



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru  
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

# Childcare Inspection Report on Toadhall Montessori Nursery And Creche (Station Road)

50 Station Road  
Llandaff North  
Cardiff  
CF14 2FF



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## **Description of the service**

Toadhall Montessori Nursery And Creche (Station Road) is currently registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide care for up to 25 children aged from birth to 12. They currently care for children from two to five years of age. There is a Registered Person (RP) responsible for the overall service and a Person in Charge (PiC) who manages the nursery on a daily basis. The nursery is located in the centre of Cardiff and is open from 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday. Care is provided through the English language with the use of incidental Welsh.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

Toadhall Montessori Nursery And Creche is very well run, employs enthusiastic, well trained staff and ensures that resources are plentiful and of very good quality. They implement the Montessori method based on the approach that children learn through understanding and doing and staff encourage children to explore their learning and play environment. There are a wide range of interesting activities and resources which children clearly enjoy. They have clear procedures for ensuring children's safety which are consistently implemented. The management team set high standards, are conscientious and seek continual improvement.

### **2. Improvements**

There were no areas of non compliance made at the previous inspection in September 2015 and the recommendation to undertake staff observations to identify children's next steps has been acted upon. Furthermore, the nursery has been refurbished and a mud kitchen added to the outside play space to enhance children's learning experience. The nursery has started the process to become an eco friendly setting.

### **3. Requirements and recommendations**

The service is fully compliant with all of its legal requirements.

# 1. Well-being

## Summary

The nursery promotes children's well-being effectively through fun and stimulating activities which are supported by caring, responsive staff. The nursery is very child centred, children are properly consulted and their feedback used in the planning and development of the nursery and activities. Children are given good opportunities to develop their confidence, follow their interests and learn new social skills. Staff understand the importance of promoting children's emotional well-being and communication skills so that their all round development is supported.

## 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. We saw and heard staff encouraging children of all ages to participate and express their opinions, given time to make choices and supported when needed in their chosen activity. We saw that during circle time children contributed their ideas and preferences and these were written down by staff onto a spider chart. Children's comments were then incorporated into planning of activities so that their interests were satisfied and encouraged. Children participated in the Quality of Care review formally via questionnaires and informally through their verbal evaluations at circle time. We were told that every half term children are encouraged to consider and devise nursery rules and older children had suggested "*no shouting*", "*taking turns*" and "*walking not running*". We saw that after lunch children were asked what they had enjoyed or not liked and this was written onto a large white board and used for future meal planning. Children had freedom of movement within the nursery and we saw all 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 happy and settled at the nursery and their emotional well-being is at the centre of working practice approaches. 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. Parents confirmed with us that during settling in periods there had been no pressure to leave their child too quickly and that the settling in procedure had put the needs of their child at the centre of the decision making. We saw children were settled, happy and confident moving around the environment and were eager to start their play when

being dropped off by parents. Children told us who their friends were and introduced us to areas of the nursery where they liked to play.

Children appeared to be happy, settled and reassured at the setting.

### **1.3 How well do children interact?**

Children interact well with their peers and are supported in their social development by staff and the daily routines. We were told that all children attend the daily assembly and have smaller focused circle times. These are opportunities for the children to participate and practice their social skills such as sharing and listening. We saw several circle times during the course of the inspection and most children were able to participate appropriately being polite and able to take turns. We heard children using 'please' and 'thank you' throughout the inspection, showing good manners. Children were visibly pleased when staff praised them for sharing and being kind to each other. We saw spontaneous acts of kindness between children and during circle time one child turned to their friend and gave them a big hug. Children learn how to socialise with their peers and develop positive relationships.

Children are happy and interact well with their peers and the staff looking after them.

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

Children are motivated and engage in their play and learning well. We saw children playing with a good variety of age appropriate toys such as construction, puppets and extensive arts and craft materials. These activities enabled children to extend their creative and imaginative play. There was lots of chatter and conversation as well as laughter and warm interactions. Whilst children were getting ready for Forest School activities one child told us "*I love digging for worms and bugs...but no eating!*" and the other children and staff laughed and agreed. Another child had visited Cardiff Museum with the nursery during the morning session. She was very animated and eager to discuss what she had seen with a staff member, "*A mummy dinosaur, a daddy dinosaur and a baby dinosaur! and a squirrel and spiders!*" Our observations showed that the staff and the resources available, support children to extend their learning very well. We observed children concentrate for an appropriate amount of time for their stage of development during staff led activities. Older children also demonstrated that they had been paying attention by answering questions and providing suggestions during the assembly.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning and benefit from a large selection of toys and activities.

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

There are plenty of opportunities for children to develop their independence. Toys and resources are situated so that the children can access them easily. We also saw children use the bathroom independently showing increasing skills in their personal care. Low level coat pegs allowed the children to access their personal belongings independently. We saw children putting their own coats and wellies on to go outside

and one child told us they have an “*amazing way*” of putting their coat on and demonstrated this for us. Opportunities to develop a broad range of self help skills are cleverly utilised with all children. At meal times children are encouraged to serve themselves, pour their own drinks and gravy and choose their cereals, toast or fruit at breakfast time. They also returned their dirty plates and washed them in a specially adapted low sink. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times and we saw children get tissues and wipe their own noses and then dispose of the tissue in a pedal bin. We heard lots of incidental Welsh throughout the setting and children responded well to simple instructions and conversation. Children are encouraged to self register when they arrive, to help encourage their participation.

Children are given time, space and frequent opportunities to learn and do as much for themselves as they can.

## 2. Care and Development

### Summary

Staff are well qualified and experienced. Relationships with children are warm and affectionate and staff work well together to provide a high quality service. Staff understood key policies and practices and follow these in their every day work in order to keep children safe and healthy. Staff provide a good, wide range of activities and quality resources that help children develop an inquisitive attitude to learning and play.

### Our findings

#### 2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff understand their responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy and do this to a very high standard. The setting has been awarded a Level 5 by the Food Standards Agency and achieved the Gold Standard Healthy Eating award. This demonstrates that food health and hygiene practices and procedures are robust and well understood and implemented by staff. Food provided is freshly cooked and menus indicate a varied, healthy diet is encouraged. All staff have completed Food Hygiene training and information relating to children with specific dietary needs is clearly displayed. All staff we spoke with were able to describe relevant health and hygiene procedures and policies in place. In the dining area there is an “Eat well” guide board on the wall to encourage children to develop an understanding and discuss healthy eating. We heard staff having these conversations with children, for example, “*Why do you like milk? What does it do?*” to which children replied “*Gives you muscles*”. We noted that fresh water was available in all rooms for children to access throughout the day. The nursery have completed stages one and two of the Healthy and Sustainable Pre School Scheme and we saw children encouraged to brush their teeth through the Design to Smile initiative. Children’s physical health is promoted effectively through weekly movement and dance sessions, yoga and access to a stimulating outside area. Risk assessments are well written with risks identified and preventative measures put in place. The fire log book demonstrated that emergency evacuation procedures are practised every two months. Records also showed regular testing of safety equipment, such as smoke alarms and emergency lighting supporting the overall safety of the setting. We saw that managers complete monthly audits of accidents and incidents to help determine any trends of problem areas. Children’s health needs are recorded when they start the nursery. 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 hold appropriate first aid qualifications and have completed food hygiene, health and safety and COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) training. Child protection including Prevent training had been completed by all staff. Leaders had also completed level three child protection training.

Staff and managers are mindful of their responsibilities in providing a healthy, safe and nurturing environment.

## **2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?**

Staff are consistent with the children in their approach to dealing with unwanted behaviour and promoting positive behaviour. Staff spoke in calm and gentle tones, which were respectful, warm and nurturing. We were told that all staff had completed behaviour management training and staff understood the importance of children learning self regulating behaviour. The staff we spoke to were able to discuss lots of strategies that they use so that children learn and understand what is acceptable social behaviour and interactions. An emotions board is used to encourage children to indicate how they are feeling. We were also shown a 'Peace rose' that children can choose to give to someone they need to say sorry to, in order to express their feelings. We observed staff explaining to children how they could take turns and share with others. Staff praised children for listening and this reinforced the positive interactions the children had with each other. Staff were patient and spoke to children clearly about the expectations within the nursery. We saw that children were supported in expressing and understanding their own and others emotions through the use of hand puppets with differing expressions. Children were able to tell us about these puppets and what they meant. 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 and would be cascaded down to staff so that it could become embedded in their everyday practice.

Staff support interactions very well with excellent emphasis on promoting children's emotional wellbeing.

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

Staff have developed excellent relationships with the children and strong bonds are formed. Our observations showed that staff have a very good understanding of the children's needs and are able to plan and provide appropriate activities for children's abilities. There are 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 one child had visited Longleat and their interest and enthusiasm for this had enabled staff to build in maps and safari topics into the planned learning themes. Careful questioning by staff further promotes the children's learning and understanding. For example, we heard staff talking informatively to the children during assembly about spring. They encouraged children to think about new life in flowers and animals and the children volunteered their thoughts. Another staff member made notes and observations of what the children said and these were used to inform future planning to help extend children's individual learning. Children thoroughly engaged in these interactions and enjoyed their time with the staff. 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. During the inspection a Speech and Language Therapist visited to work alongside some children and discuss with the staff suitable strategies to develop and support particular children's language acquisition. We saw staff and children had learnt some basic Makaton signs and used them together, further promoting their inclusion and communication skills.

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

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

The environment is clean, bright and maintained to a very high standard. There are colourful displays positioned throughout the setting which depict topics that are being studied. Toys and resources are well looked after, plentiful and of very high quality. Considerable care is taken to maintain safety in order to ensure the well being of children. The setting, both inside and outside, provides a highly stimulating learning environment and is of excellent quality

#### **Our findings**

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

The manager ensures that the premises are safe and there are daily risk assessment sheets completed by staff to support this process. When asked, staff were able to tell us safety procedures. They understood who was responsible for certain checks as there is a rota staff refer to so that they are clear about their daily responsibilities. This ensures the environment is safe and suitable for children. The nursery employs a cook, specifically responsible for the preparation of all meals for the children at the Nursery and Creche, ensuring that hygiene and safety procedures are followed during food preparation. They also employ a maintenance person to ensure any identified repairs or maintenance tasks are dealt with quickly. The building had all the required gas safety and electrical certificates and was in very good repair. Hand sanitizers are located at the front door and people are encouraged to use them before entering the building. 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 of the setting were suitably supervised and supported children to play and explore in a safe and engaging manner.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment.

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

The indoor play space is very well decorated, child centred, warm and welcoming. There are large display boards throughout the nursery which showcase some of the topics that have been covered and the children's work. The displays help celebrate the children's efforts, as well as promoting a sense of ownership and belonging to the setting. There is considerable bilingual Welsh/English signage supporting children's language recognition. The outside play areas are very well equipped with a range of resources such as a mud kitchen, water play, planting area, pet rabbit, play house and area for ride on vehicles. These areas provide children with good opportunities to gain new skills and experience a wide range of outdoor play experiences. Team meeting minutes also show the nursery is keen to further promote indoor physical activities

giving the children choices and more opportunities to develop their physical development.

The nursery ensures that children can play and learn in a supportive, thoughtfully prepared and vibrant environment.

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

Children have easy access to very good quality play equipment and resources and there are monitoring systems implemented by staff to ensure their continued value. Resources are made available in sufficient quantity to ensure all children have good variety and choice. There is a good selection of multi cultural toys and books available for the children to use that promote diversity and equality. Furniture is appropriate for the age of the children and is of very good quality. Regular checks are undertaken to ensure all resources and equipment are safe, clean and of suitable quality with any broken or worn equipment immediately removed.

Systems are in place to ensure the high quality equipment and resources that enhance children's play and learning experiences are maintained to a very high standard.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

There is a strong management structure in place at the setting that ensures the nursery is well organised and managed to a very high standard. Management and staff fully engaged in the inspection process and were open and transparent throughout. They are keen to make continual improvements and therefore enhance the experience of the children who attend the nursery.

### **Our findings**

#### **4.1 How effective is leadership?**

Management of the setting is highly 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 very 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. Regular team meetings and individual supervision sessions provide staff with quality guidance and support as well as promoting consistency and high standards throughout.

Leadership of the nursery is highly effective.

#### **4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?**

There are excellent 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 contacted staff familiar to the children are used to cover annual leave or sickness.. The RI completed the Self Assessment of Service Statement which was circulated by CIW earlier in the 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 excellent 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. Feedback in the parental questionnaires was seen to be very positive and identified that *"everyone seems to have a role and communicate well"*. The management team 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 provides 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**

None

## **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;
- assessment of documentation held by CIW.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website [www.cssiw.org.uk](http://www.cssiw.org.uk)

## 7. About the service

Type of care provided	Childrens Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Sandra Clayton
Registered maximum number of places	25
Age range of children	Two to five years
Opening hours	8am-6pm Monday to Friday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous CSSIW inspection	31 March 2015
Dates of this inspection visits	6 March 2018 7 March 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	Yes
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	The provider does not provide the 'Active Offer' in relation to the Welsh Language.  An 'Active Offer' means providing a service in Welsh without someone having to ask for it. This is part of the Welsh language Policy to develop and strengthen Welsh language in services
Additional Information:	