

# **Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board**

## **School Accreditation**

This report is prepared following an accreditation visit made on behalf of the Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board. It considers how far the school follows the criteria set out in "The Guide to the EYFS in Montessori Settings".

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.

### **Anne Frank Montessori**

Bonfire Hill, Church Lane, Southwater, West Sussex RH13 9BT  
Visited on 3 December 2008

#### **Description of the school**

Anne Frank Montessori is a privately owned rural school which opened in 2006 in the former Southwater Parish Council offices in Southwater, West Sussex. It consists of one large classroom within a single storey building with views of surrounding fields. The school is open from 7.30 on Mondays and Fridays and 08.00 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. Children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The school is registered for 28 children aged from 18 months to eight years. Children attend from the local village and surrounding areas. The school supports children with learning difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language. The school employs seven members of staff. Of these, four hold relevant Montessori qualifications and three members of staff are working towards an early years qualification.

#### **Summary and conclusion.**

The school offers good quality guidance and resources in a carefully prepared environment. Very good quality learning materials are easily accessible to the children who are calm, happy and busily engaged in worthwhile activities. Staff have created a warm, welcoming, loving and nurturing environment for the children where they can absorb knowledge and respect, and grow in independence, confidence and self-esteem. Children show good levels of concentration, perseverance, independence, communication and social skills. The children have ample opportunities to enjoy physical activities in the garden.

The school has a formal comprehensive, consistent, manageable system for the observation, assessment and planning for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to ensure that the needs of each individual child are met.

***The school provides an education in accordance with the principles of the Montessori approach and environment and merits accreditation by the Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board. In developing its work further, the school may wish to consider the following point:***

- Provide parents with information on how the Montessori approach can be extended into the home.

### **Philosophy**

Overall, this aspect of the provision is particularly good. The setting has a mission statement and conforms to the Montessori approach in all respects. Very good access is offered to parents to attend open days and evening sessions where they can learn more about the Montessori approach. A company prospectus indicates some of its educational philosophy and parents are provided with a copy of a booklet called 'Reach' about the introduction of the Montessori movement into the UK, which contains useful information on the rationale of the approach which take account of Montessori's descriptions of the nature of the child, the educational environment and adult's roles. Reviews of the principles, goals and philosophy are discussed at monthly staff meetings and are recorded.

The weekly plan is displayed on the entrance door for parents to read. The recording system in place is of good quality, easy to follow and accessible to parents. Its availability to parents has been communicated by newsletter. Staff are very confident with the processes of observation, planning, recording and assessment. The purposeful activity, calm atmosphere and the self-controlled social interactions of the children distinguish this school as a very good Montessori setting.

### **Learning and Development**

The overall outcome for learning and development is very good. Planning is predominantly organized by Montessori areas of learning. It is supplemented by detailed written plans which show areas of learning covered, materials used, description of process, and evaluation. Planning is done weekly for all ages together in one large classroom. The planning within the setting is discussed by members of staff who take turns to contribute to the curriculum, planning and preparation.

Staff provide a wide range of activities for the children that are developmentally appropriate and meet the learning needs of the children. Children choose their own activities and repeat them as often as they wish to. Staff use a wide vocabulary which promotes learning and understanding in the children. The recording systems have been reviewed recently, the outcome of which is to redesign the current record to bring it in line with the Montessori system.

Records of observations are outstanding as all staff complete these immediately after an activity. Photographs taken of individuals achieving goals and samples of children's work are kept in well organized children's files with all the information on each child easily accessible to staff. At mealtimes staff offer gentle and effective encouragement. Children with additional needs are well catered for in this supportive environment.

### **Prepared Environment, resources and materials**

This is a well resourced, carefully maintained school with high quality materials appropriate to the age range in the nursery. The lightly coloured wood together with the neutral décor is conducive to the children's concentration, as is having just one prominent example of children's

work displayed and thus creating a very pleasing environment. The generously-sized outdoor screened fenced area, where a rabbit is kept, is equipped with a balance beam, digging area, tricycles, and sandpit, all suitable for the development of large movements and co-operation.

The overall design of both the indoor and outdoor areas is good. The room is divided into two sections by the use of low level cupboards and a similarly sized door thus enabling children who are concentrating on work, to do so undisturbed either physically or visually. The division of the room also facilitates construction and role play area, and is a most appropriate use of the space with a quiet book corner and a wooden bookcase housing good quality attractive books. Montessori materials are complete, systematically arranged, ordered and accessible to the children on low level shelving in all areas of the prepared environment. There is an ample range and quantity of resources. Natural lighting is provided by windows on either side of the room from which children can observe the outside environment.

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

Children's independence is good, being facilitated by easily accessible Montessori materials and unlimited time to choose or complete an activity. They have ample opportunities to work individually or in small groups, choosing to work either indoors or outdoors at different activities. Often children choose spontaneously to work individually or in pairs and they can move freely between the two sections of the room in accordance with their preferences of activity. The access to the outdoor area is good and the door can be left open for free flow. All the indoor resources are easily accessible and the outdoor resources are taken out at the beginning of the day and suitably stored at the end of each session.

The proprietor is considering producing information for parents on how the child's independence can be promoted at home. Softly spoken staff are particularly adept at redirecting children to new activities by demonstrating to them how to use materials. Interactions between children and staff are positive and respectful. A good balance is achieved between freedom and responsibility to each other and the environment. Children show due regard for the right of their peers to work undisturbed. Levels of concentration are good. Children are comfortable and secure in their surroundings, polite and attentive to each other. They treat the environment with respect by handling resources carefully and returning them to the shelves. The caring practitioners listen to their questions and give them time to express their needs.

**Montessori practice: *classroom management***

Both the morning and afternoon sessions have a three hour work cycle which includes free flow access to the garden. The well-prepared environment caters for the mixed-age group so that they can share the same room throughout the day and move about freely within it, having access to all the materials. Teaching is individual, in pairs and small groups, according to the children's interests and stage of learning. Spontaneous groups are formed at the differing activities, determined by children's preference. A key person system is in operation and all staff contribute to writing observations of children and file them on their records, hence they are always up-to-date. Staff record observations on all children who participate in their planned activities.

The rolling café snack system is effective in enabling children to have a choice of healthy foods and eat at their preferred pace. The exceptionally good team work contributes to the seamless

serenity of this happy learning environment.

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

Good opportunities are provided for parental involvement in the nursery. Parents are very positive about the daily feedback from staff and the regular parent/teacher meetings. Records of the children's progress are accessible to parents on a daily basis and this includes observations and photographs. A daily photographic record has been introduced of group activities within the nursery, which can be viewed by parents when they collect their children.

Parents are very happy with the day to day care and education of their children and the friendly, supportive and informative approach of their child's key person. The entrance hall is fully utilized with information about Ofsted, EYFS, insurance, and procedures within the nursery. A well written newsletter is produced and parent/teacher meetings are held termly. Parents are regularly invited to open days, training meetings and special events.

Observation and record keeping of children's progress is very good. The Acting Supervisor has overall responsibility for health and safety and all practitioners participate in the regular maintenance of the environment. Discussions and reflections by staff promote the well-being and safety of the children and the proprietor reviews all policies annually.

**Staffing**

Overall this is very good, as the four staff are implementing Montessori philosophy and practice while providing a good balance of stimulating activities in all areas of learning. Training is very good at this school and opportunities to participate in courses are open to all staff. The quality of teaching is very good. Staff spontaneously provide role-models and guide children where necessary as well as contributing to personal and social development through discussions of consequences of actions. Team work is exceptionally good and this creates a welcoming ambience for the children and enhances their confidence.

The staffing structure of the organization is clear and staff simultaneously perform the roles of presenter, overseer and observer of the children. Detailed job descriptions for staff are in place to cover all positions and documentation reviews take place annually. Appraisals are carried out annually and a format for peer observations on staff is being considered. Annual budgeting is carried out by the proprietor who considers areas for development and purchasing of new materials. The induction process is thorough and minutes of staff meetings are recorded. The leadership of the team is strong with careful consideration been given to the delegation of roles for areas of responsibility.

Name of Assessor  
Anne McConway

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