



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Gemma Gibbs**

**Pontypridd**



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## **Description of the service**

The child minder was registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in April 2011. She provides care for up to ten children under 12 years old when working alone or with her partner who is also a registered child minder. The service operates from Monday to Thursday to meet the part time needs of several families during term time and school holidays. She lives in a village on the outskirts of Pontypridd and employs an assistant. This is an English speaking service where the Welsh language is introduced and supported through play and activities.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

The child minder provides an excellent, caring and cheerful 'family style' 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 play, learning and development. Children benefit from a healthy lifestyle and affection is freely given. The child minder's home is very well maintained, safe and secure and provides an excellent, child friendly environment, with access to a good range of experiences and resources. The child minder keeps her training up to date and attends additional training for her professional development. She keeps a good range of policies and procedures to support her business. Children are happy and enjoy their time with the child minder, her co-worker and their assistant who have an excellent working relationship.

### **2. Improvements**

Recommendations made at the last inspection to improve some record keeping and storage have been implemented. Children's experiences are enhanced as a result of the child minder applying knowledge and understanding gained from her child care qualification and ongoing professional development. The premises have been upgraded to provide a high standard of kitchen and toilet and hand wash facilities. A new nine-seater vehicle enables children to enjoy group outings together.

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

We made some recommendations to update and make minor changes to paperwork and some policies and procedures.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children's individual needs are placed at the centre of this service. Their views are valued by the child minder and they are able to influence their activities. Children are happy and feel 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 an excellent variety of activities at the child minder's home and can spend time outside 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 and games in their play space. We saw that younger children's comments and statements were acknowledged and encouraged by both child minders and the assistant. We observed four children enthusiastically taking part in a story session, answering and asking questions about the characters. Children had plenty of choice for their snack and decided what they wanted to drink and eat for themselves. After school, children were asked if they wanted dinosaurs out instead of the cars and they chose to play with both sets of toys. We spoke to an older child who told us they liked "*Playing with the kids*" and we later saw that they chatted through a dinosaur story with four younger children.

Children are listened to by the child minder and are able to make choices throughout play and activities.

### **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 excellent bonds of affection with them. We saw the younger children receive warm close attention and all children were praised for their efforts. We observed children arriving after school, making themselves very much at home and settling to play. A child briefly woke after the car journey from school, and settled back to sleep in a quiet comfortable area in the play space. We saw two children make themselves comfortable with a small blanket each on bean bags after lunch to relax with their favourite Peppa Pig animation on television. Children were confident and happy to join in or play by themselves, asking the child minder for anything they needed. We spoke to an older child who was clear who they would talk to in the event they had any concerns.

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

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

Children interact very well at this service and enjoy each other's company. We observed a group of children within a mixed age range play together making a dinosaur scene to help illustrate the story they were sharing. Three younger children huddled under a low table, using a cloth to 'hide' themselves, giggling together. There was lots of laughter as they were 'found' by the child minder and another younger child. Children were happy to play on their own, absorbed in an activity such as sending vehicles down the garage chute. They were equally content to engage with their friends in a group activity. After school, children including the child minder's own children, played together for a while until they each moved on to other games of their choice.

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

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

Children are able to enjoy a variety of play based activities which suit their interests and are appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children are offered some focused activities and we observed younger children happily gluing shiny shapes onto a pre-drawn heart shape to make a St Valentine's Day card. Older children were offered a similar activity, more suited to their age and ability, cutting shapes and writing the words themselves. We saw a group of younger children squealing with delight, excitedly trying to catch bubbles blown by the child minder. After school an older child helped their younger friends with an activity, asking "*What shape do you reckon this is, then?*" We were told that during school holidays children go out for fun days together to country parks and local places of interest.

Children enjoy their 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. We observed younger children were asked to help tidy toys away and they tried to put their shoes on before going out to collect older children from school. After school, children left their bags, shoes and coats in the designated space in the hall. Children were becoming independent in using the toilet and hand wash facilities or given additional support to tend to their own personal needs. We saw a younger child go and fetch the changing mat ready for a nappy change and another child was given a small task which helped them take some responsibility and feel valued. We saw that specific arrangements are in place so that some older children can play outside the house with the child minder's own child. The children were discreetly but closely monitored by the child minder, enabling older children to develop a sense of trust and self-sufficiency.

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 child care qualification, experience caring for children and knowledge gained via additional training to inform her practice. She applies a 'family style' approach to her service. The child minder is able to identify children at risk and has the confidence to follow appropriate safeguarding procedures. She treats children with warmth and respect and has realistic expectations of them. Excellent 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. She provides activities that she knows the children will engage with and 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 there are excellent 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 procedure and noted that it mostly reflects current recommendations, other than recent updates to documents referenced in the national minimum standards. The child minder maintains Paediatric First Aid training and is registered with the local authority in terms of food hygiene. All food and snacks are provided and freshly cooked. Drinks were available to children at all times. Children's tooth brushes and paste are kept ready for use. Fire drills are practised regularly and they and smoke detector checks are logged. Accident, incident and medication recording systems are all in place and the child minder was clear about what action to take in the event of an emergency. We saw good practice in place for nappy changing arrangements, although the policy and procedure does not take account of ensuring children's dignity and privacy is maintained while providing personal care to children.

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

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

Children are clear about what is and is not, acceptable because the child minder applies a consistent approach that takes into account the age, stage of development and needs of each child. This reflects the policy and procedure for managing behaviour, although it did not include a statement that CIW will be informed of any changes to it within 28 days. We observed no areas of tension between children who each received lots of individual attention. They were kept well-occupied, given gentle and appropriate prompts to be helpful or share and they were praised for their efforts and kind acts.

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 keeps a good range of toys, activities and resources that interest and stimulate the children. This is an English speaking service where the Welsh language is introduced and supported within some activities such as counting and learning colours. We observed that multicultural awareness and inclusivity is integral to children's care. The child minder described the weekly routine which includes lots of child-led free play opportunities and experiences at home or in the local community. During term time, the younger children spend time out and about in the mornings, such as at a play centre or local parent and toddler group, where children can socialise with their peers. Afternoons are usually spent at home with free play and naps after lunch. Outings and activities are planned to take account of children's sleeps and the school runs. The child minder told us that she keeps daily diaries and separate notes about younger children's progress and development and is aware of how to plan for their next steps in play and learning. She plans and prepares learning activities for pre-school children to promote their learning and offers focused activities within multicultural themes and celebrations. We observed children enjoying a celebratory St Valentine's Day lunch with table decorations and 'wine glasses' for their juice. They took a heart shaped chocolate and a small cake they'd decorated home with them. We saw photographs of this year's Chinese New Year celebration when children enjoyed a Chinese banquet using chopsticks and fortune cookies to take home. We were told of the preparations being made to assist communications with a child who is due to start and whose home language is not English. A parent told us that "*Nothing was too much trouble*" in the service they receive.

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 maintains excellent systems and routines to ensure 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 an environment in which children can learn, play and relax safely and takes steps to minimise risks to children, while enabling them to develop their independence.

#### **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 a daily visual risk assessment and excellent cleaning routines throughout the play space. We were told that planned regular deep cleaning takes place. The front door was kept locked during the inspection and the garden access is kept secure. The child minder demonstrated consistent best practice and vigilance in terms of awareness of children's safety, including hygiene and clearing away and preparation for next activities. We saw the first aid kit and fire blanket available in the kitchen. The child minder maintains relevant insurances and the annual gas safety certificate for her home. There are good arrangements in place to maintain confidentiality within the service which is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). However, there is no e-safety policy and procedure to cover children's access to, and use of, the internet, mobile phones and computer games, although children have no access to the internet while in her care. All parental consents are in place for children who may attend community group sessions with the child minder.

The child minder is clear and pro-active about the 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. The main play spaces are the family open plan living room and dining area which leads to the garden. The toilet and hand wash facilities are on the ground floor and dedicated for children's use. They have recently been upgraded and have non-touch sensors for the toilet flush and taps, assisting high standards of hygiene and promoting children's independence. There is also improved storage for children's personal items such as toothbrushes. Children are able to help themselves to toys and resources from the storage boxes or those left out, such as vehicles, construction toys, books, small world and home corner and dressing up and role play equipment. Safety gates are in place and there are two high chairs in the dining area. Children's sleeps are usually in the play space unless parents ask that their child uses the mobile cot in a

bedroom on the first floor. We discussed emergency evacuation plans which the child minder clearly described. However, the potential risk for a child sleeping upstairs while other children remain on the ground floor in an emergency situation was not included in the written procedure. Outside, the child minder has provided more patio slabs, enabling year round play, and children have access to a large wooden play house currently storing toys for dry weather use. The child minder uses a dedicated office which helps maintain confidentiality within the business.

Children are cared for in a home from home environment which is well planned to provide 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 suitable range of toys and materials that are kept in good condition and meet children's needs. The child minder checks the toys and equipment used within the daily visual risk assessment. Toys and resources are also checked for wear and tear as they are used, or tidied away. We were told that resources are stored and used in rotation to maintain children's interest and meet their needs.

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

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

Children are cared for by a child minder who is pro-active and professional in the way she runs her service, taking into account the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care (NMS) and relevant regulations. She is organised and maintains her paperwork in a clear and accessible system. Parents are given the information they need about using the service and she maintains good communication with parents and demonstrates consistent and improving practice. The child minder has several years' practical experience working with young children, a formal childcare qualification and seeks out additional training to ensure that experiences for children are positive. The arrangements for co-working with her partner and the employed assistant are clear and well managed.

### **Our findings**

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

The child minder holds a good overview of the service and makes strategic plans for improvement. We looked at the paperwork the child minder uses to support the service and made a very few recommendations for best practice, which are described at the end of this report. We looked at a sample of records including registers, children's records and accident forms which were all completed appropriately. No complaints had been received. A children's complaints procedure was in place, although not easy for children to make best use of.

Parents and children benefit from a service which is run and managed effectively within a consistently high standard of caring practice.

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

Children's outcomes are enhanced in the care of an experienced and knowledgeable child minder. She is keen to develop the service and seeks parents' and children's views both verbally on a day to day basis, as well as more formally within the annual review of service. We discussed the current review which is still in process, covering the past year and found that the child minder is proactive in finding ways to develop the service and improve outcomes for children. It was comprehensive and professional, and included achievable action plans, such as improving the garden area and developing contingency arrangements to ensure consistent care for children. Longer term plans include improving the premises to further enhance messy play and outdoor activities for children. Some parents had returned their questionnaires as part of the review process and spoke very highly of the service they receive. These included "*Your communication is fantastic*" and "*You do more than enough of a variety of activities*".

The child minder has skills and knowledge to provide an improving service and takes steps to implement positive changes.

### **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, her co-working partner and their assistant within the service. The child minders work well together as a team and as individuals. They share responsibilities for day to day care while each takes a specific role according to their strengths in terms of managing the service. There is an overarching business name for the service and the statement of purpose comprehensively describes the legal responsibilities for each child minder when working alone or together and when the assistant is present. We recommended that all business paperwork and policies and procedures are amended to reflect the overarching and individual arrangements. The child minders and assistant wear polo shirts promoting a corporate image and children wear high visibility tabards when they go on outings. No-one else who may be present at the service is given any responsibility for the children who are always supervised by the child minder. The child minders usually work together, although they may occasionally arrange to provide appropriate cover so that one child minder may take time away from the service. Excellent adult to children ratios are maintained, ensuring children receive close attention at all times. We observed children playing happily with the child minder's and assistant's own younger children and were familiar with their older children as they arrived from school. The child minder and her partner described the arrangements made for leave around the birth and early months of care for their youngest child. Parents were happy to make interim arrangements until the full service was re-opened. We spoke to the assistant who was confident about her own responsibilities and was keen to embark on a level three child care qualification later this year. The child minder maintains a clear staffing recruitment and appraisal system. The child minders is taking steps to be able to provide the 30 hours' free child care to relevant families.

Arrangements for managing resources and people who may be present are clear, 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. Discussion with her showed that she knows the children and their families well. We were told that most parents using the service are a result of word of mouth recommendations. The child minder provides parents with the information needed to make informed choices about their child's care and carries out appropriate settling in processes designed to meet each family's needs. A parent told us how the child minder had adapted her practice to ensure an inclusive approach when their child developed a specific allergy. We spoke to parents who described the service as *"Lovely – professional and practical; flexible. They are just good people. Nothing is ever too much trouble"*; *"Excellent. I trust them. Communications are thorough and personal"* and *"Never any issues"*.

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 Recommendations for improvement**

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

- amend all business paperwork and policies and procedures to reflect the overarching and individual arrangements;
- amend the safeguarding policy and procedure to include references to the documents noted in NMS 20.2;
- amend the managing behaviour policy and procedure to include a statement that CIW will be informed of any changes to it within 28 days;
- develop the existing children's complaints procedure to be more child friendly;
- develop an e-safety policy and procedure to cover children's access to, and use of, the internet, mobile phones and computer games;
- ensure the emergency evacuation procedure covers the potential risk for a child sleeping upstairs while other children remain on the ground floor and
- amend the nappy changing policy and procedure to include how children's dignity and privacy is maintained while providing their personal care.

## **6. How we undertook this inspection**

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

- we looked at the range of paperwork the child minder keeps about the service including policies and procedures, risk assessments, contracts, children's records, accident records and safety certificates;
- we observed the children interacting with the child minders and assistant and choosing their activities;
- we spoke with children and 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](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)

## 7. About the service

Type of care provided	Child Minder
Registered Person	Gemma Gibbs
Registered maximum number of places	10
Age range of children	Under 12 years
Opening hours	7.00 – 18.00 Monday to Thursday, including school holidays
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	10 June 2016
Dates of this inspection visit	14 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 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.
Additional Information: The child minder co-works with another registered child minder and an assistant is employed.	