



Childcare Inspection Report on

**Helen Thomas
Cardiff**



Date of Publication

25 February 2019

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Description of the service

Helen Thomas is based in Morganstown outside Cardiff. Her service is provided from her home and operates four days a week from 7.30am until 5.30pm Monday to Wednesday and 7.30am to 4.30pm on Thursday. The child minder is registered to care for a maximum of eight children and she has been registered since April 2002. The service is provided through the medium of English with incidental Welsh used every day.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall Assessment

We found that children using this service enjoy their time and are happy to attend. They are able to make choices over their play and they have access to a wide and suitable range of play resources. Children enjoy a warm relationship with the childminder in an environment which is tailored to meet their needs. Parents and children benefit from a reliable service. Children are safe, can learn, play, and become independent.

2. Improvements

None noted at this inspection.

3. Requirements and recommendations

No issues of non compliance were evident at this service and no recommendations have been necessary.

1. Well-being

Summary

The children were happy and confident they enjoyed a range of activities and benefitted from the calm and reassuring care provided by the childminder. Children enjoyed the warm and comfortable child focussed environment which enhanced their play and learning experiences. The children responded positively to guidance from the childminder and we saw her praise good behaviour, good manners and sharing. Children are able to relax and learn from a child minder who is a positive role model.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children are encouraged to speak and express themselves and their views are valued by the child minder. They are encouraged to make choices about their play. Children were happy to play with their favourite toys and knew where everything was kept in the play room. Children were able to make choices about their toys and chose their favourites which included dressing up as Princess Nita playing with Buzz Lightyear and then a game of hide and seek amongst themselves. Children were happy, excited and confident that any questions or requests would be responded to by the child minder, even though they may have to wait if another child was talking.

Children are able to make choices and their voices are heard.

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

Children are secure, comfortable, happy and relaxed in the care of a child minder with whom they have developed a warm relationship. Strong links have developed between the children and the child minder and we saw that they were praised and encouraged in all their activities. We saw that the children were happy and confident to approach the child minder and chat with her whilst they played. The children expressed enjoyment, and we saw them smiling and laughing amongst themselves. Children were happy to sing songs which included "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" and their chosen song with actions "Head Shoulders Knees and Toes" which resulted in laughter and delight. During the afternoon children painted using stamps and stencils and were happy with their results. The children knew each other well and played together as friends and were complimented on their good behavior and sharing. One child told us the best thing about coming to "Helen" was "Helen" The other children said they enjoyed "everything"

Children are well settled, happy, confident, and feel valued.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children manage their behaviour, co operate, take turns and share. The children were well behaved, polite with only a few minor squabbles which they sorted out with some gentle help from the child minder. They enjoyed interacting together and with the child minder during the inspection. The children also interacted with us and asked questions or showed how they could jump and explained how toys like Buzz Light-year worked. We saw that they showed affection for each other and the child minder either holding hands or with spontaneous hugs.

Children manage their behaviour and enjoy warm and positive interactions.

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

Children are interested and excited in their play which is very much led by them. They were happy to learn from the child minder how to dress up and put their costumes on and learn about colours in both Welsh and English. Children enjoyed learning and used the painting stamp and stencils and named the colours they wanted to use for their creations. One child was especially pleased to wash and dry the equipment at the sink. We saw children laughing and smiling during all of their activities and they were happy, settled and content.

Children enjoy their play and learning, sustaining interest in their play and gaining a sense of achievement from it.

1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent

Children showed their independence by bringing out the resources they wanted and accessing the bathroom when needed, remembering to wash and wipe their hands using their own different coloured towels provided. They were happy to tidy up toys and to put wet wipes in the bin or get tissues to blow their own noses. Children were responsive to help from the childminder during their activities and were eager to learn. We saw pictures of the children on the beach making tunnels out of sand and paddling in the sea.

Children are making progress, and are confident and independent

2. Care and Development

Summary

The child minder provides a good variety of activities which the children enjoy and find interesting. She respects the children in her care and the decisions they make. Children remain safe and healthy because the child minder has a good understanding of her responsibilities, enjoys caring for the children and her knowledge of their families enhance their overall well-being.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

The child minder ensures that the service's policies and procedures are implemented to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the children in her care. The child minder had good knowledge of child protection issues and talked us through the process of escalating any concerns. The child minder promotes good hygiene and the children were gently reminded to wash and dry their hands after using the bathroom before and after meals or if they had sticky hands. The child minder promotes healthy eating and ensures the children have fruit, vegetables and yoghurts every day. The child minder had a good system to record medication that is administered, along with a record of any accidents. The child minder told us she explained about fire drills so that children were familiar with the procedure, and knew what to do in an emergency and kept a record of actual drills carried out. The child minder keeps clear records of children's attendance.

The child minder keeps children safe and healthy and there are good policies and procedures in place to support this.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

The child minder is a good role model. She is calm and reassuring and uses a consistent approach to managing behaviour. We did see some issues of unwanted behaviour during the inspection and the child minder was consistent in her management explaining why the behaviour was not acceptable. The child said sorry and was quite happy to have a cuddle. The child minder was warm and positive in guiding the children. We saw her praise good behaviour, good manners and sharing both in English and Welsh, which the children responded to with smiles and laughter.

The child minder manages interactions effectively and this has a positive impact on children's well-being.

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

The child minder provides a nurturing and caring environment in which children's free choice of play is promoted and their needs are met. The child minder responded to the children with affection and the children were very comfortable in her care. The child minder plans activities ahead but does not have a fixed routine. Children often visit the beach, walk to the local garden centre to see the animals and plants and attend a local toddler group run by the child minder and other childminders on a Thursday morning. Annual celebrations are captured through the children's art and craft work and they take home their work for parents to see. We saw pictures of children painting and colouring cards for birthdays, Christmas and Halloween. The child minder uses her diary to record children's progress and talked about her knowledge of the foundation phase in planning activities and informing next steps.

The child minder has a good understanding of children's individual needs and effectively promotes children's well-being through play and learning.

3. Environment

Summary

Children benefit from an environment which meets their needs. They are able to access a variety of resources indoors and are familiar with the lay out of the play area. Children are comfortable and have suitable furniture to use when playing. The sitting room and adjoining dining room is used for most activities, general free play, dancing or singing. Messy play, creating cards or paintings takes place in the play area adjoining the kitchen. The living area is available for bigger toys also and the child minder has maximized the space available to the children. The garden is safe and secure with a wide range of outdoor toys.

Our findings

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

The child minder ensures that all areas used by children are safe and well maintained. The child minder had identified and addressed risks in her home and risk assessments are undertaken. The front door was locked and a visitor's book was available to sign. Smoke alarms and a fire blanket were in place and accessible, and evacuation drills explained to the children. All insurance cover was seen and was up to date.

The child minder checks and ensures the safety of the environment for children in her care.

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

The child minder provides an environment which is well decorated and is very welcoming, with space available for children to play and learn. The child minder has designed the layout of the play area to maximize the space for learning or playing. Children can move from one activity to another easily and enjoy appropriate table and chairs for eating. Comfortable furniture in the living area is used for relaxing, reading books or singing songs together with the child minder or just for a cuddle. Children have access to a wide range of toys and equipment that are suitable to their needs.

The child minder provides an environment which is well resourced and suitable for children to explore and enjoy.

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

The child minder routinely quality checks the toys and resources so that they are safe and well maintained. The resources and equipment available are up to date and reflect the

popular trends of the day for both boys and girls. Children also benefit from new books and toys whenever possible and the child minder's network includes parents who pass on unwanted toys of very high quality. Resources meet the requirements of learning through the foundation phase.

The child minder rigorously checks to ensure resources and equipment are of a good quality.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The child minder provides a very reliable service that is well organised. A good range of policies and procedures are in place which outline the service and this ensures that parents are well informed about what to expect before the children are placed in the child minder's care.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The service is well run, organised and efficient. The child minder's Statement of Purpose is clear and she confirmed that it is shared with parents. Policies and procedures are also available for parents to read or take home and are reviewed annually. Children's development is captured and is shared with parents from the child minder's diary. From the records available we saw that the child minder has a good knowledge of the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care and she ensures her policies are appropriate and meet requirements. The child minder has good recording systems in place in relation to recording accidents and incidents and the administration of medication

The service is run efficiently through good leadership and management.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

The childminder reviews her service annually in order to complete the quality of care report. She has devised questionnaires for both parents and children which focus on the key themes outlined in the inspection process. All comments were positive and we saw cards and letters from parents showing their appreciation to the child minder for the care she provided.

Leadership and management is seen as a priority for the child minder and is reflected in her documentation and the responses from children and parents.

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

The child minder is effective in managing her own time and has a wide range of skills to provide a home-based child care service. She plans activities responsively to ensure that children's needs are always met in a timely manner and the calm and relaxed care environment has a positive impact on the children's mood and their interactions. There are contingency plans in place to deal with emergencies. The child minder has strong links with other local childminders who have a reciprocal agreement in place to help should it

become necessary. The child minder and members of her household have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks in place. A refresher course in safeguarding training was booked for January, hygiene and paediatric first aid training was up to date. The child minder is keen to review her own training needs and develop her knowledge and regularly checks if there are any courses she can attend which may help to improve her service.

The service is well organized and this has a positive impact on children's experiences.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Children's needs and preferences are identified well and parents know how these will be met. The child minder told us that when a child first starts with her a child record form is completed by the parents. This outlines all the information necessary to be able to provide care to the children and meet their needs, such as the child's likes and dislikes, routines and development. We examined these records and found them to be up to date and in very good order with detailed information on all children cared for. The child minder gives verbal feedback each day to parents and shows them her detailed diary if they ask specifically at any time. Parents' responses to the childminder's questionnaires reflected the good partnership arrangements in place and how the parents really value the opportunities, experiences and genuine care afforded to their children.

Partnerships are strong.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

None

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 for approximately four hours. We:

- Observed the children and the care they received;
- talked to two children;
- looked at a wide range of records;
- had discussion with the child minder;
- looked at responses from parents in respect of the care their children received in response to the questionnaires from the quality of care review.

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	Helen Thomas
Registered maximum number of places	8
Age range of children	0-12 years
Opening hours	7:30am to 5:00pm Monday to Thursday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	1 June 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	20 November 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early year's 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 which does not provide an "Active Offer" of the Welsh Language, it does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh Language needs of children who use or intend to use the service. We recommend that the service provider considers the Welsh Government's "More Than Just Words" strategic guidance for Welsh Language in Social care.
Additional Information:	