

Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board **School Accreditation**

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

The report does not address the standards and quality issues that are assessed by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) which reports separately. Also the report does not provide any assessment of financial aspects of the setting.

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.

Newpark Montessori Nursery School – Wandsworth 15 Ebner Street, London, SW18 1BT

This accreditation is valid until June 2023.

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

Description of the nursery:

Newpark Montessori Nursery School – Wandsworth is located in the London Borough of Wandsworth. It is part of a small group of private nurseries called Newpark Childcare, which is family-run and managed by three Directors. This setting opened in 2014 and has sole use of the premises, a large converted church building with two floors.

The children are separated into two age groups. The younger children, aged from 3 months to 2½ years old are based in the Infant Community. This is a spacious baby unit that includes one large, attractive ground floor classroom, a small kitchen for preparing milk, and a nappy changing facility incorporated into the children’s toilet facilities, which are shared by both age groups. The older children, aged from 2½ to 5 years old, are based in the Montessori School Room, also on the ground floor. This is a large and extremely well equipped classroom. It has direct access to the nursery’s garden, which is a good size and is at the front of the premises. During the morning and afternoon work cycles, part of the nursery garden is fenced off to create the Montessori School Room’s outdoor classroom. Whilst this fence is in place the Infant Community has ongoing use

of the rest of the garden, and at all other times during the day the entire nursery garden can be used by both the older and younger children, depending on interests and needs.

In addition to these classrooms, children benefit from the truly unique 'Indoor-Outdoor Garden' on the first floor. This is a highly inspiring garden room with large roof windows that fill the space with fresh air, creating the feeling of being outdoors. The nursery also has a reception area, office, staff room, kitchen, laundry room and a buggy storage area.

The nursery is open for 50 weeks per year, from 07.30 to 18.30 Monday to Friday. Children are provided with breakfast, a hot lunch and tea, and a morning and afternoon snack. There are currently 88 children on roll. On the day of the second accreditation visit 22 children attended for the full day in the Infant Community, with 9 members of staff present all day. Of these children, 13 were aged under two years old. Twenty-five children attended for the full day in the Montessori School Room, with six members of staff present all day. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as children with English as an additional language (EAL). It also supports children with food allergies and food preferences and uses a 'traffic light' system, where each child wears a different coloured wristband to remind staff to refer to the dietary requirements wall charts.

The Directors, and a newly appointed quality improvement manager who has extensive experience of the nursery group, closely support the staff although they are not in daily attendance. One of the Directors holds a Montessori diploma together with a degree and Early Years Professional Status.

The setting employs 20 regular members of staff including a cook and her assistant. The manager holds a Montessori qualification and is studying towards a degree. The Head of School also holds a Montessori qualification and Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Four members of staff hold Early Years degrees and two further staff also have QTS. Four staff have level 3 childcare qualifications and one has a level 2. Two of the team have recently completed the Integrating Montessori Practice (IMP) qualification. A further five staff members are working towards a Montessori teaching diploma and two are working towards gaining the IMP.

The manager, the deputy manager (who is head of the Infant Community) and the head of the Montessori School Room (known as Head of School), are responsible for the day-to-day running of the setting and cover for each others' absences. The manager works on a supernumerary basis and is not included on the teaching staff rota. The majority of the other staff members work a ten-hour shift for four days per week and two staff work part-time. There is a key person back up system in place to ensure children have continuity of care in their key adult's absence. On the day of the second accreditation visit, 19 members of the team were present all day, including the manager, quality improvement manager and kitchen staff. Additional staff members are employed by the company to cover for staff absences and work in all settings across the group.

Summary

The Directors, manager and leadership team are strong advocates of the Montessori approach to education and work extremely hard to promote and develop Montessori practice throughout the nursery. This is illustrated through several members of the teaching team currently being engaged in Montessori training, which is evidently having a very positive influence on their teaching skills and is helpful for embedding the Montessori principles into the daily life of the nursery.

Children across the age range have wonderful opportunities to develop their independence. Self-initiated learning is highly trusted and respected, which creates an extremely industrious and productive atmosphere during the work cycles. Following suggestions made at the first accreditation visit positive changes have been made to ensure that mealtimes in the Infant Community are less busy and more enjoyable. The transitions into mealtimes in the Montessori School Room have also been reviewed and are much smoother and more harmonious. The team has also reflected effectively on how to develop a fully consistent approach to teaching children about the classroom ground rules. Staff act as positive role models to support children's growing understanding of these.

Children have a myriad of interesting learning and development opportunities. They gain confidence in exploring the beautifully prepared indoor learning environments that are highly stimulating and excellent for capturing their interests and supporting them to learn at their own pace. Moving forward, the team is encouraged to now focus more on the Montessori provision in the Montessori School Room's outdoor classroom, which is available to this room's children during the work cycles. The resources and learning opportunities here could be as exciting and engaging as the ones offered inside the classroom.

Information sharing and communication with parents is excellent. Parents express that they feel extremely well informed about their children's learning and that their child's education is carefully planned for and nurtured.

At the second visit, both classrooms had a newly appointed room leader in place. It is evident that staff have responded extremely well to this change. They successfully communicate with each other and work efficiently to ensure that all children have excellent opportunities to learn and flourish.

The setting provides an education which follows the principles of the Montessori approach and environment. The setting 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 to develop the Montessori School Room's outdoor classroom – in particular its Montessori shelf – to offer children more variety and challenge and to enhance their concentration and engagement when working outdoors.

Philosophy:

The Directors, manager and leadership team are extremely passionate about the Montessori approach to education and strongly believe that each child is a unique individual. Their aim is to enhance the personal, social, emotional and creative development of each child and assist them to work towards their full potential.

The Montessori philosophy is evident throughout the nursery and the ethos is comprehensively shared with parents during their initial tour, through the website, prospectus, policies and procedures. Once families start to attend, information about the benefits of the Montessori approach are regularly disseminated to parents through monthly newsletters, an online blog and through the opportunity for parents to spend time in the classroom on Parents evenings. These help parents to gain a deeper understanding of the Montessori materials and how they can aid children's learning.

At the second accreditation visit, perceptible changes were observed in relation to how all staff members implement their understanding of the Montessori values in their interactions with children. All staff sensitively offer support and encouragement throughout the day, including during busy transition times, and are good at teaching children how to care for each other, respect their classroom and to understand the ground rules.

Children at the nursery have very good opportunities to learn from each other. The nursery successfully implements vertical age grouping in both classrooms. This enables younger children to be inspired and motivated by older children and, in turn, helps the older children to develop their confidence and consolidate their knowledge and skills when helping their younger peers.

Learning and Development:

Children show high levels of interest and enthusiasm as they explore their indoor learning environments. They confidently enjoy making their own choices and are very well supported in their learning.

The Infant Community is a busy environment with an excellent range of beautiful resources and age appropriate activities to keep children stimulated and engaged. These children start their morning by coming together in a group to welcome each other, sing songs and enjoy a variety of language activities. Children are given the option if they wish to join or not, most do and thoroughly enjoy this part of the day. After this short session, children freely choose where to play and have access to construction, imaginative play and language focused activities, being closely guided and supported by adults.

On the day of the second accreditation visit, the younger babies enjoyed exploring musical instruments and matching beautiful large toy animals as part of small groups, wherein adults effectively modelled new language and provided lots of encouragement. The young toddlers also enjoyed exploring a variety of early Montessori activities in a specially designed area of the classroom. They enjoyed dry pouring exercises, exploring assorted boxes and threading large cubed beads, all of which are excellent for developing their hand and eye co-ordination and dexterity.

At 10.00 the children are invited for a snack and take turns to eat either in the designated area in their classroom, outdoors in the nursery garden or upstairs in the 'Indoor-Outdoor Garden'. Offering snack and all other meals in smaller groups is something that the team has implemented following a suggestion at the first visit. It is working extremely well and makes these parts of the day much calmer and more enjoyable.

The children then engage in a further work cycle in the later part of the morning that typically lasts for another 45 minutes. They have their lunch at 11.30 and are encouraged to find their own beds afterwards, where they sleep. In the afternoon, children enjoy further free exploration and a range of small group activities, with more focus on messy play, art and crafts. During both sessions, the children benefit from daily outdoor play in the nursery's well-equipped garden and have frequent opportunities to explore and learn in the 'Indoor-Outdoor Garden'. They are given the choice to visit these different learning spaces. They also have weekly yoga and drama/puppet groups to participate in.

In the Montessori School Room, the work cycle starts by 08.30 and lasts until 11.30. During this time children have excellent opportunities to work autonomously with activities that capture their interests. The room has free-flow access to the outdoor classroom. Children thoroughly enjoy choosing which space to work within, however, it is recommended that the learning opportunities offered in the outdoor classroom are reviewed to ensure that the Montessori and other resources are more inviting and offer children more challenge and variety.

Throughout the morning, children benefit from a very good balance of independent learning, one to one presentations with a teacher, spontaneous adult-led group activities and also working collaboratively with each other. On the day of the first visit, a child thoroughly enjoyed making predictions when working with a teacher with the Sink and Float activity. Another child eloquently discussed and made comparisons about different lengths when working with the Long Rods. The afternoon work cycle runs from 14.00 until 15.30 and reflects the morning work cycle provision. Additional activities such as music, drama, yoga, a sports class and gardening are offered throughout the week. All of these, except for gardening, are offered after tea. Gardening is available on a Wednesday morning as part of the work cycle.

Planning, observation and assessment systems are extremely detailed. The team has several methods for monitoring and recording children's progress. These ensure that the Montessori curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) areas of learning and

development dovetail together and are both considered in the records, planning and assessments. In the Infant Community, adults complete and evaluate 'Key Child Focused Planning' weekly, where each teacher records their key children's interests and achievements and then plans activities to support their development. Information provided by parents in the children's 'Complete Guides' is also incorporated into the planning. In addition, the teaching team also plans a topic based on the needs and interests of the group.

In the Montessori School Room, the Head of School and the team devise 'Individual Developmental Plans' for their key children based on observed interests and the progress of each child. These plans are evaluated monthly. This team also plans a weekly topic focusing on one of the activities in the environment. Furthermore, 'Montessori Daily Observations and Records of Work' are completed each day. These document the Montessori materials that each child has been working with and this information is used to support staff members to observe, assess and facilitate children's ongoing development.

Across the entire nursery, staff members and parents contribute to the child's 'Complete Guides' weekly. Staff members add in photographs and short observations of children enjoying a new experience, which are linked both to the EYFS and the Montessori curriculum. These are sent home on a Friday for the parents to enjoy with their children and to contribute to over the weekend.

Every six months a 'Child Development Tracking' form is completed by each key person, which provides an overview of the child's progress in relation to the EYFS areas of learning and development. This information is used to prepare a written 'Developmental Report' on the child, which is shared with their parents during the Parents evening. Additionally, teachers complete a 'Key Group Tracking, Monitoring and Moderating' form, which helps the manager assess how certain groups of children within the nursery are progressing, for instance, children with EAL. Learning opportunities for children are excellent and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and EAL are extremely well supported by excellent partnership working with external professionals. This helps to provide consistency in these children's care and education.

Prepared Environment: resources and materials

The indoor learning environments and the main nursery garden are exquisitely presented and equipped with an extensive range of high-quality learning materials. The spacious Infant Community consists of an inviting book and language corner, a Practical Life area, a sensory space, maths and construction area, heuristic play zone, a cosy, canopied space and wooden baby gym. Each area fully facilitates children's developing independence, with low, accessible shelves, and each encourages the children to become highly engaged in activity. This classroom also has a large aquarium that can be viewed from the nappy changing area as well as the classroom. This is full of tropical fish, which the children immensely enjoy observing and discussing throughout the day.

The Montessori School Room is equally as beautiful and carefully planned. It has a vast

range of Montessori materials, offering excellent opportunities for progression for this age range. These materials are arranged by Montessori areas of learning. They are in very good condition and there is a strong sense of order throughout the classroom, with every activity having a clearly defined space. In addition, there is a generously equipped creative corner, a small book area and snack table. This classroom also has a washing-up station and washing and drying cloths area, which were in full use on the day of the first accreditation visit. This room's outdoor classroom is a wonderful additional space, but the team should continue to review the provision in it, to ensure children show the same levels of engagement when learning outdoors.

All children at the setting have frequent opportunities to learn and explore in the beautifully designed and enchanting 'Indoor-Outdoor Garden'. Its six large windows are open all year round. This space is painted with wall murals to give the impression of a town square surrounded by houses, and it has a wonderful role-play room that is decorated and equipped as a house. There is also a reading area, sand pit, slide and shelves beautifully equipped with carefully selected educational resources.

Young babies are sensitively supported to follow their natural routines and can eat and sleep whenever they need to in a quieter area of the Infant Community. The children from this classroom enjoy eating their snack, lunch and tea either in the Infant Community classroom, upstairs in the 'Indoor-Outdoor Garden' or in the nursery garden – weather permitting. The Montessori School Room children eat all meals within their own classroom and show excellent levels of independence during these times. The children who need to sleep have the opportunity to do so in their own classrooms or upstairs. They sleep on fold-out mattresses after lunch and the children who no longer require sleep play in a section of the Montessori School Room, in the nursery garden or in the 'Indoor-Outdoor Garden'.

The adults and children all share the role of maintaining the classrooms and even the very young children are encouraged to use dustpans and brushes and to return their resources to the shelves. The respect and love for the environment that the teachers instill in the children is truly wonderful to see.

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

From the moment the children arrive, they have excellent opportunities to develop their independence. Each child has their own peg, with their name and a picture of an animal on it which aids them to independently identify where to hang their coat and put their shoes. During the work cycle children can freely choose which resources to explore. The adults show great trust towards the children and give them plenty of time to repeat and master activities of particular interest.

Children in the Montessori School Room can freely choose whether to work indoors or outdoors for the entirety of the morning and afternoon work cycles. In this classroom, two children assist with cutting fruit and preparing snack for their friends each morning and children can freely choose when to eat snack, which is available for two hours

during the morning and for one hour during the afternoon. After children have eaten, they wash their cups and plates and children's levels of autonomy are impressive. They also have an active role in preparing for lunchtime and help to tidy their classroom and set the tables. During lunch, two children are designated to serve their friends meals and two assist the children in the Infant Community classroom. All children pour their own drinks and scrape their plates when they have finished eating.

Children in the Infant Community also have good opportunities to develop their independence when they are ready. During snack, lunch and teatime a child is chosen to hand out the plates of food and children independently scrape their own plates when they have finished eating. They then wipe their faces using a low mirror to see their reflection. Parents speak positively about their children's levels of independence at home and credit the team for supporting them to confidently help their children develop new skills.

Montessori Practice: links with parents, including reports and records

Partnerships with parents are extremely strong. Parents express significant gratitude and appreciation for the dedication of the team. They consistently discuss positive experiences at the nursery and feel their children are flourishing. Parents receive daily verbal feedback at the end of the day and receive weekly photographs and observations in the 'Complete Guides'.

Each child has a key person and back up key person, who are responsible for monitoring and recording their development, however there is a strong culture of all staff members working with all children to build varied relationships. Parents learn about their children's progress in more detail at Parents evenings, held twice a year. They also receive written developmental reports prior to these meetings. Mandatory two-year-old progress checks are completed and shared with parents. Transition reports are also written to inform the adults who are supporting children when they move on. In addition, parents receive extensive information in monthly newsletters and from the nursery's blog, wherein the Montessori philosophy and approach feature strongly.

Parents also receive a wonderful gift on their children's birthdays; a birthday DVD that is filmed throughout their day at the nursery. This offers parents a highly valuable and appreciated insight into their child's experience.

Staff: qualifications, deployment, and performance management

The manager and the team are highly committed to their roles. They share a strong vision to ensure that children have exciting and enjoyable learning experiences, which facilitate their love of learning. There is an extensive range of policies and procedures in place. All staff members have clear job descriptions which refer to the Montessori philosophy and which contribute to their understanding of their responsibilities. There are extremely thorough recruitment and induction systems in place. The manager conducts termly supervision meetings and the room leaders conduct additional

supervisions to provide ongoing support to their team. Appraisals are carried out once a year and the Directors are proudly 'Living Wage Employers'. Staff members have valuable opportunities to engage in professional discussions and to reflect on their practice at monthly staff meetings and through frequent peer observations of each other. They also visit and are visited by their sister nurseries' colleagues to celebrate their strengths and identify any areas to improve.

Commitment to continuing professional development is excellent. There are currently several staff members across the setting engaged in Montessori training. This demonstrates real commitment to the Montessori philosophy and is already proving to be highly influential in helping to further embed its values and ethos into all aspects of the nursery.

The teachers have a very good understanding of how children learn and develop. They also have a breadth of different experience and interesting skill sets, and show enthusiasm for working together to guide children to be inquisitive and confident learners. Newpark Montessori Nursery School – Wandsworth is a wonderfully enabling learning environment and the dedicated staff are accomplished at supporting children to develop extremely positive attributes and a deep love of learning.

Name of Assessor: Amy Mckenzie

Date of first visit: Thursday 22nd November 2018

Date of second visit: Friday 15th March 2019

Date reports submitted: First visit – Wednesday 28th November 2018

Second visit – Tuesday 19th March 2019