

Collaborative Montessori Accreditation (CMA) Report

Name of Assessor: Hannah Khiani

Date/s of Assessment Visit: 19th June 2023

Name of Setting: The Village Montessori

Address of Setting: Kingswood Halls, Kingswood Place, London, SE13 5BU

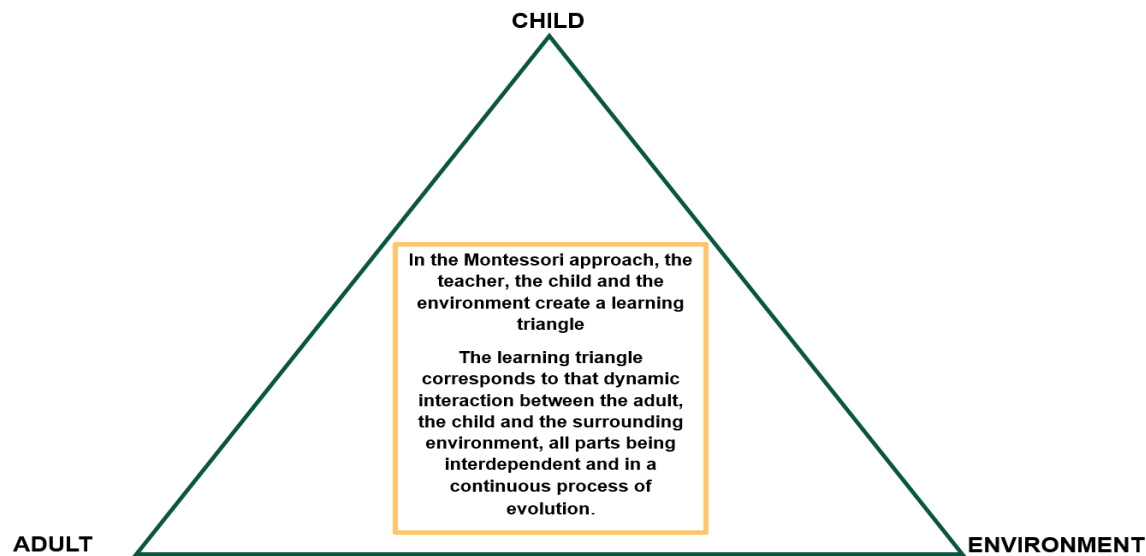
Setting type: Sessional/Term time

Facility type: Within a hall, adapted for use

Ownership of the Setting: Privately Owned

Date Setting opened: Opened in 1985 and has been run by the current owner since 2000

Date and grade of last Ofsted / relevant national inspection: 2020 / Outstanding



The accreditation criteria draw on the principles of the dynamic learning triangle, which is at the core of the Montessori philosophy and approach.

The adult, the child and the environment create the learning triangle, with dynamic interaction and interdependence between all three parts. These dynamics in effective practice enable continued improvement of quality. This triangle underpins all documentation for reflection and assessment in the CM Quality Assurance Programme.

This report is based on the information submitted by the setting (including its self-evaluation) and on the evidence gathered during the Assessor's visit.

The Child

Attendance on the day of the accreditation visit:

Age	How many children were present		
	Morning session	Afternoon session	All day
0 – 2			
2 – 3			
3 – 5	20	18	(6)
Over 5	0	0	0

Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:

The children at The Village Montessori (VM) are joyful, confident, comfortable and assured in their environment. They arrive with smiles and news from home: “I did see my cousins who have real bees that can make honey and chickens that lay eggs” and questions for their teachers: “Do snails have blood?”. They are confident about the morning routine as they enter the classroom, choose activities, and help themselves to snacks and water. The children are active as they move around the classroom,

choosing where and how to work or sitting quietly in the book corner. They are knowledgeable about risks such as carrying and using scissors and chopping fruit and vegetables using a wide variety of utensils and are trusted to make choices.

Independence

The children independently choose activities from the shelves and where they want to work - inside or outside. The children tidy up after themselves and are trusted to use the materials responsibly, with respect and care; children respond well to this trust and are confident in asking for help when they need it. The children move freely around the garden and the classroom, they carry tools safely, change clothes and shoes independently, wash hands before snack, being generally independent in their self-care while also remind others of the rules. All are encouraged to take turns, to let others speak and express their opinions as they are attentively listened to and their views are considered. Children are free to join group activities such as phonic sound bingo, looking at the bee life cycle and creating a honeycomb, obstacle course building, musical statues, holidays and passport making and playing 'who is missing' but are also free to decline invitations to participate. Children independently create and test out their ideas ("I made a saddle for my pig!").

Socialisation

The vertical grouping within the school supports the sense of community that is highlighted as a positive by parents, as well as providing many opportunities for socialising. Children work together to harvest and care for plants, look after the classroom and the guinea pig called Kate; they help each other to make obstacle courses and carry heavy planks ("We can do it all together"). The children know each other well: they give each other hugs, hold hands, invite each other to play as the environment provides a wonderful opportunity for the children to learn together. The children also know their teachers well; they play and talk to them all day long ("I did go real camping") and delight in sharing news at circle time ("I got a new bike with pedals"). The teachers also role-model grace and courtesy as they greet the children in the morning and interact with them throughout the day. During lunch, children held interesting conversations with each other and greeted visitors with interest: "I am X, who are you? I am three – are you three?". In the garden, the different spaces afford the opportunity for involved and animated role play such as tea-

parties, picnics, police; small groups of children define roles as they devise games: “I am not a big sister, I am a small sister” and “Maybe I am the Mummy”.

Exploration

Children are supported in exploring using their whole bodies: dancing in the garden and jumping from a height, alongside creating different structures using cones, blocks, planks and tyres. Children mixed paint on the easel and explored the garden finding out about the different buds and flowers and which insects like to feed on them. Inside, children used glass beads with the number rods to explore quantities and built extensive cities using blocks and train-tracks: “Mine is a long train, I got 11 on my train – you got 12 – mine is so long”.

Movement

The children are encouraged to refine their fine motor skills as they use scissors, pens, pencils and paintbrushes. Children are shown how to hone their pincer grip as they use a variety of resources. Children move around the classroom with confidence and are given the opportunity to test their own abilities. Outside, wobbly planks, tyres and trees were all used by the children to test their balance and co-ordination. Shovels, rakes, brooms, hoes and balance bikes alongside the outdoor obstacle courses demonstrate the importance the team at VM place on movement; children lift heavy tyres and reels and also draw, mark make and use chalk. A picnic blanket under a shady tree and the well-stocked book corner provide a space to rest too.

Communication

The teachers are very respectful and calm as they speak to the children and each other; conversations are used to encourage children to connect with each other and to share ideas and feelings. For instance, children were heard asking: “Please can you help me” and were extremely polite to one another. Children were observed leaning in for hugs when they needed comfort and also using gestures and pointing to communicate their needs. Conversation is also used throughout the day to extend the children’s knowledge and understanding on a wide range of topics. A comprehensive choice of books help introduces

interesting and varied new words. Teachers act as positive role-models and support language development through re-casting and by giving children plenty of time to respond after listening; children who may need help with communication are fully supported within the school and also through links with outside agencies.

Parents commented on the strong communication between home and school and were very appreciative of the way that they feel they are "...part of an enriching and thriving community". Parents also appreciated the 'open door' policy and how the staff team were available for ad hoc chats at drop off/pick up times as well as via the Montessori app and emails. Parents highlighted family events such as the nativity, summer fair/party, evening cheese/wine and information evenings; they valued the way they are invited to stay and read to the children and also to contribute to current topics being discussed, such as sharing items from their culture.

The Environment

Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:

VM is based in a light and airy hall, with natural light and arched windows. Art and role-play resources are stocked in a smaller back room. The resources are organised by curriculum area and offer a comprehensive range of activities to entice the children to explore and discover. Parents describe the school as "peaceful, inviting and joyous" and explained that it is a "a calm environment where children feel safe, secure, confident and utterly engaged in their work". The environment is prepared with care: plants and flowers, both inside and outside, provide the children with a beautiful space which provide children with the opportunity to look after and take responsibility for their own environment. Recycling paper, arranging flowers and washing and drying tables are all part of this care.

Order

The classroom is divided by curriculum area and each activity is self-contained on the shelves. Resources are organised in a thoughtful sequence which reflects the age and stage of the children in the setting. Colour coding is used on the shelves in

KUW and the materials are well-spaced and complete. Recently, parents have organised a parent/teacher collaborative project to undertake a renovation of the nursery: as well as cleaning and painting, the refurbishment included an audit of the resources which ensured that order inside the cupboards is present too. Ground rules were observed throughout the day, with the children returning activities to the shelves and using mats when working on the floor. The routines of the day are well established, and children remind each other of their importance: "We can sit down on this line and then everyone can see – I don't have a line at my house - just here".

The activities

All of the activities are well presented, complete, appealing and enticing. The Montessori activities are supplemented by additional ones made by the teachers, alongside artefacts from different countries, natural resources (such as leaves and seed-pods), art materials and also toy vehicles.

The physical environment

Indoors

The indoor environment is beautifully prepared, it has with natural light from large windows and plants and flowers which makes it look welcoming. The book corner is well furnished with a comfy chair, a small sofa and a rug on the floor. In the back room, resources are organised in drawers, shelves and cupboards; a space with a computer has a noticeboard for the teachers to display key information and their planning. Parents describe the environment as "Warm and serene" but also "Exciting and stimulating" acknowledging that both descriptions work together as one at VM.

Outdoors

Before going outside, the children carried out the 'garden check', using a clipboard and different photos to ensure the space was safe for use: for instance, any rubbish was carted away by the children so that the garden was 'safe' for everyone. The outdoor area is tranquil and well-planned with different zones offering places for practising gross motor skills alongside quieter

spaces for reading and role-play. There is a wide variety of activities available for the children: they were observed transporting heavy objects to create different obstacle courses and also using scarves to see and feel the wind. The traditional hedge proved to be a wonderful place for bug hunts and the children were able to harvest the strawberries that had ripened over the weekend. The Artificial grass area proved to be a perfect space, on the day of the visit, for running and jumping, dancing to music and using the balance bikes. Children were fully engaged in both independent and teacher-led activities: in the playhouse, the children made passports and discussed holidays in different countries. A large easel with paints was set up outside as was water play. Kate the guinea pig was also brought outside so that her cage could be cleaned out by the children. There were garden tools for the children to use alongside a mud kitchen and a picnic rug with books for children seeking a quieter moment.

First-hand experiences and active learning

At VM the children are active learners. The wide variety of activities invite the children to explore: nature finds are on the shelves and the bee life-cycle materials are enhanced by real bees that the children could view through magnifying glasses. Children grow and harvest fruit and vegetables and care for the guinea pig. Outside, insect identification cards were available for the children to use. Children were also observed playing with a water wall, exploring volume and flow.

The Adult

Adults present during the accreditation visit.

Initials, roles and responsibilities	Qualifications	Length of time at the setting	Part time	Full time
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MS	Montessori Dip L5	25 years		x
NY	Montessori Dip + BA L6	10 months		x
CM	Montessori Dip L4	20 months		x
TT	Montessori Dip L4	3 years		x

Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:

All the teachers at VM are respectful and polite to each other, to the children and to their parents including those who present in the classroom, settling-in and reading to the children. All the teachers are warm in their interactions and all hold full Montessori qualifications. The shared ethos and respectful approach provide a unique and positive atmosphere. The team works well together and this is reflected in comments from the parents who noted that VM is “such an amazing setting, all the staff are so, so passionate about Montessori education.”

The Leadership Team

VM is led by the owner (also the manager) who has supported many students in becoming qualified Montessori teachers; she knows all the children and their families well. Parents note that: “The team ... is the best I have come across, so a big thank you to them for all they do.” As an experienced practitioner, the manager leads her team with skill and confidence. Parents also shared that they value the clear communication and the level of care that is both ‘impressive and reassuring’.

The Teaching Team

All the teachers are very caring and attentive and are open to learning from each other. They are also observant and know when to step back or wait and when to intervene in supporting a child’s emotional or physical needs. The teachers are respectful and sensitive and children were observed asking for hugs and leaning into teachers for support and reassurance when needed. Communication with parents/carers is regular and effective and parents feel part of the VM community. Planning for the children

is based on the current interests of each child. Parents appreciate the guidance given by teachers on a range of issues and said: “Our entire household, including grand parents, have learnt so much in the last two years that it feels like a different home altogether.”

The Key Person

Although each child has a designated key person, all of the teachers know the children well and work collaboratively to meet their needs; information about the children is shared between the team members on a regular basis. The parents have the chance to meet with the key person and noted the strong communication amongst the teachers who are skilled in observing, recording and supporting each child’s holistic development. The team is also effective in liaising with outside agencies to ensure that any additional needs of the children are met.

Commendations

- The effective and thoughtful way that communication is used at VM is worthy of praise. The teachers role-model consistent, calm and polite language which is reflected in the children’s verbal interactions. Effective communication is also used to build a sense of community with parents/carers and with outside agencies
- The commitment to the Montessori method, the training of all the teachers and the resulting shared ethos is highly commendable
- The variety of activities available to the children both inside and out demonstrates the passion the teachers have for following the interests of each individual child

- The thought and care given to the planning and use of the outdoor environment is praiseworthy as it enables the children to enjoy first-hand experiences and become active explorers

Recommendations

- The outdoor space could be further enhanced with shelves and resources that provide the opportunity for hypothesising and scientific discovery
- Review additional ways to extend children's knowledge through projects that support children's understanding of sustainability and the principles of cosmic education
- Continue regular audits of the shelves to observe which activities are used and which can be rated with other stored resources

Conditions

The Accreditation Assessor has concluded that the setting meets CM main requirements for Accreditation and therefore no conditions are set.

Name of Assessor: Hannah Khiani

Date of Report: 26th June 2023

The CM Accreditation Report has been reviewed by the CM Accreditation Board. The Board has verified the Assessor's recommendation to accredit the Setting.

Award

Accreditation is therefore granted to:

The Village Montessori

Validity period:

From: July 2023 to: July 2026

Receiving accreditation carries the expectation that the setting will continue to implement the Commendations, develop on the Recommendations and fulfil the Conditions (if applicable) highlighted in this Accreditation Report to continue to strive for best Montessori practice.

The report does not directly address the standards of practice that are the responsibility of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

The report does not provide any assessment of financial aspects of the setting.