



Inspection Report

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Abergavenny



Date Inspection Completed

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About the service

Type of care provided	Child Minder
Registered places	8
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	2 February 2017
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	No

Summary

This is an inspection undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic. We have therefore focused on the priority areas for this setting and not the full quality framework.

Children are happy and settled at the service. They have warm and supportive relationships with the child minder and enjoy the time they spend at her home. They are able to make choices about their play and have good opportunities to develop their independence.

The child minder understands her responsibility to keep children safe and provides supportive and nurturing care. She has begun to develop suitable system to monitor and record children's progress and she ensures that children have access to a good selection of play opportunities to support their all-round development.

The home is spacious, welcoming and suitable for the needs of children who attend the setting. It is safe and secure and there are appropriate safety checks to ensure children's welfare. However, safety audits must be conducted regularly and take account of all areas of the child minder's home so that all relevant activities are checked for suitability. The child minder also needs to ensure that any risks of trailing cables or hanging decorations are minimised whether it is inside the child minder's house or in the garden. Children benefit from a good selection of play and learning resources suitable for their age and stage of development and toys and equipment maintained to a good standard.

The child minder is making sound progress in developing her child minding business and in developing appropriate recording keeping systems to support her service. She maintains good links with parents who use her service and they speak highly of the care she provides.

Well-being

Children make choices and very much enjoy the time they spend at the child minders home. The children are confident. They speak up and make their needs and wishes known. They have consistent opportunities to follow their play interests and to make decisions and choices about what they like to do. Older children are beginning to communicate verbally and younger ones use non-verbal methods, to show the child minder what they like and want.

Children are familiar with the home and are comfortable with their daily routines. They are comfortable to move around the home independently, selecting toys and resources of their choosing, assisted by the child minder when necessary. They follow their interests supported effectively by the child minder, so that they gain as much as possible from their play opportunities. They are forming positive bonds of attachment with the child minder and enjoy her involvement in their play. They are relaxed and comfortable in her presence, approach her for cuddles and reassurance and receive encouragement and praise to support their confidence and well-being. For example, on our arrival, a younger child was reserved and the child minder explained to the child "Do you remember what I said to you we might get a visitor? Well this is a visitor. Can you smile and say hello?" the child looked down and nodded as if to say no. The child minder reassured the child and said, "Well when you think you can say hello and show that lovely smile of yours that will be fine". The child settled down soon after that and began in selecting toys and activities to play with.

Children benefit from a good selection of play and learning opportunities suitable for their age and stage of development. They enjoy playing with small world toys and have opportunities for outdoor play. There are regular trips to the park and other outdoor areas to extend children's social experiences. Where possible the child minder has started to take children to playgroups as the pandemic rules have begun to be relaxed. This allows children to meet other adults and children in social situations and helps them to learn to cope with large social groups.

Children have opportunities to develop new skills and become independent in line with their age and stage of development. They are given time and space to select their own toys and follow their own interests, supported by the child minder when required. We saw a young child show confidence in looking through storage drawers, picking out toys without assistance and happily moving from one play activity to another. After returning from playing in the garden the older child told the child minder "I'm going to wear my special suit" and wandered off rummaging through the dressing up basket to find a Spiderman outfit to put on. This showed that children have a sense of belonging and know where to find things they need.

Care and Development

The child minder understands her role and responsibilities to keep children safe in her care. She has appropriate record keeping systems for accidents, incidents, registers of attendance and medication records. She records any concerns about children's welfare, an appropriate safeguarding policy and procedures. The child minder implements suitable measures to reduce the risks associated with Covid-19 and has a risk assessment and policy in relation to this. In the main risks are identified and minimised, however some improvements were discussed with the child minder. Fire evacuation drills at suitable intervals, however, her records are rudimentary and lack information such as who was present at the time. The records did not record any comments about the events or the time it took to evacuate. This type of information will help the child minder to make effective changes if required in the future. The child minder holds a current paediatric first aid certificate and is able to deal with minor issues should they arise.

The child minder manages children's behaviour effectively. She does this by being a good role model, treating children kindly and respectfully resulting in a calm atmosphere within the home. She communicates in a calm manner, giving positive eye contact and uses differing methods when dealing with minor conflicts. For example, an older children became upset because they were hungry and the child minder explained "I am just waiting for our Frittata's to warm up it won't be long before we can have lunch". The child accepted this and settled back down to play with cars and toy garage. There is an appropriate behaviour management policy, and the strategies outlined are age appropriate. Children understand what is expected of them, as care routines are consistent.

The child minder plans for an appropriate selection of play and learning opportunities to support children's all-round development. Planning records show a good variety of play opportunities are available, both inside and outside of the home. This includes opportunities for children to explore the local environment and visit play parks. The child minder draws on her skills as a qualified teacher to develop systems to monitor and record children's development and progress. She is very supportive of children's needs and has a good knowledge of their development and what they enjoy doing.

Environment

In the main, the child minder provides a suitable home environment for all children. To ensure that the home is safe, maintenance and safety checks are regularly completed. Safety certificates for appliances are up to date. The child minder is mindful of children's safety. However, not all areas of the house and garden were suitably restricted. For example, we noted a very large paddling pool erected in the upper side of the garden, which did not have a sturdy lid. Although we did not observe the children using the pool, it was evident from our discussion with the child minder that there were potential safety risks. We discussed these with the child minder and who understood the importance of the safety issue. Following the inspection, the child minder notified us that the pool had been removed. This was a serious matter of safety. However, CIW did not take further action as the child minder acted immediately and removed the risks.

The child minder's home is welcoming, maintained to a good standard with a spacious environment so children can explore in comfort. There is a large living area with comfortable sofa for relaxation and the living area is dedicated to child minding. We noted some cables for table lamps and television were trailing and children could access these. We also noted similar issues with solar lighting around the garden. We highlighted the issue with the child minder who agreed to make improvements immediately. Rooms throughout the house benefit from good natural light and children have access to downstairs toilet facilities to promote their independence. The kitchen is large enough for a table and chairs for meal times and for messy play activities.

The child minder's outside area is carefully supervised when children want to play in the garden. This because the garden is situated at higher levels with steep steps. Fencing and safety gates are secure so that children can feel safe accessing the garden area. The child minder has sectioned off areas of the garden for the benefit of her minding and developed a mud kitchen and quiet areas for children to sit and enjoy the surroundings. Recently the child minder has erected a large wooden cabin, dedicated to child minding. She told us that the children love using the cabin for play in all seasons but they benefit it most during colder months when outdoor play could have been restricted.

Leadership and Management

The child minder is making positive steps in developing a child minding service that is well organised and effective. Her statement of purpose provides parents with sufficient detail about her service so they can make an informed decision about its suitability for their child. The child minder has appropriate record keeping systems to support the smooth running of her service. She obtains relevant information about children as part of the admission process this includes using contracts. However, we noted that the child minder did not have written permission for regular outings such as going to play parks and attending playgroups. Nor gained written permissions from parents on the use of the paddling pool, when it was in use. Verbal agreements are in place.

The child minder has a good range of policies and procedures in place and shares key policies with parents. She recognises the importance of monitoring and reviewing her service to ensure best outcomes for children in her care. She completes an annual review of her service using questionnaires to consult with parents and children. Information obtained forms part of her annual report.

The child minder manages her service to an appropriate standard. She undertakes relevant training to ensure that her knowledge and skills are up to date. She informs parents in advance of planned holidays, so they can make alternative arrangements. There are Disclosure and Barring (DBS) Service checks for all persons over the age of 16 living at the premises as required. Arrangements in place in the event of an emergency keep children secure. For example, the child minder has a buddy system with another registered child minders who can assist should such an emergency arise.

Parents told us that they appreciate and value the service the child minder offers. They are happy with the service and the care the child minder provides. They receive regular updates about their child's day and information about changes to the service. The child minder has communicated with parents through the pandemic using a range of electronic safe methods such as texts and Phone calls. Parents are very satisfied with the service their children attend.

Recommendations to meet with the National Minimum Standards

R1. Minimise all risk of trailing cables and access to the pool area

R2. Improve Fire drill records to include details to help identify any patterns of concern in the evacuation procedures

R3. Ensure parental written permissions are sought for regularly planned outings and high risk activities such as using the paddling pool in the future.

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