

Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board

School Accreditation

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 out in "The Guide to the EYFS in Montessori Settings".

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.

Victoria Road Montessori

The Vestry, Christ Church, Victoria Road, London W8 5RQ

Visited on 11 June, 2009

Description of the school:

Victoria Road Montessori School was registered in 2007. It is privately run. This nursery is a sister setting for Ivorna Gardens Montessori Nursery and is also managed by the owners of Ivorna Gardens. The setting focuses on providing care and learning based on Montessori principals. The school operates from the ground floor vestry of a church in a residential area in the borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The setting has the use of a small hall, toilet facilities and an enclosed outdoor play area.

Victoria Road Montessori is registered for 16 children from two to five years old. There are, at present, 16 children attending the morning sessions. The school is open from 09.00 to 12.00, term time only.

All three members of staff hold the Montessori qualification.

Summary and conclusion.

Schools please note: the assessor's recommendations are considered by the Report Monitoring Group which meets two/three times each term and are presented for validation to the Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board. The report is published following the MEAB validation and is private and confidential until such time.

Victoria Montessori offers care and education in line with the Montessori philosophy and practice. This is a small setting and the children and parents are part of the school community. The environment, indoors and outdoors, is inviting and conducive to learning as it is well prepared and maintained by the enthusiastic and caring team. The head and two members of staff work directly with the children and they all hold the Montessori teaching qualifications.

The school provides an education in accordance with the principles of the Montessori approach and environment and merits accreditation by the Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board. To ensure consistency in the way the curriculum is delivered the setting should consider:

- Continuing to explore how French lessons could be incorporated into the work cycle.

Philosophy

The Montessori philosophy and principles are followed in this setting. Independence, freedom and opportunities for self-learning is promoted by an extended work cycle, a well-prepared environment and trust in the child. The children freely explore the indoors and outdoors with a good level of adult support. There is a wide range of Montessori and other learning resources in both environments. Most children, with little reminders, follow the cycle of activity.

The adults in this setting show respect for the children and their families. Great care and attention is paid to each individual child. This aspect of the practice is highly praised by parents.

The aim of Victoria Road Montessori is to foster independence, confidence and awaken a love of learning in the children. There is a written statement in the nursery's website to this effect.

Learning and Development

Learning and development in this setting is in line with Montessori principles and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The learning resources are plentiful, well kept, displayed in accordance with Montessori practice and accessible to the children. Freedom to work/play individually, in pairs or in small groups is in place. Opportunities to learn from each other are plentiful. This is due to vertical grouping, trust in the children, and the continuous work cycle observed on the day of the visit.

Children's records are organized into a learning journey of each child. It is comprehensive and organized into the relevant areas of learning as identified in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the Montessori curriculum. This document is shared with the parents during termly meetings or more often should a meeting be requested. The children take great pride in their learning journey book and enjoy sharing it with their parents and friends. The children's observations are informative and identify the next steps of learning

The termly themes are planned by the whole team and organized into weekly projects. This provides opportunities for looking in greater depth at an aspect of the prepared environment. For instance, continent themes will look at peoples and cultures and link in with festival celebrations. This fosters respect for other cultures and provides opportunities for parent participation.

Under the guidance of enthusiastic, experienced and qualified Montessori staff the outcomes are positive for all children at this setting.

Prepared Environment: resources and materials

The adults take great pride in providing the children with a well-prepared environment to maximize independence, freedom of choice and self-teaching. The materials are beautifully displayed, inviting, plentiful, accessible and suitable for the number of children.

The room is organized according to the Montessori curriculum and divided by low shelves to create cosy corners. The topic table is inviting with a wealth of carefully chosen items. The classroom is small but bright. The use of large free standing trays instead of tables is very effective.

There is a large secure garden with flowerbeds, pots, sandpit, building blocks and digging areas. A selection of Montessori resources is also available. The children explore this area effectively and engage the adults in their play.

There is free flow between the two environments. This is of great benefit to the children as they choose where to work/play and with whom to spend time.

Montessori practice: *independence, independence at home, freedom, respect.*

Independence in this setting is fostered by an extended work cycle, a well-prepared environment, uninterrupted cycle of activity and supervision by adults who understand and deliver the Montessori practice. The children display high levels of independence, confidence and are able to concentrate for appropriate periods of time on self-chosen activities. The snack forms an integral part of the work-cycle. The children select and prepare their own fruit or vegetable and share them with others. They show respect for their environment by cleaning tables and putting resources back in their place on the shelf and sharing well.

The parents interviewed praise the children's independence at home and school. Partnership is good and they are satisfied with the level of communication in place. They particularly enjoy the 'open door' policy as it provides them with ample opportunities to talk to staff, look around the classroom and share in their children's learning. There is a very informative and up-to-date website where parents and carers can access information about the school's policies and procedures as well as information about the curriculum provided. The termly meetings with the key person, to discuss the children's progress, provide further opportunities for the team to inform parents about their practice and how this could be followed at home. To further the parents understanding of the Montessori method consideration will be given to offer them a Montessori book and subscription to the Montessori magazine when the child joins.

Montessori practice: classroom management

This classroom is well managed. The small team works well together and communication between them is good. The environment is kept clean and inviting. Some learning resources are changed according to the topics presented. This is very effective as the children are

curious about the new items and explore them either individually, with a friend or an adult. The children experience a high degree of freedom. They initiate activities and are given time to finish as and when they are ready. Help is always at hand should it be needed.

The adults are well placed: two outdoors and one indoors. They support children's work/play in a quiet and friendly manner and give them time to resolve conflict. When intervention is needed this is done with the utmost respect for the child.

The key person system is in place, and all adults support the children. This is very effective as they are happy and secure. Information about individual children is shared between them via observations, staff meetings and informal talks. They know the children well and cater for their developmental needs.

Extracurricular activities did not take place on the day of the visit. However, according to the school timetable these do take place and are outside the 2½ hour work-cycle. It is recommended that the head and her team review the way in which French is delivered.

Montessori Practice: links with parents

Partnership with parents is strong. Those interviewed reported satisfaction with the levels of involvement in place. They welcome the 'open door' policy and the informal consultations with the staff. The termly meeting with the key person, open evenings and a very informative website ensures that they are kept up to date with the school's activities, policies and procedures. They praised the team for knowing the children well and for catering for their individual needs.

The child's profile, Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) record card and Montessori list are kept up to date by the key person. Observations are done regularly and used to inform the next steps of learning. The termly report is informative and reflects the child's stage of development.

On the day of the visit a child invited his mother in to look through his learning profile. She was warmly welcomed by the team.

Staffing

Three adults work directly with the children. They hold the Montessori qualification. The head supports continual professional development. The needs of the team are identified through informal discussions and annual appraisals. Teamwork is strong and respect is shown for each other.

Staff meetings are in place and recorded. However, as this is a very small team there are plenty of opportunities for effective communication on a daily basis. This is beneficial as staff are able to discuss children's progress regularly and their duties for the day. The manager is experienced and gives a good level of support to the classroom teacher and vice versa. The

staff handbook provides clear guidelines on the code of conduct expected by the head. Formal staff appraisals take place once a year and informal ones on a regular basis. Peer observation is on the agenda to be implemented shortly.

The staff at Victoria Road Montessori are committed to deliver care and education in line with Montessori practice and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Name of Assessor

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Date of report

Rosie Roberts

15 June 2009