

Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board

School Accreditation

This report is a supplement to the setting's previous MEAB Accreditation Final Report, which is published in conjunction with this report.

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.

Barnes Montessori Nursery

Barnes Sports Club, 261 Lonsdale Road, Barnes, London SW13 9QL

Dates of previous MEAB accreditations: June 2011 and June 2015

This accreditation is valid until June 2023

This accreditation report relates to the provision for children aged 2 to 5 years old

Description of the nursery:

Barnes Montessori Nursery is situated in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. The nursery opened in 1969 and has been under its present, sole ownership since 1987. This pack-away setting is located in a sports pavilion and has sole use of the premises during its opening times.

The setting consists of four rooms, three of which are used as classrooms (Cricket, Ladybird and Butterfly) with the fourth being a multi-purpose room. The setting also has use of the sports clubhouse (a separate building) for some activities. There is a small kitchen, and toilet facilities for staff and for the children. Outside, a veranda is used as an outdoor classroom and the children also enjoy the securely-fenced large field. A shed

contains resources such as balls and hoops, and an area near the pavilion has a mud kitchen, water play and other outdoor equipment. The children are regularly taken on outings in the local community, such as to the nearby shops and reservoir, providing opportunities for observations of nature and to learn about the wider world.

The setting is open term time only, Monday to Friday. The morning sessions run from 09.00 to 12.00. The afternoon sessions run from 12.00 to 15.00, Monday to Thursday. The nursery has a lunch club on Tuesdays through to Thursdays from 12.00 to 13.00 and some children then stay for the afternoon sessions. Monday lunch and afternoons are available for children who attend Forest School. Children bring a packed lunch from home and snack is freely available during the morning. The nursery can take a maximum of 50 children at any time and presently there are 50 children aged between 2 and 5 years on the roll. On the morning of the second reaccreditation visit all the children attended, with ten staff. Twenty-eight children stayed for lunch club, of whom 26 stayed for the afternoon along with four staff, including the Principal.

Two optional afternoon sessions are run separately from the rest of the nursery for children over 2 to rising 3 years old, in the run up to their entry in September of each year. This additional provision is not being considered for this accreditation.

The owner is the Principal who attends every day. There are ten other members of staff; three work full-time and the appointed deputy is in charge if the Principal is absent. Eight of the team, including the Principal, are Montessori qualified and one has received Montessori Centre International training. The Principal has a BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Studies and Early Years Professional Status. Four other members of staff also have degrees and one is a qualified physiotherapist. The nursery has achieved – and updates annually – the London Borough of Richmond’s Improving Quality for Children scheme.

Summary

The dedicated team at Barnes Montessori Nursery is successfully led by the highly-experienced and inspirational Principal. All staff members are extremely passionate about the Montessori philosophy and share the Principal’s vision for creating a highly nurturing learning environment, where each child is fully valued and supported to develop a love of learning, at their own pace. The adults have an excellent understanding of how children develop. They are well-attuned to each child’s needs and have high expectations of children’s capabilities to fulfil their unique potential. They successfully plan a variety of rich and challenging learning experiences to foster children’s personal development.

Extremely strong links with parents are established and there are excellent opportunities for them to be involved in their children’s learning. Highly effective communication with families ensures that children’s individual needs are fully met. Many parents express high levels of satisfaction with how quickly their children settle and begin to flourish and they describe how their children make rapid progress.

As recommended at the previous MEAB accreditation, the Principal and team have continued to reflect upon their practice to ensure its high standards are maintained. The Principal is extremely open-minded and motivational, with a clear vision for future improvements. This ongoing and incisive self-evaluation is at the forefront of the nursery's continued success and ensures high quality education for all its children.

New members of staff receive an in-depth induction and are mentored to help ensure they are fully knowledgeable and confident in their roles. All the adults are committed to engaging in continuing professional development. Following a recommendation from the first reaccreditation visit, the Principal now regularly meets together with a peer to benefit from the same opportunity for performance review that she frequently offers her staff members in supporting them to reflect on their practice.

Since the previous MEAB accreditation there has been a change in the leadership team, with a new deputy manager now supporting the Principal. Staff members are also now experienced in using the secure online record-keeping system, which was in the very early stages of being introduced during the last visit. This is used to link effectively the Montessori curriculum with the Early Years Foundation Stage's areas of learning and development in recording and planning for each child. Subtle changes have also been made to the start of the lunchtime routine, which has extended the morning work cycle to a full three hours.

Self-initiated learning is strongly supported by the layout and routines of the nursery. There is an extensive range of Montessori materials, as well as some interesting and beautifully homemade additional resources to reinforce learning concepts. All of the children thoroughly enjoy the exceptional opportunities for free-flow movement between the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Following a recommendation from the first visit, staff members have effectively reviewed the way in which the Montessori materials are organised and displayed, to ensure that each has sufficient space. This has enabled the children to access the resources more easily, and fully supports their sense of order. Staff members show a strong commitment to regularly reviewing the provision so that the learning environment is adapted frequently to match the interests and needs of the children.

Barnes Montessori Nursery is an extremely enriching and nurturing learning environment; the children enjoy attending, they display high self-esteem and are exceptionally confident learners.

The setting provides an education in accordance with the principles of the Montessori approach and environment and merits accreditation by the Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board.

- it is recommended that the setting continues to reflect on its exceptional practice in order to ensure that its inspirational teaching and high standards are maintained.

An Action Plan has been drawn up with, and retained by, the setting to address these recommendations.

Philosophy:

The Montessori philosophy is highly respected and fully embedded at Barnes Montessori Nursery. Staff members wholeheartedly trust the children's ability to become motivated and independent learners. Great emphasis is placed on 'following the child' and allowing each to take ownership of their learning based on their interests and inner developmental needs. Staff members treat children with the highest levels of respect, which helps them build their self-esteem and an extremely positive approach to learning. The nursery's invitation system, whereby children can visit the other classrooms throughout the session, enhances their freedom of choice, natural curiosity and provides excellent opportunities to learn from peers of different ages.

Learning and Development:

Teaching is inspirational. Staff members skillfully motivate the children to learn and accomplish new things. The adults are particularly effective at encouraging children's thinking skills and giving them time to develop their own ideas and make connections with their previous experiences. For example, during the second reaccreditation visit some of the children delighted in making mud pies in the outdoor mud kitchen. They shrieked with enjoyment as they pretended to add in a range of different ingredients, and a member of staff skillfully supported their development by using lots of descriptive language and encouraging them to discuss their intentions. The sense of fun, learning and engagement was captivating. Staff meticulously plan a range of interesting activities based on individual children's emerging interests, which inspires and engages children to become active learners. The children's progress is recorded effectively through high-quality long and short observations.

Prepared Environment: resources and materials

The three classrooms are welcoming and well-resourced with a variety of Montessori and additional materials which accommodate the children's needs and interests across the setting. Each classroom has an individual snack table and children show high levels of involvement when preparing and enjoying fruits and vegetables. They also have a cosy book area, where children's interest in books and stories is fully encouraged. On the day of the second reaccreditation visit children sang a range of songs along with a teacher who was playing a ukulele. The teacher used this fun and interactive session to encourage the children to express a range of feelings and they enthusiastically sang about lots of different emotions in an animated way.

Following a recommendation from the first visit, staff members have made some positive changes to how the resources are displayed. This has resulted in an excellent balance and range of activities being available to support all areas of learning. Furthermore,

each material has sufficient space, which improves the accessibility, order and overall aesthetics of the classrooms, making them attractive and inviting for children to explore.

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

Children have a plethora of opportunities to develop their independence. They are fully encouraged by the staff and the carefully prepared environment to freely choose which resources to work with, whether to learn indoors or outdoors, and whether to work alone or with others. On the day of the second reaccreditation visit children showed high levels of independence and thoroughly enjoyed making confident choices. For example, outdoors some children enthusiastically built a short bead stair using colourful logs for counting, whilst others enjoyed water activities using spray bottles. Others delighted in transporting bricks with wheelbarrows and some showed excellent agility when climbing trees. Children are given plenty of time and freedom to repeat activities. This allows them to think and problem-solve for themselves and to develop confidence through their own personal achievements. As a result, the children's behaviour is excellent.

Montessori Practice: links with parents, including reports and records

Relationships with parents are exceptional. Their views are regularly sought via discussions and feedback questionnaires, and they consistently express high levels of trust and confidence in the nursery. Strong communication and information-sharing is established before a child starts at the nursery, such as during the optional home visit. Updates on learning and progress are then regularly exchanged with the child's parents using the online record-keeping system, and reports are drawn up from this annually for each child. Parents are invited in as 'Mystery Readers', to spend time in the classroom, or to help out on trips. Parents' understanding of the Montessori philosophy is also fostered at the annual 'Presentation Morning'.

Staff: qualifications, deployment, and performance management

The inspirational Principal leads a team of very well-qualified and committed staff. Each is impressively talented and brings a wealth of attributes and unique opportunities to the children. They work collaboratively to ensure the best outcomes for children and families. There is a strong culture of continuing professional development and staff members attend a range of training courses to fully support children's emotional wellbeing, their learning and development. New staff members are given a full induction and are mentored by the Principal. Job descriptions include a section on Montessori practice and all staff members carry out peer observations to reflect upon and improve their practice. As suggested at the first reaccreditation visit, the Principal has made some subtle changes to the structuring of how she supports staff members in their roles and now ensures that she carries out this task together with a peer to ensure that she also receives ongoing support in her already exceptional leadership of this outstanding Montessori nursery.

Name of Assessor: Amy Mckenzie

Date of first visit: 01/03/2018

Date of second visit: 10/05/2018

Date report submitted: First visit – 03/03/2018

Second visit – 10/05/2018