



Inspection Report

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Ebbw Vale



Date Inspection Completed

17/04/2024

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About the service

Type of care provided	Child Minder
Registered places	5
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	11 January 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	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>	Adequate
<u>Environment</u>	Adequate
<u>Leadership and Management</u>	Adequate

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

Summary

Children are settled, comfortable and happy in the child minder's home, voicing their needs and opinions clearly. They direct their own activities and follow their own interests freely. They have formed close relationships with both the child minder and one another. They are developing good all-round skills in line with their age and stage of development.

The child minder understands her role to keep children safe and healthy. Interactions are warm and nurturing and she is responsive to the needs of the children. The child minder supports children's learning and development sufficiently by providing a suitable range of activities and resources that promote children in progressing their all-round skills.

The child minder's home is clean and suitably maintained. It provides sufficient space for children to play in comfort. Basic risk assessments and safety checks are in place. The child minder provides a variety of toys, resources and play equipment to help meet children's needs and support their development.

The child minder manages her service appropriately. She has basic policies and procedures in place and children's information is obtained with suitable records kept. She has positive partnerships with parents who use her service. She monitors and reviews her service regularly to improve outcomes for children.

Well-being**Good**

Children play freely and move around easily, choosing from the toys and activities available to them in the child minder's home. They express themselves well and thoroughly enjoy talking to the childminder readily approaching her for general conversations. They confidently ask for anything they might want with ease. We heard children requesting a variety of resources from the child minder to expand their role-play activities. For example, children asked if they could have bouncy balls and other games to sell in their toy sale and were able to complete their chosen activity.

Children are happy, settled and relaxed in the child minder's home. It is clear that they have formed affectionate relationships with the child minder. We saw children often approach her for spontaneous cuddles and invite her to join in with their play. Children receive frequent praise for their efforts and achievements, enhancing their self-esteem and making them feel valued. For example, children smiled with delight when they were praised for sharing resources and succeeding at tasks, allowing them to gain a sense of achievement.

Children form close friendships, enjoy one another's company and interact well as they develop their social skills. They play happily alongside each other spending time chatting about their favourite characters from Disney films. We saw them readily sharing resources and taking turns in their play. For example, they used a method of 'my turn, your turn' as they happily played a game of hide and seek. They show kindness to one another saying "*Let me help you*" as they attempt to tidy resources away.

Children are motivated and enjoy their play and learning. They sustain interest in their chosen activities for extended periods and delightfully engage in imaginative play. For example, they were engrossed as they played in their role-play ice cream parlour serving their many flavoured ice-creams. They enthusiastically ask questions such as "*Which flavour would you like?*" and "*Would you like sprinkles, nuts or cherries on top?*" as they find the ingredients they need. We saw them sitting contently to engage in focused activities such as a shape game. They relished in the positive comments from the child minder as they successfully recognised and named each shape.

Children are developing good levels of independence and are learning to do things for themselves. They access the toilet independently, wash their hands at the appropriate times and put their own coats on when it is time to go home. They listen well to the child minder following any instructions given, such as helping to put toys away. They are motivated to follow their own personal interests and freely access the resources available to them, picking out toys confidently.

Care and Development**Adequate**

The child minder has a sufficient understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. She holds up to date safeguarding training and understands the procedures to follow should she have any concerns about children's safety or welfare. She has a child protection policy in place, but this did not include the contact details for the local safeguarding board or the regulator Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). The child minder has current paediatric first aid training, enabling her to deal with minor injuries or accidents confidently and she obtains written permission from parents to administer emergency medical care. She has a suitable medication policy and procedure that is followed, and she keeps a record of all accidents, incidents, and existing injuries to children. These are discussed with parents as appropriate, and signatures are obtained. The child minder does not provide food due to the short period of time that children are in her care. Physical activity is encouraged through regular walks home from school and visits to the local park. The child minder follows suitable cleaning procedures as part of the infection control process to help keep children healthy and safe.

The child minder is affectionate towards the children and has a calming and patient nature. She lowers to children's level to interact and engage with them and encourages children to share and be kind to their friends. She implements positive strategies, offering regular praise to children for their efforts. For example, we heard the child minder using positive language such as *"Wow, that's amazing, well done"*, and *"Well done, I'm so proud of you"* frequently. She has a behaviour management policy in place which supports the promotion of the positive strategies she uses, however it does not include enough detail around circumstances in which any physical intervention will be used and the recording of such incidents as well as arrangements for its review.

The child minder knows the children in her care well and is responsive to their individual needs. She provides them with a range of play and learning experiences, including visits to places in the local community. She actively takes interest in their chosen activities and engages in their play. We saw her singing, naming objects and colours with the children as they shared smiles and played together. She extends children's learning by asking question such as *"What shape is this?"* and *"How many sides does a triangle have?"* There are no formal plans in place for activities and the child minder does not undertake observations of the children to inform next steps in learning. This is because the children are only in the child minder's care for a very short period of time each day. During the inspection, we did not hear the child minder promoting the use of any Welsh language or provide opportunities for children to develop their Welsh language skills.

Environment

Adequate

The childminder ensures that the environment is generally safe and secure for the children attending. Entrances are always locked, and a log of any visitors is maintained. Safety gates are in place around the setting to restrict access for children to areas such as the kitchen when unsupervised. Suitable risk assessments are in place for most aspects of the service including any outings such as walking to and from school or going to the park. The child minder undertakes daily visual checks to identify any emerging risks within the environment that could impact on children's safety and well-being. There is a basic written risk assessment in place for the premises, however this did not identify or consider all potential hazards within the home, the risks they pose to children and how these risks can be reduced, including any fire risks. Fire drills are completed ensuring children are aware of how to leave the building safely and fire equipment such as smoke alarms are tested. However, we found that not all previous records of fire drills and fire detection equipment checks were readily available to evidence they had been conducted at suitable intervals. The child minder has a suitable fire evacuation plan in place for the premises. She was able to verbally tell us her procedure to follow in the event of an emergency such as a fire, however we noted that this procedure was not included within her fire procedure documents. The child minder ensures the premises is maintained to a suitable standard and that the heating system is serviced annually.

The home environment is child friendly, comfortable, and suitably maintained. Children have access to the downstairs lounge and dining room, which has a dedicated play area. This provides sufficient space for children to move around freely and direct their own play. Furniture is of suitable size and design for the age of the children and there is a comfortable sofa where children can relax and rest. The child minder has a large rear garden which is currently out of use to children due to on-going repairs to the external fence. The child minder informed us that this will be available for children's use again once repairs are completed. There is an accessible ground floor bathroom, which is clean and suitably equipped to support children's independence.

The child minder provides a range of clean and suitable quality resources which are age-appropriate and relevant to children's interests. For example, a variety of interactive games, construction sets, small-world, arts and crafts and a range of role-play items including an ice-cream parlour, a picnic set, a shop, and a dentist. Resources are suitably organised, and children can access most resources freely because they are stored at low level, supporting their independence. The child minder provides some multi-cultural resources such as dolls, story books and jigsaw puzzles, helping to promote equality and awareness of various cultures and the diverse society that we live in. The child minder regularly rotates the toys to provide further choice and variety for children.

Leadership and Management

Adequate

The child minder generally runs her service well. The statement of purpose provides sufficient information about the service enabling parents to make an informed decision about the care of their child. The child minder has a range of satisfactory policies to help

support the operation of her service, although we noted that these have not been regularly reviewed and some require updating. The complaints policy does not comply with regulations and requires updating to include information on the process of how older children can make a complaint, consideration of formal complaints, consideration of complaints made against the child minder as well as any procedures for outside agencies to investigate a complaint and contact details of the appropriate office. While no immediate action is required, this is an area for improvement, and we expect the provider to take action. The child minder obtains relevant information about children as part of the admission process, which helps ease their transition into her setting. Records about the children are completed and organised including contracts, children's information forms and parental consents. She maintains daily records such as attendance registers well.

The child minder monitors the quality of her service appropriately. She asks for the views of children and parents, using their feedback to evaluate the service she provides and produces an annual quality-of-care report. She makes improvements to meet the needs and wants of the children. For example, she has previously purchased a new storage unit to make resources more easily accessible for children and has also recently purchased larger construction blocks as a result of children's requests. The child minder submits her Self-Assessment of Service Statement when requested by CIW.

The child minder organises her day to meet the needs of the children in her care. She has links with another child minder in the area and has a nominated back-up child minder that she can call on should an emergency arise. She ensures that all mandatory training such as paediatric first aid and child protection is regularly updated and fulfils her responsibilities in terms of notifying CIW of any changes or significant events affecting the service. The child minder has an up-to-date disclosure and barring service check (DBS) to confirm her suitability as a registered child minder.

The child minder promotes positive partnerships with parents. She provides daily verbal feedback to parents upon collection and sends updates via private message. Parents feedback is positive, and they confirmed that they are happy with the care provided and that children are happy attending the service. They value the care their children receive and noted that the child minder treats their children like one of her own family.

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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32	The Registered Person must ensure that the complaints procedure for the service is compliant with regulations.	New
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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 20 - Child protection	Update the safeguarding policy to include the contact names and telephone numbers of both the local safeguarding board and the regulator CIW.
Standard 9 - Behaviour	Update the behaviour management policy to include further detail around circumstances in which any physical intervention will be used and the recording of such incidents as well as the arrangements for review.
Standard 24 - Safety	Develop written risk assessments for the premises to ensure all potential hazards, and the risks these pose to children have been considered, including fire.
Standard 24 - Safety	Extend the fire evacuation plan to include the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire or emergency and ensure that previous fire drill records and smoke alarm checks are readily available to evidence that they have been conducted at suitable intervals.

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)
Provide opportunities for children to develop their use of incidental Welsh.
Ensure policies are reviewed and updated at least annually or as changes occur.

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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