



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 the 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 as well as 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.

Tigglets Montessori Nursery School

Cron dall Scout Centre, Pankridge Street, Cron dall, Farnham, Surrey GU10 5RQ

Date of previous MEAB accreditation: June 2013

Date of first re-accreditation visit: 16 June 2016

Date of second re-accreditation visit: 21 October 2016

This accreditation is valid until 31 December 2020

This accreditation report relates to the provision for children aged 2½ to 5 years

Description of the nursery:

Tigglets Montessori Nursery School first registered in 2001 and is privately owned. It operates from a scout hut in a rural location on the outskirts of Cron dall village, on the borders of Hampshire and Surrey. The nursery has sole use of the premises during its opening hours and packs its resources away when others need access to the building. The nursery uses two large rooms, one is the main classroom and the other is used for group activities, and there are also kitchen and lavatory facilities. A maximum of 26



children may attend the nursery at any one time. The outdoor provision consists of a large grassed area, a soft-surface play area and a gardening area used for planting and playing in a mud kitchen.

The nursery is open in term time only, from 09.15 to 15.30 Monday to Thursday and from 09.15 to 12.30 on Fridays. There are currently 33 children aged between rising 3 and 5 years on the roll. On the day of the first re-accreditation visit 25 children attended in the morning and 17 stayed for the afternoon. Three children came just for the afternoon session. On the day of the second visit 15 children attended in the morning and the setting was closed in the afternoon as it was a Friday. The children attend for a minimum of three sessions a week. Those who are present for lunch bring in their own packed meal and all bring in fruit for snack. The nursery offers extra activities including French and yoga.

There are six members of staff including the owner/principal, four of whom hold a Montessori International Diploma. The principal also has NVQ Level 2, three have honours degrees and two have Qualified Teacher Status. All staff work part-time and all six were present for the second visit. The principal is responsible for the administration and day-to-day running of the nursery with the help of her two deputies. They cover for each other's absence.

The setting makes provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as for children with English as an additional language and it liaises with external agencies such as the local authority and private therapists. One member of staff is appointed as SENCo.

Summary

The children are settled, happy and play together co-operatively in this nurturing and caring environment. The staff members are very good role models and establish clear boundaries and expectations of acceptable behaviour. Each child is respected, valued and is treated as an individual. By combining the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the Montessori principles the nursery offers a curriculum suitable for the children's ages and stages of learning in an environment which is very well prepared according to the Montessori philosophy.

The nursery has met all the recommendations of the previous MEAB accreditation by introducing staff peer observations, writing evaluative observations of the children and ensuring a consistent approach among the team in supporting children's independence.

Where areas for development were identified during the first re-accreditation visit the setting has demonstrated a notable capacity to make improvements. Team work is very much in evidence and staff members have worked well collectively to implement the recommendations. The work cycle has been extended, the garden is



now open for most of the session, a nature area has been created, the shelves have been painted and the lunch routine and large group activities have been reviewed for the benefit of all those who attend the nursery.

Strong partnerships are built with the parents, who are very complimentary about the support that is offered to them by the staff. The planning and record-keeping system, which both the staff and parents contribute to, helps keep all involved in the children's care well informed.

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 points for further development:

- the nursery should continue to review its practice; and
- ensure that the children have a morning work cycle of at least two and a half hours by keeping whole group activities to a minimum.

Philosophy:

The staff's adherence to the Montessori philosophy provides the foundation for the children's learning in Tigglets Montessori Nursery School. The principal and her team have high standards and expectations of themselves and of the children, setting realistic goals while being sensitive to the children's needs and encouraging their independence. The nursery offers a very good example of how the Montessori practice of vertical age-grouping is beneficial for everyone. Respect for the learning environment and the calm, productive atmosphere ensure that the children have a very positive pre-school experience. This promotion of mutual respect extends to the families and to the local community. The team seeks to involve the parents and generates thoughtfulness in the children by holding charitable events.

At present the work cycle is interrupted occasionally by whole group activities; these infrequent interruptions have the potential of disrupting the children's concentration.

The website is updated regularly and this provides a succinct description of the Montessori method of education. Parents are also offered other extensive written and verbal information. The setting works hard to promote a clear understanding of its aims and pedagogy. Staff members demonstrate a profound commitment to these aims and to their implementation of the Montessori philosophy. The principles of the nursery are reviewed annually and the team are constantly looking to improve their practice. They are ably supported by an operational framework that enables them to fulfil their mission statement for the benefit of each child.



Learning and Development:

The setting follows Montessori principles in planning the curriculum and providing for the individual. It has a well thought out system of planning and assessment which cross-refers Montessori areas with the EYFS aspects. The system focuses on appropriate target setting, observation and evaluation. It encourages parental input and allows for the development of the spontaneous interests of each child. Staff members chart the children's progress and work hard to ensure that assessments are relevant and informative. All of them observe all the children, but it is the child's key person who is responsible for collating and evaluating the information and writing the children's reports, which are then scrutinized by the principal. Projects are planned and often follow the children's observed interests. At the time of the first re-accreditation visit they had been focusing on celebrating the Queen's birthday and on the day of the second visit pumpkins were being painted in preparation for Halloween.

As well as useful daily communication between the staff, half-termly minuted meetings also serve to keep the whole team updated about any changes and to provide an opportunity to exchange relevant information about all the children in the nursery.

The carefully prepared indoor learning environment is set up appropriately to meet the developmental needs of the children across the age range, with a range of activities being provided in separate areas. A staff rota gives each member of staff responsibility for one area of the curriculum. This efficient system works very well to support the children's learning and development. The children show high levels of engagement with the purposeful activities on offer. Individual activities are well-defined and there is plenty of opportunity for positive social interaction during small group activities.

Following the first re-accreditation visit the routine in the morning has been changed and the outside area is now opened before 10.00. The children are free to choose whether to go outside or not for the majority of the morning. The staff team has evidently worked hard to make the transition to the outside a success as the children calmly get themselves ready to go out without disturbing others who are working. The outside area is a much enjoyed learning space that the children can now make full use of, and since the first visit it has been transformed. Plants have been added and children engage in gardening activities or play in the mud kitchen. The soft-surface area immediately outside the door is set up as an outdoor classroom, with an area cordoned off for bikes and scooters. The improvements have greatly enhanced the children's learning opportunities. The outdoor curriculum covers all areas of learning and is very popular with the children.

Tigglets offers a nurturing environment for all the children attending and integration and inclusion are effective. The parental feedback indicates that the nursery makes a palpable difference to their children's lives.



Prepared Environment: resources and materials

The children's spacious main classroom is carefully prepared every day. The Montessori and other activities provided are suited to the age and ability levels of the children attending. The separate areas of learning are distinctively prepared and, for example, construction, role-play and play dough augment the Montessori materials. The small world play area was set up as a farm on the day of the first re-accreditation visit, which proved to be very popular, and a dolls house was available on the second visit.

The nursery's website has extensive details about the areas of learning and explains how the materials are used to aid the child's learning through exploration. The resources are well-ordered, laid out systematically and are accessible and ready to use on a continuous basis, with additional activities being introduced to support individual learning. Equipment is rotated in response to changing needs and interests. Painting the shelves has brightened the room. The adults fully understand their role as custodians of the learning environment.

The snack table is in the middle of the main classroom, with washing up facilities close by. As the children help prepare snack and are able to clear away and wash up they are able to complete this whole cycle of activity, which supports their sense of order and helps them with sequencing and understanding routines. There are four seats at the snack table, so the children learn to take turns and hone their social skills.

Following the first visit staff members have added an interesting nature area to the room which includes resources that reflect the season. Care has been taken to make the 'wormery' a prominent feature. Children are free to engage with these materials whenever they choose.

Outside, the children enjoy using bikes and scooters and playing with water. The materials in the outdoor classroom encourage representational play. During the second visit a child was keen to show others a 'tree' made from twigs in playdough, which was decorated with red, orange and green beads to represent the leaves. The garden has been re-designed and flowers in a variety of containers decorate the area. Various suitable activities have been added such as log piles and digging pits. The mud kitchen is very popular, having its own supply of running water. The children were able to use this natural space during the majority of the morning work cycle on the second visit. Tigglets Montessori offers a very favourable learning environment and makes excellent use of the premises.

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

Children at Tigglets Montessori Nursery are encouraged to do as much as they can for themselves. The team trusts the children's ability to select activities spontaneously and



to engage with them appropriately throughout the two daily work cycles. The children are very familiar with the daily routines and only occasionally have to be reminded about ground rules. The snacks are available throughout the morning session and are prepared by a small group of children. This system works well. The children also manage their own personal hygiene capably. The children who stay on from the morning, and those few who come in just for the afternoon session, bring their lunches from home. Staff members prepare the lunch tables for them and sit with the children while they are eating to further support their independence and social interaction.

Staff members work hard to promote parental understanding of the importance of nurturing independence in children. The parents enjoy coming into the setting to help the children with their shoes in the morning. The parent literature is comprehensive and informative and explains the importance of children doing tasks for themselves. The workshops and parent consultation evenings are popular and are used as another way to convey this information. Parents speak very highly of the way in which the nursery fosters independence and they particularly appreciate how staff members share with them their methods of promoting independence so that they can use the Montessori approach at home.

Montessori practice: Classroom management

As all the nursery's children are based together they are able to benefit from the mixed age range, the younger children learning by example from those who are older.

The staff work hard to ensure that the children benefit fully from their time in the nursery. They efficiently support children to choose where they would like to work, they observe the children at play and only intervene when needed and in an appropriate manner for the individual child. Different routines are in evidence on different days depending on the extra activities offered; these take place first thing in the morning two to three times a week and the team are working on ways to incorporate these groups seamlessly into the work cycle. On the day of the first visit the majority of the children attended a music session in the adjacent room at the beginning of the morning. During the second visit no additional activities were timetabled and all children settled quickly to their chosen tasks. The team have very successfully extended the work cycle on the days when no extra activities take place to around three hours as they have also changed the routine at the end of the morning and the circle time is now shorter. The engagement and concentration shown by the children, particularly at the beginning of the day, is remarkable. The lunch routine has also been improved to shorten the time the children wait to eat and now all the children and staff start their meal at the same time.

The afternoon work cycle is an hour and three quarters and runs along the same lines as the morning except that all the children go to play outside after lunch and then return to the classroom when lunch has been cleared away by the staff. Children are



able to go to the book corner to sleep should they need to. All the children join a circle time at 15.00 in preparation for going home.

As most of the staff team work part-time, care is taken to match the key person days with a child's attendance. This is a small team who work closely together and any member of staff can cover when a child's key person is unavailable; the teamwork in this setting is outstanding. The children's development and learning is enhanced by the staff's demonstrable ability to change their practice where areas for development are identified.

Montessori Practice: links with parents, including reports and records

One of the outstanding features of this setting is the work that is done to help parents feel informed and supported and the way they, in turn, support the nursery school. Home visits are offered. The children and their parents spend up to four sessions in the setting before they start to ensure that all understand the classroom routines. The settling-in procedure is therefore comprehensive. The setting also has an open door policy and welcomes all the parents into the classroom on arrival. The workshops offered to parents, along with all the written information that is available, provide them with enough knowledge to feel that they can use the Montessori approach at home, to take the lead from their children and to follow their interests.

All staff members are aware that the parents are the prime educators of their children and have an important role to play. The child's key person writes comprehensive reports each term and parents contribute to these reports with their comments. In-depth consultation meetings take place between the parents and principal during the spring term and key persons meet with the parents on a regular basis throughout the term.

Documenting the mandatory two year old progress check is the responsibility of the child's key person; this is written at the end of the child's first term in nursery, with parental contribution. Preparation of the transition document compiled for the child's next school is also the responsibility of the key person; this is very wide-ranging and is set out under the prime and specific EYFS areas of learning with reference to the goals achieved. Two newsletters are distributed to the parents each term via email. The setting is to be commended on its outstanding links with parents.

Staff

The principal has overall responsibility for the nursery but she recognises her staff members' individual skills and delegates roles such as SENCo accordingly. Her two deputies manage the setting when she is absent.



The staff members are well qualified and the majority are Montessori trained. Three have honours degrees, two of which are in early years' education. The majority of the staff have worked in the nursery for a number of years. There is an excellent induction programme for new staff that covers the setting's policies and procedures. New staff members feel well supported and are given the opportunity to work alongside an existing member of staff. Job descriptions are personalised and updated annually. Peer observations are now embedded in the practice and are used to support staff development and the supervision process. Continuous professional development is given high priority and staff members attend a variety of external courses, including Montessori training that is offered locally by the Montessori Schools Association. Ideas from training are cascaded amongst the team – for example one member of staff recently attended a course on how to extend the curriculum to the outdoors and has broadened the provision in this area by, for example, introducing more small world activities outside. Another member of staff has been on a Portage course which has enhanced staff's understanding of how to adapt activities for any child, not just those with special needs, to help them learn.

Staff who are new to the setting bring vitality and diversity of experience to the nursery and all staff members clearly demonstrate an understanding of how to 'follow the child', which is reflected positively in their everyday interactions with the children. Tigglets Montessori Nursery School provides a superb facility for children and their families.

Name of Assessor: Charlotte White

Date report submitted: First visit – 18 June 16

Second visit – 22 October 2016