride from their achievements. They are learning appropriate self-help skills in line with their age and stage of development. Some children need help with accessing the toilet while an older child was independent. Children receive encouragement and support to feed themselves and are happy to ask for help if needed. We noted that the Welsh language was not used during our visit. The child minder told us that she had plans to improve her Welsh provision and intends to start with using simple phrases and purchasing Welsh books.

Children enjoy good play and learning opportunities which benefits their overall development.

2. Care and Development

Summary

The child minder is an experienced practitioner who has developed a range of good systems to ensure that the health and safety of children is promoted and their needs are met. All the required policies are in place to ensure that outcomes for children in her care are positive.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

The child minder has a good understanding of her responsibility to safeguard children and to promote their welfare.

There is a safeguarding policy in place and we saw evidence that the child minder has undertaken the appropriate safeguarding training which includes the Prevent duty. During our discussions the child minder told us that she was confident to recognise any issues of concern and clear about her duty to refer any issues relating to the welfare of a child to the appropriate authority. The child minder has a system to record any existing injuries of children before they arrive at the service but this has never been implemented or discussed with parents. After our discussions about the importance of this procedure the child minder told us she would discuss with parents their responsibility to keep her fully informed about any previous injuries or accidents of children. The child minder promotes healthy lifestyles by ensuring that children are offered fresh, nutritious snacks and drinks which includes a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables. Parents are responsible for providing lunches for children. Children are encouraged to keep safe in the sun by wearing hats and sun cream. Physical activity is regularly promoted with daily visits to outdoor facilities.

We saw risk assessments for activities are in place and discussed at length the need for these documents to be completed before each trip out to busy community venues such as the beach. This is because the risks are likely to be different on each trip and additional staff could be needed to keep all children safe, as the environment cannot be controlled in the same way as at home. The child minder agreed to consider these concerns. After the inspection, the child minder provided us with a checklist which she uses before she takes children out on community visits. We will check the use of these documents during our next inspection.

The child minder keeps children safe and healthy by following her procedures. There is a need for additional action to ensure safety is carefully assessed at all times.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

The child minder manages children's behaviour effectively.

There is a behaviour management policy in place and the child minder told us that she uses positive behaviour management strategies to promote children's welfare.

She takes into account the age and developmental stage of children and understands that these factors can affect children's behaviour. We heard the child minder praising children for being helpful and cooperating and saw that she used distraction techniques to refocus children when needed. The child minder is a positive role model to children and she told us she strives to maintain a calm environment in which children can settle and feel comfortable.

The child minder supports positive interactions with children.

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

The child minder has a good understanding of children's needs and is nurturing and responsive.

There is a system in place to observe and track children's progress. This is logged on the Foundation Phase Tracker template. The child minder uses the information to plan activities to meet the development needs of individual children. Activities used include puzzles, building blocks, craft and role-play. Children are encouraged to develop an understanding of diverse cultures by celebrating a range of festivals and seasonal events such as Diwali, Eid, St David's Day, Halloween and Christmas.

Children are offered opportunities to learning about sustainability by engaging in play with recycled resources. They are creative and are encouraged to use their imagination to make cards and other items. During our visit, children were supported to create hedgehogs using sticks, card and coloured paper.

The child minder promotes children's development by assessing their needs and providing appropriate activities.

3. Environment

Summary

The child minder's home is safe, inviting and well maintained. There is a playroom used for child minding along with a large sitting room and compact garden area. Good attention is given to safety and security. The child minder ensures that children are well supervised. Some adjustments are needed to provide children with suitable equipment and to carry out safety checks.

Our findings

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

The child minder ensures that the safety of the environment is a priority.

Children are cared for in safe and secure premises. The service is welcoming and friendly to children and the child minder has a daily checklist that she uses to ensure that there are no hazards in place. We saw evidence of annual gas boiler checks and regular checks are made of the fire alarms. The service has identified and addressed risks on the premises. Regular checks are made of fire alarms and we saw records of monthly fire drills. Good records are kept of children's attendance in a daily diary.

There are some good systems in place to safeguard children within the service.

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

The child minder maintains a suitable environment for children to receive good quality care.

The premises are clean, welcoming and attractive. The environment is spacious and comfortable and all resources are easily reached by children. They are able to choose to play in the playroom, sitting room or garden and they move around confidently and freely. An outside downstairs toilet is well maintained and accessible. Although there is no sink in this facility, there is an anti-bacterial liquid dispenser that children are encouraged to use before washing their hands at the kitchen sink. The child minder told us that during the winter when the weather is wet, children use the upstairs toilet facilities. We noted there was no child-sized furniture for children to use and that children sat around the dining table to eat. We observed one child slipping from her adult sized seat and discussed the benefit to children of appropriate sized chairs and tables or other equipment such as booster seats. These maintain children's safety and comfort when eating and taking part in table top activities. The child minder told us there are two high chairs for babies to use although during our visit the child minder fed a very young child from the sofa.

The child minder maintains an environment which is homely and safe. Suitable child sized furniture is needed to enhance children's comfort and safety.

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

Resources provide good opportunities for children's learning and development.

There is a good range of equipment and play resources to maintain the interests of children of varying ages. Older children choose puzzles, construction toys and board games. The child minder told us she rotates the toys regularly to ensure that children do not get bored and is happy to purchase resources requested by children. All broken toys are removed at once and either repaired or discarded. We asked the child minder to reconsider the issue of separating resources and activities into those for boys and those for girls. We observed that all the dressing up clothes given to the children came from the girls' dressing up box and matched stereotypical roles and that there was a separate box for boys. The girls present were keen to have access to the 'boys' clothes and clearly enjoyed the opportunity to be monsters and 'power rangers' when this was given to them.

Children's experiences are mostly enhanced by the opportunities presented to them but greater attention is needed to prevent children from taking on stereotypical play roles that may affect their potential and worldview.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The child minder manages her service efficiently with due regard to the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare (NMS) and to the Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations. She is well motivated and has extensive experience. The child minder is open to new developments as a means of promoting positive outcomes to children and their families.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The child minder organises her service effectively. There is a statement of purpose that provides an accurate picture of the service provided. The child minder agreed to forward this document to CIW when any changes or updates occur. She is registered with the Information Commissioners Office and has a clear understanding of the principles of data provision and privacy. All parents receive information about the storage of personal data. We saw that child protection, paediatric first aid and food hygiene training have been completed and recently updated. The child minder has also undertaken Foundation Phase training which provides good information and practical framework for her role. All the required policies and procedures are in place and we noted that these are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. We saw that the complaints procedure required some modification to ensure the correct information is provided and the child minder agreed to these amendments.

The child minder ensures that systems and procedures are in place to provide a good quality service to children

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

There are good systems in place to evaluate the service and to plan for improvement.

The child minder has compiled a detailed quality of care report that examines all aspects of the service she provides. We saw copies of questionnaires sent to parents to provide feedback of the service and these showed that the service is highly valued. We saw that there was no system in place to gain the views of children specifically although some parents' forms included children's views. The child minder told us she intended to devise an accessible means for children to give their opinions. We saw a calendar of events that the child minder uses as a reminder to ensure she renews her certificates. This includes Data and Barring Service (DBS) checks for herself and her family, Public Liability Insurance and training courses.

There are effective systems in place to support service developments.

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

The child minder manages resources effectively and plans for unforeseen circumstances.

The child minder prepares the environment in advance of children arriving so that she is ready to engage with them straight away. She told us that she has an arrangement with two local registered child minders who have agreed to support her in an emergency. The child minder does not employ an assistant.

The child minder manages her time well and plans ahead to meet children's needs.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Partnerships with parents are positive and respectful.

Parents provide extensive information about their child's needs at registration using the 'All about me' booklet. The child minder told us she receives any additional information when changes occur. All decisions relating to the welfare of the child are taken in partnership with parents with regular discussions occurring daily. A review of the contract with parents is carried out annually. The child minder told us that she ensures that parents have access to the policies and procedures and that she is considering providing them to new parents electronically. Parents are provided with an information pack about what they can expect from the service. Social media is used with parents throughout the day to keep in touch with them and this includes photographs and messages. The child minder told us that she attends regular community facilities which include the local library and playgroups. Close relationships are maintained with other child minders. Information is shared and the group operates as a forum for discussion of any new developments and requirements within the early year's sector.

The child minder encourages and maintains valuable partnerships to maximise the benefits of the service to children and families.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

- liaise with parents to make a record of children's existing injuries when they arrive at the service;
- ensure that the check list which is completed before taking children to the beach and other public spaces consider all potential hazards alongside ways to diminish the risks;
- consider issues relating to equality especially with regard to providing girls and boys with play resources which stereotype gender;
- provide child sized furniture or booster seats for children to use for eating and table top activities;
- learn to use some basic Welsh phrases with children and purchase some Welsh language resources;
- send the updated statement of purpose to CIW;
- devise a child friendly system to gain the views of young children about the service and
- ensure the complaints procedure contains the correct information about how to access support during the process. This includes information relating to the fact that CIW is not a complaints agency and does not investigate complaints.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full inspection which was undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections.

- One inspector undertook an unannounced visit to the service for five and a half hours on 3 October 2018;
- we engaged with the three children present;
- we read feedback forms from six parents;
- we looked at the information held by CIW including the self assessment of the service by the child minder;
- we looked at a wide range of records. These included the statement of purpose, risk assessments, copies of policies that included safeguarding, safety records and monitoring records. We also looked at children's records and
- we made a visual check of the premises.

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	Nicola Barnes
Registered maximum number of places	10
Age range of children	0-12 years
Opening hours	7.45-18.00 Monday to Friday throughout the year
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	15 February 2015
Dates of this inspection visit	3 October 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early year's education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This service 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 consider Welsh Government's ' <i>More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care</i> '.
Additional Information:	