

## **Montessori Accreditation Report**

The Montessori Accreditation Report was reviewed by the MAA Accreditation Board. The Board has verified our Montessori Assessor's recommendation to accredit the setting, as highlighted below:



MAA Montessori Accreditation has been awarded to:



***The Little Learners Montessori Nursery, Wembley***

*United Reformed Church, East Lane, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 7NN*

Validity period: 3 years

From: April 2024 – April 2027



**Name of Montessori Assessor:** Neena Dhawan

**Date of initial assessment:** 11th March 2024 via Zoom call

**Date of visit:** 25th April 2024

**Note on Confidentiality:**

*This final document is private and confidential, and may not be made public until ratified by the MAA Board. The Final Report will be submitted to the MAA Board for approval. Upon the Board's validation, an official email notification will be sent from the MAA office.*

*This notification not only confirms the accreditation but also contains the final version of the Report, the MAA accreditation logo, and a press release. At this point, the report can be shared with parents and the broader community, and the MAA logo can be featured on the setting's website and in documentation. Settings will also be awarded a certificate.*

*It's important to note that the report does not address the standards and quality concerns evaluated by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). It is solely an inspection to judge whether the nursery is adhering to the Montessori Educational Standards set by the MAA.*

*This Montessori Accreditation Report was prepared following an initial online video call, interview and in-person accreditation visit, conducted by an experienced Montessori assessor within the Montessori Apprentice Academy (MAA) team.*

**Activities carried out by MAA Montessori Assessor**

*The manager led the Montessori Assessor on a learning walk and discussed their Montessori ethos, curriculum planning and educational knowledge on Montessori.*

*The manager carried out a joint observation with the Assessor on the settings Montessori practice. The Montessori assessor carried out direct observations of the Montessori classroom, the interaction of Montessori Teachers with children and the Montessori practices with the Montessori Apparatus.*



## ***The Little Learners Montessori Nursery, Wembley***

*United Reformed Church, East Lane, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 7NN*

### **Description**

The Little Learners Montessori Nursery, Wembley is located in the large suburban area of Wembley, which is in the London Borough of Brent. The nursery was established in 2009 and is part of a group of four privately owned Montessori nurseries. The nursery is based in a church hall, with a large main room and a smaller room, which is used as an art room and role play area. There are two toilet areas for the children to use including a changing area, a cloakroom area, a kitchen and an Office/Staff room on the first floor. As the entrance area is spacious, two small sofas are available for Parents/Carers to use when their child is settling in. In addition there is a good sized garden with an artificial grassed area, which is bordered by paving where various activities are set up on a daily basis. The nursery is a pack away nursery, thus shelving and other furniture is packed away on a daily basis.

The nursery hours are from 9:00 – 3:00pm, with some children attending a half day till 11:50am. The afternoon session commences at 12:10pm and mirrors the morning session. The majority of the children attend a full day, having a fruit snack and a drink midmorning and a packed lunch from home at midday. Afternoon children join the morning children for lunch, and if required staff are able to heat the children's packed lunch in the on site kitchen. The nursery is term time and open for 38 weeks in the year, and is in receipt of funding for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

The setting offers places for children from the age of 2-5years and has 59 children currently on roll. A maximum of 50 children can attend each session and on the day of the visit, there were 40 children in the morning and 28 in the afternoon. There were eight members of staff in attendance plus the Manager, including two trained Montessori Teachers and one Teacher currently undertaking a Montessori training course due to complete next year. The team are experienced and the majority have been working together for over five years and share a passion for the Montessori ethos.

All staff complete safeguarding training and are first aid trained. The nursery has two SENCO (Special educational needs Coordinator) teachers on site, who are currently supporting one child with special educational needs. The staff are supported well by management in terms of continued professional development and each term an Inset training day is held, where staff will cover key Montessori presentations.

## **Summary**

The Little Learners Montessori Nursery, Wembley is a place where excellent Montessori practice is evident. The children are happy and secure in their setting and are motivated to self select from the range of Montessori resources and other Early Years activities. They show independence as they organise their activities and kindness as they help each other. As observed when an older one placed her arm around a younger child and helped him with his task, by opening a container for him enabling him to continue with his work. The children are excited to enter the class and show good focus as they choose their activities; some choose to work on their own or with their peers in small group tasks such as investigating mini beasts using magnifying glasses. The Montessori work cycle is 2.5 hours long, after this the children move to small group work and some help set up for lunch, which is served at midday.

The children are friendly and confident, as seen when they gifted pictures to the Assessor and enquired if she also had a packed lunch when they were eating. Parent and nursery communication is strong, and parents value the settling in process, which enables them to spend time with their child in the art/role play room; helping them to get to know the staff and the children. On the day of the visit, a Grandmother was helping her grandchild to settle, a staff member gave gentle support as she played with the child and asked him about his favourite foods as they pretended to cook together. The Grandmother shared that her daughter (the grandchild's Mother) had also attended the setting and that it was very special to be returning with her grandchild after so many years.

## **Recommendations**

-To continue with in house Montessori presentations for all staff and to facilitate formal Montessori training for staff or to engage more Montessori Teachers. Thus ensuring valuable Montessori experiences for the children are optimised.

### ***1. Montessori Philosophy***

The Montessori philosophy is noticeable in all aspects of the classroom, with the needs of the individual child a priority. The classroom is set up to promote independence, respect and self-motivated learning as seen when the children enter the classroom and decide which activities to work with. The opportunities to experience free choice and social interaction within a mixed age are supported by staff who enable the children to self-select tasks and make choices whether to work independently or with a friend. The Teachers observe well and when a child is ready, the Montessori Teachers present new activities to the children to ensure that their whole needs are met.

## ***2. Montessori Curriculum***

The Montessori Curriculum is outstanding and is presented to the children via a range of Montessori resources covering the age groups within the setting and this is extended to the garden area where children can access a practical life and sensory area. The children are aware of the routine of the day and are able to self select tasks that are available at low level accessible shelving. The resources include an extensive range of Teacher made Cultural resources such as the Continent boxes, a nature table and animal pictures. The large room is organised well with all materials displayed in order and with items such as a cleaning station and floor mats easily available. The art room follows the Montessori principles, where the children can pick up a tray and choose from a wide range of art materials to work with. They are also encouraged to tidy up after completing their artwork, which encourages a sense of responsibility and care.

The children concentrate well and are able to explore the materials, as seen when one child who has an interest in construction and design, placed the prisms of the broad stair into a rectangle shape and then carefully placed the cubes from the Pink Tower within the rectangle. A Teacher observed and made a note of the child's interest.

The classrooms support all children from the age of 2 -5 years and there is a calm and blissful atmosphere of purposeful activity and enjoyment.

## ***3. Montessori Prepared Environment***

Both classrooms are bright, well organised, inviting and orderly in layout, staff were seen checking the materials throughout the sessions ensuring that all materials were complete and in order. The main classroom houses the Montessori resources, which are extensive as there is a wide range of Teacher made resources to complement the core materials. Some resources are stored and rotated, for example the practical life area is seasonal based, this term the children can transfer flowers using tongs, in the Autumn term they have access to conkers or pinecones. The children are familiar with their routine and help to care for the plants and look after their two fish. In addition the children's artwork has been displayed in the classroom at a low level and in the book corner there are small chairs that make the area look homely.

The smaller art room is limited to 6-8 children and offers the children opportunities to explore a wide range of mediums such as painting, collage work or using play dough. Here the children were using pink play dough, and a child commented that his favourite colour was blue and asked if next time the play dough could be blue. The Teacher responded positively and they spoke of the different shades of blue that could be made.

The art room also contains a role play home corner area, which offers the children chances to dress up, cook and care for a selection of dolls. All children can access the room by checking the numbers on the door to see if there is space. The same system applies to the garden area, thus encouraging children to make safe choices.

The team prepare the garden area each morning in imaginative ways; they ensure that all key areas of learning are available to the children, from access to a mud kitchen with a wide variety of tools to a construction area. Here some children placed the large wooden blocks in a line and confidently used them as 'stepping stones' whilst others looked for mini beasts under a large wooden log.

The entrance area to the setting is spacious where the children can get ready, place their lunch boxes on a trolley and self register by selecting their name card before they enter the class.

#### ***4. Montessori Practice***

Montessori practice is strong and reflects an established routine, as staff are able to stand back and observe the children at work. On the day of the visit, a busy hum of activity was observed as the children entered the class and chose their tasks with independence and confidence. They worked with the materials precisely and this reflects the high quality of the presentations from the Montessori Teachers. For example as a child carried the red rods to her workspace, she held them carefully as she placed them on a floor mat and then made a stair by comparing and feeling the length of the different rods. A number of Montessori presentations were observed, where the Teachers used positive language and encouraged the children to problem solve, for example as child worked with the Pink Tower the Teacher encouraged her to compare the sizes of the cubes.

The children were seen to explore the resources well, for example as one child worked with the colour box two, she decided to extend the task and find matching items from around the class. Similarly as two children worked together, the Teacher prompted turn taking by suggesting "one for you' and "one for your friend". During a presentation of word building with the large movable alphabet, a child confidently made phonetic words and as she made the word 'pig' she shared with her Teacher that she had seen a pig on a farm. The Teacher paused and responded positively as the child continued with her task.

Throughout the sessions 'grace and courtesy' was evident as the children greeted each other, shared experiences and were thoughtful towards each other, as one child said "it's ok I can go to the garden later as I'm staying for lunch today". Staff also give good support to those children with English as an additional language as seen when a child was helped to name some farm animal models and place matching cards with the models. Parents provide the team with useful words in their home language to

help their child to settle, and bilingual books are available in the book corner. The children talk about their home experiences at mealtimes as they chat to their peers and happily share that 'today I have sushi' and 'I have pasta' as another tucks into his roti.

This term the children are focusing on 'mini beasts' and show much excitement as they explore models of 'mini beasts', as they explore by placing the bugs on leaves and twigs, the Teacher introduces the names of the mini beasts and they discuss what the creatures might eat. In the garden the theme is followed through as the children jump onto chalk pictures of ladybirds and then find the matching number cards as they count the spots on the ladybirds.

The children take care of their classroom as they water plants and clean the leaves and compost the fruit peelings at snack time. The children have free access to the snack area, and organise themselves well as they use apple cutters and knives to prepare their fruit. They tidy up after snack and show independence as they wash up afterwards. A Teacher supports the area and the children show patience and politeness as they wait their turn.

The children are able to make choices throughout the sessions, and can decide where they wish to work in the classroom, for example two children were seen standing at the nature table and studying the life cycle of a frog as they placed models of frog spawn, a tadpole, a froglet and a frog in the correct order. Others worked on their own, one with the short bead stair and one with their workbook where they practice writing the letters in their name. During the sessions the Teachers are constantly observing and making discreet notes so that they have a record of the individual's progress and can plan ahead for each child. This ensures that all of the children's unique needs are well supported.

All of the children are very independent and the older ones access the toilet areas by themselves, they are aware of good hygiene practice as one child informs, "I've washed my hands with soap!" One member of staff is always on 'float' duty and carries a 'walkie talkie' so that all children and staff have appropriate support.

In the garden, the children have access to a range of tasks to support their motor skills and sense of adventure, one child was seen to jump over a series of traffic cones, as he succeeded his friend commented 'good job'. Large items are rotated such as bikes and trikes and on the day the children were well wrapped up as they prepared a picnic for their friends and enjoyed serving pretend ice creams at the ice cream parlour.

At the end of the morning session, the children tidy up and move to small group tasks such as playing 'I spy', singing songs or looking at a daily calendar where the children discuss what they did at the weekend. Some volunteer to help set up for lunch, they organise the tables and chairs, place plates and cutlery on the table and

complete the set up by placing flowers in the centre of the table, which makes the tables look inviting. It is suggested that a jug of water and some cups are also placed on each table to ensure that all have access to water at lunchtime.

### ***5. Montessori Parent Partnership***

Parent Partnership is a strong feature of the setting; the Parents speak highly of the setting and value the 'open door' policy. They appreciate the weekly feedback via the 'Family' app, the written reports and the opportunity to meet their child's key person at face-to-face meetings. Parents feel involved, as they are able to be onsite during the settling in process and receive regular information about the themes and events via a termly newsletter. Recently families were involved with a charity fund raising event when the children attended nursery in their pyjamas. Parents are also invited in to read to the children and have been involved with the Brent initiative "I can" an early 'talk boost' programme to support children's speech and language. After the nine week programme, the children received a booklet prepared by the SENCO to share with their families, which covered the new language introduced, songs, stories and photographs.

Parents also comment that they have noticed that since being at Little Learners their child is more independent and confident. Staff aims to maintain this supportive relationship with all families and if required staff will translate information for Parents as the staff speak a range of languages other than English.

### ***6. Montessori Management***

Outstanding Montessori management is embedded in this setting as leadership with the support of a Senior Management team (based off site), seek to prioritise a quality Montessori experience for all children. The team share ideas and evaluate their experiences with the children ensuring that high quality education is accessible to all. They maintain effective systems for recording each child's progress and operate a key person system. The Manager ensures that staff are well supported with regular staff meetings, supervision and access to online continuous professional development. New staff are linked to an experienced 'buddy' and can shadow the Montessori Teachers as they present new materials to the children. Thus ensuring that all staff are aware of the Montessori ethos and work together to nurture all children in their care.

The management team support further Montessori training for staff and plan to recruit Montessori trained staff as required strengthening the current team of Montessori teachers.

Overall, the Management and team of staff have prepared a welcoming, happy and harmonious environment for all children and their families.