



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Amy Solomon**

**Cardiff**



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## **Description of the service**

Amy Solomon is based in the Rumney area of Cardiff. Her child minding service is provided from her home and she does not work with an assistant. The service operates five days a week in term time and in school holidays and is conducted bilingually through the medium of both English and Welsh. The child minder is registered to care for a maximum of 5 children and she has been registered since December 2013.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

We found that children attending this service benefit from warm relationships with a motivated child minder who has a good understanding of each child and is well able to meet their needs. Children are making good progress and gain lots of enjoyment from their play and learning. They benefit from a well-run and planned service, as well as a safe and stimulating play environment.

### **2. Improvements**

This is the first inspection of the service. Since registration with CIW, the child minder has shown a commitment to her continuing professional development by undertaking training courses which support her in her role. These included training on the Foundation Phase curriculum, safeguarding, working in partnership with parents, and supporting children's speech and language needs. She has also completed a level 3 qualification in Children's Care, Learning and Development to further her understanding of child care and development.

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

We found the service to be compliant with the regulations. We have made several practice recommendations, and these relate to elements of activity provision and some amendments to documentation.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children in this service are able to make their own choices about their play and are supported to do this. Their independence is promoted and they enjoy the good range of play opportunities available to them.

## **Our findings**

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

Children are encouraged to speak and express themselves, and all attempts at communication are valued by the child minder. We observed the child minder to be very considerate of the children's views. The children present were quite young and so could not yet speak fluently and they were given lots of time to communicate their wishes. We saw the children choose to bring out toy tools for the stored resources and they began 'fixing' the ride-in toy car, role playing a garage. Children's choices are respected in this service. The child minder told us that she asks explicitly what children wish to do, especially in the summer holidays when she cares for older children and for longer periods. She explained that for the younger children, she observes the toys and resources they show interest in and builds on these observations for ideas of what else she can provide for them.

Children have a voice that is respected in this service.

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

Children are secure, comfortable, happy and relaxed in the care of a child minder with whom they have developed a warm relationship. Children have clearly developed bonds of affection with the child minder. They are happy and confident to approach her, to seek comfort from her when necessary and are keen to interact with her and include her in their play. The children are happy and they smile and laugh whilst they are playing. They were also confident to move between the resources available and stored resources across the play space available to them. They enjoyed communicating with the child minder, babbling and chatting as they played. We observed the children role play a café for an extended period which they enjoyed, and in which they involved the child minder as a willing customer, ordering drinks and meals that the children then pretended to make.

Children in this service are well settled, happy and confident. They are forming friendships and feel valued.

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

Children are learning to co-operate, take turns and share, as well as becoming sensitive to the emotions of others. Despite their young ages, all of the children present were well behaved and content. They were happy to join in with group times and tidying up, and they listened well to the child minder. Once they had tidied up for lunch time, the children sat together with the child minder to do a small circle time activity and sing songs. All of the children listened well to the child minder, joined in with singing the songs and danced to the actions. At one point, one of the children took quite a while to choose a song to sing and another child tried to jump in and make the choice. The child minder reminded the child that it was not their turn, which they remembered and accepted once the child minder had reiterated it. All children took turns with the assistance of the child minder. Most of the children we saw were too young to be able to play co-operatively, but they played alongside each other very happily, as well as interacting warmly with the child minder. They are becoming polite and mindful of the other children. We observed a child say 'thank you' to another child when they passed a block they wanted but could not reach. A child also bumped into us as they were playing and we said 'oops', to which the child said 'sorry'.

Children in this service are learning to manage their behaviour, and they experience warm and friendly interactions with the child minder and with their peers.

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

Children are interested and excited in the play based activities in which they engage. Throughout our time at the service, the children really enjoyed various role play activities, first as a café and later as a garage. They led this play themselves and developed it as they wished, persevering and extending the play in ways that interested them. They played happily like this for much of the morning, clearly enjoying themselves and smiling frequently.

Children enjoy their play and learning, sustaining interest in their play and gaining a sense of achievement from it.

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

Children are developing across a range of skills. The child minder spoke knowledgeably about the children, and was able to tell us about the developmental progress of the children during the time they had been with her. When singing action songs and nursery rhymes, all children participated in some way, joining in with actions even if they did not yet know the words. We also observed children's independence developing. Even the youngest children were encouraged to help to

tidy away activities when they were finished with and, with support, they were happy to help the child minder with this and join in with their peers. The child minder encouraged the children to try to put on their own socks, shoes and coats when it was time to go out, and the children also have some independence in their play as they are able to access some stored resources easily.

Children in this service are making progress, and are becoming confident and independent.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Children and parents benefit from a skilled practitioner who has a good understanding of individual children and is well able to meet their needs. This helps to ensure that children develop well at this service. The child minder respects the children in her care and the decisions they make. Children remain safe and healthy because the child minder has a good understanding of her responsibilities and has good procedures in place to support her within her role.

### **Our findings**

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

The child minder ensures that the service's policies and procedures are well implemented to support the health, safety and wellbeing of the children in her care. She has shown a commitment to her continuing professional development and has recently completed a level 3 qualification in child care to help inform her practice. She was able to speak knowledgeably about dealing with child protection concerns and responding to them appropriately. Good hygiene is promoted at the service. All children were encouraged to wash their hands before snacks and meals, and nappy changing was also conducted hygienically. Food preparation areas and high chairs were cleaned with antibacterial spray. The child minder has a current certificate in food hygiene. The service has registered with the local Environmental Health department as a food business. The child minder provides healthy snacks and main meals for the children in her care. On the day of the inspection, this included scrambled eggs and baked beans with toast for lunch, and sliced fruits and vegetables as morning snack. Records showed that the child minder conducts fire drills with the children on a monthly basis, plus ad hoc evacuations when the smoke detector is set off by cooking etc. The child minder has in place a suitable system to record any medication that is administered to minded children, and any accidents that occur. We examined accident records and found that for head bumps, the necessary recordings to say that ongoing checks for concussion had been made by the child minder were not in place. The child minder undertook mandatory paediatric first aid training prior to her registration with CIW and is aware of the need to renew this training every three years.

The child minder keeps children safe and healthy and there are appropriate policies and procedures in place to support this.

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

The child minder sets realistic boundaries, is a good role model and uses a consistent approach to managing behaviour, taking into account children's age and understanding. We observed that the child minder was positive and warm in her guiding of behaviour. She was proactive in praising the children when they behaved well, thereby reinforcing this good behaviour. We saw her praise good sharing and helping to tidy up. She was also very encouraging when the children made a good effort and praised this, and it was evident from our observations that the children responded well to this praise and encouragement. No significant issues of behaviour management occurred during the inspection, largely thanks to the positive approach taken. The child minder undertook an 'Introduction to Behaviour Management' course in 2017 and said she felt this had been useful and informed her practice.

The child minder manages interactions effectively and this has a positive impact on children's experiences at the service.

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

The child minder provides a nurturing and caring environment in which children's development is promoted and their needs met. We saw that the children were very comfortable to interact with the child minder and she responded to them with affection. Warm relationships were evident. The child minder spoke with the children in a consistently calm and reassuring manner, which put them at ease.

We observed the child minder to be a reflective practitioner who delivers the ethos of the Foundation Phase curriculum through her service. The child minder is aware of the principles of the Foundation Phase curriculum and was able to speak knowledgeably to us about the different skills the children were developing. It was clear through our observations that she had taken into account children's interests to plan a selection of activities which the children would enjoy. The child minder keeps a record of children's development, recording photographs and meaningful observations of children's abilities and identifying their next steps in learning. However, these do not inform the activities she plans for children and this should be considered.

The child minder promotes diversity in her service. She is a fluent Welsh speaker and conducts the service bilingually, including Welsh during interactions to help support children's learning of the language. She told us that she incorporates festivals from many cultures in to the activities she plans and children enjoy learning about and celebrating these.

The child minder effectively promotes children's wellbeing through the play and care provided. Children are developing well and their individual needs are well met by the child minder, but their next steps in learning should be included when planning activities.

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

Children benefit from an environment which is safe, clean and welcoming. They have access to outdoor play and benefit from an adequate range of resources which are appropriately maintained.

#### **Our findings**

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

Parents can be confident that all areas used by children are safe and well maintained. Valid insurance cover for public liability was in place, as well as a safety certificate for the gas system within the premises. The majority of risks in the home have been mitigated and we saw that the rooms that children access were appropriately maintained and decorated. The home was secure as the child minder locked the front door behind us and we saw that the gate in the garden was bolted out of the reach of children. We examined the risk assessments for the service and found that they were comprehensive and kept under review. We also found the child minder was using any accident records to inform and update any relevant risk assessments. An emergency evacuation plan was in place for the home, but it did not include the specific routes that would be taken depending on where the children are and the location of the emergency.

Children are cared for in a safe, clean and secure environment, but the evacuation plan should include the routes that can be taken off the premises.

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

Children's well-being is promoted within the home because the facilities and equipment provided meet the children's needs. We found that the home was appropriately maintained and that there was a good standard of cleanliness and repair throughout. The play space was decorated in a child-friendly way and soft furnishings to aid children resting. The way in which resources are stored means that children can access some of them independently, and this helps to facilitate their free choice. The home benefits from a garden with outdoor toys, but we did not see children make use of the garden during our visits due to very cold, wet weather. We noted that throughout both of our visits to the service, children's music was playing on a speaker in the background. On occasions it was too loud to easily hold a conversation. We also saw the child minder initiate an activity singing nursery rhymes with the children, but without turning off the competing music. Research shows that young children need to hear normal environmental sounds, particularly human speech in order for them to

develop their own speech and hearing. Music played on a continual basis can mask these sounds.

Children benefit from a suitable environment and adequate space to play, learn and develop, but the use of background music should be reconsidered.

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

Children have access to toys and equipment that are appropriate and suitable to their needs. We saw that the resources at the service covered a suitable range of play opportunities. There were books, jigsaw and inset puzzles, small world toys (such as cars and trains), dolls, construction blocks, role play resources, and craft resources. However, we noted that the provision included few resources made from natural materials or real life items (such as household items which can be used for role play). We saw children freely accessing the resources stored within the play space, finding what they wanted to play with from what was available. However, much of the storage was away from the play space and so the child minder had to take to the children to this area to find what they wanted. Whilst the child minder is conscious to manage this, it would be of benefit to develop storage that children can access more easily. The child minder told us she is mindful to clean the resources on a regular basis and check for wear and breakages.

Children benefit from a suitable range of toys and equipment that promote their development. However, resource provision should continue to be developed and the storage of resources considered so children have better access to the resources available.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

Parents and children receive a consistent, quality service which is well run, with due regard paid to the Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2012 and National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care. The child minder is proactive in planning for her continuing professional development and also in sharing information with parents and families.

### **Our findings**

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

Children and parents benefit from a well-run and planned service. The child minder has a Statement of Purpose in place which she told us she shares with the parents. This document contains the information required by the Regulations and National Minimum Standards and is kept under review to ensure it is always an accurate reflection of the service provided. We examined the service's policies and found them to be appropriate and thorough. A small number of policies would benefit from some additional information and this was discussed with the child minder (see section 5.2 Recommendations). The child minder records accidents and incidents appropriately and has a system in place to record the administering of medication and any existing injuries children have when attending the service. We examined the register of children's attendance and found that it contained all of the necessary information and that it is completed in a timely manner. We noted that the times of children's attendance were difficult to read clearly and it should be ensured these are always clear.

Parents can be confident the provision is well run through good leadership and management and with due care and attention paid to the regulations and National Minimum Standards.

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

There is a system in place to ensure that a self evaluation of the service is undertaken. The child minder told us that she consults with parents and children to complete an annual Quality of Care review and that once she received their feedback, she uses this information to inform a Quality of Care report and make improvements to her service.

The child minder draws on first hand evidence and the views of parents and children to inform her plans for improvements to the service.

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

The child minder is effective in managing her own time and prioritising activities responsively to ensure that the children's needs are always met in a timely manner. We observed the child minder to be well organised and we saw that this allowed her to remain calm whilst delivering care. Examples of this included having children's snack prepared and at hand for when it is needed, as well as having sleep and nappy change resources easily accessible. This calm and relaxed care environment has a positive impact on the children's mood and their interactions. Robust procedures are in place to ensure the person caring for children is suitable and qualified to do so. The child minder and members of her household over the age of 15 years each have current DBS checks in place and the child minder has a system to ensure they are renewed as necessary. The child minder has also shown a commitment to her continuing professional development by undertaking several training courses to further improve her understanding of child care and related matters. There are contingency plans in place to deal with emergencies and a nominated child minder is in place who can be called upon in an emergency.

The service is well organised and this has a positive impact on children's experiences.

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

Children have their needs and preferences identified and parents know how these will be met. The child minder told us that when parents make an enquiry about engaging care, she asks them to visit the service so that they can discuss their requirements and the service she can offer, and settling in visits are arranged for the child. A child record form is completed by parents so that the child minder has all the information necessary to be able to provide care to the children and meet their needs, such as the child's likes and dislikes, routines and development. There are policies in place which outline how the service operates and copies of all policies are provided to parents at the outset for their future reference. Parents are kept involved and informed about their child's activities. Written information is provided on a daily basis for young children, as well as the child minder talking with parents at the beginning and end of each day to inform them of how the child has been. The child minder also sends parents a newsletter each month letting them know about upcoming events.

Children's needs are identified to ensure a good quality of care can be provided, and parents have all the information they need to make an informed choice about using this service.

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

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

None

### **5.2 Recommendations for improvement**

- In activity planning, consider linking activities to intended learning outcomes already identified as next steps in the children's developmental records;
- the emergency evacuation plan should include specific routes;
- the use of background music should be reconsidered;
- resource provision should continue to be developed and the storage of resources considered so children have better access to the resources available;
- accident records for bumps to the head should record ongoing checks for concussion;
- in the register of children's attendance, the recording of attendance times should be clearer to read;
- the Child Protection policy should include that the child minder would refer any safeguarding allegations made against herself or her family to Children's Services;
- the Behaviour Management policy would benefit from considering how escalating behaviour would be dealt with. The 'House Rules' should be included for clarity;
- the timescales for taking action if a child was uncollected should be reconsidered; and
- the Healthcare, Illness and Exclusion policy would benefit from including the Public Health England guidance on exclusion timescales for schools and early years settings.

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

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

- One inspector undertook an unannounced visit to the service. We visited the child minder across two visits on two days to observe children and the care they received;
- we reviewed information held by CIW;
- we undertook a visual inspection of the premises;
- we spoke to a number of children throughout the day; and
- we looked at a wide range of records. These included the Statement of Purpose, health and safety records, children's records, activity planning and developmental records.

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

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

## About the service

Type of care provided	Child Minder
Registered Person	Amy Solomon
Registered maximum number of places	5
Age range of children	Birth to 12 years
Opening hours	7am to 6pm, Monday to Friday throughout the year
Operating Language of the service	English and Welsh
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	This is the first inspection of the service
Dates of this inspection visit	08/11/2018 and 13/11/2018
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 is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and operates as a bilingual 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	