



**Childcare Inspection Report on
Toadhall Montessori Nursery And Creche (Evansfield Road)**

**14 Evansfield Road
Llandaff North
Cardiff
CF14 2FA**



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Description of the service

Toadhall Montessori Nursery and Creche (Evansfield Road) is located in the Llandaff North area of Cardiff. It is registered to care for up to 18 children under 12 years of age and chooses to care for children between the ages of 6 weeks and two years. It operates from a large residential property which has been adapted for use as a full day care setting and is open Monday to Friday between the hours of 8:00am to 6:00pm. Children have access to three playrooms on the ground floor and an outdoor play area at the rear. The baby rooms are on the first floor. The service operates in partnership with Toadhall Montessori Nursery located a short distance away in Station Road. There is a Registered Person to oversee both settings and a Senior Operational Manager and Person in Charge (PiC) to manage the day to day running of the creche. English is the main language used at the setting however a great deal of Welsh is also used.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Toadhall Montessori Nursery and Creche provides good care, play and learning experiences for children. The environment is safe and welcoming with good quality resources and toys available to children. Staff are well trained, caring and engaged with the children. Managers of the service demonstrate a commitment to the service and hold a clear vision of continual improvement in order that the children attending experience good child care.

2. Improvements

There were no areas of non compliance made at the previous inspection in January 2015 and the recommendation to undertake risk assessment of a canopy in the quiet area has been addressed. Furthermore, since the last inspection the service has put into operation a staff development officer to support staff, purchased additional outside play apparatus including a wooden playhouse and repainted inside areas to freshen the environment.

3. Requirements and recommendations

The service is fully compliant with all of its legal requirements. We have made some recommendations which are discussed within and highlighted at the end of this report.

1. Well-being

Summary

The nursery promotes children's well-being through fun and stimulating activities which are supported by caring, responsive staff. Children are happy, secure and relaxed with their carers. They are able to make choices and decisions and are encouraged to express themselves. There is a good range of stimulating resources and play opportunities which encourage the children to become active and curious learners and develop their confidence and independence.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children's opinions and wishes are listened to and their feedback is actively considered in the development and delivery of the service. Rooms are well equipped and have a good choice of activities and equipment which children can mostly access independently. There are daily routines which enable all children to spend time outdoors choosing where they wish to play and what resources they want to play with. We saw and heard staff give young children time to make choices and supported them when needed in their chosen activity. Children's preferences were incorporated into planning of activities so that their interests were satisfied and encouraged. Children's views were considered and incorporated into the review and evaluation of the service. Children had freedom of movement within the nursery and we saw children moving from one area to another following their interests and play choices. Staff were mindful of where they positioned themselves so that they could support the children effectively without it hindering the flow of the children's interests.

Children's voice is at the centre of the service and there are very good systems in place to ensure children's wishes and opinions are acted upon and treated with respect.

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

Children are settled, happy and relaxed and cope well with separation from their parents as their needs are well met. Managers had undergone training in SSTEW (Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Well-being) and discussed with us their intention of ensuring all staff were confident in this when supporting children. Staff interacted and played well with the children giving them time and supporting them to find solutions and do things for themselves. Children sought out staff to play and interact with, and staff responded to them positively.

Children are happy, settled and reassured at the setting and receive consistent care from staff who know them well.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children are supported to understand their feelings and are developing a sense of right and wrong. Children are learning to share and respond well to staff instructions.

The staff's positive reinforcement of rules and behaviour encouraged children to be kind to each other and reminded them what is acceptable without using negative language. We saw children playing happily alongside others and learning to play cooperatively with one another. Children responded well to those caring for them and followed simple instructions and guidance given. Staff used appropriate strategies to help children learn how to socialise with their peers and develop positive relationships, which resulted in the nursery maintaining a happy and calm atmosphere.

Children are learning how to play and are developing socially acceptable behaviour.

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

Children are free to explore their environment and spend time on activities that interest them and this encourages them to enjoy their play and learning. Some children spent time happily playing with a wooden train set. They concentrated for sustained periods of time doing this, whilst others coloured and completed craft activities. We saw photographs of children learning about and holding a variety of creatures and were informed that a project called 'Zoo lab' had visited the nursery with snails, spiders, rats, centipedes and a snake. Children had chosen whether they felt comfortable and wanted to take part in this activity. Those who had not, had played with their chosen activities in another room. We saw that children were able to follow their own interests as they were able to move freely between activities and from room to room.

Children are active and find enjoyment in the play they engage in at the service.

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

Children have opportunities to develop and practice independence skills. Toys and resources are situated so that the children can access these easily. Allowing young children to make choices allows them to develop interests, to find out their likes and dislikes and to try out different ways of learning. As children reach 18 months old they were encouraged to self register as a means to develop feelings of competence and self reliance. Older children were encouraged to develop skills around managing their own toileting and hygiene. As soon as they are able children are encouraged to feed themselves, handle drinks and make choices about food. Staff supported this as we heard them asking children "*What do you think we could have for snack later?*" and children suggested a variety of healthy options, such as '*banana*' or '*fruit*'. Children were enabled to become self-reliant at a steady pace and it was understood by staff that these skills supported their emotional and social development.

Children have a growing sense of self-worth. Staff encourage children to learn and do as much for themselves as they are able to manage, in line with their age and stage of development.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Staff are well qualified, experienced and understand and implement key policies in order to keep children safe and happy. Interactions with children are warm and responsive and planning and evaluation of activities is undertaken regularly in order to identify and meet children's individual needs. Staff work well together and provide a good quality service.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

There are appropriate systems in place which are designed to promote the health and safety of children. However, we found that more could be done to ensure that staff fully understand and implement some of the policies and procedures outlined by the service. The safeguarding procedure had been updated with information regarding the service's responsibilities under the Prevent Duty, which relates to child care providers protecting children from radicalisation and extremism as part of their safeguarding duty. Staff we spoke to had a good understanding of this. The safeguarding policy also outlines the procedures for making referrals about concerns for children's welfare to an appropriate agency if needed. Staff understood the nursery procedures but would benefit from a review of personal responsibility to make a direct referral themselves should the need arise. We noted that incident, accident and medication records were well maintained at the service and staff ensured that parents signed to say that they have been kept informed regarding issues about their child. We spoke to several staff and they were able to discuss the health needs of the children in their care, with a high level of confidence. All staff had appropriate First Aid and Food Hygiene qualifications and they promoted a healthy lifestyle encouraging children to appreciate nutritious food and physical exercise. Children's physical health was promoted effectively through access to a stimulating outside area and activities such as baby massage and baby yoga. The setting has been awarded a Level 5 by the Food Standards Agency and achieved the Gold Standard Healthy Eating award. Staff were able to tell us clearly milk preparation procedures undertaken within the nursery. Food health and hygiene practices and procedures were robust and well understood and implemented by staff. There were clear systems implemented by staff to identify children with allergies or food intolerances. We saw records that indicated fire drills had been completed regularly with the children.

Staff are able to keep children safe and healthy but need to be supported to ensure that they are fully aware of, and implement all of the services' policies and procedures.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff are warm and responsive and care for the children in a calm manner giving clear instructions. During the inspection we saw that staff encouraged children and helped them to develop their play. The service has a behaviour policy in place and staff demonstrated a commitment to managing behaviour positively. They praised good

behaviour and understood the importance of being good role models themselves being courteous and polite with children. Children were encouraged by the staff to cooperate, share and to respect each other. Staff ensured that children had access to appropriate activities and resources preventing children becoming bored or frustrated. We saw children praised for their efforts in all areas, for example “*Good walking!*” and their efforts were acknowledged and shared with others. Children’s emotional well being and ability to communicate their needs and thoughts was at the forefront of staff/child interactions and we were told that training in SSTEW (Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Well-being) had been undertaken by management figures and would be cascaded down to staff so that it could become embedded in their everyday practice.

Staff are able to promote children’s positive behaviours and know the importance of supporting children to communicate and develop emotional resilience.

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

Staff work together in planning, implementing and extending learning opportunities and are able to support children in their play, learning and development. Throughout the inspection we saw that children were engaged in activities of their choice. Toys and resources were made available so that children’s interests, age and stage of development were catered for. Helping children make choices about what they want to play with encourages communication and the weighing up of simple alternatives. There were detailed development records in place for each child. Regular observations are completed, both spontaneous and planned to identify children’s strengths and areas for future development. We were told that children had really engaged with watching chicks hatch from eggs in an incubator and we saw photographs of a variety of focused tasks. Children thoroughly engaged in these interactions and enjoyed their time with the staff, for example, we saw one child engrossed in painting with flowers. The setting has identified an Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator to tailor support for children with additional learning needs. ‘Team Around the Child’ meetings are held, if necessary, attended by health professionals and the nursery staff to customise plans and support key learning. Staff told us that they promote children’s awareness of other cultures by celebrating festivals such as Diwali, Chinese New Year and Saint David’s Day and they have a selection of multicultural toys and resources that reflect different cultures.

Staff promote the children’s well being, learning and development to a very high standard and know their individual needs well.

3. Environment

Summary

The environment is generally safe and well maintained although we have recommended that visual check procedures are reviewed with staff. Resources both inside and outside are plentiful, well looked after and of a very high standard. The nursery has access to a maintenance person and any maintenance issues are dealt with promptly in order to ensure the well being of children is prioritised. Children's work is on display which encourages children to feel settled and have ownership over their space.

Our findings

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

Leaders ensure that risks to the health or safety of children are identified. We saw records, daily checklists and risk assessments to evidence that safety checks were in place and generally followed well. We did observe that some procedures had not been completely followed by staff and have recommended that the sleep checks which are currently undertaken are also recorded and that the checks within the environment are reviewed with staff. Since the inspection we have been informed that this review has been undertaken. However, the environment did not present any significant hazards during the inspection and this demonstrated that staff had a good enough understanding of checking areas used by children for potential risks within the nursery environment. We noted that risk assessments for outings were well informed and recorded and were told that when going somewhere new, staff will visit the area to undertake a risk assessment before visiting with children. We noted that ratio's increased for outings with 2:1 staff; child ratios. The premises are well maintained with a secure door entry system and a visitor's book to control and monitor people entering the building. Gas safety and electrical certificates were in place. We saw that hand sanitizers were placed strategically at entrances and that everyone entering the building was encouraged to use them. We noted that staff positioned themselves well throughout the setting. This helped to ensure that they could monitor the children's safety in an unobtrusive manner and be on hand to offer assistance if needed. We heard lots of communication between the staff and they worked well together. This ensured that all areas were suitably supervised and supported children to play and explore in a safe and engaging manner.

Children are cared for within a safe environment.

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

The service provides a welcoming environment for children's care and learning and there is sufficient space to meet the needs of children. The environment was clean and clutter free and we were told that staff check toys and resources regularly to ensure their suitability and discard damaged items. We were told that all resources and cleaning routines conform to infection control principles. The facilities are spacious and have good natural light which promote the children's well-being. We

were told that the outside space is accessed by all children every day and was very well equipped with a range of resources such as water play, planting area, play house and area for ride on toys. These areas provide children with good opportunities to gain new skills and experience a wide range of outdoor play experiences. There were areas where children could relax and have quiet times. There are sufficient toilets and wash hand basins readily accessible to all children, as well as rooms where confidential information can be discussed.

The environment provides good opportunities and experiences for children to learn and play.

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

Children have access to furniture, equipment, toys and materials that are suitable and appropriate for their needs and there are systems in place to monitor and replace resources when required. Equipment was sturdy and well maintained. A wide range of resources were available to meet the needs of the children and they were plentiful and of good quality. Children's stages of development and interests have been considered and opportunities to explore and develop their creativity and curiosity are provided by staff. There is a good selection of multi cultural toys and books available for the children to use that promote diversity and equality. As the setting is operated according to the Montessori principles equipment is designed around learning and wherever possible natural materials are used.

The facilities and quality of the resources and equipment provide an enriching, stimulating environment for children to play, explore and learn.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

There is an effective management structure in place at the setting. Support to the PiC from management is effective, visible and proactive in promoting good practice and safe child care. The service is organised and managed to a good standard. Management figures are very motivated and keen to make continual improvements and therefore enhance the experience of the children who attend the setting.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Management of the setting is effective and the nursery is fully compliant with the national minimum standards and day care regulations for children. Management has high standards and these are shared with the staff team. Managers have achieved a number of gold and silver awards celebrating their leadership and personable approach to managing staff. It was very clear that they value and invest in good quality staff. When we spoke with staff they were clear about their roles and expectations and were enthusiastic and committed to the nursery. Staff turnover is low and this indicates that staff are happy at the setting. Furthermore, all staff we spoke to stated that they were happy with the management. There are clear policies and procedures in place which support the smooth and effective running of the nursery although a small number of these need to be reviewed with staff. Regular team meetings and individual supervision sessions provide staff with quality guidance and support as well as promoting consistency and good standards throughout.

Leadership of the nursery is effective.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

There are very good systems to review and implement improvements to the service. There is a suitable, clear system to capture the views of children, parents, staff and other professionals, with the use of questionnaires which are distributed on at least an annual basis. The operational plan states "Children are our main priority and at the centre of all we do and have a right to have a voice". This document is clear and well written with a three year business/action plan for future improvements, such as further Makaton training. The service undertakes an annual Quality of Care review and produces a report which incorporates all feedback received and an action plan outlining specific areas for development. During discussions with the management team, we found them to be open and receptive to new ideas. Managers demonstrated that they understood the importance of thorough on going self evaluation and planning for improvement.

Self evaluation and planning for improvement is very effective and is the basis for on going improvement and service development.

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

All staff have defined roles and responsibilities as stated in a job description. On viewing staff files, we saw the necessary recruitment checks such as two references and checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) were complete and routinely updated. All staff are suitably qualified and all held the necessary paediatric first aid qualification. Agency staff are not used at the service as contracted staff familiar to the children are used to cover annual leave or sickness. The RP completed the Self Assessment of Service Statement which was circulated by CIW last year. All staff receive regular formal supervision and annual appraisals which are of a good quality, in addition to attending regular staff meetings; all of which supports and promotes effective communication and consistency in care practices.

Management of staff and other resources is good and this is evident in the day to day running of the setting.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Partnerships are effective. Staff communicate with parents on a daily basis and provide essential information relating to their children's daily routines whilst at the setting. The management team and staff have worked hard to build positive relationships with parents and carers. They arranged a selection of social events such as parents evening and monthly parent and baby group on "Early Montessori Approach". Parents and carers we spoke with were very happy with the nursery. We were informed that the nursery had not received any formal concerns or complaints from parents or other agencies. There is a large notice board in the reception area of the nursery. This provided parents with a range of useful information, including the setting's policies and procedures, the weekly menu, as well as key worker information. The management team seek to have effective relationships with their staff with regular team meetings. This helps to ensure that all staff feel they have a voice. At the beginning and end of each day there are meetings for all staff to ensure good communication about the children or nursery itself is shared effectively.

Managers demonstrate effective partnership working which is essential to build trust with parents, staff and other agencies, this helps to ensure children are suitably supported.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

- Sleep check observations need to be recorded and
- ensure staff are clear regarding safeguarding procedures.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. Evidence for the information held within this report was gathered via:

- Discussion with the Manager, Person in Charge and staff;
- observations of care practices, activities undertaken and interactions between the staff and children;
- a visual check of the premises;
- a review of some staff files, including training and supervision records, and some children's files;
- scrutiny of a selection of daily records, policies and procedures;
- speaking with parents and children and;
- reading documentation held by CIW.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Childrens Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Sandra Clayton
Registered maximum number of places	18
Age range of children	Six weeks to two years
Opening hours	8am – 6pm Monday – Friday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	27 January 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	03 April 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?	No
Additional Information:	