

Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board

School Accreditation

This report is a supplement to the setting's previous MEAB Accreditation Final Report, which is published in conjunction with this report.

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 by the Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Kuwait. The report does not provide any assessment of financial aspects of the school.

Receiving accreditation carries the expectation that the setting will continue to work on the issues highlighted in this report and will remain committed to the ongoing development of its practice. Furthermore, that it 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.

Gulf Montessori Nursery

Salwa, Area 7, Street 1, House 168, Kuwait

Dates of previous MEAB accreditations: 15 November 2011 and 16 June 2015

This accreditation is valid until December 2022

This accreditation report relates to the provision for children aged 2 to 6 year olds.

Description of the nursery:

The Gulf Montessori Nursery in Kuwait is privately owned, and was established in 1993; until August 2018 it had a sister nursery in Dubai. It offers trilingual provision with teachers speaking Arabic, English and French. The nursery is located in the Salwa area, in a converted double story villa of which only the ground floor is now being used for the nursery provision. Following changes in nursery regulations a new nursery building was constructed in the grounds of the school to accommodate the original upstairs classroom. Each classroom has its own bathroom facilities. There is access to a large paved and grassed garden. The nursery also includes a comfortable reception area, a kitchen, and dining and staff rooms with excellent storage facilities.

Currently there are 70 children attending, all of them come to school five days a week; their day starts at 08:00 and finishes after lunch at 12:50. Some of the younger children leave before lunch. The three classrooms are named after flowers: the youngest, and newly registered children attend Blossom, the 2 to 4 year olds' class is called Lilies and the 3 to 6 year olds are in Tulips. There are currently approximately 22 children in each class. The nursery provides children with breakfast, snack and lunch prepared on the premises.

The nursery has facilities to support children with special educational needs. The trilingual approach supports children with diversity of languages. Many parents appreciate that their children have access to Arabic. The nursery employs 20 staff, with a Montessori academic co-ordinator, who is also the deputy principal, supporting ten Montessori trained teachers and two Montessori trainee teachers. Each classroom has a nurse and support staff. The administrator also holds a Montessori Diploma.

Summary

Gulf Montessori nursery offers excellent provision closely adhering to its Montessori principles and values. The experienced staff are fully committed to delivering rich learning opportunities to all children following their individual interests and developmental needs.

The provision for the youngest children's provision focuses on their physical and language development whilst ensuring that all children are well settled and comfortable and enjoy coming to nursery. This is an excellent start to their nursery experience that is reflected in their progress in learning as they enter the Lilies or Tulips classrooms where critical thinking and creativity are promoted based on spontaneous use of the excellent range of learning materials on offer both inside and in the outside classroom.

The excellent rapport of the teaching team in each classroom promotes calm and rich learning opportunities for the children and encourages independence and freedom with responsibility. They share the children's learning effectively with the families and parents speak enthusiastically about the progress their children make in the nursery.

Following the previous re-accreditation visit the nursery has met all the recommendations and this is evident in the quality of the children's learning experiences observed during this re-accreditation visit. The gentle kind positive guidance the children receive is mirrored in their engagement and high levels of concentration in their choice of activities when using both the indoor and outdoor classrooms.

The exemplary leadership of the setting by the principal and her deputy enable all staff to demonstrate their deep commitment to their classroom team and to the principles of the Montessori approach ensuring the excellent learning experiences for the children attending Gulf Montessori Nursery.

The setting provides an education in accordance with the principles of the Montessori approach and environment and merits accreditation by the Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board.

It is recommended that the setting continues to reflect on its practice in order to ensure that high standards continue to be promoted by excellent team work and shared reflection on practice.

An Action Plan has been drawn up with, and retained by, the setting to address these recommendations.

Philosophy:

The aim of Gulf Montessori Nursery is to create a favourable learning environment, where Montessori philosophy is respected and where children are offered excellent opportunities for learning and development by following their interest and needs. All staff members are eager to ensure that children attending have freedom of movement, choice and opportunities for spontaneous interaction within the group. The staff observe and respect children's sensitive periods for their readiness for learning and development. They follow children's progress in each curriculum area and prepare lesson plans according to children's interest and readiness to explore. The activities also relate to the setting's comprehensive curriculum plan.

These aims are included on an informative website and are shared with parents in monthly newsletters that always include a Montessori quotation. They are also explained at the parents' initial visit to the setting and during the induction period when children are settling into the nursery,

Since the last accreditation the leadership team introduced peer sharing of reflections of practice which focus on the key principles of the school's aims and philosophy.

Learning and Development:

Learning is organized and monitored following the Montessori Early Years Curriculum. The Blossoms classroom focuses on the children's wellbeing and fosters a sense of security. The children's language and physical skills and learning through the senses are at the forefront of the classroom's daily work and are reflected in the activities on offer in the prepared environment. Whilst in the Lilies and Tulips classes the children are offered the full range of Montessori activities with strong emphasis on their freedom to problem-solve and be creative in their thinking. Effective learning takes place during the three hour work cycle, both inside and in the outdoor classrooms which are adjacent to both the Lilies and Tulips rooms.

Whilst detailed plans of learning are in place, the teachers are always guided by the children's sensitive periods and individual interests when supporting the children's learning. This approach provides for deep engagement, a calm and purposeful learning environment and respectful work with the children. The nursery organizes termly outings in support of the themes followed by the children, such as the local zoo, the beach or the science park.

Children's progress is monitored through daily observations and shared with parents regularly. The richness of learning opportunities on offer supports their development well and is appreciated by parents. The teachers' commitment to the children is reflected in

their careful and respectful use of language and responsive attitude to their individual interests in the learning environment.

Prepared Environment: resources and materials

The children are offered a wide range of Montessori and other activities within the carefully prepared areas of learning which reflect children's stages of development. The plentiful activities are prepared with care and attention to detail and effectively support the children's spontaneous choices of what to do and with what to engage. The sizes of the classrooms offer choices of working at tables or on the floor, alone or with a group of friends.

The prepared environment supports the work cycle effectively and includes morning breakfast/snack as well as lunch prepared on the premises, which the children serve themselves and help to clear at the end.

The outdoor activities include sand and water play for the younger children, a range of creative and science activities for the older children, and care of plants and animals. Children rejoice in watering, sharing their planted seeds with adults and friends, as well as ensuring that the nursery animals are well looked after. The animals – including goats, chickens and pigeons – which arrive at the start of the academic year are returned to the farm from which they originally came at the end of the school year, enabling the children observe the animals' transformations from babyhood to maturity during that time.

The staff pride themselves on the children's engagement with the activities on offer and take great care in ensuring that they meet their individual needs and interests.

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

The children's independence is fostered from the moment they enter the nursery and all staff members are patient and respectful of their need "to do things for themselves". Children's choices of activities are supported effectively and their independence is best demonstrated during lunchtimes when even the youngest children serve their own food and feed themselves, helping themselves to more food when they are ready. The older children also take turns in preparing the lunch room for their friends and tidying up at the end of the meal.

The organization of the environment effectively supports the children's freedom of choice as they learn to choose activities appropriate for their development. This approach promotes responsibility for their choices by returning the activities back to the shelf when they have finished with them.

The parents talk enthusiastically about their children's need to do things for themselves at home and value this aspect of the nursery provision. The deputy principal and

classroom teachers provide parents with ideas of how to contribute to this important principle of the Montessori approach in the home.

Montessori Practice: links with parents, including reports and records

Parents benefit from effective communication with the setting as they have opportunities to meet with staff members during daily drop off or pick up of their children. They benefit from effective information about the nursery which is available on the website and in regular newsletters and termly parent meetings. An annual report is prepared for all children attending.

The nursery also organises social opportunities for parents to meet each other during sports days and annual graduation, when the achievements of the children leaving the school are celebrated.

Staff: qualifications, deployment, and performance management

The Gulf Montessori nursery benefits from an experienced, fully Montessori qualified staff teaching team supported effectively by nurses and other staff. The strong leadership by the principal and her deputy ensure a cohesive approach to the delivery of the Montessori values as reflected in their daily work.

Comprehensive policies and procedures are in practice supporting the effective delivery of the Montessori approach. The staff members are deployed effectively to support the children's learning both inside and outside. Staff members benefit from ongoing professional development training focused on Montessori practice that is led by the deputy principal, who is also a Montessori trainer.

Recently introduced peer observations have made a significant contribution to reflective sharing of practice and outstanding communications within the classroom teams, which contributes to the excellent Montessori practice observed during this third accreditation visit to the nursery.

Name of Assessor: Barbara Isaacs

Date of re-accreditation visit: 23 October 2018

Date report submitted: 25 October 2018