



Childcare Inspection Report on

Sonia James

Denbigh



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Description of the service

Sonia James (Chuckles) is registered to child mind from a spacious detached house situated on a residential estate close to the town of Denbigh. She provides a service throughout the year on Monday to Thursday from 8.00am to 5.00pm. She is currently registered to care for up to ten children under the age of 12 years. The child minder has a dedicated playroom and two distinct areas of garden for children to play.

The child minder promotes the use of the Welsh language using basic Welsh with the children but does not provide the “Active Offer” in relation to the Welsh language.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

The children are very settled and enjoy the space and opportunities to develop their play, learning and social skills during their time with the child minder. The child minder has established a good routine and is mindful of promoting healthy lifestyles and keeping children safe. The child minder is very experienced and has a good knowledge of child development. The premises are very clean with indoor space which can be used in a flexible way and good outdoor spaces providing different surfaces for a variety of play activities. The child minder has an excellent range of resources which are of good quality. The service is well organized but further information is required for the annual review of the quality of care.

2. Improvements

The child minder has redecorated the conservatory and purchased new toys.

3. Requirements and recommendations

We made some recommendations relating to policies, risk assessments, child development records and fire safety.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children are able to make choices because toys and activities are easily accessible. Children are very settled and have a good relationship with the child minder. There are good opportunities for child initiated play or organized activities and outdoor play is a regular feature of the day. Children are often taken out to places within the local community to provide additional activities. Children are familiar with the routine and are provided with opportunities to increase their independence.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children are listened to and are able to make choices from the toys which are available to them.

We saw children making choices during the day. The older children chose to spend time indoors colouring, reading and playing with the Lego. The younger children were offered choices when they came in and one chose to play with the Lego whilst two children played with two garages and a selection of cars.

We saw a comment in the daily diary which stated the child minder had a chat with the children about what they wanted to do in the school holidays. The child minder said the children had requested setting up a shop and a hairdressers.

Children are supported to make choices.

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

Children are settled and good routines are established to provide consistency of care.

One child had only been attending for a short time, but was very settled and played well with the other children. One child who has some issues around mealtimes, was supported by the child minder to eat a meal and some fruit. Children enjoyed having opportunities to engage with some of the animals. They fed the tortoise and watched him eat and held or stroked the rabbit. Children who had slept during the afternoon were given cuddles and reassurance until they were sufficiently awake to want to play. There is a routine for the day which helps the children to settle, but this is flexible enough to change during school holidays and to accommodate the weather.

Children feel comfortable, relaxed and valued.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children are learning to manage their behaviour and take turns.

The five children present were different ages, but the three youngest children played outside for the first part of the morning sharing the bikes, cars and scooters and the role play outfits. We saw two children play with a garage each, but share a box of cars between them without the need for adult intervention. We watched two children take turns to be the

hairdresser and the “client” using the hairdressing equipment. Children were encouraged to use good manners when passing toys or when receiving food and drink and were given a lot of praise for doing so.

Children are learning how to express their emotions appropriately.

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

Children are offered good opportunities to stimulate their learning and development.

Children were provided with good opportunities to learn and to be active throughout the day. We saw from the daily diary, children have opportunities for craft activities, jigsaws, role play, water and sand and they were able to go outside in the garden. We saw children playing on a variety of wheeled toys on the paved area of the garden and later in the morning with the slides and rockers on the grass. Children are taken out within the local community and further afield. They recently enjoyed a trip to the RSPB site in Conwy to observe the birds and to use the play area.

Children are active and curious learners.

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

Children’s independence is promoted and they are given opportunities to develop physical, social, creative and imaginative skills.

Children are offered opportunities to develop skills to support their independence. We saw one child given support and encouragement to use the “big slide” to encourage using steps. We saw an entry in the daily diary which stated one child had learned to tie their shoe laces and to juggle.

Children are offered a good variety of opportunities to support their development. We saw children engaged in physical play, threading cotton reels to develop small manipulative play and using the shop, cars and hairdressers to develop their imagination.

Children are offered a wide range of opportunities indoors and out for play which support their development.

2. Care and Development

Summary

The child minder has policies and procedures in place to support her practice in keeping children safe and healthy. She is aware of the needs of the children in her care and is able to manage interactions in accordance with their age and stage of development.

The child minder is aware of the progress of the children but does not keep a written record for each individual child.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

The child minder has policies to support her practices in keeping children safe and healthy.

The child minder has a child protection/safeguarding policy and refreshed her knowledge of safeguarding in 2015. She was clear in her responsibilities in relation to protecting children and who to contact if necessary. Each child has a book to record accidents, incidents and medication, but the book has not been used for incidents and we discussed what should be noted. The required information for accidents and medication was recorded appropriately?. The child minder used wet wipes for cleaning hands for snack whilst out in the garden, but children washed their hands before lunch and dried them using individual hand towels, reducing the risk of cross infection..

Children have a healthy and varied diet with a cooked meal provided at lunch time. Meals are recorded in the daily diary and children have chicken dinner, haddock and spinach pie, tuna and pasta bake and rainbow rice as an example. A sweet is provided and these include bananas and custard, yoghurt and fruit and rice pudding. The children had cottage pie, peas and carrots for lunch followed by jelly and ice cream after being given a choice of sweet.

The child minder has the knowledge, experience and training to keep children safe, but recording of information could be improved.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

The child minder is working in accordance with her policies and procedures to manage behaviour and provide positive interactions.

We saw lots of examples of positive interactions during the day. The child minder remained calm throughout the session and used her voice to provide soft reassurance for a child who was upset. The child minder made sure the children were occupied throughout the day, bringing out a selection of toys or asking them which toys they wanted to play with. It was also helpful to have sufficient toys such as two garages and two boxes of Lego to allow children to play alongside one another. Children received a good deal of praise for playing well together and accomplishing tasks.

The child minder is approachable and sensitive to the needs and experiences of individual children.

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

The child minder is qualified in child care and is aware of the progress of the children, but this information should be recorded.

The child minder managed the different needs of the children well and made sure activities were suitable. The older children were offered different activities such as colouring and a puzzle book. They were looking forward to a planned activity of painting with acrylic onto plastic mason jars. . When finished, this would provide children with individual containers encouraging them to drink more water particularly in the hot weather.

The shop and hairdressers requested as part of the holiday activities were provided in the conservatory part of the playroom. The children had made signs for both "shops" and future activities included making "sweets" to fill some sweet jars. We saw mobiles of fish, starfish and seaweed hanging from the ceiling as part of an activity about the sea. The children had been to the pet shop to buy more fish for the fish tank.

The child minder does not record children's progress or skill development and so is unable to provide written evidence to demonstrate she is meeting individual needs. We did however hear her giving verbal feedback to a parent about the changes occurring for one child around mealtimes.

The child minder ensures parents are informed verbally about their child's achievements and development, however there should be written notes. Parents are kept regularly informed about the child's well-being.

3. Environment

Summary

The child minder keeps the premises safe and secure. She provides a clean and well maintained space for children to play both indoors and outside. Toys and equipment are well maintained and provide a good range for different types of play and age groups

Our findings

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

The child minder provides an environment which is clean and well maintained and where children can play safely.

The child minder has two adjoining rooms dedicated for play when children are present. These can be used as one room or divided by using glass doors. The door at the rear of the house is used as the main entrance. This door was open to allow air to flow through the playroom, but the child minder remained mindful of where each child was when in the playroom. Both outdoor play areas are fully enclosed with fencing or conifer hedging to allow children to play safely.

The child minder carries out fire drills each month with the date recorded in the daily diary. Further information is required to meet the NMS (National Minimum Standard). The child minder has a fire blanket which was stored in a cupboard near to the cooker and would be difficult to access and use in an emergency.

The gas appliances had been tested in July 2018. Risk assessments have been completed which record the risk and the action taken. There are however no written risk assessments for any outings.

The child minder makes sure the premises are clean and safe.

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

The child minder provides different areas for children to play and learn in a comfortable and well maintained environment.

The child minder has provided a dedicated space for play which allows for different types of play. The space includes comfortable adult seating which was used by the older children to read books. A space is provided for role play, with this area currently set up as a shop and hairdressers. There is sufficient space for children to play on the floor and a table and chairs for craft activities and eating. Children who require a sleep are placed on their own quilt on the floor in the play room, while space is available in the adjoining conservatory for other children to play. There is a toilet off the playroom allowing easy access for the children and encouraging them to be independent.

Outdoors, there is a large paved area which is used for wheeled toys and sand and water play. In addition, there is a grassed area to the side and front of the house which is fully enclosed and is used for ball games, slides and rockers.

The child minder ensures the environment is suitable. It is used flexibly and creates a good sense of security and belonging

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

The child minder provides a good range of toys and resources to meet the needs of children.

We saw a range of good quality toys on display in the playroom and others were stored in baskets on a high shelf in the playroom. Other toys are kept in a shed and are brought out in rotation to provide some variety to children's play. A rack is used to display books so children can easily see and access them. In addition to the toys, we noted in the diary, the children were provided with a number of throws/sheets/blankets to make tents outside.

They enjoyed the play and it also helped to provide some shade on a hot day. We were told new toys purchased this year included puzzles, water trays, a bubble machine and a selection of games including connect four.

The child minder has provided a number of water trays and a pool for children to use to provide cooling activities during the hot weather.

The child minder makes sure that children have access to a wide range of good quality, play and learning resources indoors and outdoors.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The child minder has statutory policies, but information about reviewing and monitoring is required. The statement of purpose provides all of the information parents require about the service offered. The child minder has made use of feedback from parents and children in her quality of care review. She has developed good relationships with parents and provides information to them on a regular basis.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The child minder is organized and files are well maintained.

The child minder has the required policies and procedures in place to support the service. There is no evidence to show when policies or the statement of purpose have been reviewed and it would be useful to date all documentation. The child minder was reminded of the GDPR Laws 2018 (General Data Protection Regulation) and the need to consider this in relation to her child minding business.

The child minder needs to ensure the service is evidence based and up to date with current legislation.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

The child minder seeks feedback from parents and children but further monitoring and self evaluation is required.

The child minder had provided a quality of care review for 2017 and is due to complete one for 2018. Questionnaires were sent out to parents and the review states families were very happy with the high standard of care their child received. They were pleased with the detailed communication each day and the excellent varied meals which are healthy and nutritious. Children had been asked to draw pictures and also write down their likes and dislikes. Children liked the after school snacks including hot chocolate on a cold winter's day. They liked craft activities and enjoyed having lots of animals around. The children said they would like more time to play after school before their parents arrive. The review was limited to the comments from parents and children and should be more reflective of the service provided.

The child minder seeks feedback on her own practice, but should be more reflective.

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

The child minder manages current resources effectively.

The child minder has a child care qualification and has attended statutory training courses. Since the last inspection the child minder has updated her first aid qualification and completed a safeguarding course. DBS (disclosure and barring service) documents for all members of the family were available and current.

The child minder is aware of the statutory requirements to complete training and maintain a current DBS.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

The child minder has a good relationship with parents and keeps them verbally informed about their child's well-being and progress.

Parents have recorded they were happy with the service provided. Parents of younger children are offered the option of having written information about their child's day. The parents of children who are currently attending receive verbal information. We saw one parent receive feedback when collecting their child and it was evident there was a good rapport.

We were told of one child, who is now fourteen and still enjoys attending on occasion. This effectively demonstrates the relationship established and maintained by children and parents.

The child minder works in partnership with parents with good communication

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

We recommend the child minder should consider;

- To include a date on the statement of purpose and policies to evidence when they have been reviewed;
- record when children arrive with marks and existing injuries;
- to use the review of quality of care to evaluate the service more fully;
- the fire blanket should be fitted in accordance with the recommendations of the fire service;
- fire drills should be recorded and records kept to the satisfaction of the Fire Safety Officer;
- the latest data protection guidance and
- providing written risk assessments for specific outings.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full unannounced inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of Inspections. One inspector visited the service on Monday 6 August 2018 from 9:40 am to 15.15pm.

We:

- We observed the children and the care they received;
- we spoke to the children;
- we spoke to the child minder;
- we looked at some records including policies, procedures, children's records and registers and
- we inspected the premises and the quality of toys and resources.

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	Sonia James
Registered maximum number of places	10
Age range of children	0 to 12 years
Opening hours	Mon to Thurs 8.00am to 5.00pm
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	30 September 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	6 August 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?	No
Additional Information:	