

Collaborative Montessori (CM) Accreditation Report

Name of Assessor: Michela Castellarin

Date/s of Assessment Visit: 22nd July 2022

Name of Setting: The New Montessori Pre-school

Address of Setting: Methodist Church, Tarring Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 4ET

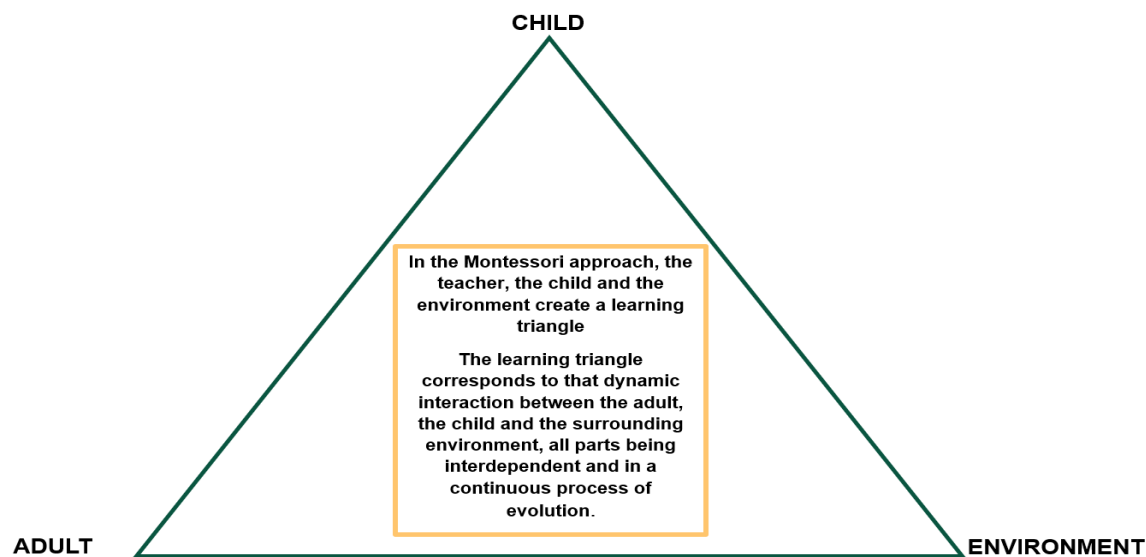
Setting type: Term time Nursery

Facility type: Refurbished from other use

Ownership of the Setting: Beki Shanahan

Date Setting opened: 1999

Date and grade of last Ofsted / relevant national inspection: 12/07/2017 - Ofsted, Outstanding



The accreditation criteria draw on the principles of the dynamic learning triangle, which is at the core of the Montessori philosophy and approach.

The adult, the child and the environment create the learning triangle, with dynamic interaction and interdependence between all three parts. These dynamics in effective practice enable continued improvement of quality. This triangle underpins all documentation for reflection and assessment in the CM Quality Assurance Programme.

This report is based on the information submitted by the setting (including its self-evaluation) and on the evidence gathered during the Assessor's visit.

The Child

Attendance on the day of the accreditation visit:

Age	How many children were present		
	Morning session	Afternoon session	All day
0 – 2	2	1	1
2 – 3	23	19	19
3 – 5	7	5	5
Over 5			

Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:

Children attending NM show true ownership of the facilities and of the learning opportunities on offer; they engage with purpose and they build and maintain strong relationships with both peers and adults. Children's efforts are celebrated and their choices are respected; inner-motivation and acknowledgement of one's own achievements are encouraged at every opportunity.

Independence

Children are independent from the moment they enter the premises: they place their belongings on their peg, they self-register and afterwards they decide how to start their day. Children continue to enjoy many freedoms throughout the day as they decide what activity to engage with, where and with whom to work.

The children enjoy a rolling snack time routine that is well supervised by adults. It is a recommendation that this routine is carried out as it was before Covid19 practice in order to maximise children's independence and life skills, much like the lunchtime routine that children currently enjoy.

Socialisation

The benefits of the vertical grouping are truly embedded into the life at NM. Children are free to meet and socialise as they freely move between the two indoor classrooms, the kitchen and outdoors. The sitting arrangement with large and smaller tables symmetrically positioned within the rooms allows for both group and individual work alike; during adult-led activities such as the Volcano experiment, children come together naturally and spontaneously to share their enjoyment in this exciting activity.

Exploration

The freedom children have within each activity offers plenty of problem solving opportunities; one child was observed spending a lengthy period of time exploring different ways in which pieces of a puzzle would balance on the tray.

Creative development is understood by the adults at NM in a much wider context: this outlook is reflected in the divergent thinking opportunities and in the provocative creative experiences on offer such as those from the Light Table and from the optical illusion board.

Exploration is encouraged in younger children by the addition of a separate area within the classroom: here, natural resources such as large wooden puzzles, posting activities and everyday objects are contained in beautiful treasure baskets which the children can freely access.

Movement

Movement is an integral aspect of the Montessori approach and is closely linked to freedom and the free flow that children enjoy; movement is integrated into every aspect of education such as in the children's play, in the use of the prepared activities, in the children's social life and in their creativity expressions.

Communication

The clear and positive language that adults model adeptly supports children's language development, communication and expression. All the adults are skilled in the use of Makaton which further supports communication in younger children and in children with speech delay; adults' body language emanates reassurance and a feeling of calm.

The Environment

Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:

NM operates from a refurbished church, which oozes with character: its interesting and unusual layout, original historical features and quirky furniture make this setting very dynamic and aesthetically pleasing. The high windows allow for much natural light to seep through, the wooden furnishings create a peaceful yet joyful atmosphere and the pretty alcoves and nooks add another special touch to the overall cosy environment.

Children benefit from two fully equipped and similarly organised classrooms.

Order

Order is a major component of everything that NM offers and routines are well established as are ground rules. All activities are organised according to curriculum areas, by subject, subtopic and level of challenge. Colour coding is used as additional tool to ensure further categorisation of information which supports the young child's mathematical mind and need for order extremely well; this is extended to all areas of the environment such as the arts & crafts resources which are well organised in labelled trays and the outdoors.

Staff are encouraged to review the order of the Numeracy and Arithmetic activities; these should follow the recognised sequential order to better scaffold the child's knowledge and understanding in this curriculum area.

The activities

NM offers the most wide-ranging, original, well organised, well made and well maintained resources. For instance, the Practical Life activities have beautiful objects which show attention to detail, are displayed in a cosy separately-lit alcove and are

perfectly sequenced to refine the child's independence skills: melon scooping, flower pressing, hairdressing and baby washing enrich the already plentiful more conventional activities. The KUW area offers a wide variety of both conventional and homemade resources about the world at large; the geography sub-area is particularly rich and is celebratory of different cultures and abilities.

The physical environment

Indoors

The indoor environments are spacious, welcoming, airy and vibrant; the well equipped Montessori shelves are complemented by a selection of beautiful antique furniture and resources such as a fitted Lego bench and old-fashioned scales, by a carpentry corner with natural resources and a fully functional role-play corner (themed after police force) with reality based resources such as a working set of handcuffs.

The kitchen is an integrated area of the children's environment which they can freely access during snack time.

Wall displays are purposeful, limited in number and serve as a tool to promote Montessori principles; where possible displays are situated at children's height and they celebrate children's work and include their voices.

Outdoors

Feeling welcomed at NM starts at the outside waiting area where parents gather for drop-off and pick-up times; here a selection of library books to take home awaits them.

Similarly to the indoors, the outdoor area is well organised in separate sections which provide positive opportunities for holistic development with the raised sand-pit, water tray, planting tires, home corner and the giant snail cage exemplifying this holistic approach.

Due to the restricted space, provision for the development of gross motor skills can be limited; it is important that children continue to benefit from organised outings such as visits to the beach and the South Downs.

First-hand experiences and active learning

Children's learning is based on practical occupations with concrete, real and sensorial materials; their active physical and intellectual participation is noticeable as they manipulate objects and explore possibilities of what they can do with them. Some

first-hand experiences with nature are present and others (such as having a school pet) have been offered in the past; outings to the wider natural habitats will continue to provide additional opportunities of engagement with the natural world.

The Adult

Adults present during the accreditation visit.

Role and responsibilities	Qualifications	Length of time at the setting	Part time	Full time
BS	NNEB, Montessori Diploma	23		x
AL	NNEB, Montessori Diploma, Foundation Degree	18		x
S C-G	NVQ3, Degree in Childcare	16		x
LB	NVQ3	18		x
SM	QTS	12		x
E	NVQ3	12	x	
SP	NVQ3	10		x
TS	NVQ3, Montessori Diploma	10		x
KH	Montessori Diploma	4		x

Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:

NM provides consistency of care and support for both children and their families: the majority of staff have been employed at NM for decades. Parents have multiple children at NM and some have been invited to become volunteers, then to train and ultimately to work at the school.

Parents' numerous responses to the pre-accreditation online questionnaire confirm their full support for the school: parents are highly complimentary of all staff, describing the learning environment created for the children as "...wholesome, focused, calm but busy, nurturing and creative...". They are highly appreciative of how teachers have supported their children's developmental progress, of the low staff turnover and of the support they received during the Covid19 lockdowns.

The Leadership Team

NM is led by an experienced, committed and proactive owner whose supportive presence continues to guide and motivate her staff. The skilful, efficient and trusted manager helps to supervise, train and inspire staff towards best Montessori practice; planning is monitored, appraisals are regular and parental involvement is fully encouraged via the wide variety of different events that are organised. Peer-on-peer observations and Montessori CPD are areas that NM will be developing further.

The needs of families are also fully taken into consideration: for example, the school opening hours have been recently changed to suit working-from-home needs since the Covid19 rules and regulations.

The principles of sustainability are consistently implemented and have a subtle presence in the school with old unwanted equipment finding new life as it is transformed into new functional objects such as the outdoors driving-the-bus construction; recycling materials find a new purpose within the children's activities (for example, milk bottles are used as continent folders in the KUW area!)

The Teaching Team

Staff are very respectful of the children, are approachable, caring and observe unobtrusively; they support one another well throughout the day as flexible deployment occurs effortlessly.

"Each member of staff is committed to providing a fully comprehensive Montessori curriculum and the manager ensures it is embedded in our approach and ethos...Through observation and self-reflection our practitioners gain an insight into how to... support our children." (says NM's owner)

All staff are involved in all stages of working with children with additional needs, from identifying initial concerns to planning specific activities and providing professional support.

The Key Person

Children at NM have a designated key person who sensitively and skilfully cares for their holistic development and general well-being. They fully participate in children's daily occupations as they actively engage in role play scenarios, eat lunch together and become involved in constructive conversations.

The online recording platform is used efficiently to share children's observations and planning amongst teachers and with parents, who, in return, feel enthusiastic about adding their own home experiences. Parents are appreciative of the individual care that the key person provides for their children and are grateful for the support received during the lockdown.

Commendations

- NM's beautifully original indoor environment offers peaceful yet dynamic surroundings for children to grow in and to enjoy.
- The activities and learning resources are well thought out, formative and appealing
- The strong, meaningful and long lasting relationships the setting has built with the children's families through the years are exceptional; some parents have become members of staff.
- The passion and commitment of the members of the leadership team towards striving for Montessori best practice and towards promoting the Montessori approach are inspiring

Recommendations

- Review the sequential order of the Montessori Numeracy and Arithmetics activities to better scaffold the child's progress within this curriculum area
- Return to the pre-Covid19 snack routine so that children can fully participate in the preparation, consumption and clearing away of their snack.
- Review Peer-on-Peer observations procedures to ensure that they occur regularly and are carried out across all staff

Conditions

The Accreditation Assessor has concluded that the setting meets CM main requirements for Accreditation and therefore no conditions are set.

Name of Assessor: Michela Castellarin

Date of Report: 12th August 2022

The CM Accreditation Report has been reviewed by the CM Accreditation Board. The Board has verified the Assessor's recommendation to accredit the Setting.

Award

Accreditation is therefore granted to:

The New Montessori Pre-school

Validity period:

From: August 2022

to: August 2025

Receiving accreditation carries the expectation that the setting will continue to implement the Commendations, develop on the Recommendations and fulfil the Conditions (if applicable) highlighted in this Accreditation Report to continue to strive for best Montessori practice. This accreditation assessment has not considered the setting's compliance with its national curriculum and other regulatory requirements, nor does it provide any assessment of the setting's financial aspects.