

# 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.

### **Streatham Montessori Pre-School**

66 Blairderry Road, Streatham Hill, London SW2 4SB

Visited on 14 November 2008

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

Streatham Montessori Pre-School first opened in 1989, and is located in two rooms on the ground floor of a converted residential property in south London. The front room contains the Montessori exercises (such as practical life and sensorial activities), whilst the second room is given over to the art corner and role play. There is also access to a garden play area which has a variety of outdoor equipment, including pots where the children can grow plants and flowers. Provision for toddlers is upstairs and is not considered for accreditation

The pre-school is currently registered for 25 two to five year olds, and it operates five days a week from 08.00 – 18.00 for 51 weeks a year. Children can attend a variety of sessions.

Five Montessori trained staff work in the nursery, the remaining six staff who are not Montessori trained work mainly with the toddler age group which is not considered in the present accreditation.

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

**The pre-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:**

- The Montessori materials that are damaged or have pieces missing need to be replaced. The materials need to be extended and rotated on a regular basis.
- The pre-school room at the front would benefit from a cosy corner and expansion of the role play area in the back room.
- The staff need to have documented supervisions on a more regular basis. Appraisals should be reviewed with a view to setting achievable goals and outcomes.

### **Philosophy:**

The pre-school practice is clearly rooted in the Montessori philosophy. The children work independently and industriously with the minimum of interference from their teachers. They are confident and courteous, offering help to one another or asking permission to join in with an activity. For example, one child was working with an extension exercise with the long rods, building a maze, another child wanted to join in but first asked permission, respecting that it was the first child's work. They then proceeded to build it together and remembered to remove their shoes before walking through the maze.

Good practice is seen throughout. The staff are good at observing children (e.g. written and photographic records of the children's work are made). The teachers work as facilitators and enablers and only interact directly when this is requested. There is good evidence of a clear and sustained work cycle, although this is short, lasting only about 1 3/4 hours.

### **Learning and Development:**

The pre-school follows the Montessori curriculum and there is good evidence of planning centred around the Montessori areas of learning. The children work from 9:30 to 11:15 and then prepare for lunch, which is served quite early at 11:30

The front room has a working Montessori environment at the front and a messy area at the rear; the back room is half carpeted and half a working area with Montessori equipment. Both rooms had good record keeping with clear evidence of observations being recorded (though there was no evidence of narratives being taken). Parents get regular feedback and have good access to the appropriate key worker.

The children respect the materials and know how to handle them correctly; they help tidy and care for their environment and take pride in their work.

### **Prepared environment, resources and materials:**

The materials are displayed in the correct sequence and are easily accessible to the children on shelves at their level; the range of materials is a little constrained by the space available, and exercises should be changed frequently to get around this. The materials are generally in poor condition and in need of replacement.

The children in the front room have no access to an area where they can sit and enjoy reading. When reading, the children have to sit in hard chairs; there is nowhere in the room to relax and reflect.

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

The pre-school is very strong in this area: the children know the rules of the classroom and respect themselves, one another and the materials. The teachers act as good role models and the children are calm and purposeful in what they do. Independence is encouraged from when they arrive: they take off and hang up their own coats and then have freedom of choice of activities. They show good manners generally, and ask permission before choosing activities or joining others to work together. The children move easily from one activity to another (for example, those who had chosen to stay indoors with the music teacher went straight into other activities when the music lesson was over).

Parents are encouraged to allow their children independence at home and this is set out in the prospectus.

**Montessori practice: *classroom management***

The classroom management is good and there is good team work despite the divide between the toddler provision upstairs and the downstairs nursery. The children are happy and motivated to learn in their environments.

The staff from upstairs come down and help during lunch breaks and other times hereby providing opportunities for the staff to experience different ages and working environments.

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

Staff responsibilities are clearly outlined; there is in-house training, and professional development is encouraged. Records are good, they are kept up-to-date, and children's profiles are maintained. Parents are kept up to date by way of a noticeboard, newsletters, and twice yearly parents' evenings. They have regular access to their child's key worker and are invited to join school outings.

The parents provide very positive feedback and information is shared on a regular basis; most of this is verbal however, all messages are recorded and given to parents on arrival/pickup.

**Staffing:**

The pre-school has five Montessori trained staff, and they are occasionally assisted by some of the non-Montessori trained staff of the upstairs toddlers nursery.

Although Streatham Montessori Nursery and Day-care encourages professional development

