



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.

Newpark Montessori School and Nursery

450 Uxbridge Road, Shepherd's Bush, London W12 0NS

Date of previous MEAB accreditation: November 2012

Date of first re-accreditation visit: 30 June 2016

Date of second re-accreditation visit: 11 November 2016

This accreditation is valid until 31 December 2020

This accreditation report relates to the provision for children aged 4 months to 5 years.

Description of the setting:

Newpark Montessori (Shepherd's Bush) is part of a small group of private nurseries called Newpark Childcare; the group is family-run and managed by three Directors. This setting opened in 2006 and has sole use of a large church hall premises. The children are separated into two age groups. The younger children are based in three rooms which are collectively known as the nursery – one room is called the 'creative area', another is the 'Woodland room' used for sensory play and sleeping, and the third is



called the 'advanced Montessori room'. These nursery children are currently aged between 9 months and 3 years. The older children, aged 3 years to rising 5, are in the large main schoolroom; this section of the setting is known as the school. There are connecting doors between the rooms. The premises have four enclosed outdoor areas. One small area is adjacent to the schoolroom and is used just by the children in this room. There are also three other areas, two large and one small, accessed by children across the age range.

There are currently 85 children enrolled. On the day of the second re-accreditation visit 16 children attended for the full day in the schoolroom, and in the nursery 36 attended in the morning and 34 in the afternoon, of whom 17 in the morning were under 2 years of age and 15 in the afternoon. After an initial settling-in period all children attend a minimum of two full days a week. Newpark Montessori is open for 50 weeks per year, from 08.00 to 18.30 Monday to Friday. The children are provided with hot meals and snacks.

One of the Directors is in regular attendance but is not included on the rota. She holds a Montessori diploma together with a degree and Early Years Professional Status. The setting employs 22 members of staff including a cook and her assistant. The appointed manager and the leader of the schoolroom (known as head of school) are responsible for the day to day running of the setting and cover for each other's absences. They both work five days a week. The manager works on a supernumerary basis and is not included on the teaching staff rota. All the other teaching staff members work a ten hour shift for four days per week. On the day of the second visit 17 members of the teaching staff were present along with the kitchen team. Additional staff members are employed by the company to cover for staff absences across the group.

The manager and the head of school are Montessori qualified. The lead practitioner in the nursery has a Montessori diploma for birth to 6 years. Two further members of staff also hold this diploma, one has a Montessori diploma 3 to 6, and two have birth to 3 Montessori diplomas. Five are currently studying for Montessori qualifications and one has a Montessori special educational needs certificate. The remaining staff are also well qualified, many with early childhood qualifications at level 6 or above.

Summary

The very well qualified team at Newpark Montessori understands the needs of the children in the setting and provide a warm, nurturing environment for them to thrive in. The website is very comprehensive and has many links for the parents to access, which help to reinforce the Montessori ethos at home. Parents speak highly of the progress their children have made since joining and appreciate the contact that they have with the setting.

The learning environment is very well resourced, with each of its separate areas having developmentally appropriate activities within easy reach of the children. The materials are of a high standard, beautifully prepared and maintained. Staff members know their



children well and provide a tailored learning experience for every child, with a strong emphasis on the Montessori ethos of grace and courtesy. One of the excellent improvements made following the first re-accreditation visit is the mixing of the age ranges, as all the children in the younger age range are now based together across their three rooms. This has greatly enhanced their learning opportunities and these children develop a close sense of community, they enjoy playing with and caring for each other. The older children also have daily opportunities to mix with those younger and so serve as mentors.

The management team is very experienced and well qualified. Continued professional development (CPD) is encouraged for everyone working at the setting and in-house training is used to keep their practice up to date. Following the first re-accreditation visit, this already good practice has been extended to include more training in the Montessori method for those who are not yet Montessori qualified. The setting has successfully addressed the recommendations from the previous MEAB accreditation by providing the children with a planting area and gardening lessons and introducing more technology into the classrooms.

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 point for further development:

- it is recommended that any child with identified additional needs has the plan for their individual support included in their 'Individual Planning' folder. This will further facilitate the monitoring of their progress.

Philosophy:

The owners and staff at Newpark Montessori are committed to embedding the ethos and principles of the Montessori method of education into the day to day experience that they offer the children. The ordered and exceptionally well prepared learning environment allows children the freedom to choose activities that meet their interests and that are developmentally appropriate. The children engage enthusiastically with each other, the staff, visiting adults and the resources because they feel settled and confident. The setting operates a key person system; however, all the staff know all the children within their area well and this leads to effective support for all children

The setting's website and prospectus explain its aims and objectives and include a comprehensive explanation of the Montessori philosophy and how the setting adheres to this in practice. The mission statement – which is 'to enhance the personal, social, emotional and creative development of the children' – is very evident throughout, and the application of Montessori philosophy in practice is regularly reviewed informally



during staff meetings. Staff members have an excellent understanding of Montessori philosophy and adapt this fully in their work. This is illustrated in the way they have implemented the recommendation from the first re-accreditation visit, by fully integrating all children attending in daily opportunities to play and work together.

The team acknowledges that parents are the children's primary educators and they have regular contact with them. They send the children's records home each week for parents to read and add to. The parents are very supportive of the setting and appreciate the comprehensive and personal service that they are given.

Learning and Development:

High priority is given to planning and resourcing the different areas of the learning environment, both indoors and out. The resources fully meet the needs of the children attending. They are able to make links in their learning and play imaginatively as their understanding of the world grows. On the day of the first re-accreditation visit the children were engaged in purposeful role-play and real tasks, for example, some washed up their snack crockery and others looked after their plants by watering and cleaning the leaves. On the day of the second visit children in the nursery were making their own playdough, helping themselves to flour, water and oil and mixing them together, and within this mixed age group the toddlers were able to model their dexterity to the babies. The degree of skill, concentration and independence which all these young children demonstrated was remarkable.

During both visits, children's literacy skills were very well supported outside. The children are able to write, draw and listen to stories in a cosy area under an awning that protects them from rain or too much sun. The older children love their gardening lessons and during the visits enjoyed explaining facts about bees. They knowledgeably discussed how they collect pollen and nectar from flowers and make sweet honey for us to eat. To augment the Montessori curriculum, topics are planned for each month by the staff team, who take into account the changing needs and interests of the children.

Each child has a named key person but any member of staff in each area can record observations of the children's progress and engagement with materials. The key person is responsible for planning for their children and for ensuring that their 'Individual Planning' and other records are up to date. A system is in place which ensures that all staff members in each area are aware of all the children's needs as plans are displayed in the rooms.

In the schoolroom, staff members plan for their children according to the Montessori curriculum and link the outcomes in their learning to aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). They chart their children's progress very effectively. Key persons working with the younger age group complete Key Child Focused Plans and these, along with information from the parents, are used to chart each child's



developmental progress with reference to Montessori activities and the EYFS, and to record current interests to assist staff in their planning. The Director and senior management team monitor children's records. All the staff are given time to observe the children regularly and to update records. Through this comprehensive recording and assessment process, the staff team ensures that children make excellent progress.

Newpark Montessori provides for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those for whom English is an additional language. Staff team members speak a wide range of languages between them and they promote children's communication and language skills. There is an appointed SENCo who liaises with relevant outside agencies and attends regular training. To further enhance this good practice it is recommended that any child with identified additional needs has their targeted plan of support included in their 'Individual Planning' folder to help staff closely monitor progress and next steps. Children at Newpark Montessori are given many and varied opportunities to make exceptionally good progress in their learning and development.

Prepared Environment: resources and materials

The setting offers the children a very well prepared environment indoors and out; it encourages their natural tendencies to investigate and explore, it engages their interest and promotes their independence. The materials are very well presented and maintained, and the adults fully understand their role as custodians of the learning environment. The extensive range is suitable for the age and stage of development of the children attending in each area. Specific Montessori materials are complemented by a diverse range of equipment across all curriculum areas.

On the day of the first re-accreditation visit exploratory play was evident in the nursery as children were engaged in a seaside activity, combining dressing up in suitable attire with sand play. A tray with ice, shells, fish and coloured sand was provided for the children to extend the seaside theme and encourage creative play and sensory experience. On the day of the second visit they had a tray with pine-cones, leaves and other autumnal natural materials to explore. Several children were also engaged in practical life activities and even these young children put their work away without being prompted.

Following the first visit the 'creative area' has been established replacing the baby unit and is used now for messy play and as a dining room for the whole of the younger group. On the day of the second visit the children painted with straws, made playdough here and had their meals in this room. Other activities such as books and Lego are also available here. The treasure baskets and activities to support exploratory play with objects are now located in the 'advanced Montessori room' which has also been very successfully set up to accommodate the interests of all the nursery's children.



The beautifully presented sensory room, the 'Woodland room', is also used effectively throughout the morning by all the younger age group. While they may not be based in these areas, the older children can have access to these rooms, a few at a time, if they choose to. The changes that have been made to promote family grouping are outstanding. Staff can see the benefits of this for the older children as well as those younger, as all have access to a broader curriculum. The babies follow the older nursery children, gaining in independence and competence by following their lead. The toddlers can now take on a more caring role as they help the babies.

The children in the schoolroom engage in stimulating activities and generally keep their classroom tidy. On the day of both visits children worked with a very wide range of resources to extend their learning, including activities to promote writing and number skills. The children were very happy to share their knowledge about penguins living together on the ice and sitting on their eggs. Diversity is well catered for, such as through books that support the children's growing understanding of others.

Of the four separate outside areas the largest main area is set up as an outdoor classroom and is covered when necessary with two awnings so it can be used in all weathers. The resources are wide-ranging, appropriate and cover all aspects of learning. Small world play was in evidence on the day of the second visit, as well as activities to promote the children's gross motor skills. The children enjoyed playing with toy dinosaurs, logs to climb on and a 'shop'. The other main garden area is used for bicycles and scooters as well as for tending plants. Excellent use is made of this area as many of the children have gardening lessons in the afternoon. The outdoor curriculum offered is very comprehensive and the older children in particular have a very wide variety of rich experiences; they also have a small outdoor area off their schoolroom that, on the day of the first visit, had plants and a table. A few children can work out there if they choose to during the morning. Those in the nursery are able to go outside during the sessions and used the largest area on the day of both visits. The younger children also used the other smaller and suitably equipped area in the afternoon, which is located at the back of the building. The children in both age ranges have plants in their rooms and one outstanding feature of this excellent environment is its large fish tank in the schoolroom, which now also includes matching and pairing cards used to identify the fish.

The prepared environment has been significantly improved by combining the younger groups into one. The staff should be commended for their open approach to this fundamental change to their working practice.

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

There are many opportunities for the children to develop their skills and independence at Newpark Montessori. Even the babies and toddlers are encouraged to manage their



own meals and activities independently if they are able to. This is an outstanding feature of the setting. The older ones also look after their belongings and all those having breakfast help themselves and choose where to sit.

As the work cycle for all the children can start as soon as they arrive, they benefit from being able to engage with activities for as long as they choose during the morning. The older children can access the outside areas freely provided there is space, and the younger group also enjoys plenty of time outside each day.

The children are confident, kind and considerate to one another, and mirror the very positive role-modeling that staff members display. For example, on the day of the first re-accreditation visit, a visiting child was sympathetically chaperoned by an older child. The children understand their boundaries and this leads them to develop self-discipline and to help care for their environment – they were observed prompting each other to look after their activities and put them away when finished with. The more extensive vertical grouping the children now enjoy has had an excellent impact on the children, with even the very youngest showing an impressive level of independence. For example, all the younger children feed themselves very productively with a spoon and the older children successfully use a knife and fork. Two of the older children are invited to help the babies at lunch time, which works very well. The older ones act as positive role-models for the younger children, who in turn benefit enormously from seeing the concentration with which the older children engage in their activities.

The setting operates a rolling snack time which is available for an hour during the morning work cycle. The older children cut their own fruit and wash the board and knife when they have all finished. Following the recommendation from the first visit the lunch routine has been reorganised and now runs much more smoothly, with the food being distributed more efficiently in both rooms. In the schoolroom the staff and the children prepare the room for lunch and two children help distribute the food. These children now all eat their main course at the same time. The children in the nursery also help prepare their snack and they are divided into two groups for lunch depending on their needs that day. Each child fetches their own lunch, a routine that has greatly reduced the time spent waiting to be served, and now most of the children eat their main course at the same time in each lunch group. Those who are not eating until later carry on working in the 'advanced Montessori room'.

An extensive range of literature that explains the Montessori method of education is available for parents, and they are invited to come into the setting to see for themselves how the staff manage their children's independence. The level of independence offered to the children helps ensure that they can develop self-awareness and that they have time to grow into confident and successful learners. This is a significant strength of the setting and was well illustrated by the actions of the children and by the interesting and knowledgeable conversations that they initiated during the visits.



Montessori practice: Classroom management

Classroom procedures and staff responsibilities are displayed on the notice boards and in the information the parents receive. Daily checks are made of the environment by the staff before the children come in and the setting has help from a maintenance person to ensure that it is kept in good working order. All staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities, which change on a monthly basis. Staff deployment is very effective and the adults' involvement with the children varies appropriately across the age range, with staff progressively offering less help as the children get older.

The children arrive between 08.00 and 08.30 and those who want breakfast help themselves. Each child is given a coloured band to wear for the whole day which indicates their dietary requirements. This is a very efficient system and there is also a list in the kitchen. Children have independent access to the materials for around three hours in the nursery and four hours in the schoolroom as the younger children have lunch in two sittings starting at 11.15 and those older have it later, at around 12.00.

The nursery's routines are run with full regard for the needs of these younger children and the majority of them sleep in the afternoon in one of their rooms; those who do not need to sleep play inside. A few children in the schoolroom also sleep after lunch. They are provided with their own bedding and a mat to sleep on, whilst their peers can play outside.

The children continue to have independent access to the learning materials in the afternoon, although this time is also used for extra group activities such as gardening, yoga or cooking. These all took place on the day of the first re-accreditation visit. This daily routine works very well as the children get to enjoy a variety of activities during their day. Tea is at 16.00. The children are regularly taken on outings. Before the younger children move to the schoolroom they visit their new class and, because the age groups mix more now indoors and outside, they are already familiar with the staff and children. All the children have a very varied curriculum and are purposefully engaged for the whole day. The extended work cycle during morning sessions, together with the staff's commitment to the principles of vertical age grouping, offer enormous benefits to the children.

Montessori Practice: links with parents, including reports and records

Parents know their child's key person and value the part they and the rest of the staff play in supporting their children. As well as receiving emails, the fortnightly blog and very informative newsletters, parents are given time to communicate with staff during handovers. Parents of children aged up to a year are given a daily record sheet which can be continued if deemed necessary for those over this age. The parents show commitment to the setting and awareness of the developmental needs of their children by providing written feedback and family photographs in their children's 'Complete



Guides'. These comprehensively illustrate the child's developmental progress. This two-way communication works very well. Parents also enjoy Newport's unique birthday DVD, compiled during a child's birthday at the setting, which gives them an insight into their child's day.

Parental involvement is actively encouraged and includes opportunities for them to come and observe their children, as well as twice yearly parent evenings and one to one appointments with the management staff and their child's key person. A 'child development tracking' is recorded to coincide with these parent meetings. Mandatory two year old progress checks and annual developmental reports are also drawn up by the child's key person. These link to EYFS areas and are shared with parents. The report also serves as a transition record when a child moves on to primary school. The quantity and quality of parental input has an excellent impact on children's development at Newport Montessori.

Staffing:

The manager and the head of schoolroom share overall responsibility for the daily running of the setting and take responsibility for their own areas. The manager oversees the nursery alongside its lead practitioner and the schoolroom is overseen by of the head of school. The manager also uses a checklist to ensure that all areas of the setting's management are covered.

Those staff members who have had no previous Montessori experience undergo in-house training on the general philosophy, activities for everyday living and the use of positive language. To ensure consistency of approach throughout the setting staff members now work much more closely together and both the schoolroom and the nursery are led by Montessori qualified members of staff. Continuous professional development is well supported and includes opportunities to attend Montessori workshops. One member of staff who recently had CDP training in 'creativity' changed the approach taken in order to give the children freedom to use art media as they choose, rather than requiring them to follow instructions.

All staff members have their own job descriptions, which are reviewed when necessary. The induction process for new staff is thorough and they feel very well supported. They are made aware of the policies and all other relevant documentation and are given a month's settling-in period. The appraisal system, staff supervision and peer on peer observations are fully embedded in the setting's practice.

To complement the daily verbal communication that is very evident, minuted whole setting staff meetings take place every month and the teams within the two separate areas also meet every month. Because this setting is part of a larger group of nurseries, they are able to share ideas and expertise, and staff members are able to visit the other settings as the company employs additional staff across the group to cover for



absences.

Newpark Montessori places the child at the centre of everything it does and its team should be highly commended for delivering an authentic Montessori environment across the whole of the setting.

Name of Assessor: Charlotte White

Date report submitted: First visit – 2 July 2016

Second visit – 11 November 2016