

Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board

School Accreditation

This report follows an accreditation visit made on behalf of the Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board. It considers how far the school follows Montessori approaches. The report does not address the standards and quality issues which are the responsibility of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) which reports separately. Also the report does not provide any assessment of financial aspects of the school.

Meadowbrook Montessori Pre-Primary Department

Malt Hill, Warfield, Berks RG42 6JQ

Description of the school:

Meadowbrook Montessori Pre-Primary Department is located in an old Victorian school building in Hayley Green in rural Berkshire. The building consists of two main classrooms (Meadow and Brook), an annex building, and other smaller rooms used for staff or additional children's activities. Outdoors there are extensive grounds mainly to grass, with a 'jungle gym' activity trail and wooden climbing apparatus. There is a wildlife garden developed by the children and a greenhouse. There is also a tarmac area and each class has an outside area that is easily accessible for children should they choose to work outside during the work cycle. The Pre-Primary Department is registered for sixty places and runs for five morning and five afternoon sessions per week.

Summary and conclusion.

Meadowbrook has a very strong Montessori ethos which is felt and modelled throughout the school. There is strong leadership and team work and all staff demonstrate excellent understanding of Montessori philosophy. Parents feel involved and informed about their children and Montessori practice.

The school provides an education which broadly follows the principles of the Montessori approach and environment. This merits accreditation by the Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board, but further development is needed in the following areas:

- Staff observations should be made more formal and retained so they can be reflected in practice.
- The present Montessori Progress Report could be extended to reflect that the child has creatively explored all possibilities of the material.
- The present Report Sheet given to parents should refer to the EYFS in all areas of learning.

Philosophy:

Montessori philosophy is evident throughout the school. All children are treated with respect and trust, the staff understand child development, the environment is well prepared and there is genuine freedom.

All staff and parents sign an agreement to comply with Montessori principles and positive discipline.

The curriculum is clearly defined through the Montessori programme taking careful account of the EYFS Early Learning Goals. These are defined on a comprehensive Montessori check list.

There is a long term yearly plan covering the Montessori curriculum, termly and half termly topic/lesson plans, and short term weekly, daily and individual planning.

These are all very good.

Curriculum:

The curriculum is carefully planned respecting the individual needs of the child. A secure environment, committed staff and visiting professionals, such as the PE teacher, supports the children's development.

Planning is well organised and documented and all staff show positive Montessori practice.

Children have free access to all areas. Creativity is encouraged in a cafe role play area. In suitable weather children can gain access to working with materials outdoors.

Recording children's learning and progress is thorough and staff maintain Montessori and EYFS learning goals records daily, termly and over the time the child is at school. There is a comprehensive report system.

Resources and materials

There is a very good and extensive range of Montessori exercises in all areas. They are laid out systematically, are attractive, and freely accessible to all children. They are developmentally appropriate for each class age group. Staff change the exercises every three to four weeks. There is appropriate floor space for each child (or group of children) to work in each area and furniture is child sized. Art and role play (a cafe) are available.

Outside each class there is an area for children to work with practical life exercises.

Staffing: Staff are experienced and totally committed to Montessori philosophy.

They thoroughly understand child development, follow the lead of the child and show respect and trust in greeting children and in lesson time.

There is a comprehensive staff handbook with details on Montessori practice,

mission statement, aims and objectives, routines and all policies. The very strong Montessori philosophy and practice is evident throughout. Staff have detailed duty lists, a comprehensive job description and sign an agreement to ensure Montessori practice.

Staff roles are well documented and they work well as a team. Staff observations are written twice termly but are not retained. Staff appraisals are carried out formally each term, following a comprehensive self-evaluation. There is a Personal Performance Review and feedback is given formally by management.

Montessori practice: *independence, independence at home, freedom, respect*

Independence is strongly reflected in practice, staff values, and children's opinions. A calm and concentrated atmosphere reflects the fact that the children respond well to freedom, choice and respect. A staff member talks quietly to the children, but assists another child with the trinomial cube.

Positive discipline is evident throughout the school and the Head of Pre-Primary is strongly committed to this.

The children show pride in their own achievements. One child relates how he had held the globe at a birthday circle and another talks about a newspaper article at Newstime.

The parents are very well informed and very supportive of Montessori practice at home through talking to staff, a Parents Handbook, termly Information Evenings and Child Days when children show parents round.

Montessori practice: *classroom management*

Children are very respectful and treated with dignity. The work cycle is for two to two and a half hours inside and about 30 minutes outside followed by circle time. Indoors and outdoors, the children's freedom is respected at all times.

Montessori practice: *adults' routines links with parents, including reports and records.*

Communication between staff, parents and the Head is very strong with opinions being sought and acted on. Adults know their roles and routines.

Parents comment that liaison with the school is excellent. They feel involved and supportive of the school by attending parents evenings, report evenings, Mother and Toddler groups, fundraising and expressed strong support for the Introductory Booklet.