

## **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.

### **Orpington Montessori Preschool**

Methodist Church, Sevenoaks Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 9JH

Date of previous MEAB accreditation: November 2015

This accreditation is valid until June 2023.

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

#### **Description of the nursery:**

Orpington Montessori Preschool is located near the centre of Orpington. It is situated on the ground floor of a church hall and has use of a grassed and paved fenced area within the grounds. The part of the premises that the nursery uses consists of a main classroom, a nearby kitchen and a separate storage area. The setting has sole use of the hall during its opening hours and packs away daily. It originally registered in 2009 and is one of two Montessori nurseries in the area owned and led by the proprietor. The setting is open during term time only. It offers morning sessions from 09.00 to 12.25, Monday to Friday, and extended days on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, from 09.00 to 15.30. Children may attend either full or half-day sessions and they bring a packed lunch if staying all day. There are currently 45 children on roll. On the day of the second reaccreditation visit 31 children attended in the morning, with seven staff. The nursery makes provision for children with English as an additional language and for

those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are seven members of staff employed, including a nursery manager. All work directly with the children and hold relevant early years qualifications, four with Montessori qualifications. Four staff members work full-time, including the nursery manager. The proprietor has Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) and is the nursery group's manager. She regularly monitors and contributes to the running of this nursery. The deputy manager has Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS).

## Summary

The children at Orpington Montessori Preschool make exceptional progress in their learning. Parents are highly appreciative of the quality of teaching delivered by the well-qualified and friendly staff team. The setting is very competently managed and led, with excellent ongoing training for the staff.

Since the previous MEAB accreditation an outdoor canopy has been installed, enabling the outdoor space to be used during all weather conditions. Other resources that have been added include a new climbing frame, a mud kitchen and a wider range of role-play equipment. These developments have greatly improved opportunities to enhance children's physical skills and creativity. In addition, the layout of the main classroom has been improved to provide more distinct areas for activities. The afternoon sessions offer more group activities. The setting has also increased the number of Montessori qualified members of staff from three to four.

Transitions between outdoors and indoors are smooth and the children show high levels of engagement during a variety of interesting activities. In response to the recommendations made at the previous MEAB accreditation, the management has continued to reflect with staff on their practice at regular staff meetings, through parent questionnaires and by considering children's views. Following a recommendation made at the first reaccreditation visit, many of the materials used by the children have been refurbished to a high standard, or replaced. It is now recommended that staff continue to review materials for refurbishing when required.

***The setting provides an education which follows the principles of the Montessori approach and environment. The setting has successfully addressed 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 refurbish resources when worn.

**An Action Plan has been drawn up with, and retained by, the setting to address this recommendation.**

### **Philosophy:**

Orpington Montessori Preschool fully implements the Montessori philosophy by, for example, providing the children with freedom to choose activities. Staff are highly skilled at extending children's learning by presenting them with new and challenging activities. The children are well nurtured in this caring and stimulating environment and develop a passion for learning. They show excellent levels of independence when practicing and refining their skills in self-chosen activities. The setting's principles and goals are regularly reviewed by staff, led by the managers.

### **Learning and Development:**

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent as staff plan activities according to the needs of each child. During the first reaccreditation visit children particularly enjoyed using the Activities of Everyday Living and the Spindle Box. Following the previous MEAB accreditation, the work cycle has been extended to three hours in both the morning and the afternoon sessions – to increase the amount of time that children have to freely choose activities. The sessions no longer start with an adult-led group activity. This has been positive in supporting children's autonomy from the start of the sessions. All staff also now take a more active role in planning, which is done by each member of staff weekly to enable them to put the interests of their key children first. Planning is shared with parents and is now also more detailed for both indoor and outdoor activities. Additionally, there is also more focus and structure for the afternoon sessions and better opportunity for children to use the garden, with staff taking a flexible, child-centred approach.

The progress of the children is exceptional. Staff are excellent at observing them and presenting new materials to them when they are ready. The nursery manager discusses the progress of the children weekly with staff and offers ongoing guidance and support. Evaluation of practice takes place at the end of every session and is discussed and recorded, which enables the staff to regularly assess and improve the provision further.

### **Prepared Environment: resources and materials**

All areas of learning in the indoor environment are thoughtfully designed, easily accessible and well used by the children. The revision of the layout has created spaces that are more distinct for certain areas of learning – for example the cultural area, where children enjoy exploring puzzles of animals and maps. Children have the opportunity to rest in the book corner if they wish to do so. There has been an increase in the range of resources for Information and Communication Technology and for supporting children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Following a recommendation made on the first reaccreditation visit, many of the Montessori materials have been refurbished to a high standard or replaced. This makes the resources attractive and ready for use by the children and encourages them to take care of the equipment and of their learning environment. Continuing with a regular review of the condition of the resources will be

beneficial to maintaining a stimulating and well cared for environment.

Staff have recently enhanced the well-resourced outdoor learning environment by the addition of a permanent canopy, enabling the children to play outside when the weather is inclement. They have also introduced a mud kitchen and climbing frame. This provides excellent opportunities for the children to engage in imaginative play with others and develop their climbing skills, balance and co-ordination.

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

The children develop very helpful practical skills from an early age, for example, they independently prepare fruit and vegetables for their snack during both sessions. They show perseverance in tasks such as hanging up their coats, placing them on pegs. Staff are highly attuned to children's individual abilities and are careful not to offer more help than is needed in order for children to gain maximum benefit from practicing and consolidating new skills. Children work at their own pace and naturally develop their own daily rhythms and work patterns. The relationships between the children are excellent as they play co-operatively, enhancing each other's learning.

### **Montessori Practice: links with parents, including reports and records**

Relationships with parents are exceptionally strong. Parents are kept very well informed of their children's progress and have two formal progress meetings per year. Parents of children under 3 years of age receive reports each term and for those over 3 years an annual report is produced at the end of the academic year. Parents can view their child's progress records kept on the secure web-based recording system at any time and are encouraged to play an active role in their child's learning. To promote this further, parents would benefit from having the weekly information about activities (which is on display daily on the setting's noticeboard) accessible electronically. Parents express that their children receive high quality learning experiences and an excellent standard of education. There is a good sense of community and parents help fundraise for new equipment.

### **Staff: qualifications, deployment, and performance management**

The staff team is fully committed to achieving best practice by regular evaluation of all aspects of the nursery. Excellent training for staff continues to be a real strength and the managers have attended management courses to further enhance their knowledge and skills. The procedure for formal staff supervision, which takes place termly, has been recently reviewed to make it even more robust. It provides staff with good opportunities to set new goals that further develop their teaching and personal effectiveness. Peer observations have also been developed to make them more relevant and, despite their complex format, these allow staff to share knowledge effectively. Each member of staff meets with the nursery manager weekly to discuss the children's progress and share

ideas so that all the children can receive the best support possible. Managers attend regular local meetings to share information with other early years professionals and setting leaders. This also helps to ensure extremely positive outcomes for children and their families at this excellent Montessori setting.

Name of Assessor: Anne McConway

Date of first visit: 23 January 2019

Date of second visit: 5 April 2019

Date report submitted: First visit – 24 January 2019

Second visit – 5 April 2019