



Childcare Inspection Report on

Donna Weston

Pontypridd



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Description of the service

The child minder was registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in March 2005. She provides home based child care for up to ten children under 12 years old. Her service is available during week days including school holidays. She lives in a village near Pontypridd and provides an English language service where the Welsh language is supported through some resources and activities.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

The child minder provides a good service which includes some areas of excellent practice, using her child care qualification and experience to place children's care at the centre. She gives children lots of choice and encourages them to share their views and do things for themselves. She knows the children well and ensures they have fun, learn and develop through their play. Children benefit from a healthy lifestyle and praise and affection are freely given. The child minder's home is very well maintained, safe and secure. The children are cared for in a comfortable, family environment with access to lots of appropriate resources. The child minder keeps effective policies and procedures. She keeps her training up to date and takes up some opportunities for learning to support her professional role.

2. Improvements

The child minder had met the recommendations made at the last inspection which were to develop a system to observe and record children's progress and provide some additional details in other records. Children benefit from extended outdoor play activities because the child minder has bought a new large climbing frame and slide and some sit and ride toys. She has introduced some traditional wooden resources for children to enjoy in the indoor space. Families now benefit from access to the Welsh Government's 30 hours free child care offer.

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 views are valued by the child minder and they are able to influence their activities. Children feel welcomed, very much at home and have formed good relationships with the child minder and each other. They are able to develop their self-help skills and take part in activities build their confidence and self-esteem. Children enjoy a good 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 lots of choices and they are encouraged to express their views and contribute to discussions. Younger children chose to play outside, freely choosing to climb or ride, or spend time 'cooking' in the play house. All children were chatty and took part in lots of opportunities for discussion after school. They discussed events that had taken place at the week end and in school during that day. They were asked what they want to do in the holidays and chatted about a visit to Bryngarw House they had once done. Older children told us the best things about being here included colouring dinosaurs and sitting down and talking. They like playing snap, the yes/no game, reading and songs. A child told us about holiday activities such as picnics in the park, going for walks, or visiting Penarth and soft play centres. They described some word games they played while travelling in the 'bus'.

Children are listened to by the child minder and are able to make lots of choices within the activities she provides.

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

Children are settled and comfortable in their care because the child minder knows them well and has developed excellent bonds of affection with them. We saw a younger child wake from a nap, beaming with pleasure to see their friends and the child minder and quickly settling for their fruit snack. After school, children arrived chatting and laughing with each other, quickly making themselves at home. Children enjoyed lots of joint discussions together with the child minder who gave lots of praise such as *"Wow – you are so good!"* and *"You are so clever – that's beautiful!"* The child minder told us how she tries to help children understand that they can talk to her about anything at all. She appreciates that children like to stay in contact with her after they have left her service. We spoke to older children who were happy to tell us who they might talk to in the event they had a concern while in the child minder's care. It was clear that the subject had already been discussed by the children with the child minder and that their parents were aware. A child said *"Donna. I feel I can trust her; and my mum of course"*. Another child told us *"There's a cheery atmosphere here"*. We saw a display on a wall showing children's birthdays and photographs.

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

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children interact very well in this service. We observed them chatting, laughing and playing together. Older children spent a few minutes sat together in the comfortable book area, quietly talking, and at ease in each other's company. Younger children played confidently alongside each other or on their own, following their imagination with small world toys, creating stories and private conversations with them. Older children helped their younger friends with a craft activity. They all laughed or groaned at the jokes on the yogurt packs at tea time. The older children helped with reading them out for all to share.

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 good variety of play based activities which suit their interests and are appropriate to their age and stage of development. Play is mostly child led, and children are given good choices about taking part in focused activities. A child chose to continue colouring in a picture they had started on a previous day before joining in with the craft activity prepared for them today. They wanted to complete their picture for their file, where each child collects examples of their work. Children clearly enjoyed a sense of achievement contributing to their file and discussing past pictures together.

Children enjoy a good range of 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 familiar with their surroundings and know where things are. Resources are organised so that they can mostly help themselves and be independent in their play. We observed children were encouraged to help tidy toys away at the change of an activity. This was used as an additional learning opportunity with prompts such as "*Where does this live?*" Children were confident to indicate if they wanted something. Younger children are given support to learn to manage their own personal needs and encouraged to do things for themselves, such as putting on their own shoes. We observed that the child minder supervised children in a non-intrusive manner as they used different resources and play spaces, enabling them to feel trusted and take appropriate responsibility.

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 level three child care qualification and experience caring for children to inform her practice and applies a 'home from home' 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 follows good hygiene routines. The child minder has realistic expectations of children and is able to plan for their individual needs effectively. She provides activities in her home and in the local area that she knows the children will engage with and will promote their learning and development.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

The child minder keeps a very clean and safe home. She is experienced in her role and has good procedures in place for keeping children safe and healthy. She renews the Disclosure and Barring Service Certificates for herself and household members over the age of 16 as necessary. The child minder knows what action to take in the event of a safeguarding situation and keeps up to date with training including Paediatric First Aid. Fire drills are practised regularly and are logged appropriately, and monthly checks of the smoke detectors are recorded. There is an effective fire evacuation plan and procedure in place. We looked at the accident, incident and medication recording systems, which were all in place and the child minder was clear about what action to take in the event of an emergency. The child minder provides all food, snacks and drinks for children, taking account of any individual dietary requirements. We saw a menu that identified allergens in food products and healthy and nutritional snacks are provided. We observed good, hygienic systems routinely in place in line with nationally recognised infection control principles. Children's health and well-being is promoted, including regular outdoor activities.

The child minder promotes children's good 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. She takes into account the age, stage of development and needs of each child, reflecting her policy and procedure for managing behaviour. Children are familiar with the 'house rules' which are displayed in the main play space. We observed the child minder was calm, clear, kindly and firm, explaining things to younger children, enabling them to learn to 'make good choices' and manage what might be difficult feelings. Older children showed they were sensitive to others' feelings and were polite and calm. They routinely took their empty plates to the kitchen and returned to the table, patiently waiting for all children to finish their meal before leaving the table.

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 are suitable for the children who attend. This is an English speaking service while there are books and resources that promote the Welsh language. Children follow seasonal themed activities including some multicultural celebrations. The child minder told us about her weekly routine in which care is provided on a part time basis to suit the needs of several families. Mornings may be spent at a soft play centre, the local park or trips to the beach. The child minder plans to stay at home with the children two days a week when they have a more relaxed routine and enjoy free play and focused activities such as craft or cooking. Weekly routines are adjusted to suit children's sleep, rest and school needs. Observations and activity planning take place for younger children and the child minder is developing an effective system to observe children's progress and plan for their next steps in play and learning. We looked at children's individual files of photos and examples of children's work showing how they link to the Foundation Phase Framework in Wales. They include comments about encouraging a child in their next steps of learning, such as holding a crayon independently.

The child minder supports children's play and learning and she has skills and knowledge to meet their individual needs.

3. Environment

Summary

The child minder ensures 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 a good environment in which children can play, learn and relax safely and she takes steps to minimise risks to children.

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 regular recorded risk assessments and cleaning routines, including a daily visual check throughout the play space. We were told that daily cleaning takes place, and regular deeper cleans are planned and carried out. The front door was kept locked during the inspection and the garden access was kept secure. We saw the first aid kit and a fire blanket were available, although the fire blanket was not fixed for easy access. We looked at the record of accidents which showed that only minor accidents had occurred and had been dealt with appropriately. Toilet and hand wash facilities are on the ground floor, and were appropriately kept and children can use them independently. The child minder maintains relevant insurances and the annual gas safety certificate for her home. Policies and procedures are in place covering access to and use of, the internet, mobile phones and computer games. She has taken account of data protection regulations and was clear about how she keeps and shares information securely. She has registered with the Information Commissioner's Office, although it was not stated in her confidentiality policy and procedure.

The child minder is clear about her 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. Children have access to the designated play room and open plan kitchen and dining area and garden. This enables the child minder to be closely attentive of younger children while older children can use other areas with some independence. The garden has been arranged to provide some challenging play opportunities on a large climbing tower and slide. Safety matting is in place for some activities on the paved area outside. The child minder has plans for developing the raised garden area for personal use and it is no longer accessible to children. She is currently carrying out a risk assessment to provide the most appropriate management of the concrete steps leading to the raised garden. Indoors, children were able to help themselves to toys and activities from the storage boxes or those left out, such as vehicles, construction

toys, books, dressing up, small world and lots of role play resources. We saw displays of Welsh colours and numbers, and 'hello' and 'welcome' in many languages as well as posters about emotions and the five senses to support children's learning. There were chairs and tables available to suit both younger and older children for craft activities and meals. Three highchairs were in use in the kitchen dining area at snack time for the youngest children.

Children are cared for in a home from home environment where the child minder has placed good play and learning opportunities as a priority.

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

Children have easy access to furniture, equipment and a good range of toys and materials that are kept in good condition and meet children's needs. The child minder checks the toys and equipment daily and more formally within the annual written risk assessment. We were told that toys and resources were also checked for wear and tear as they are used, or tidied away. Deep cleaning of all toys and play space is planned and carried out regularly.

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

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The child minder runs her service so that it meets the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care (NMS) and relevant regulations. She keeps her paperwork in a clear and accessible system. Parents are given the information they need to make an informed choice about using the service. The child minder has a level three child care qualification, several years' practical experience, keeps her training up to date and has undertaken some additional training to ensure that experiences for children are positive. She provides a good, improving service, sets up ways to reflect on her practice and includes parents and children's views in the process.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The child minder manages her service effectively. She is organised, motivated and conscientious. We looked at the child minder's statement of purpose and her comprehensive set of policies and procedures and found that overall they are appropriate and she confirmed that she shares them with parents. We made some recommendations for some revision to paperwork which are noted at the end of this report. The child minder has attended additional training such as the Prevent Duty and anti-terrorism awareness, safeguarding and General Data Protection regulations and has printed out recent documents to support her understanding.

The child minder delivers a consistent and improving standard of care to children.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

Children's outcomes are enhanced because the child minder takes a reflective approach to operating her service. She reviews her service annually and we looked at questionnaires returned by parents and children in October 2018. We saw that parents were highly satisfied with the care their children received and had made no suggestions for improvements. A child wrote *"Sometimes I don't get on with other children but Donna reminds me we are all different but should all be friends."* The child minder identified an action plan noting her intention to attend more training over coming months.

The child minder reflects on her service and takes steps to improve it.

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 and anyone who may be on the premises during child minding hours. She has appropriate contingency arrangements in place to cover any unforeseen emergency which are outlined in her operational plan. Children are able to enjoy outings

further afield in the child minder's nine seater van they call the 'bus'. It was chosen specifically because the seating arrangement allows children to sit opposite each other and can converse and play games like 'I spy' while out and about and travelling to and from school. Age appropriate car seats are in place for younger children. Older children's developing growth and independence are acknowledged by the child minder. She used a grant from the local authority to buy a table and chairs that are suitable for older children to use comfortably.

Arrangements for household members who may be present and resources are 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. The child minder provides them with the information needed to make informed choices about their child's care. Discussion with her showed that she knows the children and their families very well and she has cared for a number of children and their younger siblings over a several years. There was a chatty and informative hand over to parents as children were collected. Parents spoke highly of the service they receive and said how they had been recommended the service by other parents who used it. We spoke to parents who told us *"My two children have been coming here over several years; they don't want to come home; they eat better here than at home!"*; *"Donna tells me every day what they have done/eaten"* and *"She is very approachable; fab."*

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

We discussed the following matters with the child minder:

- revise the behaviour policy and procedure to include a statement to say that CIW will be informed of any changes to it within 28 days;
- revise the complaints procedure to clarify CIW's response to any complaint they may receive, update CIW's telephone details and clarify the action to take in the event of a concurrent investigation;
- develop a complaints procedure that older children may use;
- revise the child protection policy and procedure to include references noted in NMS 20.2 and the contact details for making any referral to the local authority; and
- fix the fire blanket to a wall where it is easily accessible for use.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This inspection was announced at very short notice and undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. The inspector undertook two visits to the service on one day of approximately two hours each. We gave feedback of our findings to the child minder at the end of the visit. There were eight children between the ages of 18 months and eleven years of age present during the inspection. Evidence for the report was gathered using the following methodology:

- we looked at the range of paperwork the child minder keeps about her service – including policies and procedures, risk assessments, contracts, children’s records, accident records and safety certificates;
- we observed the children interacting with the child minder and choosing their activities;
- we spoke with children and their 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

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Child Minder
Registered Person	Donna Weston
Registered maximum number of places	10
Age range of children	Under 12 years
Opening hours	7.00 – 18.00 five days a week including school holidays
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	5 October 2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	25 March 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: None	