



Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board

School Accreditation

This report is prepared following one accreditation visit made on behalf of the Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board (MEAB). It considers how far the school follows the criteria set out by MEAB. The school has received licence to operate from the Ministry of Education. This report does not provide any assessment of financial aspects of the school.

Madeleine's Pre School

House 582, Road 3212, Block 332, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of accreditation visit: 11 May 2015

This accreditation report relates to the provision for children aged 3 to 5 years old

Description of the pre-school

Madeleine's Pre School was established in 1985 by its current owner and head teacher. It is located in a converted villa in a residential district of Manama, the capital of the Kingdom of Bahrain. It serves the local community.

Madeleine's has seven classrooms, six of which are on the two floors of the villa whilst the seventh is housed in a separate building in the garden. The school also has a large indoor activity room, spacious entrance hall, kitchen and a reception/office area on the top landing. There are children's toilet facilities on each floor. The school is accessed through a small garden.

There are currently 125 children on roll with approximately 18 children in each classroom. They are organized by age with the younger children, 3 to 4 years old, in three classrooms, a further three classrooms of 4 to 5 year olds and one class of 4 to 6 year olds whose classroom is in the house in the garden. The school day starts at 8.00 and finishes at 12.30, and there are facilities for early drop off from 7.00 and late collection at 13.00. The school follows the Bahraini school calendar and is open five days per week. Mid morning snack is provided for the children.

The English and Arabic provision is offered on a weekly basis, children change their classes weekly to be with either English or Arabic speaking teachers. The approach facilitates immersion in each language and the adults only speak to the children in their mother tongue. The school also offers weekly cooking classes and there is provision for children with special needs.

Madeleine's Pre School is led by the owner who is Montessori qualified and actively participates in the daily management of the school. She is supported by an administrator, a team of eight Montessori trained teachers and two Early Learning



trained teachers, six teaching assistants, three domestic staff, and a maintenance and security staff member.

Summary

Madeleine's Pre School is a well-established pre-school with an excellent local reputation. Over the years the school has doubled in size. The school's aims are to establish a strong foundation for learning based on hands-on experience that allows the child to truly understand the basics of literacy and mathematics. Children are given the opportunity to follow their natural curiosity for learning by working with materials and activities that allow them to explore, investigate and problem solve.

The school is well equipped with Montessori and other learning materials, and children are encouraged to appreciate and care for nature. There is emphasis on children's self-expression through painting and art, as is evident in the classroom displays. There is a gentle, calm and industrious atmosphere in the school and children are encouraged to be polite.

The children's learning is well managed, offering strong foundations for academic learning and secure transitions to primary school. The staff work well as a team and plan and prepare their lessons under the guidance of the owner.

The pre-school works closely with parents and strives to get to know each child and family well to ensure that the best educational provision is available to each individual child and that a happy learning environment is created for all.

The school provides an education which follows the principles of the Montessori approach and environment. The school merits accreditation by the Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board. Consideration should be given to the following point for further development:

- Provide Montessori training for teachers and other staff to ensure continuity of the Montessori ethos within the school

Philosophy:

Madeleine's Pre School aims to work closely with children and their families to ensure that individual achievements are celebrated and the needs of each child are met. The children are prepared for academic learning through Montessori activities of everyday living and sensorial education.

Staff create a caring and calm atmosphere conducive to learning and encourage



respectful and considerate behaviour amongst the children. The teachers, many of whom have worked at the school for many years, work closely with the head to ensure sound progression in children's learning.

The school's prospectus states its aims clearly and these are reviewed regularly by the whole team. The Montessori ethos of co-operation and consideration for each member of the learning community is well embedded in daily life of the school.

Learning and Development:

The school uses the Montessori early years curriculum as the basis for children's learning and development, which comprises activities of everyday living, education of the senses, numeracy and arithmetic, and literacy, with well-prepared materials in English in classrooms led by English speaking teachers and Arabic literacy resources offered by the Arabic speaking teachers. Knowledge and understanding of the world is valued by the school and, during the visit, the children were exploring the types of birds found in Bahrain and our dependence on the sun. Arts and crafts are given prominence in the school and children's art work has pride of place in the school's displays.

The children access activities spontaneously from the well-prepared shelves, and adults ensure that they are well supported in their learning. As the children progress through the pre-school more emphasis is placed on their work in literacy and numeracy and the oldest children have more formal lessons in writing, reading and counting, with access to a wide range of materials which also promote learning in natural sciences and geography. The children take part in regular outings and also fundraise, enabling them to be part of the wider community.

Due to the restrictions of the building, children's visits to the garden are timetabled and are usually preceded by a group snack, during which the children serve themselves and also ensure that their plates and cups are stacked away. Due to the length of the morning, it is possible for all children to benefit from a two and a half to three hour work cycle, which is, for some children, interrupted by a visit to the garden. However, they are used to this routine and engage well with the carefully prepared activities and materials on offer in each classroom. The school has an atmosphere of industry and purpose, with activities undertaken in a calm and gentle manner.

The teachers plan as a group for the themes they explore during the academic year. Each child's individual progress is monitored through the Montessori activities checklist. The needs of children with special education needs are discussed with their families and supported well by either the class teacher or a specially appointed adult. Teachers' daily notes and observations are used for the preparation of children's progress reports.

Prepared Environment: resources and materials



All the classrooms are well equipped with Montessori activities and other materials, which are well laid out in areas of learning and are easily accessible. The children are used to the routine of choosing them and then putting them away when they have finished with them. The teachers ensure that the materials are complete and inviting. There are ample and appropriate materials for the age and number of children attending each class. The garden is equipped with climbing apparatus, a large sandpit and tricycles, all of which promote the children's gross motor skills, balance and spatial awareness.

In the Arabic classrooms the resources and displays are in Arabic, whilst in the English classrooms they are in English. The children are very familiar with the weekly change in their routine and benefit from the immersion in the two languages. In the Arabic classes particularly there is a lot of singing and movement to further enhance the children's language learning.

The teachers in each classroom take responsibility for their resources and their readiness for the children's use; they also bring in new activities to reflect children's individual interests and to meet their needs. The art area in each classroom is well-equipped and in constant use by enthusiastic young artists whose work is much celebrated by the school by being well displayed. The resources in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world are most inviting and very engaging for the children, who are well supported by the knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers.

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

The children's independence is supported and encouraged across the school. They select their own activities from the shelves and return them when they are finished. Many children are capable of engagement with activities for long periods of time without being interrupted. They manage their own toileting and snack routines well. The transition into the garden is managed calmly and quickly, as is the start of the day, when children gather in the garden and are then taken into their classrooms between 8.00 and 8.30.

Calm and polite behaviour is modelled well by the adults in the school, who encourage respect and consideration for each other. This is reflected in the homely and gentle atmosphere of the school. The staff and the head know the children really well; this approach fosters a strong sense of belonging, wellbeing and school community.

The school's publicity explains the need for children's independence and parents are encouraged to support it at home. Parents comment on their children's need to try things for themselves at home. They also value the good manners which are encouraged across the school.



Montessori practice: Classroom management

The head makes sure that the staff are aware of their individual roles and responsibilities to ensure the smooth running of their classroom and of the school. She is also on hand daily should staff need to discuss individual children with her, or need support in their teaching. A daily overall plan is available to all staff to ensure that all children have opportunities for indoor and outdoor play. The school routines are well established and discussed at the start of the academic year and during staff meetings.

Children are independent in their spontaneous use of materials and appropriately guided by their teachers, who are supported by assistants and also student teachers. There are at least two adults in each class and helpers are on hand should children need support in toileting and personal hygiene. The children's observations and daily records serve as the basis for regular reports prepared for parents.

The work cycle is well managed and, despite the necessary interruptions, the children demonstrate confidence and joy in their learning. They are happy to share their learning with others and are capable of engaging with activities on their own or with friends and also in groups. The organization of learning is well established in the school and the confident and well settled teachers share their positive attitude to their work with the children in each class.

Effective classroom management is very much part of the daily routine of the school and is overseen by the head who is always present and who manages everyone by stating her expectations clearly and by building on the unique strength of each adult in the team. She is very much a mentor and a guide to the staff in the school.

Montessori Practice: links with parents, including reports and records

The relationship with families is a strength of the school and they value this partnership, which is encouraged by the positive links that staff establish with each family and their children. The head welcomes everyone at the start of the day; she and the class teachers are available should parents wish to make an appointment and have a brief chat.

Parents are invited into the school to share special days with children such as National Day and sports day; regular concerts are organized for the parents, who also participate in fundraising and school outings.

There is an orientation day organized for parents at the start of the academic year and also two parent/teacher meetings, held in January and June, which are supported by reports prepared by the class teachers.

Parents are happy with the progress their children make in the school and value the positive attitudes to learning which are fostered by the school.

**Staffing:**

The school benefits from the considerate and informed leadership of the head and from the team spirit fostered among the staff, many of whom have worked in the school for many years.

They have the necessary policies and procedures in place to safeguard the professional management of the school and effective support for the staff, they also benefit from daily access to the head and opportunities to learn from her experience of running the school.

Staff are encouraged to participate in local training and there are plans to engage again with the Bahrain Montessori Centre to deliver more Montessori training for the staff and also for parents. Recently they participated in first aid training and also yoga training which they then shared with the children.

The school is led by the owner who is Montessori qualified and actively participates in the daily management of the school. She is supported by an administrator, a team of eight Montessori trained teachers and two Early Learning trained teachers, six teaching assistants, three domestic staff, and a maintenance and security staff member.

The Montessori ethos of respect and trust is fostered by the effective leadership and commitment from the staff to promote a love of learning in the children attending Madeleine's Pre School.

Name of Assessor: Barbara Isaacs

Date report submitted: 25.5.2015