



Inspection Report

Amanda Merrick

Cowbridge



Date Inspection Completed

14/03/2023

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About the service

Type of care provided	Child Minder
Registered places	6
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	27 April 2017
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This service does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and does not demonstrate a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

<u>Well-being</u>	Good
<u>Care and Development</u>	Good
<u>Environment</u>	Good
<u>Leadership and Management</u>	Good

For further information on ratings, please see the end of this report

Summary

Children feel very secure, happy, and comfortable with the child minder. They play freely, are contented, and freely communicate their needs. Children choose toys and activities which interest them from the selection available. They have positive emotional bonds with the child minder.

The child minder provides a nurturing and caring atmosphere and meets children's needs successfully. She offers a range of free play opportunities and some planned activities for children to access independently or with support.

The child minder ensures the environment is safe, clean, and well maintained. The premises are welcoming, homely and well organised. Suitable risk assessments and safety checks are in place. The child minder provides a range of engaging resources, which extend children's play and further their development.

The setting is managed well. The child minder has a beneficial range of policies and procedures. Communication with parents is effective. Links with the community are good. We have noted two recommendations at the end of the report.

Children are happy, settled and thoroughly enjoy their time at this setting. Children have a strong voice and feel comfortable to express themselves. They confidently chat and interact with us during our visit and speak engagingly about their favourite activities at the setting. Children have opportunities to make choices and decisions. For example, they play freely and make choices about the toys and activities they play with.

They engage and chatter away to the child minder, receiving nurturing and appropriate responses. Children feel safe, happy, and valued. They are very settled, relaxed and feel quite at home. Children display positive emotional bonds with the child minder and are completely at ease with her. They know the routines well. For example, older children arriving after school, take off their shoes, neatly putting them away and wash their hands. Children are active and express enjoyment in their play and activities.

Interactions between children and the child minder are consistently good. Children cooperate well, they are polite and considerate. Children are treated with respect and the child minder takes their views into account. For example, she asks children if they would like to join in with an activity or continue with their free play. Children interact particularly well with each other. They chat together following a day in school and play a card game, enjoying each other's company.

Children confidently choose activities that interest them. They enjoy their play and learning. For example, one child showed enjoyment and sustained interest in an imaginative construction game which was supported and extended by the child minder. Children have freedom to safely explore their indoor environment. They have good opportunities to initiate their own play and to influence their activities. They freely choose toys from the resources available. They can choose to relax and have quiet times.

Children are well supported and encouraged in developing their independence. They are self-sufficient within the setting. For example, independently visiting the bathroom and competently washing their hands. Children are actively encouraged to participate in the decision-making process with regards to how they spend their time at the setting. This encourages children's independence and also raises their self-esteem.

Care and Development

Good

The child minder has a range of thorough and purposeful policies, which promote the children's safety and well-being. Her safeguarding training is up to date, and she has procedures in place to safeguard children, appropriately and confidently responding to child protection scenarios. The child minder promotes children's health successfully. She holds current first aid and food hygiene certificates. There are robust systems in place to record accident, incident and medication administration. Effective hygiene practices are in place, with regular cleaning routines followed. The child minder supervises children's access to the pet dog, but she has not obtained written consent from parents.

The child minder has an appropriate behaviour management policy in place which details a positive strategy in relation to behaviour. She follows the policy and uses the management strategies consistently, praising children for their achievements. We heard her encourage and positively respond to children throughout our visit. For example, "*Wow! That looks perfect*" and "*That's a really good try, good boy, that's excellent.*" She models the language associated with good manners and acts as a good role model at all times. The children benefit from a child minder who is flexible and accommodating to the needs of the parents using the service. The child minder engages successfully with children, whilst promoting their learning and particularly their self-esteem. Interactions are consistently positive demonstrating respect, warmth and kindness. This is a real strength of the child minder. People who use the service told us that she is very flexible and accommodating. For example, fitting in with children's activities and clubs.

The child minder is aware of the children's individual development. She knows the children very well and has a good understanding of each child's individual needs and routine. The child minder keeps detailed developmental records and has a good understanding of how these inform her next steps and areas to focus on. She involves children in a variety of activities, both indoors and outdoors. She supports children in their free play, using incidental opportunities to extend discussion and learning opportunities. For example, she played along with a child during imaginative play introducing new and challenging vocabulary at appropriate times. Playing along with the child in this manner resulted in sustained engagement with the activity and the child clearly enjoyed their play. The child minder frequently uses incidental Welsh during the course of the day. She makes a real effort to learn new vocabulary along with the children and strives to make learning new words fun. Parents who use the service told us that, "*(She) provides a range of seasonal and themed activities both indoor and outdoor and develops excellent crafting skills.*"

Environment

Good

The child minder ensures the environment is safe, clean, and well maintained indoors and outdoors. The child minder keeps a record of the visitors to the premises. The outdoor area is safe and secure, and the front door is locked once the children have arrived. She practises regular fire drills, so children are familiar with this routine. Safety checks are completed on smoke detectors. She supervises children well and understands the difference between acceptable and unacceptable risk for the age group of children she cares for. There are comprehensive risk assessments in place to support safety. They do not however include evidence of review dates.

The premises is welcoming, well organised, and accessible to all. Children now benefit from a dedicated playroom which is homely, bright, and engaging and has increased the area children have to play. Within the playroom, low-level furniture and accessible storage containing toys and resources promote children's independence. The addition of a downstairs toilet has also impacted positively on children as they access this facility independently and with ease. The garden area was not used on the day of our visit. However, it is maintained to a high standard and well organised. Recently purchased equipment for climbing and a slide will benefit the children's physical development. The child minder makes good use of local amenities such as attending soft play and meeting with other professional child minders in the area.

Indoors, the child minder ensures the children have access to a good range of toys and play equipment that suit their individual needs. Toys and resources are stored appropriately. The layout and design of the environment promotes children's independence. For instance, children can access toys and resources themselves or ask the child minder to pull out what they want. The child minder ensures the play environment is homely and nurturing, providing some interesting activities and play equipment. Diversity is encouraged through investigating and learning about celebrations from a range of cultures such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year. Engaging and interesting age-appropriate resources are available for older children who access the provision after school.

Leadership and Management

Good

The child minder runs her service well. She is very organised and keeps all the required records to a good standard. The child minder has up to date car documents and is registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). She is also registered with a professional association for childcare and early years. A statement of purpose is in place and provides an accurate reflection of the service provided. The child minder has a range of beneficial and thorough policies in place. The child minder is suitably qualified and has a clear vision for her service. She has a strong culture of continuous personal development. For example, she is knowledgeable about the new curriculum for Wales and has assessed how this may improve her practice.

The child minder reviews and reflects upon her service and produces a purposeful quality of care report. She seeks information from parents and children to support her in the evaluation of her service and provides an opportunity to make suggestions for improvements. The report looks at what works well and clearly targets areas for improvement. For example, to improve the outside play space and provide new resources. The child minder engages positively with CIW, consistently and swiftly acting on recommendations in relation to her service.

The child minder promotes positive partnerships with parents and other professional childminders. She keeps parents up to date regularly through verbal and private messages. People who use the service were positive about the level of handover information given. The child minder makes good use of her local community and environment engaging in interesting and stimulating trips, which benefit the children's development and learning. For example, using local parks and toddler groups.

Some people who use the service have completed online questionnaires as part of this inspection. Feedback received is very positive. They tell us, *“(She) provides the right level of care and development for different needs of children and has always been flexible and reliable. I am highly satisfied with the service and feel (she) is offering an excellent childcare setting.”*

Summary of Non-Compliance

Status	What each means
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people’s well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)

Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement

Regulation	Summary	Status
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N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A
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Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

We expect the provider to take action to address these and we will follow these up at the next inspection.

National Minimum Standards	
Standard	Recommendation(s)
Standard 24 - Safety	Improve written risk assessments to include evidence of review dates.

Where we think it helpful, we may make best practice recommendations. These are to encourage settings that are doing well to become even better at helping children thrive.

Best Practice
Recommendation(s)
Ensure written permissions are in place for supervised contact with pet dog.

Ratings	What the ratings mean
Excellent	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.
Good	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.
Adequate	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.
Poor	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.

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