



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Olivia Thomas**

**Brecon**



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## **Description of the service**

Ms Olivia Thomas has been providing care from her home since March 2013. She provides care for up to ten children up to 12 years of age and operates Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8am – 6pm mostly term time. The service is provided in English.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

Children enjoy a good range of interesting indoor and outdoor activities. They are happy, settled and confident. The child minder promotes a healthy lifestyle and places an emphasis on outdoor play and activity. The environment in which care is given is safe and stimulating. The child minder is committed to ongoing improvement and involves both parents and children in discussions about ways to improve the service she offers. The child minder has very good administrative skills and her documents and records are well organised.

### **2. Improvements**

Significant landscaping work on the garden is almost complete; this will provide a safe and stimulating place for outdoor play.

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

We made four recommendations regarding operational matters under the leadership, and management and care and development themes. These related to the development of additional policies and records.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children are very settled and happy and enjoy their time at the service. They find the range of activities and play experiences interesting and exciting. They express themselves confidently and have a strong voice. Children are listened to, valued and are encouraged to develop independence. Children experience warmth and kindness, are stimulated and motivated to play with a range of resources. Children interact well and have warm relationships with the child minder.

## **Our findings**

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

Children confidently express themselves and know they are listened to.

Children were constantly making decisions about what they wanted to do. For example, they chose what toys to play with and then indicated clearly that they wanted food followed by a nap. There was a good range of resources available mostly in the playroom but children brought them into the living room and kitchen/dining room if they wanted to play there as well. Children made appropriate choices when asked what they wished to do and enjoyed their play. Children chatted, some non-verbally and expressed themselves clearly to make their views known. For example, when asked which activities they would like to play with, they were confident in making their selections and enjoyed some messy play with hand painting and then playing with wooden shape sorter and other infant toys. Children made independent choices within their free play from a good range of resources but also responded to suggestions such as having some quiet time colouring at the kitchen table.

Children express their opinions confidently and decide what they want to do

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

Children feel safe and relaxed and know that their feelings and concerns are taken into account.

Children were familiar with routines and the environment. They knew where to find most of the toys and craft resources and confidently helped themselves. We saw children go to the toy boxes in both the playroom and living room and get particular toys they wanted. We heard children, laughing and giggling with the child minder and her children. Children responded well to praise – smiling when the child minder said ‘well done’ and ‘clever girl’ and ‘good job’ when they helped to tidy toys away before lunch. Children interacted well with the child minder and us and could make their needs known. Parents stated in

questionnaires that their children had settled well, flourished in the environment and enjoyed coming to the child minder.

Children feel safe and valued.

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

Children are learning how to manage their behaviour, are confident to co-operate and take turns and share.

The atmosphere in the home was very welcoming and we found that children were very confident and settled within their surroundings. We saw an infant clearly indicate they were ready for a nap and they confidently settled in a buggy whilst they went to sleep. We saw children enjoy the child minders company as well as the company of her own children with lots of laughter and conversation. Children sat together at the table for lunch with the infant in a high chair alongside the older children.

Children interact positively at the service and comply well with rules of socially acceptable behaviour.

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

Children have a wide range of play activities and experiences.

Children enjoyed their play activities. They had many free play opportunities and they were laughing and animated as they enjoyed the messy play, colouring and playing with little people and shape sorters. An infant had a nap after lunch and went off to sleep happily in a buggy, as was their preference. When children tired of an activity, they made their views known about what they wanted to do next, moved on to play with paints and colouring, and later were looking forward to messy play digging for treasure in bowls of soil and as the rain had stopped going out for a walk to the river.

We saw many photographs in the children's diaries of them enjoying a wide variety of activities. Children particularly enjoyed playing in the park, going to local toddler groups, canal walks, library, the Play Barn in Brecon and the Lakes in Llandindrod Wells.

Children are enthusiastic and thoroughly enjoy their time with the child minder

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

Children have a good variety of experiences, which promotes their all-round development.

The children explored opportunities to show independence during our visit. Children had lunch whilst we were present; the toddler sat in a high chair with an integrated table while the child minder sat next to them maintaining eye contact at all times, the child minders own children sat at the table and engaged all the time with the children. Prior to lunch children

washed their hands with support and encouragement; the child minder praised their efforts. Children were animated and enthusiastic when sitting with the child minder at the table enjoying messy play with paints and crayons. Children went to the local playgroup on occasions where they could make friends with other children, which promoted their social skills. An infant present whilst not yet walking was able to move around the play areas confidently playing with shape sorters and blocks, which developed their gross motor skills. During the messy play and colouring activity, they held a felt tip pen well and made sweeping movements over the paper developing their fine motor skills. They also enjoyed physical play outdoors in local parks and soft play areas. Parents stated in questionnaires that their children had developed well since attending the service

Children have many opportunities to promote their independence.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Children are safe and cared for by a caring, calm and patient child minder. She is enthusiastic and qualified to carry out her role. She has a good knowledge of child development and ensures regular discussions between herself and parents.

### **Our findings**

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

The child minder promotes children's health and well-being.

The child minder had policies and procedures in place which helped to ensure children were safe including a safeguarding policy. She had last attended advanced safeguarding training on 7 August 2018. However, the child minder was unaware of her specific responsibilities under the 'Prevent' strategy on how to protect children from being drawn into radicalisation. There was no policy on the use of IT and social media in place, which would provide assurance to parents that their children were safe.

The child minder had accident records available, which included parents' signatures, as did medication records. She had a current first aid certificate dated 20 November 2015; however, this was a first aid at work course. We discussed that when she updates this in the autumn that she should specifically book a paediatric first aid course. She had a first aid kit available in the kitchen and one in the car. There were consents in place for emergency medical treatment, outings, photographs, observations, sun cream and transport in the family car.

The child minder no longer provided meals but did provide snacks and drinks taking into account the children's wishes and dietary needs. Children enjoyed lunch of sandwiches and cucumber sticks and the infant had a prepared meal, which the child minder heated. She provided healthy drinks of water, milk and no added sugar juice and we saw her encourage children to drink during lunchtime. The child minder had last attended a course on food hygiene in January 2018.

Children are kept safe and their physical health is promoted.

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

The child minder is a good role model in her interactions with the children.

The child minder was calm with children, recognised, and intervened when she needed too. She calmly talked to them about sitting nicely whilst eating lunch. She was very calm and reassuring when a child needed to have a nap. We heard her say 'thank you' when a

child passed their plate and cup to her. The child minder gave parents a copy of her behaviour policy along with others when their children started attending her service.

The child minder's experience enables her to manage behaviour consistently and effectively.

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

The child minder knows the children well, understands their needs and, keeps parents well informed about their child's progress.

We saw that information about the children was comprehensive and included the child's likes, dislikes and allergies, and information about their family. The child minder planned regular activities that met children's needs, which included regular trips out to parks, walks, canal, and library, some local playgroups, soft play areas and local beauty spots. Parents confirmed in feedback that their children enjoyed coming to 'Liv's' and had developed well in her care. They were very appreciative of the care and support their children received. The child minder was very responsive to children's needs and clearly knew them well. She was pleased at the way in which children developed all of their skills. However, the childminder did not currently formally track the development of pre-school children.

The child minder plans interesting and stimulating activities that promote the children's play and development.



### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

Children are cared for in a house that is comfortable, spacious, safe and stimulating. There is a lounge and open plan kitchen/ dining room as well as a small playroom off the lounge. One bedroom is used for sleep purposes and children use the upstairs bathroom. The garden has been out of bounds for two years as significant landscaping work has been completed. Once gates are fitted across the steps to the lawned area it will provide a spacious, safe and stimulating place for outdoor play.

#### **Our findings**

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

The child minder keeps the premises safe, clean and tidy.

The child minder had ensured that the rooms used by the children were clean and bright. The child minder had completed comprehensive risk assessments on all areas of the home; she reviews these on a three monthly basis. The child minder told us that she also does an informal review of all risks on a daily basis. We found that the premises were secure because we had to knock on the door to gain entry. We were asked for our identification and to sign the visitor's book on the hall table. All areas of the child minder's house to which children had access were clean and well maintained with safety gates across the stairs and across the kitchen door. Quarterly fire drills were recorded, the last having taken place on the 27 June 2018. A new oil boiler was commissioned in July 2018 and therefore annual checks on this will commence next year. The family car had valid insurance and an MOT.

The child minder has effective risk management procedures in place to keep children safe.

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

The child minder provided a warm, welcoming environment, which was clean, bright and cheerful.

Examples of children's work are displayed in the kitchen and playroom. The living room is of a good size with large windows onto the garden making it a bright and cheerful room for play. There is a good assortment of resources including Duplo, construction toys, train tracks, soft toys, jigsaws, puzzles and books as well as a garage, and ride on and musical toys. The recently decorated playroom had colourful murals that provided a point of interest. There were beanbags that children could relax on. There were comfortable sofas that children could relax on in the living room. A good range of toys for infants and toddlers was

also available. The kitchen/dining room was used for craftwork and we saw the children enjoy some hand painting and colouring whilst we were there. There was an upstairs bathroom and liquid soap, potties and a step stool were available.

The garden was very spacious with a large paved area and then steps up to a large lawned area. The landscaping of the garden has been significant; the addition of gates on the steps to the lawn will mean that the garden will provide a very safe and stimulating place for outdoor play. The child minder had a good range of outdoor toys such as Little Tykes Coupe, scooters, bikes etc. but told us that she intends to invest in some more.

The child minder provides a stimulating, spacious area for the children.

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

The child minder has a good stock of toys and materials, which are well maintained and clean.

We found that the toys were clean and in good condition. There is a good range of toys and equipment for babies and infants including shape sorters and musical toys. Toddlers and infants used booster seats and high chairs, whilst older children had access to the table and chairs in the kitchen/dining room and sofas in the living room, which helped them to become more independent. Single and double buggies, a travel cot and car seats were also available.

The child minder offers a good range of resources and has regular cleaning and maintenance systems in place.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

The child minder is motivated and clearly enjoys her role. She maintains the required records and documentation and has very good organisational skills. She has the qualifications required for the role. The service is provided in English and she is unable to offer the Welsh language Active Offer. All of her core training is up to date.

### **Our findings**

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

The child minder creates a positive ethos where children feel valued and she strives to promote good outcomes for children.

The statement of purpose is comprehensive, clear and informative providing a wide range of information to parents. However, it requires some amendment to clarify working arrangements during school holidays. We saw that the child minder ensured that policies and procedures were clear and focused on the needs of the children and regularly reviewed. When caring for babies and infants she keeps a daily diary, which indicated the amount of food, drinks, nappy changes and naps the infants had taken. All of the required child records and documents were in place and well completed.

The child minder is efficient, organised and places great importance on ensuring she provides a quality service

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

The child minder has an effective system in place for reviewing her service. She values feedback from parents and children.

We saw the current quality of care report completed in July 2018 and it included the views of parents. Comments from parents were positive including *'We are very happy with the service you provide, our child has developed so much in your care in both their speech and language skills'*. *'Fantastic service, my kids are very happy which makes me happy'* and *'our child is always happy when we pick him up so he must be having fun'*. Further comments included *'this year our child was diagnosed with allergies and you have been totally supportive of this ensuring what was needed to be put in place and also raising awareness with the other parents'*. The review was comprehensive, thorough and included plans to improve and develop including developing electronic invoicing which was a suggestion from a parent.

The child minder is forward thinking, creative and actively evaluates her service.

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

The child minder manages her business effectively and obtains the necessary checks.

The child minder had ensured that her disclosure and barring service (DBS) check was valid, dated 18 July 2016. She fully understood her responsibility to inform the CSSIW of any changes to household members. The child minder told us that she seeks any required advice and support from organisations with expertise in early years and friends who are child minders. An appropriate level of public liability insurance was in place and valid until March 2019. The family car had insurance valid until 31 August 2018 and the MOT was valid until 2 May 2019.

The child minder manages her business effectively to ensure good outcomes for children.

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

The child minder has positive partnerships with parents.

Parents stated in questionnaires that the care their children received was excellent and were grateful of the child minder's flexibility around pick up and drop off times and the opportunities their children enjoyed with the child minder. We saw evidence that the child minder worked in partnership with parents in managing children's allergies and health needs.

The child minder has very positive partnerships with parents and is committed to working together for the children's well-being.

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

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

None

### **5.2 Areas of non-compliance from this inspection**

None

### **5.3 Recommendations for improvement**

We made the following recommendations to the child minder:

- to be fully aware of her responsibilities in relation to the prevent duty;
- to develop a policy on the use of IT and social media;
- to amend the statement of purpose to clarify working arrangements during school holiday and
- to track the development of all pre-school children and keep records.

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

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

- One inspector carried out a visit to the service, arranged at short notice, lasting three and a half hours;
- we had discussions with the child minder about her service;
- we observed the children and the care which they received;
- we looked at a wide range of records including registers, children's records, policies and procedures, safety records, and the statement of purpose;
- we inspected the premises and
- we gave verbal feedback at the end of the inspection.

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	Olivia Thomas
Registered maximum number of places	10
Age range of children	0 -12 years
Opening hours	8am -6pm Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	10 December 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	10 August 2018
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 their service. We recommend that the child minder considers Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words' strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care.
Additional Information:	