



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.

Tiggywinkles Montessori Nursery

Newport Rugby Club, Forton Road, Newport, Shropshire TF10 8BU

Date of previous MEAB accreditation: May 2013

Date of first re-accreditation visit: 19 May 2016

Date of second re-accreditation visit: 10 October 2016

This accreditation is valid until 31 December 2020

This accreditation report relates to the provision for children aged 2 to 4 years.

Description of the nursery:

Tiggywinkles Montessori Nursery (known as Tiggy's) is located in Newport, near Telford, and operates from the spacious facilities of Newport Rugby Club. The nursery uses two main rooms, one of which is for its exclusive use and includes a kitchenette. The other larger room, adjoining hall and toilets are used solely by the nursery during its opening hours, and materials here are packed away on a weekly basis. The children have free flow access to a private decked outdoor area and garden. The substantial grounds and fields of the rugby club can also be used by the setting, and twice-weekly Forest School sessions take place in nearby private woods during afternoon sessions.



The nursery operates term time only and is registered for 30 children. The total number of children on roll is 47. They can attend morning or full day sessions, with 25 attending the morning session, from 08.30 to 12.30, on the day of the second re-accreditation visit and 21 staying all day. The afternoon session finishes at 16.00, Monday to Thursday, and at 15.30 on Fridays. Children bring their own packed lunch; snack is provided in the morning session and drinking water is available all day. The nursery provides for children with English as an additional language (EAL) and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and liaises with relevant professionals to support the children in its care.

The setting first opened in 1990 and re-registered in 2006 under the current owner, who is also the manager. She works on site four days a week and leads the Forest School provision. She is supported by a team of six staff of whom two work full-time including the supervisor, who is the setting's deputy manager. All hold relevant level 3 qualifications. Two members of staff are SENCo trained. The owner/manager has a Montessori diploma, an early years degree, Early Years Professional Status, and is also qualified as a Forest School Leader. The setting also supports Montessori trainees and, at the time of the second visit, had a student on placement, attending two days a week.

Summary

Tiggywinkles Montessori provides a very welcoming and stimulating nursery environment, with a strong Montessori ethos centred on following the child. Children are skillfully supported by the very experienced, committed staff team, and parents express warmly their praise for the setting and how it allows the children to develop at their own pace and follow their interests and needs.

The rich learning environment, which includes a very wide range of age-appropriate materials, encourages children to explore and develop independence and self-confidence.

Children with additional needs are exceptionally well supported, through effective liaison between the staff team, parents and relevant professionals.

Since the previous MEAB accreditation, the setting has moved into new rooms within the facilities of the Rugby Club. This has enabled the team to plan the environments afresh, and has afforded opportunities to reflect further on their practice. The recent introduction of a secure web-based recording system has contributed to staff members' successful linking of the Montessori curriculum areas to those of the Early Years Foundations Stage (EYFS). Moreover, parents are delighted with the on-line access that they now have to their children's records, including weekly updates.

The recommendations made during the first re-accreditation visit have also been addressed. Children's starting points are recorded through the use of a baseline assessment, which will allow their progress to be identified more clearly. Planned staff observations have begun to be carried out; these have provided opportunities



for beneficial feedback and should help to guide future staff development. Also, the impact of the Forest School has started to be recorded. This is expected to track the growing personal, social and physical skills that the children develop through their weekly attendance at these sessions.

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 points for further development:

- continue to reflect on the role of the Montessori practitioner, especially at the start of the year or when there is a new intake of children; and
- continue to develop the use of positive language, including descriptive praise, as a tool for behaviour management.

Philosophy:

Tiggywinkles offers high quality Montessori provision, with each child able to follow their own interests within the appropriately prepared environment. The experienced and empathetic practitioners work very closely as a team to plan for and follow the children's individual needs. The children are notably happy, engaged and show a developing independence.

The mixed aged group, which is currently 2 to 4 years, enables younger children to learn from the older ones, who in turn are role models for their younger peers. Children enjoy extended periods of time in which to choose their own activities both indoors and out, as well as independently or in small groups. The practitioners move seamlessly between the areas to support and direct children when needed, leading to a calm yet busy atmosphere. The flexibility demonstrated by the adults in their own deployment and in their support for children's concentration indicates a solid understanding of the Montessori ethos. It is recommended that the staff team continue to reflect on the role of the Montessori practitioner. At the start of the academic year, there is a need to be aware of the importance of modelling the routines for the children.

The setting's philosophy and aims fully reflect the Montessori approach. These are explained in the prospectus, in the nursery information folder for staff, visitors and parents, and on the website. They are reviewed annually by the owner and discussed with the team.

Learning and Development:

Tiggywinkles Montessori offers a stimulating environment that, when coupled with the practitioners' experience and commitment, provides excellent opportunities for each child's learning and development. All Montessori curriculum areas are accessible to the children. Group



planning – for example for cooking activities or stories – is carried out by all staff and is noted and evaluated in a daily diary. Planning for individual children is done on the web-based recording system, with each key person observing and noting next steps for their children. These plans reflect both the EYFS and Montessori curriculum areas, and are linked on the system. Staff members also use this system to generate progress reports and summative assessments. The children's development is also evidenced in their 'Yellow Books', which show additional photographs of their time at the nursery. It can be seen that children are making good progress and, following the recommendation from the first re-accreditation visit, staff have begun to carry out baseline assessments soon after children start at the setting. These should enable the practitioners to track the children's progress more effectively from their starting points.

The children spontaneously choose their activities individually or in small groups, and move freely between the indoor and outdoor spaces during both the morning and afternoon. For example, during the first re-accreditation visit, many children chose to go outside and the adults followed this lead, allowing them to engage in their self-initiated activities. Some were invited to plant their sunflower seeds, while others explored 'painting' wood with water, or making patterns in the sand tray. Adults present materials, support children individually and also lead small groups to provide opportunities to meet children's additional needs or to build particular skills. Children make exceptional improvements through these targeted and timely interventions, and staff members liaise effectively with parents and outside professionals.

The owner/manager is responsible for planning maths and literacy activities for the older children, and supports the team in presenting these activities to them. She also leads the Forest School sessions, which the older children attend one afternoon a week in their pre-school year. During the second visit it was noticeable how the children's personal and physical skills are supported during these outings; for example, they explore the woods with great self-confidence, learn to use a rope swing, follow instructions and learn to be safe by the road. This impact is now being formally recorded and tracked so as to show the benefits of accessing the wider outdoor natural environment.

The morning work cycle of three to three and a half hours allows children to fully explore the resources and select those that meet their needs. Similarly, in the afternoon work cycle of three hours children continue to engage individually or in friendship groups. Almost all of them participated in a large group activity at the end of the afternoon session during the first visit. This involved identifying and pairing rhyming words, with the children demonstrating good levels of auditory discrimination.

Prepared Environment: resources and materials

The environment both indoors and out offers a wide range of high quality resources for all areas of learning within the Montessori curriculum and the EYFS. The smaller room for the nursery's exclusive use houses an art area with a large table and a variety of materials set out on accessible shelves, including those for cutting, painting and playdough. This space also has resources for developing an awareness of the world, such as a world map and drawers with objects relating to the continents. There is a role play area which has props, including a shopping till, home corner with a kitchen and baby doll, and fabrics for open-ended play. During the first re-accreditation visit a child chose to 'cook', finding an egg and pan, and after



pretending to boil it, sat at a table to eat 'breakfast'.

The adjoining larger room has a plentiful range of Montessori apparatus on low accessible shelving, together with a comfortable book area and quiet corner for a maximum of two children. A child can also sleep here if necessary, or mattresses can be placed on the floor for this purpose. There is also a well equipped large construction/small world area with a variety of types of bricks and people, train track and wooden objects to encourage children's imagination through open-ended play. Children can choose to work with mats on the floor, or on one of the many tables, and there is also space for improvised music-making and dance, with a basket of musical instruments. Snack provision is set out in one area of this room during the morning session, and lunch is eaten in both rooms.

The outdoor spaces are used fully throughout the day and offer a wide range of resources for physical and other activities. The well considered decked area has several large trays, for sand and water play, an area for two tricycles, a rocker, and wood for 'painting' and balancing on. There are also opportunities for construction, and ball throwing into a net. Children use technology as they pump water into a large tray and use pipes and hoses to transfer this to a smaller one. In the garden area they sow sunflower seeds in pots, use soil and natural objects in the mud kitchen, and make dens with pieces of fabric and pegs. There are also books near a seating area, providing a quieter space for a story.

The resources are appealing, and meet the needs of the different stages of development of the children attending. For example, during the first visit a young child wanted to do some cutting and chose scissors and paper. When the scissors proved to be too hard for the child to manage, a member of staff offered an alternative pair which had a spring action, which enabled the child to be successful in the activity.

Checks of the environment are carried out each day, monitored by the owner/manager. Staff members ensure the resources are well maintained and complete, and the weekly setting up of materials in the larger room supports their regular review of this outstanding learning environment.

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

Independence is fostered from the time children arrive in the morning, when they hang their coats on their pegs, place their lunch boxes on a trolley, and self-register by finding their name and placing it under their photo. The long work cycles enable children to develop independence as they move around the setting and choose their activities. Visual reminders and signs help to support this, for example, reminding children to wipe their feet ten times on the mat when returning indoors, or stating that a maximum of two children can enter the quiet corner at any one time.

Snack is available from 10.00 to 11.00, with drinking water available all day. Children wash their hands and find their name before selecting their snack. Staff members encourage children's independence by supporting them to cut up their own fruit, to serve themselves bread with tongs, and to spread soft cheese on it. The children also pour their own water or milk, and wash up when they have finished. The lunch time routines involve the children by each collecting a



tray, opening their lunch boxes and by managing the containers as independently as possible.

Opportunities for small group work arise spontaneously, for example when several children decide to build together with magnetic blocks. Children with speech delay are supported in their independence through the use of a communication board, and those with additional needs receive one to one support to help them access the environment fully. The ground rules of respect for self, others and the environment are modelled by the adults, but it is recommended that greater attention be paid to reinforcing these, especially at the start of the year. The children are also encouraged to assess risks themselves, for example, during the first re-accreditation visit, whilst balancing on a plank outside, two children explained how they had tested it first and seen that it did not fall.

Children's independence is supported at home through a variety of means; for example, the software used to report children's progress has 'home learning suggestions' that parents can access, and the parent information pack gives suggestions of how to follow the Montessori approach at home. There is also a meeting held in the summer term to inform parents of the older children about the Forest School sessions their children will attend the following year. Parents are told how the children's independence is encouraged, for example when changing their shoes and putting on outdoor clothes, so that this can be followed at home. Tiggywinkles Montessori Nursery supports the children's growing independence very effectively.

Montessori practice: Classroom management

The learning environment at Tiggywinkles is well managed by the staff team. They are all aware of their roles and responsibilities, and move around the setting to follow the children as they pursue their interests. Staff members cover for one another as needed and they support the children in an extremely calm, responsive manner. They also model phrases to help the children's developing language and communication; however, it is recommended that the use of positive language and descriptive praise be further developed as a tool for behaviour management.

The children enjoy a very good balance of self-initiated and adult-led activities. Small groups are planned on a weekly basis when required to help children with specific needs such as speech and language targets, and the practitioners are flexible in allowing other children to attend these groups on request. The Forest School trips allow for the older children's freedom of choice once in the woods; during the second re-accreditation visit some children collected logs for a 'fire', others made a small den of twigs, while another group made 'apple pie' out of soil, using pots and pans and various utensils. Some of the younger children who are still settling in have a shorter morning and others who are increasing to a full day stay for lunch initially. The nursery has a flexible and nurturing approach to providing for each child's needs.

Montessori Practice: links with parents, including reports and records

The staff team at Tiggywinkles Montessori work exceptionally well together in collaboration with parents to support the well-being of every child. All members of staff are key persons, and are aware of their responsibilities to help children settle in and to maintain records on their key



children's learning. The web-based recording system has been very well received by parents. They say that they are very pleased with the facility to receive a weekly update online, and they access their children's records regularly.

Parents are provided with a wide range of information when their child starts at the nursery, receiving a very comprehensive induction pack. They also have access to documents in a Parent Information folder, and to Montessori books and magazines in the entrance hall which are available to borrow. Parents comment that they can speak to their child's key person on a daily basis, and that they value the possibility of having a meeting once every half-term. Home visits are also offered to new parents, and these have helped the settling-in process for some children.

When children leave the nursery a transfer report is generated using the digital system. This details their progress towards the early learning goals, with observational notes added. Children also take home their 'Yellow Books'.

Parents speak very highly of the Montessori provision at Tiggywinkles, especially the fact that it is child-led and that children learn at their own pace. They also appreciate the experience and care offered by the staff team and that, for example during the settling-in period, their children's individual needs are well catered for.

Staffing:

The staffing structure at Tiggywinkles Montessori is clearly defined and all members of the team are aware of their roles and responsibilities; most have worked at the setting for many years. They have detailed job descriptions, a full induction, and minuted staff meetings are held each half term to discuss practice and plan as a team. Since the first re-accreditation visit, planned and documented staff observations have been carried out, which have been well received by the team. The owner/manager is very supportive of her staff in offering opportunities for continuous professional development (CPD), and the feedback from staff observations may help to provide detailed pointers for this. The twice yearly supervision meetings and annual appraisals are also carried out by the owner/manager and are used as an effective tool in monitoring individual staff performance and indicating areas for development.

The owner/manager is highly qualified and Montessori trained. The six other members of the staff team all have other relevant early years qualifications and most are very experienced practitioners. They attend regional seminars on Montessori theory and practice, besides other training from the local authority, and also receive in-house Montessori CPD from the owner/manager on a regular basis.

The excellent team work evident in the setting, together with the commitment to the Montessori ethos, reflect the enthusiastic leadership of the owner and her vision to deliver high quality learning experiences for the children in her care.

Name of Assessor: Mary Lazo

Date report submitted: First visit – 23 May 2016
Second visit – 10 October 2016