



Childcare Inspection Report on

Mandy Bowen

Neath



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Description of the service

Mandy Bowen was registered as a child minder in February 2000. She is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to care for ten children under the age of 12 years. Mrs Bowen works with her daughter, Niketa Thomas, also a registered child minder, and her husband, Mr Bowen and sister in law Christine Bowen who are her assistants. Mrs Bowen provides a childcare service from her large detached home in Bryncoch, Neath. The service is provided through the English language, and operates from 7:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Thursday and 7:30am to 5pm on Friday.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

We, CIW, found that children attending the setting are happy and enthused by their learning experiences. They are cared for by knowledgeable, nurturing and consistent child minders who are dedicated to meeting their individual needs. They benefit from a thoughtfully planned, extremely child-centred service. The child minder's are innovative, creative and provide an excellent service overall, and of one which they are very proud of. Parents are extremely happy with their children's progress and the service that is provided. Some improvements are needed in the leadership and management of the service.

2. Improvements

Following the inspection visit the child minder has confirmed the following:

- a child's development record has been dated;
- cardboard has been placed in the incident/ accident book to ensure the carbon copy is clear;
- all standards and policies have been dated;
- parents have been reminded to date all future questionnaires;
- a sleep arrangement policy for parents to sign and give preference on where they would like their child to sleep, has been devised;
- an allergy and food tolerance policy has been devised for parents to provide information on reactions and symptoms to look out for and what treatment is needed and
- the quality care policy has been amended to state CIW will inspect every 3 years.

3. Requirements and recommendations

On the day of our visit, we notified the child minder that she was not compliant with the regulation 'Suitability of Workers' as she did not have a staff file on her assistants, or had not conducted supervisions or appraisals. We did not issued a non-compliance on this occasion, as this did not have a negative impact on the children attending, and the assistants had a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Prior to this report being published, confirmation has been received by CIW that the staff files are now in place.

As a result of this visit, some recommendations have been made at the end of this report.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning at this setting and interact in a highly positive manner. They are confident in communicating their experiences and their choices and they feel fully valued and secure.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children express their views and know that their ideas will be listened to.

Older children gave their ideas in their play and younger children were monitored by the child minder to ascertain their preferences. Older children had requested full size football goals, and these had been purchased for them. They were able to choose to play indoors or out, one child said, "*I want to go back outside*", and was able to do so. Younger children were able to choose from a vast array of outside toys, and freely moved from one to another. This included the mud kitchen, trikes; ride on toys, sand pit and playhouse. One child requested a sticking activity, and it was promised for the afternoon. Children were listened to consistently throughout the setting and their wishes took precedence over the daily routine. A child had requested spaghetti bolognaise for dinner, so the child minder made that instead of a chicken dinner. Children ate their dinner at their own pace and if they chose not to eat something, their wishes were respected. Children were offered a choice of grapes, jelly, strawberries or all three. Children had no hesitation in asking for more.

Children have a significant voice at this setting.

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

Children are settled and form bonds of affection with child minder.

Children were happy, settled and relaxed during our visit. Children were happy on arriving, and when waking from a nap. Two younger children chatted to us about making 'cup cakes' in the sand, and how they had made real ones yesterday with Mandy and how one child laughed when they said they had eaten two. Children confidently approached the child minder for a cuddle, a chat or to involve her in their play. As children arrived from school, they happily chatted to the child minder about their day. Older children sat together waiting for their tea at the kitchen table, and told us how they enjoyed coming to Mandy's. One child said, "*The food's always too good to be true*". Most children had been coming for many years. We saw an adult arriving who had come to visit the child minder, who she had cared for as a child. The children proudly showed off their new school uniform, and the child minder praised how they looked. Children all received pyjamas and a gift at Christmas from the child minder.

Children feel fully valued, safe and happy.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children are sensitive to the emotions of others and mostly co-operate and share with each other.

We saw children being thoughtful to each other; an older child put her arm around a younger child and kissed them, then took their hand to play in the wooden house, and called them 'babes'. Older children interacted well, sitting at the table chatting to each other about playing football, and there was lots of good-humoured banter between them. Children were beginning to share and take turns. One child asked another child for a piece of the Lego to go on top of the tower, and the child gave it happily, and was praised by the child minder. We saw some children that were happy to share when another child wanted the same toy; however, some younger children were still learning, and became upset if they wanted the same toy that another child had.

Children are beginning to interact in a positive manner.

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

Children are interested and excited in their play and learning.

Children were fully engaged across the age range during the inspection visit. We observed children enjoying free play, such as outdoor play with bikes, dolls, slides, and sand play. We observed younger children laughing and having fun exploring the mud kitchen with kitchen utensils and water. There was also a lot of laughter when older children were plying football outside. Children were self-motivated and fully absorbed in their chosen free play both indoors and outdoors. We saw large scrap books of photographs of children involved in various activities including baking, preparing vegetables for dinner, dressing up in sari's, Olympic games in the garden and on outings such as Techniquet, parks and beaches. One parent spoken to said that even though they were off work at the moment, they were bringing their child in, as "*(X) loves it here.*"

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning.

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

Children are confident, motivated and are developing their individual skills.

Children were confident in choosing their play and developing their play independently although they were also supported to extend their play by the child minder. For example, we saw a younger child playing in the mud kitchen, and when hesitated, were encouraged to mix the mud and water together by the child minder. Older children's speech and language skills were well developed and children clearly told us about their school day, and that they enjoyed playing board games and outside. They were well spoken and polite. Children fed themselves well using their hands or cutlery

as was appropriate to their age. Older children put on their own coats and shoes before going outside, whilst younger children were encouraged and supported. Parents confirmed that children were developing well at this setting, one parent spoken to said their child had developed a lot being around the older children. Children are developing very well.

2. Care and Development

Summary

The Child minder is motivated and enthusiastic and is a highly effective practitioner. She is consistent and thorough in supporting children's development and keeping them safe and healthy overall. The child minder has an excellent understanding of the children's individual needs and works effectively to meet those needs.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

The child minder implements a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in order to keep children safe and healthy.

The child minder placed a great emphasis on healthy eating and outdoor play. We saw the child minder leading activities and engaging with the children's chosen play in the outdoors throughout our visits. The child minder knew the children's allergies by ensuring they were recorded on the children's record forms, and had a level 2 certificate in Food Allergen Awareness. She had a list of the food that she made, and the allergen contents. Although she did not currently mind children with allergies, she had not, in the past, recorded the signs, symptoms and action to take if a reaction occurred. There was a clear safeguarding policy in place and the child minder was familiar with this through continually updating her training. The child minder told us that they understood their responsibilities regarding safeguarding and knew who to report concerns to. However, the policy did not include the action she would take if an allegation were made against her. The child minder had a nappy changing policy; however, this did not state that she used disposable gloves and aprons to minimise cross contamination. The child minder encouraged hand washing after playing outside. We heard her tell the children they must wash their hands because of the 'bugs' in the mud kitchen. The child minder had completed training in Health and Safety, Healthy Eating, Cross Infection and Dental Health Education and Infection Control. She was also part of the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-school Scheme and Designed to Smile.

Overall, the child minder consistently and successfully keeps children safe and healthy.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

The child minder works in line with her behaviour management policy. She is consistent in her approach and has regard to the children's individual stage of development when managing interactions.

The child minder had a detailed, comprehensive positive behaviour policy, which included her house rules, such as having manners and respect for others. It included information on unacceptable behaviour such as bullying. The child minder had

attended training in Positive Behaviour in Early Years. We saw a few examples of the child minder coming down to a child's level, and gently asking children what it was that the child wanted, when they had a minor dispute about toys. When they explained what they wanted, the child minder found them a similar toy, and they happily continued to play. The child minder encouraged and promoted good manners throughout our visit. She explained that they will need to learn to say please and thank-you before they go to school.

The child minder is highly effective at managing children's interactions.

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

The child minder knows, understands and meets children's individual needs and plans for their next steps in their play and learning.

The child minder knew the children in her care well through regular observation of their preferences and skills development and through regular communication with parents. We saw the development records for children that were recorded within a 'flower', and covered areas of learning such as language literature and communication, mathematical development, physical, emotional, social, cultural and well-being. However, one record was undated. The child minder had attended training in Children and Loss, Awareness of Autism, Equality and Diversity, Play to Learn and the Foundation Phase. The child minder promoted multicultural experiences, with dressing up sari's, different skin tone of dolls and by trying different foods. Sleep took place on the settee or in pushchairs, however parents choice of how they wanted their child to sleep, was not recorded. Outdoor play was offered at every opportunity, with 'Wellies' and all-in-one rain coats available for all the children. Parent questionnaires were very complimentary about the child minder including "*My children have been nurtured, loved, supported and guided during their time with Mandy. They love her*".

The child minder is dedicated and enthusiastic in promoting children's play, learning and development and comprehensively meets children's needs.

3. Environment

Summary

The child minder ensures that children are cared for in a safe and very stimulating, rich learning environment. She ensures that children have access to a vast range of resources and an environment that is suited to their needs.

Our findings

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

The child minder ensures that children are cared for in a safe, clean and secure environment. She ensures that most unnecessary risks to children are identified and reduced or removed.

The leader had ensured that there were risk assessments in place for all areas of the setting and for activities and particular aspects of the care, such as equipment and heat sources, the garden, animal waste and outdoor play. However, the water fountain/bird table held water and was not risk assessed. The house was fully enclosed and only accessible through a large gate. A visitor's book was used to record anyone who entered the house; however, the assistants' attendance was not recorded. The child minder had been awarded a 5 rating from the Food Standards Agency. A first aid kit was in place in the kitchen and in the car, and a fire blanket was fixed to the wall.

Overall, the child minder is competent at ensuring the safety of the environment.

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

The indoor and outdoor play areas are large, welcoming, well decorated and provide a rich environment for learning. There is loads of space and facilities to meet the needs of different age groups and individual children both inside and out.

The child minder had made the outdoor play area a high priority and it was used as an integral part of the learning environment. The child minder had thoughtfully laid out the outdoor area to allow children to explore a range of play opportunities. The area contained a large grassed area, and a separate garden area, which was used for focused activities and children's free play and included a shed and a mud kitchen. A large drive was used for playing with wheeled toys. The indoor area was laid out to suit the ages of the children in different areas. For example, older children had a spare room with direct access to the toilets, which they could access independently, and younger children had a dedicated playroom, with plenty of space to crawl and explore in their room, which featured low level toys. There was ample space for the two child minder's to work together, with 10 children each.

The child minder effectively ensures the suitability of the environment.

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

The child minder ensures that children have access to furniture, equipment and a vast selection of toys and materials that are appropriate and suitable to their needs. Resources are clean and of good quality.

The child minder had ensured that children of different ages had access to toys that suited their age and interests. Children of all ages enjoyed the extensive outside play space, where we saw younger children playing with sand trays, ride in cars, slides, dolls and pushchairs to name a few. Older children played in a separate area with a football and full sized goal posts. There was an ample amount of resources for the children to choose from. The tables and chairs in the younger children's playroom were suited to the age of the children, whilst older children sat at the kitchen table to eat. The child minder had ensured that she had an extremely good supply of toys, including a large garage of items available if the children requested them.

The child minder ensures that there are extensive, good quality resources and equipment available to the children of all ages.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The leadership at the setting is mostly effective. The child minder thoroughly plans and reviews the service provided and fully involves parents, child minder and other partners in this. However, she did not have the required staff files on her child minding assistants.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The child minder has a clear vision for the service and sets clear and robust policies that are focused on children's needs. She creates a positive ethos whereby children feel valued.

The child minder had a statement of purpose, which met regulations and national minimum standards, and was just one of the ways that the child minder informed parents of the service that was provided. The child minder stated that she had reviewed the robust policies regularly; however, these were not dated to evidence this. The child minder had a new policy on GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and Prevent Duty regarding who to contact if she had concerns around radicalisation. We saw permissions from parents for children to play outside unsupervised and the child minder was registered with the Information Commissioners Office. The child minder kept abreast of developments in childcare practice by attending courses, such as Forest School, doing her own research and sharing her learning with her assistants and the other child minder, based at her home. The child minder set and maintained high standards for her care, which was evident when a returning adult, who she had cared for came for a chat, and in the consistent care that we observed throughout the visit. Parents questionnaires returned to CIW included comments such as "*Excellent, caring and supportive childcare*", and "*I am so happy with the service provided by Mandy. I wouldn't trust any one else with my children, she treats my children like family – I cannot recommend her enough. I am so grateful to have found such a wonderful person.*"

Leadership is very effective.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

The child minder creates a reflective culture of ongoing review and improvement, involving parents and children; however this is not reflected in the last quality of care report.

The child minder had kept large scrapbooks of photographs of the children undertaking various activities and trips. The child minder was keen to continuously improve and during the course of inspection, good practice recommendations were addressed immediately. A quality of care report emphasised how the child minder had strived to improve her service, however it did not include the views of the parent or

children on the service. The child minder had completed CIW's Self Assessment of Service Statement part 1 & 2 as required.

The child minder is mostly committed to continuous self-evaluation and thorough planning for improvement.

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

The child minder ensures that the assistants are clear about their roles and responsibilities and which children she and the other child minder are responsible for. However, there is not a robust system of recruitment and supervision of staff in place.

The child minder worked alongside another registered child minder, and together they could mind 10 children each, and it was clear who had responsibility for which children. The child minder ensured that there was consistency for the children in the adults who cared for them. However she did not have staff files on her two assistants, and they had not received supervisions or appraisals.

The child minder adequately manages the staff.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

The child minder works with parents to identify children's needs and to keep them informed about their children's progress and well-being. She involves parents in their children's care and builds effective partnerships with them and with other partners.

The child minder obtained detailed information about children's needs and preferences when they began at the setting and she was available to talk with parents when they collected their children. The child minder had also established systems to review children's progress regularly and parents were shown the scrapbooks of their children's time with her. Parents stated in the CIW questionnaires that they have recommended Mandy to friends and colleagues, and who currently now use her for their child care. The child minder worked with other child minders and external agencies to ensure good practice was shared, along with ideas and training. The child minder had been awarded with a Family Information award; this included providing parents with information, giving leaflets and posters out, sharing useful information via Facebook or at playgroups.

The child minder has established excellent partnerships with parents and other agencies.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

We recommended that the child minder:

- considers using disposable aprons when nappy changing;
- further promotes independence at lunch time by allowing children to lay the table, pour drinks and tidy away their dishes;
- further promotes the Welsh language ;
- risk assesses the bird table/fountain outside;
- adds the responses from children and parents to the quality of care report, and the action taken in response to their requests and
- keeps staff registers on the assistants, when present.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. One inspector undertook two visits to the service on 31 August and 4 September 2018 for approximately five and a half hours.

- We spoke to the children, one parent, the child minder and one assistant. Five parents and six children completed written questionnaires. We inspected a sample of documentation and policies, as detailed in the report.
- We observed practice of the children's engagement and the care being provided by child minder.

Feedback was given to the child minder by telephone on 6 September 2018.

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

www.careinspectorate.wales

About the service

Type of care provided	Child Minder
Registered Person	Mandy Bowen
Registered maximum number of places	10
Age range of children	0 – 12 years
Opening hours	7:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Thursday and 7:30am to 5pm on Friday.
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	15 June 2015
Dates of this inspection visits	31 August 2018 and 4 September 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 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'. This is because the service is situated in a primarily English speaking area and the provider does not currently intend to offer or promote a Welsh language service.
Additional Information:	