Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Toadhall Montessori Out of School Academy

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The inspection visits for this service took place between 08/12/2025 and 10/12/2025

Service Information:

Operated by:	Toadhall Montessori Out of School Academy Limited
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	38
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	No
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	No
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The provider makes an effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture or is working towards a bilingual service.

Ratings:

Well-being	Good
Care & Development	Poor
Environment	Good
Leadership & Management	Adequate

Summary:

Children enjoy their time at the setting; they confidently communicate their needs and feel valued by staff and peers alike. They are active and curious learners who engage enthusiastically in the play-based activities available to them, both indoors and outdoors. They play cooperatively and interact positively with adults and other children. They have beneficial opportunities to develop independence and contribute to planning activities.

Interactions between staff and children are warm and positive, and staff support children's needs appropriately. Staff promote positive behaviour and act as positive role models. They keep accident and medication records up to date. Most staff understand how to report concerns; however, significant improvements are required to ensure all safeguarding concerns are appropriately acted

on to ensure the health, safety and well-being of children.

Leaders maintain a clean, well-organised environment that promotes safe play and exploration. Resources are well maintained and thoughtfully arranged, enabling children to move freely, make choices and engage in exciting activities that support their development.

Leaders are committed to providing a service which supports children and staff to achieve positive well-being outcomes and responded positively and promptly to feedback during the inspection process. There are extensive policies, procedures and documentation in place to guide staff in their roles. However, improvements are required to strengthen the overview of the settings practices. Ensuring all aspects of the setting are fully compliant with the regulations, meet the National Minimum Standards (NMS) and are operating in accordance with the settings own policies and procedures. Leaders and staff build strong partnerships with parents, who value the service offered.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children have good opportunities to make choices and decisions about how they spend their time. They communicate confidently and interact positively with staff, who value their opinions and consider their wants, moods, and needs. Staff listen attentively and respond promptly to children's suggestions. Children actively contribute to planning activities and freely choose the resources they play with in the areas they prefer. Mealtimes provide positive social experiences where children chat and share ideas, and they independently select what they wish to eat and drink. However, the length of mealtimes can impact on the time available for children to play.

Children show enthusiasm and enjoyment as they play at the setting. They gain a strong sense of belonging as they take part in activities. Each child is part of a group with a designated key worker, their birthdays are displayed on the wall, and name labels are used at mealtimes, all of which contribute to children feeling recognised and valued. Children form meaningful attachments with both staff and peers. These positive emotional connections help them feel safe and secure.

Children interact positively with peers and staff. They arrive from a variety of schools, settle quickly and form beneficial friendships across different age groups. Older children help to care for younger peers, showing kindness and responsibility. Children co-operate and play collaboratively at the setting, for example, during outdoor play children enjoy an activity exploring loose parts, working together successfully to build structures. Children manage their behaviour well, co-operate, take turns and share resources. They respect the environment by clearing up after snack and tidying away toys.

Children are active and curious learners who engage enthusiastically in play-based activities. They sustain interest and persevere to complete tasks, gaining a sense of achievement. Some children concentrate for extended periods as they enjoy reading, benefiting from the calm and supportive environment provided by quiet spaces such as the sensory room. Timetabled outdoor activities and resources are highly motivating, sustain interest and encourage collaboration. Children have freedom to explore indoors and outdoors, confidently choosing activities that excite them and promote enjoyment in both organised and free play.

Children show confidence and independence, making choices about their play and experiences. They are motivated and follow personal interests, such as selecting adult or child led activities from a wide range of resources, games and opportunities that encourage problem solving and creativity. They manage tasks such as serving snacks and tidying up, while older children help load the dishwasher and pack away dining tables, all of which supports their growing independence. Children demonstrate growing resilience and self-assurance as they explore and learn through play.

Care & Development — Poor

Staff endeavour to keep children safe and healthy. Most staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities to protect children. They can explain how to report and record safeguarding concerns and are aware of the settings procedures. Flowcharts displaying actions to take if a concern arises are displayed around the setting. However, outcomes for children require significant improvement because records viewed found that leaders do not always take the appropriate action required when safeguarding concerns arise, in line with the setting's safeguarding policy. We have therefore, issued a priority action notice. The provider must take immediate action to address this issue.

Staff record accidents in detail on forms signed by parents/carers and leaders review these monthly to identify patterns or concerns. Children's medical records are complete and are up to date. Medication records are completed in accordance with the settings medication policy. Staff record allergies and dietary requirements in children's files and display this information clearly in the kitchen, which ensures all staff are fully aware of each child's specific needs. Healthy snacks are prepared, water is always available, and a strong focus on physical activity is promoted through timetabled activities. Staff maintain appropriate child to adult ratios; however, some attendance records for staff and children are not completed fully, as the actual time of departure is not captured consistently. Children's contracts are signed by parents/carers and exchanged before children start at the setting. They capture most of the required information and relevant consents are sought.

Staff understand the behaviour management policy and implement positive strategies to support children's interactions. They are consistent in their approach, setting realistic boundaries and consider individual needs so children understand what is acceptable. Staff are positive role models; they promote good manners and respectful behaviour. They use praise and encouragement effectively and support older children to take responsibility for their own actions. A reward system, 'Toadhall tokens', are used to reinforce positive behaviour, which motivates children as they can trade in their tokens for small items of their choice.

Staff promote children's play, learning and development well. They have a good understanding of child development and alter their approach to meet the needs of the individual children. Staff follow the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) policy effectively. They use detailed individual files and a one-page profile to capture key information and tailor support. For example, they adapt the provision for children, create calm spaces and use appropriate strategies to support individual needs.

Environment — Good

Leaders provide an effective environment for children attending the setting. They ensure the setting is clean, secure and well maintained. Staff ensure safety gates and locks are utilised and carry out thorough maintenance checks for fire and smoke alarms daily. Leaders demonstrate their prompt response to safety requirements by swiftly addressing out-of-date fire extinguishers. Leaders implement valuable risk assessments for the building and for activities considered as risky play, such as the zip wire and climbing wall. These assessments are detailed and support children's safety. Staff demonstrate a positive approach to managing risks, and leaders encourage ongoing improvements by reviewing and updating procedures. Leaders conduct fire drills regularly to ensure that children and staff know what to do in the event of an emergency. However, records do not always include the date or time to reflect that all children and staff are participating in the drills.

Leaders provide a good range of resources and equipment. Children access age-appropriate toys and materials, which are stored at low levels to promote independence and choice. The environment is bright, welcoming, and well presented. Staff undertake cleaning and cooking roles efficiently, ensuring children's play and supervision is not negatively impacted. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has registered the setting and awarded it a five-star rating, demonstrating staff implement safe food practices.

Leaders ensure children can access facilities such as the bathroom independently aiding independence for children of all ages. The well-being and sensory room offer a calm and inviting space for children to relax, with low level lighting and cushions. Leaders have secured the outside play area with a high fence and secure gates, offering privacy while children play. This area is well used, and children access it in all weather conditions. The area features many exciting opportunities for children to engage in, which inspires children's creativity and imagination. For example, a mud kitchen with stainless steel pots, pans and loose parts play. Leaders provide effective transport arrangements, including the use of several industrial pushchairs and two minibuses which have the required vehicle safety checks and insurances in place. These support transitions to and from school and when attending day trips to explore the beach or the woodland during school holiday periods.

Leadership & Management — Adequate

Leaders are committed to delivering a quality service and demonstrate a strong vision for the setting. They respond positively and swiftly to recommendations for improvement. The statement of purpose is detailed and provides parents/carers with beneficial information to aid them to make an informed choice. Leaders have established a comprehensive range of policies and procedures to support staff in fulfilling their roles effectively. They have made significant efforts to carefully consider most practices and have developed detailed written procedures to guide staff appropriately. However, outcomes for children require improvement because leaders have not fully considered or undertaken appropriate risk assessments to guarantee the well-being and safety of all children when parents/carers enter the setting. We expect the provider to make improvements.

Leaders actively carry out self-evaluation and plan for improvement. They seek input from staff and parents, then incorporate these insights into their annual quality of care report. However, the report also includes findings from the responsible individual's other registered services and does not specify findings or actions unique to this setting, nor does it include children's views. Leaders strive to improve outcomes for children by participating in a variety of quality assurance schemes such as when undertaking a program which focuses on promoting excellence in paediatric first aid practices. Leaders do not always keep Care Inspectorate Wales informed regarding regulatory matters such as when senior staff are absent for a prolonged period.

Leaders implement appropriate recruitment processes and ensure staff undertake a suitable induction process. However, they do not always ensure staff files are maintained to a consistent standard, as some files lack the required suitability checks. They were able to provide any missing documents promptly when requested. Leaders have developed a beneficial supervision and appraisal process, where staff can reflect on their practices using a standardised format. However, leaders do not ensure these are carried out for all staff and in a timely manner. For example, records viewed showed that some staff have not undertaken an annual appraisal since starting at the setting in 2024 or participated in regular supervisions. While staff report feeling well supported and clear about their roles, leaders are not providing staff with regular opportunities to reflect on the quality of their practice.

Leaders foster positive partnerships with parents. Parents we spoke to, told us how they value the service and find the staff extremely approachable. Additionally, they explained that the wide variety of activities on offer to their children, along with the approach of having older children support younger peers, has boosted their children's confidence and helped them develop a broad range of skills. Leaders are also at the early stages of working towards offering the Welsh Government Active Offer, enabling parents and children to access the provision in the Welsh Language when required.

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.

The table(s) below show the area(s) for priority action and/or those for improvement we have identified.

Summary of Areas for Improvement	Date identified
The safety and wellbeing of children may be compromised because the responsible individual has not identified all possible risks or taken the necessary actions to reduce potential harm to children when carers/parents enter the setting.	08/12/25

Summary of areas for Priority Action	Date identified
We found children were at potential risk of harm, as timely action is not taken to liaise with the Local Authority Safeguarding team and records are not appropriately maintained when concerns are raised regarding children in their care.	08/12/25

National Minimum Standards

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.

Standard	Recommendation(s)
Standard 5 - Records	Ensure records for children fully capture all required details and all registers for children and staff are accurately recorded.
Standard 24 - Safety	Ensure fire evacuation drills are clearly recorded to include the date and time and ensure that everyone who regularly accesses the setting participates.
Standard 18 - Quality assurance	Ensure the quality-of-care report specifies key elements relevant to the service, incorporates the views of the children, and outlines actionable next steps to offer clear guidance for future improvement.
Standard 13 (Day Care) - Suitable Person	Ensure supervisions are carried out on a regular basis and appraisals are carried out annually. Providing staff with opportunities to reflect on the quality of their practice.
Standard 21 - Notifications of significant events	Ensure CIW are kept informed in accordance with regulatory requirements.
Standard 13 (Day Care) - Suitable Person	Ensure staff files contain all the required checks collected to evidence the suitability of workers.

Best Practice

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.

Recommendation(s)

Review routines to ensure children are not sitting for too long at mealtimes.

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