



Childcare Inspection Report on

Helen Croughan

Prestatyn



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Description of the service

Helen Croughan is registered to care for six children. The child minder's home is in a residential area of Prestatyn, Denbighshire. The child minder provides school pick ups from one local school. The service is provided Monday to Friday from 07.30 – 17.30. The language of the setting is English with occasional basic Welsh used. The service does not provide the Welsh language “active offer”.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children come first and experience warm, attentive and stimulating care. Their well-being and self confidence is promoted and independence encouraged. The experienced and well qualified child minder provides a suitable play environment and guides children sensitively and meets their every need. The environment is homely with a variety of toys and the child minder takes children on outings. The child minder gives the health and safety of children high priority and attends training to extend her knowledge. She organises her service well and has helpful and positive relationships with parents which ensure good outcomes for the children.

3. Improvements

Since the last inspection the child minder has:

- accessed information sessions with the Denbighshire Family Information Service and has completed mandatory training and
- has regularly reviewed and updated her policies and statement of purpose.

4. Requirements and recommendations

We made one recommendation to record some planning when preparing for activities.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children have a strong voice and make choices confidently. Children flourish because they feel secure and relaxed. They are learning valuable social skills. Children enjoy a wealth of purposeful experiences at this service, including outings. They are able to communicate effectively. Children are learning many concepts through play, for example a love of books and language skills, recognising shapes, and are developing well and becoming independent.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children speak or express themselves confidently and communicate their needs.

The children present made appropriate choices and decisions because they were aware of the options available. Children chose from four large boxes of toys and were pleased to choose books initially and then helped themselves to toys from the other boxes. They could choose to sleep at the time of their choice and went to sleep quickly when gently placed in their buggies.

Children have a strong voice and they express themselves freely because their choices are respected.

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

Children feel safe and happy and know their feelings and wishes are taken into account.

The children present were settled and contented with the child minder. We observed a child who had only been attending for two weeks separated from their parent easily and happily. Strong bonds of friendship were clearly evident between the children and the child minder as they approached her to answer their questions or for assistance with making toys work. The child minder and children spent most of the time playing and chatting happily together.

Children consistently feel safe and are happy in an atmosphere of acceptance which values and respects them as individuals.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children interact and co-operate very well with each other and the child minder.

The children co-operated well with the child minder, for example when she asked them to come for their nappies to be changed, they happily complied. Children were polite and said please and thank you even when not prompted. They tidied away when asked by the child minder to do so. Children were learning to share toys with each other which was consistent with their stages of development.

Children actively experience positive interactions with each other and the child minder.

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

Children are engaged and interested in their play.

The children enjoyed a variety of activities freely chosen and adult led. For example they enjoyed listening to musical toys and singing nursery rhymes together with the child minder. They were learning through their play, such as, naming colours and counting building blocks. We observed a child concentrating for a period of time whilst playing with a fort.

Children enthusiastically enjoy their play and learning experiences.

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

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

The children were learning about the world around them as they watched the child minder's new puppy and were encouraged to be gentle if they wanted to stroke the dog. The children were learning skills with support to help them be independent such as feeding themselves and turning the pages of a book which was being read to them. There was evidence in the child minder's daily diary that they had enjoyed a range of experiences including going to the library and local parks. A child who was relatively new to the service was happy to try new things and had also brought their own toys for comfort.

Children are developing effectively and consistently and are becoming independent.

2. Care and Development

Summary

The child minder keeps children safe and healthy in a caring atmosphere. She manages interactions consistently, being a good role model and using positive strategies. She is professional and experienced; promoting children's learning through play, providing a range of activities and meeting children's individual needs.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

The child minder implements policies and procedures which have children's well-being and safety at their centre.

There was an appropriate child protection policy in place and the child minder had recently attended training. She was clear about her responsibilities if she had a concern about a child. Whilst parents provided all food for the children, they were regularly offered a drink to help keep them hydrated. The child minder had a current First Aid certificate which meant she was able to deal with any injuries. Accidents had been recorded appropriately and parents had been asked to sign these records as confirmation that they had been informed. Medication records were observed to have been correctly completed. Children's health was also promoted as the child minder followed nappy changing procedures to avoid cross infection which we saw, including regular hand washing, especially between nappy changes.

We saw recent photos of regular outdoor play in the garden and outings to the zoo ensuring children benefit from fresh air. Contact with the new puppy was minimal and always closely supervised by the child minder. Weekly fire drills were recorded in the child minder's own diary, evidencing that children would be safely evacuated in an emergency. The child minder knew the children's personal details such as any allergies through detailed records and permissions completed by parents. The daily diaries and observation evidenced that children's own routines were adhered to, giving them security and consistency.

The child minder successfully keeps children safe and healthy.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

The child minder uses positive strategies to manage interactions.

The child minder managed interactions using positive strategies such as praise, encouragement and distraction. She was able to manage interactions well according to the principles reflected within the policy. Children were reminded to share and take turns, for example with a musical toy. They were also reminded not to throw toys and simple explanations given. Children listened and co-operated with the child minder. The child minder was a good role model in showing patience and respect.

The child minder manages interactions effectively.

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

The child minder provides a range of activities to promote children's development. She knows the children in her care very well and meets their needs.

The child minder provided a good range of experiences such as opportunities for speaking and listening, spatial awareness with a shape sorter and playing with a fort and figures. The child minder skilfully asked questions to extend the children's thinking and learning; for example, asking why the puppy's toys are different to theirs. Welsh words were used occasionally, such as Diolch and the names for colours. Children knew about zoo animals and discussions about their visit to the zoo were profitable in re enforcing their knowledge.

The child minder's own diary evidenced a number of regular outings including going for walks where children learn about the world around them and road safety. We also saw photos of children enjoying their time at a soft play centre and it was noted that the children were developing physical skills and interacting with others.

The child minder keeps individual records of children's progress. Although photos showed that the children have planned activities such as crafts, outdoor play and baking, no plans were available. The child minder knew the child well and had gained valuable information about their health and stage of development which meant that she could meet their needs in detail such as knowing when they might want to sleep.

The child minder meets children's needs effectively and promotes their play, learning and development very well.

3. Environment

Summary

The child minder provides a secure and safe environment and comprehensive written risk assessments evidence she is aware of how to keep children safe. The environment is suitable being child centred and homely giving the children suitable experiences. Good use is made of the areas inside and outside and the child minder supplements activities with outings. The quality of the games, toys and resources is sufficient to meet the developing needs of the children.

Our findings

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

We found the premises are safe and records show the child minder regularly checks and puts measures in place to ensure safety.

The premises were secure with the main entrance locked and the outdoor area safely enclosed. A record of visitors was kept in the child minder's own diary. Records showed that fire drills take place and smoke alarms checked regularly. Written risk assessments had been recently reviewed and updated which demonstrated the child minder was aware of the potential hazards and how to manage them. These included the recent addition of the risks posed by the pet dog and how to minimise them. For example having parental permissions for children to handle the dog; having the pet's inoculations up to date and the puppy was asleep in a cage for most of the time.

The child minder keeps the premises thoroughly safe and secure.

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

The child minder ensures there is sufficient space and facilities to meet children's needs.

The child minder ensured the environment was suitable to provide children with homely care. There was ample space for the children to play with their chosen toy or participate in the activities in the lounge or at the dining table. Easy chairs ensured to help children relax if necessary. Outside we saw age appropriate equipment such as a climbing frame and slide. The toilet included a step for children to use the facilities independently. Toys were stored in clear boxes at the children's height for them to access easily, and the door to the store room was also open for children to see what was available.

The child minder actively ensures the suitability of the environment.

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

The child minder provides children with clean, quality toys and equipment.

The child minder ensured there were enough toys, games and books to keep children profitably occupied. Toys and games; equipment and the furniture were clean and suitable. Notes in the child minder's own diary evidenced when toys were cleaned. We saw

multicultural toys and books were available to familiarise children with other cultures. There was an Inventory which included toys and equipment. The document was regularly reviewed and ensured the child minder was aware of any needed resources.

The child minder successfully ensures the resources and equipment are of good quality.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The child minder is experienced, well qualified, forward looking and strives to provide a quality service. Self evaluation is effective and improvements are made considering all involved. Resources are managed well and the child minder ensures she has sufficient on going training, support and resources. Partnerships with parents and others are effective for the benefit of the children and their families.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Leadership is organised and motivated, producing good outcomes for children.

The child minder provided an up-to-date statement of purpose that reflects an accurate picture of the service provided. The practice that we saw during the visit was consistent with the information in the statement of purpose. The child minder was competent and she has considerable experience of working with children being a registered child minder for about 25 years. We read a sample of the child minder's policies and information had been provided that they had recently been reviewed. The child minder had ensured that all legal requirements are met such as sharing information with us and up to date public liability insurance.

Leadership is successful and forward looking.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

The child minder has systems in place to assess the service provided.

The child minder had produced an annual review of the quality of care for 2017 / 2018, highlighting special events and improvements made, for example accessing additional information sessions. Parents' views had been obtained in questionnaires and all responses were very positive about the child minder. The document identified areas for improvement such as continuing to upgrade resources and printing photos more regularly.

Effective self evaluation takes place and improvements made.

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

The child minder manages her service and is organised.

The child minder takes her professional development seriously and ensures courses are completed regularly such as child protection, food hygiene and first aid. The child minder is qualified with a level 4 qualification in child care learning and development which is beyond the level required. The child minder had attended information session about matters such as qualifications and children's dental hygiene. She kept sufficient information about an

assistant who is used occasionally when numbers exceed 4 or 5. The child minder used the internet to good effect when children wanted to know what a marshmallow was; she was able to quickly show them a photo on her phone. The safeguarding of children was ensured as Disclosure and Barring Service checks for all in the household who are over 16 years of age were current. All records were up to date and in organised files.

The management of the service is very effective.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

The child minder has good working relationships with parents and other agencies.

The child minder had written information from parents about the care of their child which was up to date. Parents had been consulted and had given written permissions, for example, for their child to have contact with the puppy. Parents and the child minder exchanged information verbally and by using a daily diary about their child's day. We observed a parent asking the child minder for advice and it was clear some parents rely on her experience to help them. Good, clear communication was observed and the parent was happy. Information about courses was sought from agencies such as the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years, and the Denbighshire Family Information Service.

The child minder consistently understands the importance of working with parents and others to ensure children's needs are met.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

We made one recommendation to record some planning when preparing for activities.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full, inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. Two hours notice was given to ensure the child minder's availability. One inspector visited the service on 02 October 2018 from 11.30 until 14.45.

We:

- inspected a sample of documents and policies;
- observed practices and completed observations to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care being provided;
- spoke to the children;
- inspected the areas used and
- reported our findings to the child minder.

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	Helen Croughan
Registered maximum number of places	6
Age range of children	0 – 12 years
Opening hours	Monday - Friday 07.30 – 17.30
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	27 October 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	02 October 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 service does not provide an 'Active offer' of the Welsh language. 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:	