



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Sonia Cox**

**Caerleon**



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## **Description of the service**

The child minder operates her service from her home in Caerleon, where she lives with her husband and son. She currently has 11 children on roll and is registered to care for six children under 12 years. Child minding is offered Monday to Friday between 8:00am to 6:00pm, throughout the year. Children have access to the ground floor areas within the home. Care is provided through the English language, with the use of incidental Welsh.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

Children are happy because they receive nurturing care in a welcoming environment where they can play, learn and relax. They have access to a good supply of activities and resources to meet their individual needs and stages of development. The child minder carefully plans for a balance of structured and freely chosen play opportunities in a variety of contexts, including frequent trips out. The overall management of the service is well organised with systems in place to provide a good service to children and parents, although improvements to some records are required.

### **2. Improvements**

There were no non-compliance issues raised at the child minder's last inspection. She has satisfactorily addressed the recommendations that were set. Further improvements that she has made since the last inspection include replacing fencing in the garden, providing a safe enclosed space for children to enjoy playing outside.

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

There were no non-compliance issues identified at this inspection. However, we have set recommendations with regards to some of the child minder's administration. These have been discussed in further detail at the end of this report.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children communicate their needs confidently because they are listened to and given opportunities to share their views and opinions. They appear happy being cared for in their surroundings and they are kept well occupied with appropriate activities. They are developing their independence and social skills within their play, to enable them to accomplish things for themselves and to form positive relationships.

## **Our findings**

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

Children are listened to and all attempts at communication are valued. They speak freely to express themselves and they are listened to, supporting them to feel valued and confident to ask for things. We observed them express themselves well throughout the session, clearly communicating their needs to the child minder. For example, they alerted the child minder to toileting needs and indicated when they wanted her to join in with their play. A baby that was being cared for was able to signal their needs through non-verbal cues. For example, banging their highchair and making vocalisations when they were ready for their food. It was evident that all of the children receive responsive care according to their needs, enabling them to feel relaxed and well cared for. The children were made to feel included, because the child minder shared her attention between them all and supported them to make choices about what they wanted to play with. The children told us that they enjoy attending the service.

Children are heard and enabled to make choices.

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

Children appear secure and settled in the care of the child minder, having developed positive relationships with her and the other children that attend. As a result, they cope well with separation from their carers. A younger child who had not long been attending was clearly happy and content in the care of the child minder, indicating that settling in sessions to support a smooth transition for them had worked well. It was clear that the children have a strong sense of belonging, as they helped themselves to toys and activities that they wanted to use. We also saw that their work and photographs are displayed on the walls, contributing to helping them to feel valued. They told us that they liked attending and happily spoke about the toys and activities that they enjoyed. Scrap books with photographs of the children playing in different contexts further evidenced their happiness.

Children enjoy attending this service because they are encouraged to play in a safe and supportive environment.

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

Children co-operate well with one another. We saw two children playing together in role play games. They clearly enjoyed each other's company and were co-operative with one another, sharing and taking turns with the resources. It was evident that the children knew the boundaries within the setting. We saw that they were respectful of the resources and used polite manners.

Children have developed a good sense of right from wrong, which enables them to have positive social interactions with their peers.

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

Children enjoy the planned and free play opportunities provided to them. We saw children building with Lego, dressing up and playing with role play items, engrossed in imaginative play. Two children enjoyed creating their own play ideas, playing with a toy storage box, pretending it was their car to drive to different places. There were also activities suggested by the child minder for them to access. These included play dough and cutting and sticking crafts to make Pudsey Bear pictures for Children in Need. They were fully engaged in the activities, which sustained their interest for extended periods. We saw that they were offered consistent praise and positive feedback throughout, promoting their self-esteem and sense of achievement. The activities are optional for the children and their interests are prioritised. When a child didn't want to join in with some of the crafts, they chose to play with Lego instead. The children also enjoy frequent trips out, giving them the benefit of plenty of exercise and fresh air and social opportunities in a variety of contexts. Trips out include to local parks, play groups, soft play centres, the library, a nearby boating lake and meeting up with other child minders, providing children with a wider social network with other children.

Children's clearly enjoy the activities provided to them, which promote their learning.

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

Children are developing as confident and independent learners. There are extended periods of uninterrupted play, whereby the children are independent in self-directing what they would like to do. We saw them following their own interests and engaging in imaginative play. At other times, they were creative in their play and confident to try new things suggested to them by the child minder. Children are learning about healthy eating because the child minder provides nutritious meals for them.

Children are making good progress and gaining independence skills at an age appropriate pace.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Children's health and wellbeing are promoted because appropriate policies and processes are in place and well implemented. They are developing good social skills with one another through the support of the child minder. The child minder follows an ethos of free play, to enable children to decide upon their own play ideas, but with a good balance of planned activities, to enable them to grow and reach their full potential.

### **Our findings**

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

All required policies and procedures are in place to maximise children's health and safety needs. A Child Protection policy covers safeguarding procedures and includes the 'Prevent' duty. This places a responsibility on all registered childcare providers to have due regard to preventing children from being drawn into extremism. However, we discussed with the child minder including the procedure to follow if an allegation is made against her or a member of the family. DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificates are renewed as necessary. The child minder completes all relevant training and has current certificates for Paediatric First Aid, Safeguarding and Food Hygiene. The child minder prepares all meals and we saw that healthy options are provided to the children. We saw them eating lunch, consisting of pasta, fish cakes and beans, followed by yoghurt for desert. Fresh drinking water is always made available to them, to keep them hydrated. Suitable, Effective hygiene routines are in place, including good nappy changing practices and encouraging children to wash their hands at appropriate times. Facilities include liquid soap and paper towels, providing children with access to separate hand drying, to minimise the risks of cross infection. Fire drills are practised every two months to ensure that all children can evacuate the building in the event of an emergency; and recorded to ensure that all children receive sufficient practice. We viewed the child minder's accident/incident/medication records and noted that they are appropriately recorded and monitored.

The child minder promotes healthy lifestyles and keeps children safe appropriately, although the Child Protection policy requires extending.

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

The child minder is a positive role model to the children in her care, enabling them to develop good relationships. An appropriate Behaviour Management policy is in place, including positive strategies that the child minder implements. She did not need to offer the children any guidance for how to behave during the session, indicating that her policy has been effectively implemented. The calm atmosphere that we observed of play and co-operation, demonstrates the experience and skill that the child minder has developed to support children in building lasting friendships. We also saw the child minder offering the

children consistent praise and positive feedback for their efforts, further reinforcing the collaborative environment.

The child minder has a skilful approach to supporting children's social development.

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

The child minder provides an educational, nurturing and calming atmosphere, tailored to meet the children's individual needs. She has a good understanding of the Foundation Phase, a statutory curriculum for all children aged three to seven years, as she assesses children's progress in line with this. Each child has a scrap book, including examples of their work and photographs of them engaging in a variety of activities, with dated annotations. Further records of children's progress include Foundation Phase profiles and individual files with jigsaw and flower chart pictures, highlighting the areas of learning that they have achieved. However, children's next steps for development are not recorded, to further promote their progression. From discussions with the child minder and observations of her practice, she has a good understanding of children's developmental needs and supports them effectively during play. She plans a good variety of activities to include different learning themes. The children have been learning about British values and the next topic planned for them is about road safety. We discussed with the child minder how she caters for children's Welsh language needs. She told us that they borrow books from the library and she plans Welsh activities, such as practising counting and naming colours.

The child minder's knowledge and experience enables her to provide a thoughtful environment, which fosters all children's well-being and learning.

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

The child minder's home is risk assessed and monitored to ensure the safe care of minded children. It is welcoming and well-resourced with a good range of equipment and furniture to enable children to play, learn and relax.

#### **Our findings**

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

The child minder is aware of her responsibilities in relation to the safety and welfare of the children that she looks after. She ensures that the premises are safe and secure and that the home and garden are maintained and risk assessed. The front and back doors were kept locked during the inspection. Smoke alarms are in place and routinely checked to ensure that they are in good working order. A fire blanket is positioned on the wall of the kitchen, for ease of access. We saw a recent gas safety certificate, dated 23 May 2018. Written records are in place for yearly risk assessments of the premises and outings, to maximise the safety of children. We noted that the child minder supervises the children well, whilst providing them with plenty of freedom to explore.

The child minder provides a suitable environment.

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

The home is welcoming and friendly, enabling children to relax and explore their surroundings. Toys and resources are easily accessible, clean and well maintained. The layout and design of the main play room promotes children's independence, as they can move freely to access equipment of particular interest to them. The resources are organised in toy boxes and set up for their use. They include arts and crafts, role play toys, games, books and construction equipment. There are areas for the children to rest, on sofas in the living room. There is a table and six chairs in the open plan dining/living room, for coming together sociably to eat, and for arts, craft and table top activities. High chair facilities are in place for younger children.

The child minding areas are suitable for children to play and learn in a relaxed and homely atmosphere.

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

The child minder has a good range of resources to promote children's development and to keep them engaged and stimulated. They access the resources and activities that they want to use with ease, because the main play area is organised and stocked to meet the age ranges and abilities of children cared for. The garden is well resourced with physical



and outdoor equipment, and a shed is in place for storage. Play opportunities and resources are accessible for all age ranges, and those that we saw were clean and of a good standard.

Equipment was all of a good standard and suitable for a home based child care service.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

The child minder organises her child minding business well. She reviews her service and gathers the views of parents and children, to best meet their needs and make improvements where needed.

### **Our findings**

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

All required policies for the child minding service are in place and fully implemented in practise. However, some need extending and they all need to be signed and dated to evidence their annual review. We viewed the statement of purpose and saw that it was up to date and covered all aspects of the changes to the regulations, including how the business operates. The child minder records children's accurate times of attendance on individual recording sheets. We saw evidence of contracts that were shared with parents, setting out the expectations of both parties. The child minder is aware of her responsibility to promote the Welsh Language, using it incidentally and through providing Welsh resources and activities.

Leadership is effective and the child minder complies with the relevant regulations and National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care, although some improvements are necessary.

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

The child minder annually reviews and develops her service. A Quality of Care Report is in place for 2017-2018. We saw questionnaires that parents had completed in preparation for this. They expressed their happiness with the service they receive, in particular, the variety of activities provided for their children. We noted that the report also highlighted some improvements that the child minder had made to maintenance of her property and resources. An appropriate complaints procedure is in place, but no complaints have been received.

The child minder is reflective and makes necessary improvements to her service.

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

The child minder does not employ any staff. She has undertaken relevant training in order to ensure good outcomes for children. Appropriate contracts are in place with parents and they are kept well informed of any planned holidays or absences, so that alternative child care arrangements can be arranged. The child minder has named backup in case of emergencies, including another child minder and her daughter, whom the children are

familiar with. Arrangements are in place for meeting the necessary standards and providing a reliable service to parents.

The child minder manages her time well, keeps up to date with current practice and ensures appropriate resources are in place for the service.

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

There are good partnerships with parents and these are promoted by the systems and processes in place. The child minder has contracts in place to help her to collect important information regarding the children. This helps to ensure that there is clarity about the service provided. Settling in sessions are offered when children start, to ensure that the child minder can meet children's needs and parents understand the service provided. It was evident from the paperwork completed that the child minder invests time finding out as much detail as she can about children prior to them starting, to help with smooth transitions and to support positive relationships all round. The child minder ensures that information is shared with parents, including policies and procedures and information about the children's needs and development. She uses daily diaries, to share useful information about children's day, including their basic care needs, activities and food intake.

The child minder communicates effectively and works closely with parents to support their children's well-being.

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

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

There were no areas of non-compliance noted at the previous inspection.

### **5.2 Recommendations for improvement**

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

- Record children's next steps for development;
- extend the Child Protection policy to include the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against the child minder or member of her family, and
- ensure that all policies are dated to evidence their annual review.

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

This inspection was carried out as part of our normal schedule of inspections.

- One inspector undertook one visit to the service and spent time with the child minder and three children in her care;
- we observed the child minder's interactions with the children;
- we observed daily routines and the children at play;
- we reviewed all information held by CIW;
- we examined a range of documentation, including, policies and procedures, children's files and log sheets, and
- our findings were fed back to the child minder 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	Sonia Cox
Registered maximum number of places	10
Age range of children	0-12 years
Opening hours	8:00am to 6:00pm Monday to Friday throughout the year
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	11 June 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	16 November 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 through the medium of Welsh. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's ' <i>More Than Just Words</i> ' follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.
Additional Information:	

