

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.

Casa dei Bambini

Village Hall, Lower High Street, Ticehurst, East Sussex TN5 6BB
Visited on 25 November 2008

Description of the school:

Casa dei Bambini is a small privately owned nursery which has been registered since 2006. It operates from a room in the village hall building in Ticehurst, East Sussex. There is an area with fixed play equipment within the grounds of the premises, which is used for outdoor play, as well as a large playing field.

A maximum of 18 children from two to five years may attend the group at any one time and there are currently 14 children on the roll, of whom five receive funding for their nursery education.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday 09:00 to 15:30 during term time and children attend for a variety of sessions. The group is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are five staff members working with the children, two of whom have full Montessori qualifications and one is a Montessori student. The group receives support from the Local Authority.

Summary and conclusion.

The school’s main areas of strength are the good evidence of Montessori practice and understanding of the Montessori philosophy, and their planning and communication with parents.

The school provides an education which broadly follows the principles of the Montessori approach and environment. This merits accreditation by the Montessori Schools’ Association and the school should consider developments in the following areas:

- Induction of staff: formal records of this are needed.

- Parents should be informed of the key worker system and which member of staff is the key worker for their child/children.
- Staff appraisals should be carried out on all staff and documented accordingly.

Philosophy:

There is good practice relating to Montessori philosophy within the classroom. The children arrive with their own shoe bag and a piece of fruit, or something of their choice, for the snack table. They are given lots of time to complete their routine of hanging up their coats, changing into their slippers and putting their piece of fruit into the bowl on the snack table.

There is no sense of urgency; the children are all relaxed and familiar with the routine. They then begin to choose their own activities; they are not hurried at any time, and their need to choose and complete their work is respected. Staff observation is good and assistance is quietly offered when necessary. The child is respected as an autonomous learner.

Learning and Development:

The school offers a varied curriculum. There is an excellent planning file which is very organized and detailed. Different types of activities are successfully provided within the classroom. The weekly planning activities are listed, however the individual interests of the child are considered and the child leads his/her learning.

The children's records are well maintained with written evidence of continual observation and assessment within the six areas of learning. Detailed records, made primarily by the key person, relate to the children's use of Montessori materials.

Although the key person system is in place, all staff work with all children and contribute to the planning for each child.

Prepared Environment, resources and materials:

The school operates in the local village hall and therefore staff pack everything away most evenings and then set up the school again the next morning. Most of this work is completed by the Manager. When you walk into the classroom there is no evidence that this has taken place or that things are temporary. A great deal of care has been given to the layout and display of all the materials in the classroom. It is a well resourced, ordered and attractively arranged learning environment.

There are more than enough resources available to enable several children to work in each area simultaneously, should they choose to do so.

The outdoor facility is shared with other users in the community and therefore staff have limited opportunities for using this area.

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

The Montessori practice within the setting is very good. Independence, freedom of choice and respect are actively encouraged and evident. Children are well motivated and work purposefully throughout the morning, with high levels of concentration and engagement. The children are familiar and comfortable with the routines of the setting. They enjoy being involved in maintaining the environment.

There was evidence of the children working independently within the environment in a relaxed and happy manner. Children are given opportunities to work individually, in pairs, in small groups or with a member of staff. They engage with and explore materials and activities and are respected for their choices. Children are re-directed to new activities sensitively.

Independence at home is very actively encouraged and reinforced in discussions with parents.

Montessori practice: *classroom management:*

The classroom management is very good. The daily work cycle is two and a half hours long with all of the children in the one room. The key person system is working very effectively, with staff making reference to their planning sheets for individual children.

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

A strong emphasis is placed on links with parents, keeping them involved, well informed, and motivated to continue to be interested in and part of their child's learning process within the school environment. Parents feel that the information about their child's progress is well shared with both verbal and written feedback.

Parents also feel that they are well informed about events and topics through the newsletters. Adult routines within the setting are good. Daily responsibilities are organized and shared. The manager has a well documented routine for maintaining the environment and carrying out risk assessments.

The staff are responsible for observations and record keeping for their key children.

Staffing:

Staffing provision is very good. There is good evidence of team work and an excellent relationship between the staff and the children.

The staff show themselves to be good role models, and they support the children calmly and



effectively. They display a good understanding of the Montessori principles and practice. They are very observant and skilful in re-directing the children. Good presentation skills are evident, as is a rich use of language during group activities.

Planning, recording and assessment are strengths within the setting. All staff are involved in the process and they are all clear about their roles and classroom procedures.

Denise Morrell
Name of Assessor

28 November 2008
Date of report