



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Melanie Phillips**

**Cardiff**



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## **Description of the service**

Melanie Phillips is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to care for up to ten children under the age of 12 years. She is a well-established child minder who runs her service from her home in Lisvane, Cardiff, where she lives with her partner and her three teenage children. The service operates Monday to Thursday from 7.30am-6.00pm during term time and some school holidays. Care is delivered through the medium of English, with incidental Welsh used during play. The family have a pet dog.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

We found that children experience an excellent standard of care. Children are very happy and their needs are at the centre of the service. They are confident to explore, express their feelings and ask for help. The child minder provides activities that are exciting and engaging for children and behaviour is positively managed. Children benefit from a safe, very well organised environment that encourages them to make independent choices and this promotes play, learning and development. Leadership and management of the service is robust and the child minder's experience and pride in her work shines through.

### **2. Improvements**

The previous inspection undertaken was a focused one, so we considered areas highlighted for improvement during the two most recent inspections. All recommendations have been fulfilled. The child minder has developed her service significantly since being registered, to offer a consistently high standard of care.

### **3. Requirements and recommendations**

There were no areas of non-compliance identified at this inspection. Two recommendations are outlined in section 5.2 of this report.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children experience a high quality, nurturing service which gives them a solid foundation for their learning and development. There is a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere within the home and children are able to express their views and opinions freely.

## **Our findings**

### **1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?**

Children speak or express themselves well and can communicate their needs in a variety of ways. Their preferences, needs and feelings are well understood by the child minder and children make appropriate choices because they are aware of the options available to them. They are consulted over a range of issues, such as choosing what they want to play with and they were familiar with the resources available. We saw children approaching the child minder confidently for assistance and their wishes were valued. Children have significant influence on developing ideas for activity planning within the service.

Children's right to express themselves freely and to make independence choices is encouraged and respected by the child minder.

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

Children receive consistent, nurturing care at the service and therefore feel very safe, happy and valued. We saw that they were familiar with the routine of the day, which was arranged to meet their needs. We saw children going to the child minder for comfort and reassurance and strong bonds were evident. Some children attend the service with their siblings, which gives them security. Children have also formed friendships with other children and have a sense of belonging. We saw an older child arrive at the setting smiling and waving at everyone; they went straight to fetch their meal from the child minder, which the child had anticipated would be ready for them. The child was completely at ease and familiar with the company, routine and surroundings.

Children's emotional well-being is consistently enhanced by the high standard of care provided.

### **1.3 How well do children interact?**

Children interact and co-operate well with their peers and adults, and younger children are learning to express their needs. We heard children regularly saying please and thank you and they were consistently praised for positive behaviour or being kind to

their friends. We saw young children waiting patiently for their lunch and they were thrilled with the praise they received for taking turns and being helpful. Children were calm and relaxed in the home environment and had obvious friendship bonds with each other. When a young child wanted to join in a board game with older children, that was well underway, we heard an older child gently explain to the younger child that they could definitely play with them if they waited for them to finish first, which pacified the younger child.

Children interact appropriately for their age and stage of development and have very positive relationships with the child minder and one another.

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

Children enjoy and are engaged in their play and can also relax during quieter times. They have access to plenty of activities and resources which are appropriate for their age and stage of development. Throughout the visit there was a balance of both self-directed and adult directed play available for the children to choose from. Children at times played alone with a selection of toys and were very content. Equally, we saw them happily playing and interacting with the child minder. The younger children benefit from regular visits to toddler groups, café's or play areas to help them learn to socialise, take turns and share with children of a similar age.

Children enjoy a wide range of play and learning experiences and benefit from accessing community facilities regularly.

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

Children are developing their confidence and independence. They are encouraged to do things for themselves, they take pride in doing so and are given time to carry out their chosen activities and discover how things work. We watched a child try to put on and their shoes and they also attempted to tidy toys away when they had finished playing with them. Children have the opportunity to undertake a variety of different play activities designed to develop different skills; they are able to extend their play because the child minder is always on hand to provide assistance if needed. We observed a mixture of free play and adult led activities. For example, children initially chose to help themselves to toys which they liked, and they later welcomed the opportunity to paint a dragon as part of their St David's Day celebrations.

Children have significant influence over their play and learning and are well supported and encouraged to develop a good range of self-help skills.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

The child minder has robust systems and procedures in place to ensure that she can offer a safe, interesting and valuable service to children in her care. She is confident and competent in her role as a registered child minder. Care is interactive, warm and interactions are well-managed.

### **Our findings**

#### **2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?**

There are effective systems in place to promote the health and safety of children. The child minder understands her responsibility to safeguard children and her safeguarding policy includes reference to the Prevent duty. (Prevent is a government strategy to protect children from extremism and radicalisation) She is aware of her duty to refer any concerns relating to the welfare of a child to the appropriate authority. The child minder provides well-balanced meals and encourages healthy options for any meals provided by parents. There is a suitable system for recording accidents, along with a template to record pre-existing injuries should this be required. The child minder has an appropriate, current first aid certificate, she updated her food hygiene training in January 2019 and completed an advanced child protection course in November 2018. Children have plenty of opportunities to be physically active each day, including walking to school and back.

The child minder keeps children safe and healthy as a result of the strong systems in place.

#### **2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?**

The child minder manages interactions in a positive and pro-active way. She has an appropriate behaviour management policy which sets out the strategies to be used to support children's social development and behaviour. At the centre of this is a positive reinforcement approach. This was actively followed by the child minder, who supported children using praise and encouragement. Children were clearly used to receiving consistent messages in terms of behaviour. For example, we heard one young child praising another, slightly younger child by telling them that they were a big boy for eating all their food. The child minder then praised both children for their different efforts. The child minder has high expectations of the standards of behaviour within the service and ensures children understand what is expected of them. We also noted positive comments from parents in feedback questionnaires regarding the way behaviour is managed.

Children benefit from a child minder who is an excellent role model and supports their social development through positive reinforcement.

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

The child minder provides a high standard of care which is child centred and meets children's individual needs. We heard her consistently explaining to children what she was doing and checked their understanding as they went along. For example, play with animal figures was made fun by the child minder encouraging the children to copy the animal noises she was making and to be as loud as they liked! The child minder provides a variety of enjoyable, stimulating play and learning opportunities, both indoors and outside to promote all-round development. We saw that the child minder was responsive to the communication attempts by the children; there was lots of eye contact and questioning to help understand what the children wanted or needed and she spent much of her time at the children's level. The child minder regularly informs parents about their child's progress and overall well-being, including completing monthly observations for young children. She has a system in place to track child development and activities are planned in a diary on a weekly basis. Longer term planning is done three monthly on notice boards, with the children at the centre of decision making. The child minder also follows events on the calendar, such as Chinese New Year, Mother's Day and Halloween. Incidental Welsh was used regularly during the inspection and we saw the child minder has a 'Welsh board' to promote different words and phrases. We accompanied the child minder on a school run and saw how she effectively manages risk in practice. She also used it as a learning opportunity. For example, when we saw police officers walking past the school, the child minder asked the children questions about how they help people.

Children's development is promoted well by the child minder, who has strong skills and knowledge to meet their individual needs.

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

The child minder's home is inviting, clean and very well maintained. Children have use of a large playroom adjacent to the kitchen and dining area. There is a downstairs cloakroom and a bedroom which can be used for sleeping if needed. The garden is easily accessed via patio doors from the dining room and all areas are well resourced. Good attention is given to safety and security; the child minder ensures that children are well supervised at all times.

#### **Our findings**

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

The child minder is committed to providing a secure environment for children and she is fully aware of her responsibility in relation to the safety and welfare of children. We found that her home was very well-maintained and all resources were in good working order. The premises are safe; the front door was kept locked throughout the visit, a record of children's attendance (including arrival and departure times) was kept, along with a record of visitors. Appropriate insurance for the home and car was in place and an annual gas safety check had been undertaken as required. Fire evacuation drills are completed every month and are appropriately documented. The child minder completes monthly risk assessments as well as a daily health and safety checklist. The family dog has her own space and is well trained. We observed that potential risks are well-managed regarding the dog; we discussed the need to keep written records of this good practice to supplement the pet policy in place.

The child minder is safety conscious and has robust systems in place to promote children's safety.

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

Children have access to indoor play space which is child centred and welcoming. They can safely explore the environment which offers plenty of resources to develop curiosity and creative skills, as well as being able to relax if they want to. The home benefits from good natural light and the storage for resources is at a suitable height for most children to access independently. The child minder is always on hand to rotate toys if needed. Resources and toys are well organised and children had helped to label the storage boxes bilingually. The garden is also well-equipped for children and is used regularly in warmer weather. Children have use of a trampoline, which we saw had been appropriately risk assessed. The bathroom is clean and fresh and children have use of a stool to reach the sink, a potty and toilet training seat if required. Individual hand towels are used to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Activities



provide suitable opportunities to develop children's skills whilst maintaining a homely environment.

The child minder provides an inviting environment which is very well equipped and safe for children's needs.

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

Children of varying ages have access to a wide range of good quality, developmentally appropriate play and learning resources, both indoors and outdoors. These are plentiful, which ensures children have variety and choice, and all resources are clean and well maintained. We saw children enjoy playing with age appropriate toys and equipment which promote their all-round development, including games, trains, construction toys, blocks, dolls house, books and creative resources. The child minder told us that she regularly cleans the toys and immediately discards anything that is broken. The child minder had a range of car seats to suit the different age groups to ensure she transports children in the safest possible way.

The child minder ensures that there is an excellent range of resources and equipment available to enhance children's experiences and development.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

Leadership of the service is strong. The child minder manages her service extremely well and clearly enjoys her role. She sets high expectations for herself and strives to deliver a high quality service to children and their families. She is motivated, experienced and open to new developments as a means of promoting positive outcomes for children.

### **Our findings**

#### **4.1 How effective is leadership?**

The child minder has a strong vision for the service and this is shared in her statement of purpose. Parents are provided with information prior to their children starting at the service, including policies and procedures and an operational plan, so they can make an informed choice about using the service. A number of relevant policies and procedures are in place which are regularly reviewed, although we did not see a 'working in partnership with parents' policy at the time of the inspection. The child minder has a very good understanding of current best practice relevant to the children in her care. We looked at a sample of records including children's records and contracts, which covered all the necessary requirements. Discussions with the child minder showed that she sets high standards for the service she provides. She is aware of data protection legislation and had registered with the Information Commissioner's Office in relation to storing personal data.

The child minder delivers a consistently high standard of care to children and their parents.

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

The child minder is reflective; she seeks feedback on her own practice and understands the importance of evaluation and planning for improvement. She has completed a comprehensive annual review of her service and explained to us how she gathers children's views on an ongoing basis to improve her service, as well as formal annual feedback. The child minder also routinely seeks feedback from parents, and questionnaires completed were consistently positive. The child minder told us that she likes to chat to parents on a day-to-day basis to ensure they feel welcome. A complaints policy is in place, although no complaints have been received.

The child minder consistently evaluates her business to ensure that children experience an improving service.

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

The service is managed very successfully. The child minder does not employ any assistants. All adults living at the home have a valid Disclosure and Barring Service check. The child minder maintains orderly records of her qualifications and training, and documentation and records gathered at the time children are registered, help her to plan her service. She is aware of the training requirements in relation to food safety, first aid and child protection and she ensures that she keeps up-to-date with information on CIW and her support organisation websites.

Parents can be assured that the child minder manages her business extremely well and plans around the children's needs.

#### **4.4 How effective are partnerships?**

Partnerships with parents are mutually respectful and effective. The child minder provides parents and carers with detailed information to make informed choices about the care of their child. She speaks to parents daily and has an informal settling in policy which is tailored to individual needs. She also produces a useful newsletter (usually termly) for parents and children. Parents we spoke to were all highly complimentary about the child minder, using words such as 'amazing', 'wonderful' and 'organised'. The child minder is part of an informal network of child minders living locally; they plan activities together and children from the different services have opportunities to socialise together regularly. This joint working offers her secure back up arrangements in the event of an emergency or absence.

The child minder works in partnership with parents and other professionals, ensuring children experience excellent support to meet their individual needs.

## **5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection**

### **5.1 Areas of non-compliance from previous inspections**

None.

### **5.2 Recommendations for improvement**

We recommended that a risk assessment regarding the family dog is written up to supplement the pet policy, and that 'consent to carry out observations' is added to the list of parental permissions already in place.

## 6. How we undertook this inspection

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

- One inspector completed two visits to the service on the same day to observe children of varying ages. The inspection was unannounced, although the child minder's availability had been established in advance. In total we spent approximately five and a half hours at the service;
- observations were carried out indoors to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care provided;
- we accompanied the child minder on a school run;
- we reviewed information held by CIW;
- we undertook a visual inspection of the premises;
- we looked at a range of records including children's contracts, statement of purpose, children's developmental records, the child minder's daily diary, some policies and procedures and attendance registers;
- we spoke with several children and three parents during the inspection and had sight of questionnaires submitted as part of the child minder's annual quality of care review and
- we provided feedback to the child minder by telephone following the inspection.

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

[www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)

## About the service

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| Type of care provided  | Child Minder   |
| Registered Person  | Melanie Phillips   |
| Registered maximum number of places  | 10   |
| Age range of children  | Under 12   |
| Opening hours  | 7.30am-6.00pm  |
| Operating Language of the service  | English  |
| Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection                            | 23 June 2015   |
| Dates of this inspection visit   | 19 February 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 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   |  |