A report on

Montgomery Pre-School

Montgomery Church in Wales School
School Lane
Montgomery
Powys
SY15 6QA

Date of inspection: June 2025

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

About Montgomery Pre-School

Name of setting	Montgomery Pre-School
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	N/A
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Sarah Brian
Person in charge	Katie Emberton
Number of places	24
Age range of children	2 – 5 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	29
Number of children who receive funding for early education	21
Opening days / times	3+ education funded sessions run on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings 8.30am - 11.00am. Childcare sessions are Monday 9am to 3pm for 2 - 5-year-olds, plus 11.00am - 3.00pm Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.
Flying start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	No
Date of previous CIW inspection	20/02/2024
Date of previous Estyn inspection	October 2017
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	17/06/2025
This is a pack away setting. There are children with significant additional learning needs at the setting. The setting is not funded for any additional support for these children.	

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Well-being	**Excellent**
Learning **(only applies to three- and four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**Good**
Care and development	**Excellent**
Teaching and assessment **(only applies to three- and four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**Good**
Environment	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Excellent**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Improve opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the diverse world in which they live

R2 Retain all required building maintenance certificates

What happens next

CIW and Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the 'Supportive arrangements for transition to school for children and their families' for dissemination on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being: Excellent

Nearly all children are exceptionally happy and settled throughout the session. They know their choices and ideas will be valued, by practitioners who listen actively and show genuine interest in what they have to say. They follow their own interests, make decisions around where they play and who they play with confidently.

Nearly all children cope with separation from their parents and caregivers successfully. They form strong emotional attachments and are at ease with practitioners and are familiar with the routines and expectations at the setting. Nearly all children benefit from a strong sense of 'Cynefin' or belonging, as they see photographs of their families and loved ones displayed and readily talk about their community. For example, one child discussed whether they would be showing their sunflower at the local Montgomery show. Other children excitedly told us they were looking forward to having dinner in the 'big school' and then playing with 'the big boys and girls'.

Nearly all children are beginning to form friendships. They play happily with or alongside each other and are beginning to co-operate and share resources well. Their interactions with one another are kind and considerate. For example, when playing games outdoors, they help their friends to safely navigate the climbing wall, observing safety rules and congratulate one another on their achievement when successful.

Nearly all children are enthusiastic and engaged learners who enjoy playing and learning together. Through purposeful play, they develop curiosity about the world around them. For example, a few children become deeply absorbed in transporting water using containers, to various locations in the outdoors.

Nearly all children develop their independent skills well during their time at the setting, such as finding their name and pegging it on a line when arriving. Most children are confident to make their needs known and remind practitioners of the rules of the setting. For example, they inform us of the need to wear hats and apply sunscreen when going outside to play. Children with additional needs are showing increasing abilities to self-regulate and are encouraged to join in all activities.

Learning (only applies to three- or four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Good

Most children are happy, curious and engage well with the learning opportunities available to them. Most children including children with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress from their individual starting points. Most children develop their communication and literacy skills well. They talk readily with one another and the adults around them and share their views on things that interest them confidently. For example, they talk about their favourite fruit and describe the flowers that grow in their gardens. They sing familiar rhymes and respond to simple questions as they play happily. Many children enjoy looking at books and handle them appropriately. They listen to stories read to them by adults and retell their

favourite stories to their friends. Many children enjoy making marks using paint, sand trays and chalk outside and a few children are beginning to attempt to write their names.

Many children use Welsh words and phrases with confidence and respond to their names, discuss the weather, and sing songs and rhymes with enthusiasm. A few children name colours and count objects as the play.

Many children develop their numeracy skills appropriately. They count the number of children at the setting and recognise numbers in the environment as they play. Many children use mathematical language effectively as they play, such as talking about full and heavy bottles of water and long and short lines of water they squirt on the floor outside.

Most children develop their physical skills appropriately. They use a range of small tools with skill, such as knives to cut oranges and pipettes to draw up water to make potions. They enjoy being physically active in the outdoor environment. For example, they run up and down a sloped path with agility and participate in movement sessions with enthusiasm and coordination.

Many children develop their digital skills appropriately. For example, they draw on an interactive white board and use the menu bar to select different colours and to change the size of marks they make. They operate and enjoy listening to stories from an audio player independently and a few children listen to pre-recorded instructions alongside activities successfully.

Many children solve the problems they encounter when playing and exploring confidently. They work out how to make mini windmills move when there is no wind and discover that more damp sand will go to the bottom of a jar if they pat the top with their hands.

Many children enjoy creative activities, such as making collage pictures with a range of materials and have fun dancing with scarves to music.

Care and development: Excellent

Practitioners have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. They are warm and professional in their care and implement the settings policies and procedures to a very high standard. They have a thorough knowledge of safeguarding issues and follow the setting's safeguarding procedures diligently. Practitioners are suitably qualified and well trained. The setting has robust procedures for the administration of medicine, responding to accidents or incidents and have clear procedures to manage children's allergies, food intolerances and dietary requirements. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Practitioners employ high standards of hygiene practices themselves and encourage children to follow their example, as appropriate. They effectively promote healthy lifestyles ensuring that children have lots of outdoor play and opportunities for physical activities and fresh air.

Practitioners are highly responsive to children's attempts to communicate, and value each child's efforts. Practitioners manage children's behaviour through praise and encouragement exceptionally well. This results in a positive ethos throughout the setting which shows in the kind and respectful ways that children are learning to build relationships and act within a

social group. They ensure that children have access to high-quality learning experiences within all areas of the setting. Practitioners diligently plan experiences to match children's interests, resulting in children feeling heard and valued.

Practitioners have a robust understanding of child development and how to inspire children so that they become curious learners. For example, following a child's interest in cars, practitioners used this information to set up a station where children could wash and clean the cars to develop their fine motor skills.

Practitioners are proactive in supporting children with ALN and work closely with outside agencies to ensure children's individual needs are met and appropriate support is in place. Practitioners engage children in their learning through the use of real-life experiences, for example having lambs visit the setting and the growing of caterpillars. They undertake regular reviews of all children's progress, ensuring the next steps in learning are identified and that all staff are involved in planning around children's individual needs.

Teaching and assessment (only applies to three- or four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Good

Practitioners have a good understanding of how young children learn. They know the children well and plan exciting and engaging activities indoors and outside. They take good notice of children's interests, and repeated patterns of play. They use this information to inform their plans well.

Practitioners are reflective and work well as a team. They allow sufficient time for children to become engrossed in what they are doing. Practitioners are good role models and show children how to use resources appropriately, such turning the tap on and off to access water from the water butt and how to use a juicer to squeeze oranges. They model language for children well and introduce them to new vocabulary during their play effectively. For example, they name flowers as children put them into jars. Practitioners ask questions that promote children's thinking and problem-solving skills well, such as asking them how they could use spray bottles to water plants.

Practitioners actively encourage children to respond to questions and express their views and opinions. They provide cosy reading areas, where children relax and enjoy listening to stories alone or with others. Practitioners plan beneficial opportunities for children to engage in mark making activities, such as copying writing patterns and using chalk outside.

Practitioners develop children's Welsh language skills suitably. They encourage the use of Welsh through greetings, songs, and simple conversations about the weather. They help children to count objects and name colours during play.

Practitioners provide children with valuable opportunities to learn about their Welsh identity and culture, through celebrating St David's Day where they taste traditional Welsh food. Practitioners display Welsh flags and costumes, alongside local features and landmarks which helps children to recognise the symbols of Wales and develop a strong sense of belonging to their local community.

Practitioners support children's early numeracy skills well. They encourage counting during play, such as counting caterpillars in a butterfly house and provide resources such as number lines to help children count votes cast for a story. Practitioners provide a suitable range of hands-on experiences to support children in understanding wider mathematical concepts such as capacity where they fill and empty containers of water.

The setting promotes children's physical skills well through a wide range of experiences and resources to develop their core strength and agility. For example, practitioners provide valuable opportunities for children to climb on climbing frames, navigate obstacle courses and dance and move to music. They provide a wide range of resources to help develop children's fine motor and manipulative skills, such as knives to cut fruit, pipettes to draw water and mark materials to make marks.

Practitioners support the development of children's spiritual, moral and cultural development, through celebrating festivals such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. However, practitioners do not provide children with enough beneficial opportunities to experience and learn about the lives, cultures and beliefs of those that may be different from their own.

The setting's procedures for monitoring children's progress are effective. Practitioners carry out regular observations of children play and undertake focussed observations across areas of learning. They set and monitor targets for children, including those with ALN. They use this information to identify children's next steps in learning successfully.

Environment: Good

Leaders ensure the environment is exceptionally safe and secure and record all visitors to the setting. They implement effective risk assessments and constantly monitor and evaluate the play space eliminating risks to children. Leaders provide an environment that reflects and meet children's needs and interests. This encourages them to experiment and take risks in their play. Leaders ensure that fire and security equipment is regularly checked and complete regular fire drills, making sure that practitioners and children understand the procedures in an emergency. Leaders ensure the building is maintained to a high standard. However, they do not retain all necessary documents.

The setting shares the facility with other community groups, and this requires practitioners to pack away all resources at the end of each session. Although practitioners need to complete this daily task, they are diligent in ensuring that the environment is always set up to provide a rich learning experience for the children. The indoor environment is spacious, light, calm and welcoming. Furniture is at a suitably low level, which allows children to access and use resources independently. Leaders provide children with free access to the outdoors throughout the session. The environments supports children to develop their independent and social skills effectively. Toilet facilities are easily accessible, which helps them to embed good, independent hygiene habits.

Leaders ensure a mix of high quality natural and manufactured resources are available in all environments. For example, children use real-life resources and natural loose parts in their play to support their exploration and extend their imaginative role play. Leaders ensure that practitioners follow robust systems to regularly check toys, equipment and resources to ensure that they are clean and in good condition.

Leadership and management: Excellent

Leaders are highly dedicated and work diligently to provide high quality leadership at the setting. They have a clear vision to develop happy, independent, and confident children, who feel part of the community and have a sense of belonging. Leaders work together closely and meet regularly to discuss the work of the setting, children's development, and progress made towards planned improvements. Leaders create and maintain a strong, collaborative team ethos, where practitioners feel comfortable to contribute meaningfully to meetings.

Leaders are highly committed to making improvements at the setting and the evaluation of the work of the setting is highly effectively. They have high aspirations and consult a beneficial range of stakeholders to support the process. They regularly collect and use views from external organisations, parents and carers and act on suggestions made. For example, following parent feedback they increased the number of photographs they put on social media. Leaders also consult children as part of the process and ask them to put smiley and sad faces on different areas of learning. Leaders clearly identify areas for improvement and prioritise those that will have a positive impact on provision, staff practices and outcomes for children. Leaders monitor progress towards achieving the improvement targets and measure the impact they have had. Leaders make good use of grants to contribute to improvements in priority areas. For example, they purchased a shelter to extend opportunities for children to learn in the outdoors.

There is a clear statement of purpose that provides an accurate picture of the setting and a comprehensive range of policies and procedures which are implemented effectively by practitioners. Practitioners are suitably qualified and there is a well-developed recruitment and induction process. Leaders have devised worthwhile appraisal systems that give practitioners opportunities to reflect on their work. They set targets for them, which are closely linked to priority areas for improvement.

All leaders and practitioners engage in a wide range of worthwhile training opportunities to develop their practice and develop new learning experiences for children. For example, recent training around cynefin (belonging) suggested putting children's photographs on the blocks, which helps them identify themselves and their friends as they build.

There are strong partnerships with parents and carers. Practitioners keep them well informed of their child's progress through informal discussions after sessions, regular written reports and by sharing photographs of learning activities on social media.

Leaders have developed strong and effective relationship with the school that the setting is based in. Children attend achievement assemblies with their parents and carers throughout the year and join in with special events, such as celebrating Victory in Europe (VE) day and sports day. Transition arrangements to support children into their next phase of education are highly effective. Children have their lunch with other school children and play in their new classroom weekly. Teachers from the school visit them regularly and parents and carers receive regular school newsletters. Leaders meet with parents and carers and the class teacher to share information and ensure they are comfortable with the arrangements. As a result, this is a positive experience for children, parents, and carers, who look forward to the move. These arrangements are a strength of the setting.

Leaders make good use of the local community to enrich children's experiences, such as visiting local shops, cafes and attending church services. They enter flower growing competitions at the annual Montgomery show. Visits from a nurse and a vet contribute to children's understanding of the wider world.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from CIW and Estyn's websites (http://careinspectorate.wales) (www.estyn.gov.wales)

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
Poor	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

CIW has no areas for improvement identified following this inspection.

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

Mae’r adroddiad hwn hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

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