



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Alexandra Cooper-Gault**

**Holywell**



**Date Inspection Completed**

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<b>Ratings</b>	<b>What the ratings mean</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	These are services which are committed to ongoing improvement with many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice and innovation. These services deliver high quality care and support and are able to demonstrate that they make a strong contribution to improving children's well-being
<b>Good</b>	These are services with strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement. They consistently exceed basic requirements, delivering positive outcomes for children and actively promote their well-being.
<b>Adequate</b>	These are services where strengths outweigh areas for improvement. They are safe and meet basic requirements but improvements are required to promote well-being and improve outcomes for children.
<b>Poor</b>	These are services where important areas for improvement outweigh strengths and there are significant examples of non-compliance that impact negatively on children's well-being. Where services are poor we will take enforcement action and issue a non-compliance notice

## Description of the service

Alex Cooper-Gault child minds from her family home near Holywell, where she lives with her husband and four children aged between five months and 15 years. She provides care Monday to Friday, 08:00 to 17:30, closing for bank holidays and some school holidays with prior arrangement. She is registered to care for six children under 12 years of age, and this number includes the care of two of her own children. English is the main language used. This is a service that does not provide the Welsh Language 'Active Offer'.

## Summary

Theme	Rating
<a href="#">Well-being</a>	GOOD
<a href="#">Care and Development</a>	GOOD
<a href="#">Environment</a>	GOOD
<a href="#">Leadership and Management</a>	GOOD

### 1. Overall assessment

Children are very happy, settled, and enjoy spending time with this child minder. They develop a range of skills as she plans stimulating opportunities for children that support their play, learning and development. The child minder is committed to her role, ensures children are safe, and that healthy lifestyles are promoted. The child minder manages interactions well, positively engaging with the children and meeting their individual needs. The environment is safe and secure and provides a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere for children and visitors. All areas are utilised for the children's benefit and are equipped with good quality, age appropriate resources. The child minder effectively uses self-evaluation to make improvements and develops positive relationships with parents.

### 2. Improvements

Since the previous inspection, the child minder has made improvements to her home and redecorated. Risk assessments have been completed for all areas used for child minding. She has notified Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) of all changes to her service. The use of online notifications forms online was recommended at the previous inspection and the child minder is more familiar with their use and of CIW online facilities. New play and learning resources had been purchased and equipment such as a double buggy.

### 3. Requirements and recommendations

We discussed two recommendations with the child minder in relation to the outdoor environment and procedures pertinent to nappy changing.

# 1. Well-being

**GOOD**

## **Summary**

Children are very happy, settled, and feel secure as they have formed bonds of affection with the child minder, her own children and other minded children. They enjoy activities available to them with toddlers and pre-school children keen to learn. They are developing their social skills, are learning to take turns, and share with their peers. Toddlers, though still very young are reminded to consider each other's feelings. Children are encouraged to do things for themselves and are learning independence skills well.

## **Our findings**

The three children aged five months to two years, were confident to make choices and express themselves. A wide variety of toys were available to them, which were easily accessible and stored in a manner which enabled them to choose independently. Children were comfortable communicating with the child minder in their own way, and confident to ask or make non-verbal gestures to indicate what they wanted. Children often fetched things off of a bookshelf or made their way into the lounge to choose other boxes of play and learning resources. Babies and very young toddlers were able to crawl around or lie on the floor amongst suitable play toys carefully placed within their reach.

Children had positive relationships with the child minder, and played happily together. They approached her for comfort and were eager to involve her in their play and learning. For example, the children shared books, played educational games and went to sit on her lap when they were tired. It was also evident the children felt valued as their achievements were celebrated. For example, children smiled happily when they received praise for their efforts during games and when a toddler pulled themselves up to a standing position by a chair.

Children were interested in the activities and resources available to them. They had fun and enjoyed their play. For example, one child liked the cars and diggers, another playing dominoes and learning to match the colours. Children were able to direct their own play and follow their interest. For example, completing jigsaw puzzles, and participating in a game. Plenty of time was given during activities to ensure children were able to complete them as independently as possible and at their own pace.

Children were encouraged to do things for themselves, take responsibility and be involved in tasks. For example, the oldest child helped to tidy up before getting new toys out to play with. Toddlers were supervised by the child minder at snack and meal times, however they ate their lunches independently from their lunch boxes at the table, and fetched their own water bottles. Children have opportunities to develop self-help skills in readiness for nursery school.

## 2. Care and Development

**GOOD**

### Summary

The child minder prioritises the need to safeguard children. She is fully aware of her own policies and procedures and the reasons why they need to be followed. She knows the children she cares for extremely well and provides kind and gentle support, especially when settling children in. She promotes positive interactions and responds to their individual needs effectively. The child minder has the necessary skills and qualifications which enable her to provide stimulating and age appropriate activities which promote children's all-round development.

### Our findings

The child minder had a good understanding of how to protect children and of safeguarding procedures. Daily attendances were recorded. She told us she felt she was suitably prepared to deal with accidents and incidents should they occur, as she had attended relevant first aid and child protection training. Parents had been requested to complete existing injury sheets if their children arrive with visible injuries and they had also been asked to sign accident records following verbal updates from the child minder. Most children had practiced fire evacuations. Fire drills had been recorded in the child minding diary and the Fire Brigade had visited the service on two occasions to fit smoke alarms, check the premises and to provide extinguishers. The child minder has a 'no screen time/internet policy' meaning children have no access to the internet whilst with the child minder. Documentation is in place to minimise the risk of harm when being transported in the child minding car and that she is aware of the weight restrictions of the car seats used.

The child minder promoted healthy lifestyles as she provided opportunities for children to be physically active and offered children healthy snacks. The child minder breastfed her own child frequently during the morning acting as a positive role model to the youngsters in her care. Parents were encouraged to provide healthy lunch boxes and children drank water from their beakers throughout the morning. We observed the nappy changing procedure and found that, although procedures were mostly in line with current best practice, the child minder did not use a paper covering on the changing mat to further reduce the risk of spreading infection. We recommended the child minder reviews her nappy changing policy and procedures.

The child minder had formed close bonds with the children in her care, one child was settling in well and was happy to be with the child minder and other children. She spoke in a friendly and relaxed manner to the children, showing genuine warmth and affection especially when the child became over tired and reluctant to sleep. These close bonds provided children with a sense of belonging and increased their self-esteem. Plenty of praise was given throughout the morning for positive behaviour, completing activities,

putting toys away and trying new things. The behaviour management policy detailed how unwanted behaviour would be dealt with in a positive way and the child minder consistently implemented this. For example when a child put their feet in a storage box the child minder asked the child quietly to remove them because she didn't want them to break it, the child smiled and responded immediately by climbing out. Children were successfully redirected to other activities they enjoyed when they became restless, for example, when overtired and showing little interest in an activity the child minder pointed them in the direction of their favourite cars, read a book to them or offered a cuddle.

The child minder was familiar with each child's interests and was able to suggest and develop activities accordingly. She told us she does not plan activities in detail but goes along with children's wishes, because of the age of the children. Detailed personal diaries and the child minder's own diary had been kept outlining essential information about children's time with her. The child minder also shared information with parents verbally or via text messages informing them of their child's progress and about their day. Through conversations with the child minder and from looking at children's diaries, it was clear she provided a variety of spontaneous play and learning activities indoors and outdoors, and in the local community, for example walking in the woods and puddle hunting. A range of activities had been laid out for the children to move freely between them, with a good range of sensory, small world and educational games on the day we visited.

### **3. Environment**

**GOOD**

#### **Summary**

The child minder provides care in a clean, comfortable environment. She ensures children have access to a range of interesting indoor and outdoor equipment and areas. Resources are of good quality and appropriate for the children's needs. Risks are identified and effective measures are put in place to manage or eliminate any potential hazards to children's safety.

#### **Our findings**

The premises were secure when we arrived, we were asked to show identification and the door was secured behind us to prevent unauthorised access. Outdoor areas were surrounded by a fence with a secure gate. The child minder ensured appropriate measures were in place to keep children safe in the event of an emergency. The child minder had identified risks within the premises and these were included within risk assessments showing how they were managed and where possible eliminated, for example by using safety gates, ensuring floor areas are kept clear and the wearing of high visibility tabards on outings. The child minder no longer has dogs on the premises. All areas used for child minding purposes indoors were clean and tidy.

The premises had recently been decorated and a new kitchen installed, resulting in the rooms used being clean, bright and welcoming. The child minder ensured children had access to furniture and equipment suitable to meet their needs. For example, children had use of a playroom/dining room as well as a sitting room for quiet play, watching TV and sleeping. They had appropriate space in which to play and comfortable furniture to rest on. They were able to sit at a dining room table on chairs, whilst a highchair was used for a young baby. Low level bookshelves and storage units were used in all areas, enabling children to access most toys and resources independently. Children also had access to a secure outdoor area where they could play, which contained large play equipment.

Toys and resources were clean and in good condition. A wide range of toys and resources were available for children including dolls, jigsaws, games, craft materials, toy cars, diggers and play mats. Multicultural resources included small world play sets with a variety of figures, dressing up clothes and books. However, resources outdoors could have been stored more appropriately when not in use. We recommended outdoor areas were kept tidy.

Toilet training equipment was available in the bathroom to promote children's independence. One highchair, booster seats and rockers were available for children to use. Having the relevant equipment ensures independence and aids children's development. All equipment used was safe, clean and in good working order.



## **4. Leadership and Management**

**GOOD**

### **Summary**

The child minder has returned from maternity leave in June 2019. She is experienced in child care and suitably qualified. She fully understands what improvements need to be made to run her service effectively and leadership of the service has progressed well since registering in 2017. Policies and procedures are in place for all aspects of the service. Information is shared regularly with parents to ensure the registration process is smooth and meaningful, and thereafter ensuring parents are kept up to date with their child's progress, routines and needs.

### **Our findings**

The child minder had produced a comprehensive statement of purpose which had been brought up to date following a period of voluntary suspension. It gave a clear description of the service offered and provided parents with all the information they needed to decide if the service could meet their requirements. Policies and procedures were in place for all aspects of the service. The child minder told us these had been reviewed and we saw various post it notes attached to the policies indicating changes made and when. Effective systems are in place for obtaining relevant information about children before they start, to ensure the child minder can accurately meet the individual children's needs. The child minder told us a parent pack is e-mailed to parents and they are asked to acknowledge receipt and read through them.

The child minder monitors her service and makes improvements by gathering feedback from questionnaires sent out to parents each year. The child minder also told us she gathers children's views, when possible, about the service using verbal feedback and discussions. This information is collated and used to form a report outlining a summary of the feedback and an action plan for any improvements planned in response. The home improvements and redecoration was part of the child minders past action plan.

Documents were filed appropriately and were easily accessible. The disclosure and barring service checks for all adults living at the premises were current and satisfactory.

The child minder has good relationships with parents. Information in daily diaries and photographs, were regularly shared. The child minder told us she took children to places of interest within the community, such as local toddler groups and library. Parents provided positive feedback in questionnaires and appreciated the service offered.

## **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 the following recommendations:

- To ensure outdoor areas are kept tidy, and
- the nappy changing policy and procedures are reviewed to fully reflect guidelines recommended by Public Health Wales.

## 6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full, unannounced inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections and following a period of voluntary suspension. One inspector visited the service on 10 September 2019.

We:

- inspected a sample of documentation and policies;
- observed practice and completed observations to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care being provided by the child minder;
- spoke to the children and the child minder;
- looked at the areas used by children and resources on the day of our inspection, and
- we gave detailed feedback of what we had found and what needed to be addressed.

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	Alexandra Cooper-Gault
Registered maximum number of places	6
Age range of children	0 – 12 years
Opening hours	Monday to Friday 08:00 – 17:30
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	27 July 2016
Dates of inspection visit	10 September 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 the Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.
Additional Information:	

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