

Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board

School Accreditation

This report is prepared following two accreditation visits made on behalf of the Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board. It considers how far the school follows relevant criteria set out in “The Guide to the EYFS in Montessori Settings” (2012/14). The second visit sought to assess the progress made on the recommendations set out in the report from the first visit and considered any further findings made during the second visit.

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.

Receiving accreditation carries the expectation that settings will continue to work on the issues highlighted in this report and will remain committed to the ongoing development of their practice. Furthermore, that they will report to the MEAB office any relevant changes such as to premises address, ownership, hours of operation or to the age range of children attending.

New World Montessori Nursery Schools Ltd.
St. Barnabas Church, Pitshanger Lane, London W5 1QG

Date of previous MEAB accreditation: November 2013

Date of first re-accreditation visit: 24 November 2016
Date of second re-accreditation visit: 22 February 2017

This accreditation is valid until 31 July 2021

This accreditation report relates to the provision for children aged 2 to 5 years.

Description of the nursery:

New World Montessori Nursery Schools Ltd. (St. Barnabas) was first established in 1997; it re-registered under the current ownership in 2005 and is part of a nursery group. It uses the premises of a church in Ealing, and is open Monday to Friday from 09.15 to 15.30. The setting offers both morning and afternoon sessions during term times. Morning sessions are from 09.15 to 12.30 and afternoon sessions are from 12.30 to 15.30. Packed lunches are provided by parents for those who stay for both sessions. The premises include a lobby area, church hall/classroom, garden, kitchen, storage and toilet facilities. As the premises are shared the nursery’s resources are packed away and stored on a daily basis, and the children are fully supervised by staff when using the

toilet facilities and the lobby area.

Currently there are 21 children on roll. The nursery is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), special dietary requirements and children who speak English as an additional language (EAL).

The proprietor, who is Montessori qualified, is not involved in the daily running of the nursery. The manager holds a Montessori diploma and runs the setting, assisted by two Montessori qualified staff who also work full-time, and by another member of staff who works on a part-time basis. The setting supports Montessori students on professional placement.

On the day of the second re-accreditation visit nine children attended during the morning, four stayed on and were joined by two more for the afternoon session. There were three members of staff present.

Summary

This is a homely and welcoming Montessori nursery for young children and their families. The learning environment is carefully prepared by the team to accommodate the mixed age group of children. They provide a wide range of resources and all members of staff place strong emphasis on following the children's individual interests and needs in order to be able to guide them towards independence and confidence in their learning and development. The highly qualified and well-trained team demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the children's ages and stages of development and offers a very good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities during the work cycle.

Following the recommendations from the previous MEAB accreditation and the first re-accreditation visit, all members of staff have reviewed and developed ways of enhancing the outdoor provision to extend children's learning, including offering children free-flow access between the indoor and outdoor environments during the morning and afternoon work cycles. However, this remains an area of development for the setting as this improvement has only recently been introduced and requires more time to become a permanent part of the daily routine.

The well-implemented key person system and supportive daily routines enable children to build trusting relationships with the adults at the setting. The record-keeping system links the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Montessori areas of learning and is used effectively to enable the key person to observe, note and assess the child's progress.

Parents express their appreciation of staff members' professionalism and feel involved through the setting's open days and events, which offer them insight into the Montessori philosophy and practice. The child's key person and parents plan for the child's next steps closely together to support the child consistently at nursery and

at home. Staff regularly evaluate and reflect on their practice in order to maintain a stimulating learning environment. The strong teamwork and partnership work with parents are particular strengths of this setting.

The school provides an education which follows the principles of the Montessori approach and environment. The school has successfully addressed the points for action recommended on the first visit, and this merits accreditation by the Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board. Consideration should be given to the following point for further development:

- continue implementing free-flow access to the outside area during each work cycle.

Philosophy:

The nursery places strong emphasis on creating a favourable Montessori learning environment. The adults respect the child's inner need to explore and master skills through activity and use of resources within this carefully prepared environment, both indoors and outside. The children are free to choose materials and engage in their chosen activity as long as they wish to do so. They are free to explore the indoor environment individually or to join groups during the three hour work cycle that is offered during both morning and afternoon sessions. Following the first re-accreditation visit, free-flow access to the outdoor area has been included into the daily routine of the setting.

The supportive key person system and daily routines encourage the children to make suitable choices and to develop trusting relationships with others, which helps the child to develop confidence and independence within this prepared environment. All members of staff are positive role models, guiding the children in a calm manner, using positive language, as well as extending children's learning during both child-initiated and adult-led activities. For example, during the first re-accreditation visit a child was exploring playdough for a long period of time. During this activity the child was not interrupted by the adult until the child asked the teacher to join in. The teacher then enhanced the child's learning and creativity by suggesting other possibilities of using different tools and materials with the dough. The child responded to these suggestions by describing their creation and the texture of the resources to hand, extending vocabulary further and encouraging sensorial exploration. This consistent encouraging of children to explore and extend ideas was also evident during the second visit when, for example, two children spent a long period of uninterrupted time using the model farm animals in their role-play, exchanging ideas and using their imagination, giving names and characters to each farm animal.

All members of staff are highly skilled practitioners. They are aware of their roles and of the setting's Montessori ethos, which is defined in writing and is evident in its policies, prospectus and website.

Learning and Development:

The nursery offers a wide range of resources to extend children's learning, both indoors and outside. The long work cycle facilitates the children's exploration of the activities at their own pace. The children have direct access to the garden and now enjoy a free-flow system between the indoor and outdoor learning environments. However, this recently introduced free-flow system needs to be consistently embedded into the children's daily routine in order to broaden opportunities for learning outdoors that extend and complement those offered indoors.

Each child is allocated a key person when they start at the setting, which helps them to become confident in communicating their needs to the adult. The well-implemented record-keeping system enables the key person to observe and note their child's interests and chosen activities very effectively. This information is used to assess the child's progress according to the EYFS and Montessori areas of learning in the child's Individual Profile. Following recommendations from the first re-accreditation visit all members of staff have reviewed observational methods and practices and have undertaken clearly dated, detailed and varied observations in order to be able to more fully identify progress and to enhance planning for the individual child.

Short term plans for the group are considered and drawn up during the weekly staff meetings, during which previous adult-led and child-initiated activities are evaluated in order to be able to extend the children's learning according to the observed individual needs and interests. All members of staff plan topics together, taking into account the children's interests and any upcoming festivals or events. They also work together as a team to identify any gaps in the learning and development provision. The topics are presented alongside, and include the use of, Montessori materials, while encouraging children to develop their vocabulary and imagination. For example, during the first visit, a small group of children were presented with a nature tray which had an autumn display of model forest animals, autumn vegetables and fruit in leaves, tree bark and coloured sand. While the children were using their sensory skills the teacher was encouraging the children to describe the objects they were exploring. The children showed creativity and long periods of concentration during this activity, and enjoyed exchanging ideas with their peers and with the adult.

Additional activities such as French, yoga and music and movement are offered to the children on a weekly basis on allocated days, and are carried out by specialist teachers who attend just for these activities. Every term the setting also takes the children on outings locally, such as to the library or post office. During the second visit a yoga session was offered to the children as part of the morning work cycle. Teaching staff also participated in this additional activity in order to encourage the children to develop their social skills by trying something new and joining with others, as well as to support children's concentration and physical skills. They observed the children during the yoga session to assess their progress as a group and as individuals.

The manager is the SENCo and staff members discuss any concerns or identified SEND and EAL needs during their weekly meetings, in order to plan effectively for each child's

next steps and to fully support children and their families. This support is evident through well-documented procedures and effective multi-agency work with the local authority or health specialists, such as speech therapists.

Prepared Environment: resources and materials

The classroom is set out with Montessori areas of learning, with additional activity areas for art and craft, book reading and role-play. There is a dedicated snack and washing-up area for the children, where they prepare food and carry out cookery activities with the adults. All members of staff assess the Montessori provision fully every term to determine which learning materials to rotate to match the children's interests, ages and stages of development. The carefully selected resources across the setting fully support children's learning and exploration. They are laid out at the child's level, mostly on shelves and in an orderly manner. They are of very good quality and are easily accessible to the children. Following a recommendation from the first re-accreditation visit, the staff team have rewritten the children's name labels on their name cards and personalised drawers, so that the children can absorb the correct use of capital and lower case letters.

The grassed and partially paved outdoor area offers opportunities for children to learn through sensory exploration, such as in the mud kitchen, clay, sand and water play. The children are also encouraged to learn about recycling through small projects on how to care for the environment. There are areas for stories, construction play using building blocks, and activities that encourage large motor skills such as digging, climbing, balancing and riding on tricycles.

All members of staff maintain the environment very well throughout the day, both indoors and outside. Due to the provision being situated in shared premises, staff members set up and pack away the materials on a daily basis. Storage facilities are available for the setting, both indoors and out. The strong teamwork enables all members of staff to create a rich learning environment for all children at this nursery.

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

The children place their coats and bags on their pegs in the lobby area on arrival. When they enter the classroom they select their picture and match it with their name card on a board to self-register. The children start their daily routine with a brief 'circle time', which gives them the opportunity to settle with their key person and reminds them of ground rules, grace and courtesy, or introduces a new activity or resource. Children are given the choice to join the 'circle time' or select their own activity immediately on arrival.

Staff members respect the choices which the children make and support them when help is needed or to extend learning and development; they are excellent role models. They listen carefully to the children, encouraging them to express themselves, and they promote positive interaction and respect for others very capably. The children learn

about each other's cultures and differences, they happily help each other and are keen to share their experiences of family events. They have the freedom to work alone or in groups but are encouraged to respect each other's work and space, using floor or table mats for their chosen activities. During the second re-accreditation visit the children were offered the choice of using the outdoor environment during both morning and afternoon work cycles. A continuous free-flow system will increase the children's awareness of their choice of outdoor play during the work cycles.

The children independently prepare the fruit and vegetables for their snack, with adult supervision for example when cutting food or spreading butter on a slice of bread. The children also participate and help with the snack and lunchtime routines of setting the table, using porcelain plates, glasses and cutlery. They also use washing-up facilities to clean their crockery and cutlery after use. Due to the shared use of the premises the children do not have direct access to toilet facilities or the lobby; therefore they are always accompanied there by staff.

The setting communicates effectively with parents to convey the importance of helping children to do things for and by themselves. It uses literature, newsletters, parent consultations and open days to discuss this. Parents comment on their children becoming more confident and independent during their time at the nursery, and on their understanding of how they can continue to encourage independence at home.

Montessori Practice: links with parents, including reports and records

Information on the setting's aims and how the Montessori philosophy is incorporated into daily practice is available for parents on the website. Parents can access the provision's written policies and procedures in a folder by the entrance of the classroom. Newsletters and any ongoing changes at the setting are communicated to parents by e-mails.

The key persons speak with parents about their child's progress on a daily basis and parents can look through their child's 'Scrap book'. This book is used to share evidence of the child's progress, including weekly observations, and offers excellent opportunity for two-way communication between nursery and home. Before the child starts attending the nursery, parents fill in a registration form to inform staff about their child's routine at home and about any particular needs, it includes photographs of the child's family members; this form is kept in the individual's 'Scrap book'. The child is also invited to contribute to this book with drawings and by using a range of art materials to decorate it.

The detailed mandatory two year old progress check, which is based on observations carried out by the child's key person, is shared with parents and recorded in the child's Individual Profile. The use of the 'Scrap book' and the child's Individual Profile captures the child's learning journey during their time at the nursery very effectively.

The nursery has an 'open door' policy: parents book consultation meetings to discuss their child's progress with the key person and can attend to observe the daily routine in order to gain deeper insight into the approach and practice offered. Written reports on the child's progress with the EYFS and Montessori curriculum are issued to parents

every six months, and the child's next steps are planned closely together with parents during consultations. Transition reports are prepared and shared with the child's future school when the child leaves the setting.

Parents have opportunities to participate in fundraising events and annual celebrations at the nursery. During both re-accreditation visits parents commented on their active involvement with the setting and the support given by staff for them to gain more understanding of the Montessori philosophy and of how they can support their children's learning at home through practical activities. After the first re-accreditation visit a workshop was held for parents by teaching staff. This guided parents through the areas of learning in a Montessori environment and showed how these areas support their children's development. A follow-up workshop is planned which will focus on how parents can support their children's learning at home through practical activities. Parents also commented on the calm and 'home from home' environment created by all members of staff and how comforting and flexible staff are in order to settle their child in. Strong partnership work with parents is very evident and is a particular strength of New World Montessori Nursery Schools Ltd. (St. Barnabas).

Staff: qualifications, deployment, and performance management.

This setting benefits from having a highly qualified team of Montessori practitioners. The proprietor holds a Montessori International Diploma, a Montessori Trainer's Certificate and a degree. The manager holds a Montessori International Diploma and a Foundation Degree in Montessori Early Childhood Practice, and is currently completing a BA Honours Degree in Early Childhood Studies. The other two full-time teaching staff also hold a Montessori International Diploma and one of them is also studying for a Foundation Degree in Montessori Early Childhood Practice. The part-time staff member holds a level 3 qualification in early years and covers when members of staff are absent, for example for study leave which is usually in the afternoons.

All members of staff are aware of their responsibilities in the classroom and throughout the daily routines, which creates a calm atmosphere at the setting. They are fully aware of classroom procedures and carry out daily checks that are well documented, including those relating to the children's dietary needs.

The thorough induction program is conducted by the proprietor and manager and includes Montessori practices. Detailed written policies, procedures and job descriptions are provided to all staff; these are reviewed annually, along with the operational plan, by the proprietor and all team members. Termly supervision meetings take place with the manager for members of staff to have the opportunity to discuss any concerns or challenges in their practice. The weekly staff meetings are minuted, with action plans documented. Appraisals are held every six months with the proprietor.

The team regularly evaluates the setting's practice and philosophy to ensure that all members of staff have a shared understanding of and commitment to the Montessori ethos, and to the enhancement of provision. This is evident through the well-implemented mentoring system and peer observations, which further support staff

members' performance and inform their continued professional development. All members of the team attend in-house Montessori training, as well as courses offered through the local authority and the Montessori Schools Association's regional meetings and workshops. Each member of staff is fully supported to use their skills and knowledge when working with the children.

Strong teamwork and classroom management are significant strengths of New World Montessori Nursery Schools Ltd. (St. Barnabas). All members of the team support each other in order to further their knowledge and there are opportunities for them to exchange ideas and best practice with the sister setting.

Name of Assessor: Andrea Dalling

Date report submitted: First visit – 27th November 2016

Second visit – 24th February 2017