



Childcare Inspection Report on

Nicola Smith

Buckley



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Description of the service

Nicola Smith operates her child minding service from her family home in Buckley where she lives with her husband and two children. She is registered to care for up to six children aged up to 12 years. The service is open Monday to Friday 7:30 to 17:30, closing for bank holidays and Christmas.

The language for this service is English therefore it does not provide the Welsh language active offer.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children are settled and happy as they form a positive relationship with the child minder. The child minder is caring and knows the children and their needs well, although some improvements could be made to ensure the policies and procedures in place are fully effective in keeping children safe and healthy. The environment is safe, well maintained and provides a suitable space for children to play and learn. The child minder generally manages her service well and understands the importance of self evaluation.

2. Improvements

No improvements were identified on this occasion.

3. Requirements and recommendations

We made recommendations relating to fire drills, risk assessments, nappy changing, updating some policies and procedures, statement of purpose, providing individual towels and training.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children express themselves and know they will be listened to. They feel happy and safe in the care of the child minder. Children learn to interact well with others and enjoy learning through their play.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children express themselves and their needs.

Children were able to access what they wanted to play with from the resources available. They were becoming confident to express their wishes and ask when they wanted a particular toy or to take part in an activity. For example, when a child was there on their own they requested to watch some television, which they were able to do. Children were consulted about issues related to their care, such as being asked what they would like to do, or what they would like for lunch.

Children have a voice and are listened and responded to appropriately.

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

Children are settled and enjoy being in the care of the child minder.

One child had only been attending for a short period of time but they were relaxed and content to be in the child minder's care. They were happily playing and choosing resources they wanted. Children felt valued as their needs and requests were responded to effectively and with compassion by the child minder. Children sat on the child minders knee, receiving comfort when they requested and felt safe in their surroundings, as they were familiar with them.

Children are happy and feel safe, as they have developed a good relationship with the child minder.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children are happy to interact with others.

Children were relaxed and happy to interact with the child minder and us. They understood and followed simple instructions without any fuss. For example, when the child minder said it was time to turn the television off and play, the child understood and were happy to engage in another activity. When a child came to the service for a visit the child already there was keen to interact and share toys with them.

Children interact well and enjoy playing alongside others.

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

Children enjoyed being able to choose the activities.

Children were happy to play alone, alongside the child minder or with other children. For example, a child was the only one at the service for a while. They were happy to get the toys out they wanted to play with, sat for an appropriate length of time for their age and stage of development, and played alone. They enjoyed putting jigsaw pieces in the digger and seeing how many pieces they could get inside the toy ambulance. Children learnt through their play and through being given the time and space to explore the resources. For example, a child was matching different coloured balls to the correct matching coloured hole.

Children are able to learn through their play.

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

Children are given the time and space to follow their interests.

Children were able to independently access the resources available in the main play room. The downstairs toilet allowed children to access these facilities independently if they were able to. Inspection of another playroom showed if older children were attending, they would have an area where they could have their own space away from the younger ones if they wanted. Children had access to resources that were age appropriate and allowed them to follow their interests. For example, a child showed interest in the superhero toys which they went and got out of the storage.

Children develop well and learn to become independent.

2. Care and Development

Summary

The child minder is generally effective in implementing policies and procedures that ensure children remain safe and healthy but some improvements could be made. Positive interactions are supported and encouraged. The child minder ensures she gets to know the children well, which enables her to provide appropriate individual care.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

The child minder is aware of her responsibility to keep children safe and healthy.

The child minder understood what process she would follow should she have concerns about a child but we noted that she did not have any up to date child protection training. Policies and procedures in place were followed. We discussed the nappy changing procedure as there was no policy in place and no children attending who were in nappies at the time of inspection. The child minder confirmed that she did not wear gloves, which increased the risk of cross contamination. Children's attendance was recorded and fire drills had been conducted previously but not since the child minders voluntary suspension was lifted just over two months previously. Children were able to access facilities to be able to wash their hands at appropriate times but we noted there was only one communal towel available to dry their hands on, which could promote the spread of germs.

The child minder promoted a healthy lifestyle. Evidence seen in the daily diary showed meals provided by the child minder were nutritious but she confirmed she had not completed recent food hygiene training. The child minder provided opportunities for the children to be active and get fresh air. For example, walking to and from school, visiting the local park and accessing the garden during the better weather.

The child minder has some effective policies and procedures in place and generally keeps children safe and healthy but improvements could be made.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Positive interactions are encouraged by the child minder.

The child minder engaged in children's play when it was appropriate to do so. They knew when children were happy to play alone and when they wanted or needed support or someone to interact with. The child minder sat on the floor and played alongside the child, she communicated with them, explaining how toys worked. For example, the child minder showed the child how if the button was pressed on the back of the Spiderman toy it shot webs from its hands. Discussions with the child minder evidenced that she understood and would implement the behaviour policy if needed.

The child minder models expected behaviour and manages interactions effectively.

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

The child minder ensures she knows the children well.

The child minder encouraged parents to bring their children for settling in days before they started at the service. This allowed the child minder and children to get to know each other and also gave the child minder an opportunity to speak to the parent to ensure she knew the child's routine, likes, dislikes and any other individual needs or preferences they may have. This helped ensure the child minder could provide individualised care. The child minder was aware of children's development and she provided a range of appropriate resources that helped children develop and inspired them to play. For example, older children had access to games consoles and board games.

The child minder understands children's individual needs and promotes their play.

3. Environment

Summary

The environment is safe and secure and provides a suitable indoor and outdoor space where children can play and learn. Resources and equipment are clean, well-maintained and stored appropriately.

Our findings

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

The environment was safe.

Entrance to the service was secure and visitors were recorded in the diary. There was also CCTV which showed anyone attempting to access the premises. The child minder ensured the environment was safe and she had assessed any potential hazards and put measures in place to ensure they were managed effectively. For example, the family dog was kept locked in a different room from where the children were for the majority of the time the service was open. However, no written risk assessments had been completed on the environment, trips, places visited regularly or activities.

The garden was secure and surrounded by fencing. The only access was through the house, which ensured no unauthorised person could enter.

The child minder had risk assessed the environment to ensure it was safe but no written evidence of this was completed.

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

The environment is warm and welcoming.

The child minder ensured the environment was well maintained, clean and provided children with a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The main room used was a well lit conservatory which had direct access to the outdoors. The indoor space was used effectively, with a designated space for older children to have their own room and also give extra storage space. The toilet facilities were on the ground floor, which allowed children to access them independently.

The garden was well kept with a grassed and patio area where children could play. This was utilised more in the summer and discussions with the child minder evidenced that she had improvements planned to make the area more inviting.

The child minder provided children with a suitable environment in which they had the space to play and learn.

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

Resources and equipment are kept clean and well maintained.

The child minder provided a range of age appropriate resources that were suitable for the children in her care. These were stored in themed containers and at a level that made most of them freely accessible for the children. There were multi cultural and natural resources available. The child minder rotated the toys in the main room, which kept the children interested and eager to want to find out what was available to play with.

The child minder provides resources and equipment that are of a good quality.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The child minder is generally effective in her management of the service. She understands the importance of self evaluation and planning improvements. Resources are managed well and the child minder has developed positive partnerships with parents and outside agencies.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The child minder is beginning to ensure she has all the relevant policies, procedures and training needed.

The child minder had a statement of purpose that contained most of the information required but the process to follow in the event of an emergency was not included. This was available as part of the welcome pack for parents. We also noted that the contact number for CIW was incorrect and there was no timescale provided for responding to concerns/complaints. Paperwork was well organised and stored securely, including children's records and contracts, which were all complete.

The child minder generally manages her service well.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

The child minder understands the importance of planning improvements.

The child minder had not yet completed a quality of care report, as she had not been operating for 12 months. Discussions evidenced that she understood the importance of gaining views of parents and children. The child minder had already identified areas she felt she could improve on. These included purchasing more resources for outdoors. The child minder was open to accepting advice and understood how this helps to improve the service and care she offers.

The child minder evaluates her service and knows how parents and children's views are an important part of this process.

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

Resources are stored effectively.

The child minder ensured resources were accessible and stored effectively. This helped them remain well maintained and allowed children to have some independence. Rotation of available resources kept children interested.

The child minder manages resources well.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Positive partnerships are developed.

The child minder had a good relationship with parents and ensured they were kept up to date on their child's experiences and routines. The child minder kept her own daily diary and this was where activities, food, drink and nappy changes were recorded. This was available and shared with parents if needed. The child minder also allowed time at the beginning and end of the child's time with her to have discussions with the parents and messages were sent throughout the day that gave parents regular updates. The child minder provided parents with all the required information before their child started and she allowed time for settling in sessions so she could get to know the children and they could get to know her.

The child minder had links with the community and outside agencies, including the family information service where she could access advice and training. She took children to the local playgroup, which gave her and the children an opportunity to socialise.

The child minder develops partnerships with parents and the local community, which benefit the children.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

We made the following recommendations;

- update policies to ensure correct phone number is available for CIW and include a timescale to respond to concerns to ensure parents are fully informed of the procedure;
- create written risk assessments for all areas used by the children, activities children take part in regularly and any places visited;
- provide children with individual towels for drying their hands to help prevent cross contamination;
- implement and follow an effective nappy changing procedure to help prevent cross contamination;
- ensure fire drills are conducted at different times so all children have knowledge of the procedure to follow;
- update child protection and food hygiene training so current good practice is known and followed, and
- ensure the procedure followed in an emergency is included in the statement of purpose and not just separately in a different policy.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was an unannounced full inspection undertaken as part of our schedule. One inspector visited the service on Monday 14 January 2018 from 9:15 to 12:00.

We:

- Inspected policies and procedures including, child protection, complaints, statement of purpose and children's records;
- observed some practice to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care being provided by the child minder;
- spoke to the child, the child minder, her daughter and a prospective parent;
- inspected all areas used by the children, and
- gave feedback to the child minder over the phone on Tuesday 15 January.

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 Smith
Registered maximum number of places	6
Age range of children	0 – 8 years
Opening hours	7:30 – 17:30 Monday to Friday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	17 June 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	14 January 2019
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 children who use, or intend to use the service. We recommend that the child minder considers the Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh Language in social care.'
Additional Information:	