

Childcare Inspection Report on

Martina Thomas

Neath



Date of Publication

Thursday, 13 December 2018

Welsh Government © Crown copyright 2018.

You may use and re-use the information featured in this publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government License. You can view the Open Government License, on the National Archives website or you can write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk
You must reproduce our material accurately and not use it in a misleading context.

Description of the service

Mrs Thomas was registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in September 2006. She operates from her large detached house in the Llandarcy area of Neath. She is registered for 10 children under the age of 12 years. Mrs Thomas works alongside her husband Christopher Thomas, who is also a registered child minder, and is also registered for 10 children. They provide a child care service from 8am to 5:30pm Monday to Thursday and 8am to 4pm on Friday. The main language spoken is English.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

We, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), found that children attending the setting are happy with their learning experiences. They are cared for by a caring and consistent child minder who meets their individual needs. They benefit from a child-centred service. The child minder provides a good service overall. Parents are happy with their children's progress and the service that is provided. Some improvements are needed in the leadership and management of the service.

2. Improvements

Following the inspection visits, the child minder has:

- Amended her statement of purpose to make clear the maximum combined number of children she can care for, whilst working alongside her husband;
- added to the pet policy that children wash their hands specifically after handling the bearded dragon and that the dog has flea and worming medication;
- confirmed that she that she has completed training regarding Prevent Duty;
- added to the safeguarding policy that she can voluntarily suspend her service if an allegation is made against her and;
- added the gallery landing to the risk assessments.

3. Requirements and recommendations

We notified the child minder that she was non compliant with regards to:

- Information about other persons: all other persons;
this is because one adult residing at the address did not have a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. We did not issue a non compliance notice on this occasion because the person did not have the required documentation relevant to the child minding address until recently. CIW and families were informed by the child minder that a DBS was not in place. A satisfactory social services check for this person was in place.
- Hazards and Safety:
This is because the gallery landing on the first floor had not been risk assessed and posed a risk of children leaning and falling over the banister. We did not

issue a non compliance notice on this occasion because the child minder actioned this prior to the publication of this report.

- Keeping of records:

This is because the child minder had not recorded children's arrival and departure times. We did not issue a non compliance notice on this occasion because there was no significant impact on the children attending.

Recommendations have been made at the end of this report.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children enjoy their play and learning at this setting and interact in a positive manner. They are confident in communicating their experiences and their choices and they feel valued and secure.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children express their views and know that their ideas will be listened to.

Children were not given a choice of fruit for snack. They were all given apple, grapes and banana; however, we were told by the child minder that they would often take the children in to a shop or market to choose different fruits for that week. She also told us that children were given a choice at breakfast and dinner, and had a choice of which park or place they want to go to, with some suggestions from her. The children had asked to go to a play centre on the day of our first visit, and were taken by the child minders. On dry days, they were able to choose to play indoors or outdoors. We heard a child asking to go outdoors on the trampoline, and this request was met.

Children have a sufficient voice at this setting.

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

Children are settled and form bonds of affection with the child minder.

Children were happy, settled and relaxed during our visit. Children were able to play together or alone as they chose, one child played alone with toys on the floor and two children sat at the table doing a painting activity and chatted to us about going to the play centre later. Children confidently approached child minder for a chat or to involve her in their play, such as when they sat together doing a threading activity. Lots of laughter was heard, especially when the children were playing hide and seek behind the storage boxes.

Children feel valued, safe and happy.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children are sensitive to the emotions of others and mostly co-operate and share with each other.

We saw children being thoughtful to each other; an older child playing an organ allowed a toddler to come alongside her and smiled as the toddler tapped the keys. We saw two children playing with wooden blocks, and they shared and took turns. Older children interacted well, chatting to each other the child minder and us. Children were beginning to share and take turns. One child asked another child to swap the

organ for theirs, and was happy when they were told they could swap over in a few minutes.

Younger children are beginning to interact in a positive manner.

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

Children are interested in their play and learning.

Children were engaged during the inspection visit. We observed children enjoying free and spontaneous play, such as when the two children decided to hide behind the storage boxes and had great fun. We observed younger children having fun whilst learning, with wooden blocks, drawing and threading. The children were excited about their trip to the play centre later. Children enjoyed being praised for their achievements such as when a child was told they were clever when threading the fruit shapes.

Children enjoy their play and learning very much.

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

Children are confident, motivated and are developing their individual skills.

Children were confident in choosing their play and developing their play independently. We saw children moving from one activity to another, and the child minder was on hand to help if needed, for example, when children had difficulty threading the fruit pieces. Older children's speech and language skills were well developed and children clearly told us about their excitement at going to the play centre, and when we had a discussion about spiders. Children were well spoken and polite. Older children put on their own coats and shoes before going to the car, whilst younger children were encouraged and supported. Drinks were available when requested, however were not able to be accessed independently. Parents confirmed that children were developing well at this setting; one parental questionnaire we received confirmed that a parent strongly agreed that their child had a good choice of play activities to promote their development.

Children are developing very well.

2. Care and Development

Summary

The child minder is an enthusiastic and experienced practitioner. She is consistent in supporting children's development and keeping them safe and healthy overall. The child minder has a good understanding of the children's individual needs and works effectively to meet those needs.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

The child minder implements a wide range of policies and procedures in order to keep children safe and healthy.

The child minder placed a great emphasis on healthy eating and delivering safety messages. The child minder told us how the children make their own fruit smoothies and fruit kebabs. She stated that she takes children to national and local schemes such as Brakes Beep Beep, and National Hand Washing day, where she teaches the children about germs with glitter. There was a clear safeguarding policy in place and child minder was familiar with this through her training. The child minder told us that she understood her responsibilities regarding safeguarding and knew who to report concerns to. However, the policy did not include the action she would take if an allegation were made against her. The child minder had completed training in Cross Infection and Dental Health Education and Infection Control. She was also part of the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-school Scheme, Busy Feet and Designed to Smile. The child minder had a nappy changing policy; however, this did not state that she used disposable aprons to minimise cross contamination. The child minder pets including two tortoise's, a dog and bearded dragon; however, the pet policy not mention that the dog was regularly wormed, treated for fleas or vaccinated, and there was no permissions for the children to have contact with the bearded dragon. The toilet included a hand washing poster, and paper towels were used for children to dry their hands. Medication administration records were seen; however not all were dated, had parental signatures, and were not all individual to each child. The child minder had good accident records in place.

Overall, the child minder is adequate at keeping children safe and healthy.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

The child minder works in line with her behaviour management policy. She is consistent in her approach and has regard to the children's individual stage of development when managing interactions.

The child minder had a detailed, comprehensive positive behaviour policy, which included the house rules, such as 'play fair, make music, laugh and giggle, be silly, help each other and have fun'. It included information on unacceptable behaviour such

as bullying. The child minder had attended training in promoting positive behaviour. The child minder encouraged and promoted good manners throughout our visit.

The child minder is effective at managing children's interactions.

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

The child minder knows, understands and meets children's individual needs and plans for their next steps in their play and learning.

The child minder informed us that she has a very large 'Learning Through Play' file which is a resource that shows the next stages in different activities such as water play, extending onto floating/sinking or adding different things like lentils, salt to sand. She said she encourages dramatic play and different themes for example clay, and the older the children get, the more vocabulary and detail was added. She also had a 'flower' developmental target, which included the seven areas of learning. We heard her talking at every opportunity about numbers, colours, and shapes through children's play. The child minder had attended training in Equality and Diversity and Exploring Children's Schemas. The child minder promoted multicultural experiences, with 'save the world' jigsaw, books on religion, Welsh posters and we heard her speaking and explaining basic French words to the children. There was also books CD's and DVD's in different languages, including sign language. Outdoor play was offered and outings and trips were frequent events. One parent questionnaire stated that they strongly agree that their child's development was progressing well since attending the service.

The child minder is dedicated and motivated to promote children's play, learning and development and meets children's needs well.

3. Environment

Summary

The child minder ensures that children are cared for in a safe and stimulating learning environment. She ensures that children have access to a good range of resources and an environment that is suited to their needs.

Our findings

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

The child minder ensures that children are cared for in a safe, clean and secure environment. She ensures that most unnecessary risks to children are identified and reduced or removed.

The child minder had ensured that there was a risk assessment statement in place for almost all areas of the setting and for activities and particular aspects of the care, such as outings and outdoor play; however, the gallery landing on the first floor was not risk assessed, although there was a stair gate at the top and bottom of the stairs. The house was fully enclosed, and only accessible through a locked side or front door. A visitors' book was used to record anyone who entered the house. The child minder had registered with the Food Standards Agency. A first aid kit was in place in the kitchen, the child minder had practised and recorded fire drills and a heating certificate was in place.

Overall, the child minder is competent at ensuring the safety of the environment.

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

The indoor and outdoor play areas are welcoming, well decorated and child centred. There is ample space and facilities to meet the needs of different age groups and individual children both inside and out.

The child minder had made improvements to the outdoor play area, which allowed children to have more physical play whilst getting fresh air. The indoor area was laid out to suit the ages of the children in different areas. For example, older children had a separate room on the first floor with their own storage of age appropriate resources, and an adjoining toilet, and a place to relax on a bed/settee. Younger children had a dedicated playroom with direct access to a wet room/toilet, which they could access independently. Babies had space to crawl and explore in their room, which featured low level toys.

The child minder competently ensures the suitability of the environment.

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

The child minder ensures that children have access to furniture, equipment, toys and materials that are appropriate and suitable to their needs. Resources are clean and of good quality.

The child minder had ensured that children of different ages had access to toys that suited their age and interests. Children of all ages enjoyed the outdoor play space, where we saw younger children playing on the trampoline, one at a time. There was a good selection of resources for the children to choose from. Older children sat at the tables and chairs to eat or do activities, low level chairs were available, and a younger child had a high chair. The child minder had ensured that she had a good supply of toys, including dolls, arts and crafts, large Duplo, two organs, board games, Hammer Beads and fancy dress. Outdoors, there was an assortment of outdoor toys, gardening tools and play equipment seen on our visits. The child minder has applied for a grant for sensory play.

The child minder ensures that there are good quality resources and equipment available to the children of all ages.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The leadership at the setting is mostly effective. The child minder plans and reviews the service provided and fully involves parents and the other child minder in this. However, there are some improvements needed in this area.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The child minder has a clear vision for the service and has mostly clear policies that are focused on children's needs. She creates a positive ethos whereby children feel valued.

The child minder had a statement of purpose, which met regulations and national minimum standards; however, it was unclear how many children she could mind when working alongside another child minder. The child minder had included in her confidentiality policy, information on GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and in her privacy agreement, which was signed by parents. She stated that she was aware of and Prevent Duty regarding who to contact if she had concerns around radicalisation; however she could not find the information on the day of our visit. The child minder had a good complaints policy in place, including a section entitled 'children have a voice too'. We saw permissions from parents for children to attend parent and toddler groups, emergency medical treatment, outings, creams and face paints, to name a few. The child minder was registered with the Information Commissioners Office. She had a valid first aid and food hygiene certificate in place.

Leadership is effective.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

The child minder creates a reflective culture of ongoing review and improvement, involving parents.

The child minder had kept large scrapbooks of photographs of the children undertaking various activities and trips. The child minder was keen to improve and during the course of inspection, some good practice recommendations were addressed as soon as possible. A quality of care report emphasised how the child minder had strived to improve her service, including consultation with parents, plans, and where she could not meet requests. The child minder had completed CIW's Self Assessment of Service Statement part 1 & 2 as required.

The child minder is committed to continuous self-evaluation and thorough planning for improvement.

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

The child minder ensures that the other child minder she works alongside was clear about their roles and responsibilities and which children she and the other child minder are responsible for. However, there are some areas of improvement needed.

The child minder worked alongside another registered child minder, and together they could mind 10 children each, and it was clear who had responsibility for which children. The child minder ensured that there was consistency for the children in the adults who cared for them. However, she did not have a Disclosure and Barring Service certificate for one adult member living at the address; although she had kept CIW informed of this issue. Children's arrival and departure times were not recorded. A valid public liability insurance certificate was in place, and car documents were available.

The child minder adequately manages the service.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

The child minder works with parents to identify children's needs and to keep them informed about their children's progress and well-being. She involves parents in their children's care and has good partnerships with them and with other partners.

The child minder obtained detailed information about children's needs and preferences when they began at the setting and she was available to talk with parents when they collected their children. The child minder worked with other child minders, and external agencies to ensure good practice was shared, along with ideas and training. She informed us that she handed out new information to parents such as her newsletters regarding holidays and outings, and she told us she had lent them books on potty training. The child minder also had people coming from outside to show the children how to bake bread.

The child minder has established very good partnerships with parents and other agencies.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

We recommended that the child minder:

- asks the children which fruit they would like at snack time;
- ensures drinks are available for children to help themselves;
- ensures all medication is dated and signed for, and one sheet is used per child and
- considers disposable aprons when nappy changing to minimise cross contamination.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. One inspector undertook two visits to the service one unannounced on 14 September 2018 and one announced on 17 September 2018 for a total of approximately 2 hours and 50 minutes.

- We spoke to the children, and the two child minders working together. One parent had completed a written questionnaire. We inspected a sample of documentation and policies, as detailed in the report. We observed practice of the children's engagement and the care being provided by child minder. Feedback was given to the child minder by telephone on 18 September 2018.

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	Martina Thomas
Registered maximum number of places	10
Age range of children	0 – 14 Years
Opening hours	8am – 5:30pm Monday to Thursday and 8am – 4pm on Friday.
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	19 August 2015
Dates of this inspection visit	14 and 17 September 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?	<p>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 Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.</p> <p>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.</p>
Additional Information:	