

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.

Tigglets Montessori Nursery School

Cron dall Scout Centre, Pankridge Street, Cron dall, Farnham, Surrey GU10 5RQ
Visited on 28 November 2008

Description of the school:

Tigglets Montessori Nursery School is in a rural setting with immediate access to the countryside. It opened in 2001, and operates from a large scout centre. The nursery uses two large rooms. There is also a small kitchen and toilet facilities. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open five days a week from 09.15 to 15.30 Monday to Thursday and Friday 09.15 to 12.30 offering morning and afternoon sessions during term time. an optional lunch club is available Monday to Thursday. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area and a large field to explore. The nursery is well equipped with a broad range of Montessori materials. Currently there are specialist lessons in French and music. The head and one other member of staff hold Montessori International Diplomas, and a majority of staff also hold Montessori Certificates and are currently completing their International Diploma in Montessori education. The nursery offers a calm working environment promoting independence and giving children opportunities to discover and engage in self-chosen activities.

Summary and conclusion.

The strengths of Tigglets Montessori Nursery are that it provides an enabling environment with excellent materials and a broad range of activities where the children can move freely around the classroom, selecting activities that capture their interest. The children are guided towards becoming independent learners and have a real sense of belonging in the nursery. The majority of staff are Montessori trained and are excellent teachers who are inspired in their turn by the children.

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, and the school should consider the following points:

- Seek to provide for an uninterrupted work cycle of more than two hours.

- Implement the action plan to develop freedom of movement both indoors and outside during the work cycle.
- Develop the parents' handbook to include information on how the Montessori approach works with the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) as noted in the action plan.
- Devolve more responsibilities to individual members of staff so that they can begin to be seen as key persons.

Philosophy:

The nursery provides a stimulating environment where children of mixed ages are able to engage with Montessori materials and activities. The nursery groups children in the classroom in mixed-age groups. Children remain together for more than one to two years. For most of the school day all children are given the opportunity to select work that captures their interest and attention. They are encouraged to work independently and to learn at their own pace without interruptions. Ideally this should be a three hour uninterrupted work period. Children are encouraged to move about freely, within reasonable limits of behavior. The majority of staff are Montessori trained. Staff observe each child and record information on the child's learning. Each child has a profile which staff keep updated and reviewed. Staff support children to become independent and self-disciplined by assisting them in finding appropriate activities that help them develop habits of lifelong learning.

Learning and Development:

Learning in the nursery is a community experience. Children are absorbed in their chosen activity. The children have a passion for learning and try to do their best. The focus on the individual child is exceptional and the nursery nurtures all children. The Montessori activities and topic-based activities are well planned by staff and take into account the mixed-age group. Staff record the children's use of the learning materials and their learning accomplishments. The children's progress and achievements are written in their profiles and these are evaluated by the head of nursery. The profile is accessible to parents. The profile is also handed to the child's next school. The head is reviewing how the Montessori approach to planning and areas of learning meets the requirements of the EYFS. The Montessori curriculum allows children to develop and learn whilst using Montessori materials. On the whole the curriculum is delivered inside the classroom with an excellent range of accessible learning materials. Activities promote development in all six areas of the curriculum. The extended curriculum offers music and French lessons. There is an action plan to develop freedom of movement inside and outside the nursery during the work cycle.

Prepared Environment, resources and materials:

The nursery is inviting, warm and peaceful. The classroom is organised into curriculum areas including mathematics, language, cultural, practical life and sensorial. A creative area allows children to explore a range of materials. A small quiet area provides books and story sacks. The areas are accessible to all children and are carefully prepared by staff to allow children to self-select. The materials are displayed on child-height open shelves. Child-sized tables and chairs are arranged to allow freedom of movement. All materials are child-sized and are in excellent order. The materials support a range of skills, abilities and interests. Children have the opportunity to explore and discover. The nursery offers a wide range of intellectual challenges. Children learn to take care of plants and animals. The outdoor environment is secure and children are able to access trikes, scooters and play with water containers. An area for children to role play with writing materials and child-sized kitchen appliances promotes the development of imagination. The materials support the children's varied learning styles.

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

Children in the nursery are independent learners. The nursery fosters ground rules of grace and courtesy that promote positive discipline. Staff encourage parents to continue the ground rules of kindness and gentleness at home. Staff respect children and listen to their needs. Children are gently encouraged to try a new skill to develop their independence. Children enjoy considerable freedom of movement and choice within the environment. The staff see each child's potential and clearly work together to support each child's development.

Montessori practice: *classroom management:*

The nursery is calm and offers children an environment in which each child can develop and reach their full potential. All staff work with the children and are excellent communicators and listen to the child's needs. The Montessori materials and activities in the nursery meet the individual needs and interests of the children. Children are vertically grouped and move about freely. The nursery has just over a two-hour work cycle, which is currently being reviewed. During this time children engage in a variety of activities. At the moment the morning session is interrupted by staff so all children can access the outdoor play area or in the case of inclement weather a music and movement session or gym session. The key person is the head of nursery.

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

All staff are responsible for the welfare of the children in their care. There is a good relationship with children and parents by all staff. Children are all treated as individuals and are cared for and supported in their learning. Children are seen as leaders in their learning and are encouraged to think for themselves. Links with the parents are good and parents are supported by the head of nursery. The head offers advice and has parent partnership meetings each spring. Parents support the school in fundraising and attend in-house functions. Parents receive a progress report on their child at the end of the summer term. Regular observations on children allow staff to plan areas of learning for the individual child. The head has an action plan to develop the parents' handbook to include information on Montessori and the EYFS, planning, and key person.

Staffing:

Staff ensure the environment is warm, relaxed and safe for the children. They work together as a team alongside the children in their care. Staff are polite and are excellent communicators and listeners. Staff are well trained to observe children's learning and behavior, supporting each child's independence and competence. The adult/child ratio in the nursery is high. The head ensures that all staff are trained in the Montessori philosophy and supports professional development. This ensures the nursery is following the philosophy and that there is consistent good practice. Staff induction and appraisals are in place. Regular staff meetings take place which all staff attend. All policies are reviewed by the head of nursery, to which staff and parents have access. The nursery supports children with a medical or dietary need and those children with additional needs. The nursery has good links in the community. Parents support the nursery in fundraising and at all other events organized by the head. Each child's record of achievement is available for the parents to see. The head also holds parent partnership meetings and the nursery has an open door policy.

Name of Assessor
Jayne Roy

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