



Childcare Inspection Report on

Mandy Thomas

Troedyrhiw



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Description of the service

The child minder operates her service from her property in the Merthyr area. Minded children have use of the ground floor and upstairs bathroom. The child minder is registered to provide care for three children under 12 years. Child minding is offered Monday to Sunday, 7:00am to 7:00pm throughout the year. During our inspection visit there was one minded child present, aged over eight years old. Care is provided through the medium of English, with the use of incidental Welsh.

Summary of our findings

Overall assessment

Children are happy and relaxed in the care of the child minder. The child minder is responsive to their needs and she provides a good variety of activities for them. The environment is well maintained and children can access a good supply of resources to suit all age ranges. The child minder manages her business with the children's needs central to her care, but some administration improvements are needed to assist the overall effective operation of her service.

Improvements

The child minder has satisfactorily addressed a recommendation that was set at her previous inspection, to seek emergency medical treatment permission from parents. However, a recommendation regarding amending her Statement of Purpose remains. Further improvements that she has made include completing a Level 5 course in Leadership and Management in children's care, learning and development.

Requirements and recommendations

There were no non-compliance issues identified at this inspection. However, we made recommendations in respect to improving record keeping. These have been discussed in further detail at the end of this report.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children enjoy attending this service and their opinions are valued. They are provided with a good variety of activities to support them to reach their full potential. We noted that they have formed positive relationships with the child minder. They are supported to develop their social and independence skills in line with their age and stage of development.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children communicate their needs confidently, asking the child minder for help when needed and expressing their ideas and opinions freely. We observed a child asking for specific programmes on television, alerting the child minder to when they felt hungry and requesting particular foods that they enjoy. They received immediate caring responses from the child minder, enabling them to feel heard and valued. From observations of the child present, it was clear that they enjoy the activities on offer and spending time in the child minder's home.

Children clearly have a voice that is prioritised and valued.

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

Children have formed positive relationships with the child minder and appear happy and relaxed in her care. We saw that they were at ease in her home and when interacting with her, occupied with activities and enjoyed their mealtimes, giving good indications that overall they felt safe and valued. They were also supported with basic care tasks and their play and learning, helping them to feel valued. We saw that the activities and foods on offer were carefully tailored to their preferences, giving them a sense of belonging.

Children are kept safe at this service and they clearly enjoy attending.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children are co-operative with the child minder and they respond well to the boundaries she sets. For example, they washed their hands when asked to do so. We noted that the child present was co-operative and well behaved. They clearly have a close relationship with the child minder, which enables them to respond positively to the boundaries that she has in place.

Children are developing positively in their social interactions.

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

Children enjoy the activities on offer. There is a good supply and variety of resources accessible for them to freely choose from, promoting their development. They engaged in activities and used toys and equipment of particular interest to them. We saw them playing with sensory toys, with games on a small handheld tablet device and watching their favourite television programmes. They initiated their own learning whilst having fun in a supportive environment, as the child minder was alongside them for help and assistance

when needed. The activities sustained their interests for a good time period and they were able to engage in extended periods of uninterrupted play. Throughout our observations, we noted that the child present received positive feedback for their achievements, promoting their self-esteem.

Children enjoy their play and learning at this service.

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

Children are making appropriate progress. They are developing their independence skills because of the child minder's good balance of support and standing back when necessary. The setup of the environment enables children to access things for themselves. This includes toys set up ready for their use and drinks to help themselves to. Our observations evidenced that children are developing their independence levels in line with their stage of development.

Children are making progress with gaining independence skills in line with their expected level.

2. Care and Development

Summary

The child minder provides children with warm and responsive care and she encourages healthy lifestyles, to promote their wellbeing. She supports children to manage their interactions and develop positive social skills. She also plans a good range of play, learning and developmental opportunities, ensuring that the children are included and central to their learning and progress.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

The child minder is experienced in her role to maximise the health and wellbeing of the children in her care. We noted that permission forms are in place, including for applying sun cream, emergency medical treatment and trips out. A child protection policy is in place, including a separate policy covering the child minder's 'Prevent' duty, a government strategy to help protect children from extremism. We discussed with the child minder also including in her policy the procedure in the event of an allegation being made about her. We saw that she had up to date certificates in paediatric first aid, safeguarding and food hygiene. She provides all meals and snacks for children and we saw that there are plenty of healthy options. We noted that fresh drinking water is readily available for the children to help themselves, to keep them hydrated. The child minder told us that she also offers milk. Appropriate hygiene routines are in place to promote children's good health, including a nappy changing policy and encouraging children to wash their hands at appropriate times, using liquid soap and separate drying facilities to help infection control. Fire drills are practised and recorded routinely, ensuring that all children receive an opportunity to participate and learn about evacuating the premises in an emergency. We viewed the child minder's accident/incident/medication records and noted that they are appropriately recorded and monitored.

The child minder promotes children's good health and wellbeing.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Children are guided in their day to day play and learning, to follow clear and realistic guidelines of acceptable behaviour. The positive strategies used by the child minder are clearly documented in the behaviour management policy. We noted that the child minder was calm and sensitive in her approach and used gentle strategies, providing a positive role model to the child in her care. For example, she encouraged polite manners and offered lots of praise to reinforce positive behaviour. She has created a welcoming and friendly atmosphere that works well because established rules and routines are in place.

The child minder positively manages children's interactions to promote their social skills.

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

The child minder provides a good range of activities to meet children's ages and stages of development. She operates an ethos of 'free play', enabling the children in her care to initiate their own learning through their chosen activities. We saw that she was on hand for

support when needed and to help the children to learn in playful ways. For example, we observed her supporting a child to develop their numeracy skills playing a computer game. She also plans trips out with the children, according to their ages and preferences. For example, some children enjoy visiting a particular supermarket store and the experience of selecting foods to go into the trolley, as well as using the escalator. This has become a regular shared trip, as the child minder prioritises and recognises the children's individual learning styles and needs. Although the child minder is not currently caring for any children under the age of eight years old, she has significant experience of the Foundation Phase, a statutory curriculum for all children aged three to seven years, from working in a pre-school for 9 years, as well as her current role. She has accessed a range of courses to develop her knowledge of children with additional learning needs and assessing early year's children's development and next steps. We also saw evidence of appropriate assessment record sheets that she plans to use if she has younger children on role.

The child minder has the skills and experience to support children's development in all areas.

3. Environment

Summary

The child minder's home is welcoming and well-resourced with equipment and furniture that enables children to play, learn and relax. Areas are kept secure and the child minder makes daily visual checks to ensure that they are safe. However, we discussed also including detailed written risk assessments.

Our findings

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

Children are safe because the environment is kept secure and well maintained. The front door was kept locked during the inspection. Smoke alarms are in place and risk assessment procedures are available, including a brief written visual check of the premises. We discussed with the child minder also including a detailed written risk assessment, including the areas of her home used for child minding, the garden, pets and outings, identifying risks, hazards and any actions taken. A fire blanket is stored in the cupboard in the kitchen. We set a recommendation with regards to appropriate access to it. We observed the child minder playing close attention to the child in her care, to supervise them whilst also providing them with a safe degree of freedom, to allow them to explore their environments.

Children benefit from a safe and welcoming environment.

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

The environment is homely and suitable for a child care service. Areas are well decorated and furnished to provide suitable spaces for children to rest and play in a relaxed and friendly environment. The layout of the space promotes children's independence, as toys are set up for their use and rotated according to the age of children being minded. The child minder discussed that she has extra resources stored in the shed. Children can easily access the play equipment and facilities, such as for hand washing and toilet needs. There is a dining table in the living room for children to eat their meals and complete craft activities and table top games. The living room has large sofas for resting.

The child minding areas provide a suitable environment for children to play, learn and relax.

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

The child minder has a good range of resources to promote children's development and keep them engaged and stimulated. Toys and resources are well maintained for children's use and any broken equipment is removed and replaced. The child minder has access to a toy library at the Integrated Children's Centre and the pre-school she works at. When needed, she is able to borrow resources to reflect different cultures, including Welsh language resources. There are plenty of opportunities for younger and older children, as there are resources to cater for all age ranges, including role play items, books, games, construction and craft/mark making materials.

Resources and equipment are of a good standard and variety to support children's learning in all areas.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The child minder has policies and procedures in place to help her to operate her business. However, she needs to ensure that she completes her Quality of Care review and updates her Statement of Purpose to cover all areas of the National Minimum Standards. A particular strength of her service is the dedication to training opportunities.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The child minder has in place all required policies and procedures for managing her business. However, we viewed the statement of purpose and discussed updating it to include all required areas, including her opening hours, composition of own family, terms and conditions, dealing with complaints, activities offered at the service, contact details, pets and arrangements in place to review the policy. The child minder records children's accurate times of attendance in their individual books. We saw evidence of contracts that have been shared with parents, setting out the expectations of both parties. Disclosure and Barring Service checks are in place for all household members over the age of 16 years.

The child minder has policies and processes in place to help her to operate her business, but needs to amend her Statement of Purpose to clearly convey all areas of her service.

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

The child minder annually reviews her service to identify improvements. However, a Quality of Care Report has not been written identifying strengths and development points for the service. The child minder agreed to ensure that in future she completes this annually, including for this academic year. We saw evidence of questionnaires that the child minder completes as part of her review process, including for this year. We read the feedback provided from parents and saw that they were all positive, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the service. Comments included, "the child minder has a really lovely manner with all of the children in her care ... kind, calm and patient. Children are always happy ... I have always felt comfortable to ask questions on my child's progress and development" and, "...very supportive in all areas of keeping child safe and meeting emotional needs". A complaints procedure is in place, and the child minder confirmed that no complaints had been received.

The child minder is self-reflective and gathers service user's opinions to review and make improvements to her service where necessary, but an annual report needs to be included as part of this process.

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

The child minder does not employ any staff. She has undertaken extensive training to update her skills and to enable her to carry out her role, including on Foundation Phase training, nutrition, additional learning needs and working with children in receipt of Flying start funding. As such, she is a Flying Start provider, but does not currently have any children in receipt of this funding on role. Parents are kept well informed of any planned holidays or absences, so that alternative child care arrangements can be made. The child

minder uses a back-up relative for care in emergencies, who the children are familiar with. She has appropriate procedures in place for meeting the necessary standards and providing a reliable service to parents.

The child minder is experienced in her role and she attends relevant training to meet the needs of the children in her care.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Partnership with parents are good. The child minder uses appropriate child record forms and contracts to help her to collect important information regarding the children and to ensure that there is clarity about the service provided. Settling in sessions are offered when children start, to ensure that the child minder can meet children's needs and parents understand the service provided. It was evident from the paperwork completed that the child minder invests time gaining background information on the children prior to them starting, to support positive relationships all round. The child minder ensures that appropriate information is shared with parents on an on-going basis. This includes policies and procedures and information about the children's needs and developmental issues.

The child minder communicates effectively and works closely with parents to support their children's wellbeing.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non-compliance from previous inspections

There were no areas of non-compliance noted at the previous inspection.

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

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

- Update the Statement of Purpose, as detailed in section 4.1;
- complete detailed written risk assessments, to include all areas used for child minding indoors and out, outings and pets;
- complete an annual Quality of Care Review;
- expand the child protection policy to include the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against the child minder; and
- follow the manufactures guidelines to secure the fire blanket to the wall.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a scheduled inspection as part of our normal schedule of inspections.

- One inspector undertook one visit to the service and spent time with the child minder and one child in her care. The inspection was conducted in one day;
- observations of the child minder's interactions with the child present;
- we reviewed all information held by CIW;
- we examined a range of documentation, including, policies, procedures, record sheets, children's files and log sheets; and
- our findings were fed back to the child minder at the end of the inspection.

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

www.careinspectorate.wales

7. About the service

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| Type of care provided | Child Minder |
| Registered Person | Mandy Thomas |
| Registered maximum number of places | 3 |
| Age range of children | 0-12 years |
| Opening hours | 7:00am to 7:00pm Monday to Sunday throughout the year |
| Operating Language of the service | English |
| Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection | 29 October 2015 |
| Dates of this inspection visit(s) | 13 October 2018 |
| Is this a Flying Start service? | Yes, but there are currently no children in receipt of Flying Start funding on role |
| 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 through the medium of Welsh. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's ' <i>More Than Just Words</i> ' follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'. |
| Additional Information: None | |