



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 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.

Rosewood Montessori Nursery School

16 Myrtle Avenue, Eastcote, Ruislip, Middlesex HA5 3FQ

Visited on 9 March, 2009

Description of the school:

Rosewood Montessori Nursery School occupies a private house in a suburban area. It is open from 09:00 until 14:45 Mondays to Thursdays and until 12:00 on Fridays during term times. The setting is registered for 45 children between the ages of one and five and there are currently 53 on roll. The youngest child in attendance is two years old.

The majority of the children attend morning sessions, some stay on throughout the school day and some attend only in the afternoons. A significant number of children attending have English as an additional language.

The premises has three floors and a large outdoor area. The ground floor has a spacious hallway, a large classroom, a conservatory, kitchen, and toilet facilities. It is through the hallway and conservatory that all children attending can access the garden.

The first floor consists of two classrooms, a small additional teaching room and toilet facilities.

The third floor has a room which is designated for staff and parent use.

The garden has a large covered area adjacent to the house and an extensive lawn area, bordered with plant beds and a small wooded area.

The main staff team consists of eleven members, including the owner who is the senior manager. There is a manager who deputizes for the owner and who is Montessori qualified as well as having a Degree in Early Childhood Studies and Early Years Professional Status. The other main staff team members all have early years' qualifications, including National Vocational Qualification (NVQ level three), Montessori Foundation Certificates and Montessori Diplomas.

There are three other members of staff who come in weekly to offer extra-curricular activities and a domestic assistant.

Summary and conclusion.

Rosewood Montessori is a vibrant, busy nursery school. It offers a genuine Montessori environment where children's freedom of choice and independence are given priority. Robust and effective working procedures support children's autonomy. The staff team endeavours to ensure that each child attending has access to all areas of the setting and to a vertical age range, as far as is practical.



The adults are well-trained and supported by a skilled and cohesive management team. There is a shared commitment to continued professional development and to reflective practice, which enables the setting to enjoy continuous improvement.

Rosewood's staff are calm and professional in their practice, the quality of their interactions with the children is particularly high, supporting children in all areas of their learning and development. Emphasis is placed on providing for the needs of all the children, taking into account their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Partnership with parents is strong, staff work very hard to forge and maintain effective links with home for the benefit of the child and parents are well-informed about the setting and its objectives.

The setting is well-equipped and the materials are suited to the age range catered for.

Overall, the environment is maintained to high standards and this is achieved through team work. It is an interesting and exciting place to be for the children.

Despite the number of children attending and the setting's physical layout over two floors, there is a cohesive identity and a sense of purpose at Rosewood which supports and reflects the setting's profound commitment to Montessori best practice.

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 order to maximize learning opportunities for individual children the school aims to review the vertical grouping of its children and the free-flow available to them.

Philosophy:

The management team at Rosewood has a profound understanding of Montessori principles. These principles are defined in the aims and objectives of the setting, which describe the essence of the provision and the goals set for each child attending. A detailed website includes information on the Montessori approach and curriculum.

Emphasis is placed on offering personalized provision and on responding to individual interests. Children learn through purposeful, self-chosen activity. The adults respect and value the child's autonomy and offer support when needed.

The managers offer clear guidance and support to staff members and parents in working towards these objectives. There are robust and effective working procedures which support and reflect the setting's commitment to Montessori best practice.

Parents are seen as valued partners in the realization of the setting's goals and in their children's development and enjoyment of their time at Rosewood.

Learning and Development:

Rosewood Montessori's provision for learning and development is effective and well managed. The children are encouraged to explore the environment in their own time and the quality of the interaction between the adults and children is very good, with an emphasis on sustained shared thinking, and language enrichment. All children have access to relevant curriculum areas, to their key person and to a vertical age group, although the breadth of the age groups is slightly limited by the geographical division of the children within the building. This constraint is acknowledged by the staff team and is under review.

The planning process is documented across the long, medium and short term timescales and



flexibility is built in to ensure that the setting, and in particular the individual key persons, can respond to changing interests in the child's life and can tailor the curriculum accordingly. The continuous provision in the Montessori environment is seen as an integral part of the setting's educational plans.

The process of assessment and recording of children's progress is complex and multi-faceted, but it is thorough and effective. It serves to inform positive and productive adult/child interaction within and beyond the setting, and helps facilitate the freedom of movement of the child within the setting.

The teaching team work closely together in planning and record-keeping to ensure that information such as observational comments are shared and so that less experienced staff members are supported in assessing learning.

Parents are kept well-informed of the plans for the whole setting and for their own child, they are invited to contribute to the planning, assessing and recording cycles, which demonstrates a real commitment to involve the family in the child's learning journey. This is commendable practice that is reflected in parents' comments about the setting.

Effective links are made with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) aspects of learning and development in assessment, recording and planning.

These established systems of planning, recording and assessment ensure that the setting can effectively meet its objective to provide for the individual needs of all children who attend, including those with special needs and English as an additional language.

Prepared Environment: *resources and materials*

Rosewood Montessori offers a good range of resources both indoors and outdoors, which support all aspects of a child's development.

The materials reflect the learning requirements of the children attending, each floor of the building has a range of materials suited to the ages of the children based on that floor, and the range therefore differs across the setting. Given this arrangement, there is the potential for any child to access any piece of equipment in the building if their interest and capability is sensitively observed by the staff. The adults work hard to ensure that the children make full use of the learning opportunities available. They understand their role as custodians of the environment and in supporting learning and development. The quality of the adult to child interactions at Rosewood is particularly high and enhances the personal, social and emotional development of the children as well as communication and language skills.

The outdoor activities provide a good contrast to the indoor materials and the environment is rich in its cultural references and opportunities for real experiences.

The materials are generally of a high standard, they are kept clean and in good order, and the children are encouraged to participate in their up-keep.

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

The promotion of independence and respect is embedded in all aspects of practice at Rosewood Montessori.

Independence is fostered throughout the two and a half hour work cycle, which is offered every morning except Tuesdays (during which extra-curricular group activities are provided). Every session offers opportunities for individual work, spontaneous groups and small adult-led groups, and children are given time to complete cycles of activity. The staff team observes and amends practice in order to support this freedom and independence.

Independence beyond the setting is promoted through parent education, with verbal and



written support offered.

There are some constraints regarding the free-flow between areas, particularly between indoor and outdoor areas and the very youngest children are grouped separately for much of the time. It is considered that although these youngest children should be given the benefits of a vertical age group, in offering this it must not jeopardize the freedom of the older children. To this end, staff offer limited periods of access to the full Montessori environment and have high ratios of adults to children to support them.

The staff team is aware of these constraints and endeavours to support each child's freedom of choice as far as is practically possible. Discussions are currently taking place as to how to resolve the vertical age grouping issue.

The adults' understanding of good Montessori practice means that they support children in making appropriate choices and in developing self-respect. Respect for others and for the environment is learned by many means at Rosewood and children are given the opportunity to think about the wider environment beyond the setting, through group work and outings. Staff help children to develop a positive attitude to learning and to themselves. There is a shared sense of joy and affection between the adults and the children, which naturally enhances self-worth in the children.

Overall, the opportunities that the children enjoy for developing independence and respect are plentiful and in keeping with Montessori principles.

Montessori practice: *classroom management*

Staff at Rosewood acknowledge the importance of the work cycle, children's freedom of choice and independence. The team is managed in a way that maximizes these priorities for the individual. Extra-curricular activities and topic work are time-limited so that the children can enjoy long periods of uninterrupted, self-chosen activity.

The adults understand the principle of following the child, with key person arrangements providing scope for individual staff members to closely monitor and respond to the needs and interests of their group, whilst each child is offered support and opportunity within the framework of the whole setting, indoors and outdoors. Children can get to know all the adults and children in attendance as they enjoy an acceptable degree of freedom of movement around the setting. The whole setting comes together for celebrations and family outings. Despite its size and physical layout, there is a real sense of cohesion at Rosewood.

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

Adult's routines support the safety and well-being of the children. The environment is maintained to high standards and this is achieved through team work.

Policies and procedures are well documented and disseminated amongst staff and parents/carers. Children's records are organized efficiently and are informative.

The well-established and thorough systems of observation ensure that self-reflection is an intrinsic part of everyday practice and support continuous improvement at Rosewood.

The setting is proactive in establishing a strong partnership with all parents and frequently reviews how best this can be achieved. This partnership is evident on many levels, such as in planning activities, sharing records and self-evaluation. The shared focus of this partnership is the well-being of the individual child. The key person arrangements ensure that individual children are catered for within the framework of the whole setting and parents have a direct link with a member of staff who knows their child well. Parents appreciate the open-door policy that the setting maintains.

**Staffing:**

The staff structure is clear and supports team working. Daily roles and responsibilities are understood and enable the setting to run smoothly. These are documented. The management team is skilled and cohesive, with clear objectives in carrying out its supervision. Managers cascade best practice and support continued professional development. Every member of the team is entitled to contribute ideas regarding daily practice and planning is a shared function. The staff team demonstrate flexibility within the framework of their roles, allowing for spontaneity.

New staff members undergo formal induction and regular training is made available to all staff so that their skills remain current. The management team demonstrates a commitment to on-going self-appraisal and in-service training and this is documented. Reflective practice is endorsed and mentoring is well-established.

Rosewood's staff are well-informed, calm and professional in their practice. They share a sense of purpose in keeping with the aims and objectives of the setting, which reflect a profound commitment to Montessori best practice.

Michele Dows-Miller**12 March 2009**

Name of Assessor

Date of report