



Phase One: Standards & Training Accreditation Review - Accreditation Assessor Report

Name (legally registered name of setting):	Fountain Montessori Pre-school, Edgware
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Section 1: Overview

The purpose of this assessment for **Fountain Montessori Pre-school, Edgware** is for a Standards & Training Accreditation Review (STAR) Phase One Accreditation. The Team of Accreditation Assessors involved in this assessment include **Caroline Allen** and **Jo McIntyre**

This report is based on a review of information submitted by the setting (including self-analysis evidence) with additional evidence gathered in an on-site visit.

The scope of provision for the purposes of this report relates to formal educational provision within: **Fountain Montessori Pre-school, Edgware**. The setting is located in St Margaret's Parish Church, offering provision for 90 children per day between the ages of 6 to 60 months. The indoor space is generous with free flow access to a substantial outdoor area.

Within this context, **Fountain Montessori Pre-school, Edgware** provide a central service in the community; STAR aims to amplify this important role and provide professional insight and relevant scrutiny as evidence to external audiences and families of the essential duties carried out by this setting for its young people. The purpose of the STAR framework is to enable comparison and continuity regarding practice, principles and application of learner-centred philosophy for all applicant settings, providers and schools globally.

Fountain Montessori Pre-school, Edgware can be assured that their application has been considered via a rigorous and robust assessment process, concluded in **March 2023** and we are pleased to confirm **SUCCESSFUL** Phase One Accreditation within Montessori groups Standards & Training Accreditation Review (STAR) framework. **Congratulations!**



Section 2: Summary of Findings

As illustrated by the Montessori Group's Commitment to Quality Enhancement, STAR is a vital part of our approach to ensure the availability of high-quality educational provision through the UK and overseas. It is in support of this vision that our panel look to highlight good practice; provide narrative and commentary to share the uniqueness of each provider and highlight areas of particular notes for challenge, development or celebration now and in the future development of the provider.

Standards

- Children are nurtured by well-informed and responsive staff members who support active play and exploration, helping children develop creative thinking skills, autonomy and confidence.***

Principles	Evidenced
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>1.1 Children's spontaneous learning is of paramount importance. Such learning is nurtured by sensitive and well-informed observers who prepare rich, dynamic indoor and outdoor learning environments that actively support children's play and exploration to enhance independence.</p>	<p>The learning environments (indoors & out) are well appointed, maximising all available space. Children have a rich range of resources to access independently. The setting is currently considering whether to amalgamate the two pre-school classrooms to create richer areas of learning in the main hall area. This would further enhance children's opportunities for play and exploration.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>1.2 Holistic support and provision for children considers the needs of the whole child and promotes physical, cognitive, social, emotional, psychological and spiritual development.</p>	<p>Montessori practices implemented across the nursery support the children's holistic development. Their behaviour and sense of belonging evidence this. Additional touches, such as the aromas drifting into all areas from the on-site kitchen, provide meaningful, sensory reminders for children anticipating mealtimes.</p>
<p>1.3 Children are supported to prepare for real-life, encouraged to develop tools in resilience, self-esteem, independence and self-discipline.</p>	<p>The pre-school children have free-flow to the outdoor learning environment from the main hall area with independent access to their outdoor clothing. Children's independence is facilitated with child level sinks, stations for water and personal hygiene and small steps. Introducing china and glassware at mealtimes would further enhance children's independence.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL:</p> <p>1.4 Every child is a unique person who is continually learning at their own pace and in their own way; leading to creative thinking.</p>	<p>The key person is responsible for monitoring their children's progress and identifying next steps. These are shared within the team, ensuring that planning is targeted for each child to progress in their own way in suitably resourced environments.</p>



<p>1.5 Children learn through positive social interactions that are warm, loving and foster a sense of belonging. Staff nurture each individual child in a harmonious and peaceful environment and are responsive to children’s needs, ideas and feelings.</p>	<p>Staff are warm and attentive towards the children, evident in their communications (voice and tone). They are responsive to children’s needs, providing appropriate physical reassurance where required. Children are clearly comfortable and have a sense of belonging.</p>
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2. Children are offered the freedom to learn at their own pace and according to their individual interests, uninterrupted, during the ‘work cycle’.

Principles	Evidenced
<p>ESSENTIAL 2.1 Staff trust each individual child in his/her efforts to ‘construct an individual’.</p>	<p>The setting continues to look for ways to arrange the environments to support children’s independence. In the large outdoor space, the setting plan to introduce zones for different activities, with shelving (extending the indoor provision) and open-ended role play resources to support imaginative play.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL 2.2 The setting offers a continuous provision of activities and resources with which children engage freely and repetitiously.</p>	<p>Children's self-directed learning in each room is supported with a good range of resources supplemented by home-made and non-Montessori activities. The abundance of craft and resources is impressive. To better support children’s spontaneous and creative engagement with these materials, the setting might consider how to organise them, so they are easier for children to access.</p>
<p>2.3 Settings maintain the principles of freedom of choice; children are always given the choice to engage with an activity or not; the principle of “following the child” is embedded in practice.</p>	<p>The setting is clear about its commitment to children’s freedom of choice. Staff are reflective and mindful there are times where children’s autonomy is constrained. For example, children in the Daisies class, access the garden via the stairs. Children are necessarily supervised to use the stairs independently and safely, with access to coats and shoes (available at the foot of the stairs). Staff are keen to understand how children’s independence can be promoted at these times.</p>
<p>2.4 Children’s spontaneous learning follows ‘cycles of activity’. Each cycle is determined by the child’s selection of an activity/resource, engagement with it and completing and returning of the resource to its original place, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Children follow ‘cycles of activity’, completing the activity they were engaged in. Interruptions, such as the arrival of lunch, are limited. Some staff are open to consider how these occasions might be managed differently.</p>
<p>2.5 Consistency is achieved in establishing clear boundaries of behaviour.</p>	<p>The setting has a comprehensive Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, which includes helpful signposting and referencing the limitations of strategies involving Rewards & Punishments. This policy (along with most others) needs to be reviewed regularly by the staff team with the review dates noted on the policy.</p>



3. The learning environment (indoors and outside) enables children to follow their natural path of development and offers stimulating and challenging activities, both indoors and outside, throughout the 'work cycle'.

Principles	Evidenced
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>3.1 A favourable environment is carefully planned, prepared and maintained to offer accessibility, consistency and continuity of learning.</p>	<p>The environment is well appointed providing space in all rooms for children to make a choice to work on the floor or at tables.</p> <p>Outdoors, children have ample space to move freely. The setting is actively looking to provide opportunities for children to enrich the space to continue the work cycle outside with resources that extend the indoor provision.</p>
<p>3.2 The environment offers a mixed age range in each classroom. This age range is aligned to established developmental planes (such as birth to three years or three to six years). Where this is not possible, the children have plenty of daily opportunity to learn from each other and enjoy a wide age range and spectrum of activities.</p>	<p>Children benefit from being vertically grouped as far as possible ensuring their age-related needs are met.</p> <p>Classes are for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 to 24 months 24 to 30 months 31 to 60 months <p>Fountains Montessori, Edgeware celebrates the value of mixed age groups in their publicity.</p>
<p>3.3 Learning materials are appropriately arranged; well maintained, attractive and clean. There is space in each classroom and outside for individual and group activity. There are areas for quiet and sedentary play as well as active, energetic play.</p>	<p>Learning materials are accessible, suitable, and inviting. They are laid out on mobile low-level shelving. Considerable thought has been given to how spaces are organised with an impressive range of Montessori (and supplementary) resources available across the provision.</p> <p>The setting is continually looking to improve the provision, currently focussing on how to extend the outdoors and imaginative role play provision.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>3.4 The enabling environment offers resources relevant to all the children's cultures and communities and supports development of a positive sense of identity and culture. The child's need for independence is respected, enabling autonomy and initiative. The adults, and how they prepare the environment, support individual efforts and independence.</p>	<p>There are opportunities to further extend opportunities for children's autonomy, for example in preparing lunch tables using real crockery, glassware, and cutlery.</p> <p>The setting is reminded that all resources and equipment should be complete and appropriately sized for the activity. This includes child sized tools (for example tongs) and pouring jugs.</p>
<p>3.5 Support is available for children to take risks and explore freely, enabling them to learn to do things by and for themselves. Intrinsic motivation is highly valued as a critical element of the child's holistic development, as is the development of concentration.</p>	<p>The setting is situated in a large church building with a generous outside play area – security and safety are a key priority.</p>



4. The learning environment is prepared with reference to each child's needs and interests, which is reflected in effective planning and assessment.

Principles	Evidenced
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>4.1 The favourable environment is set up to provide for the individual needs and interests of the children, giving each child the opportunity to develop his/her unique potential.</p>	<p>The setting currently uses different methods to track children's progress in EYFS and Montessori curriculum areas.</p> <p>Further training would help deepen staff understanding on how EYFS areas of learning and Montessori can be integrated (both for the child's individual's progress to be monitored and the identification of next steps).</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>4.2 Staff observe children, looking to nurture their unique characteristics and learning dispositions/styles. They understand child development theory and how this aligns with pedagogy and practice.</p>	<p>Regular team meetings ensure that knowledge of their key children is shared by all staff who work with those children. It is unclear how much this references children's learning styles, sensitive periods etc.</p> <p>To further disseminate the Montessori pedagogy throughout the staff and setting, the leadership team are looking to equip more staff through Montessori training.</p>
<p>4.3 Staff demonstrate knowledge and skill in assessing the overall effectiveness of the provision for learning and development.</p>	<p>The Senior Leadership Team are committed to provide a supportive environment for their staff with strong methods of observation and appraisal in place. These include staff supervisions, peer reviews and room observations.</p>
<p>4.4 The recording of children's needs, interests and progress is supported by evidence that documents their engagement with activities and others within the setting, both indoors and outside.</p>	<p>The setting engages in regular Learning Walks to drive improvement.</p> <p>It is proactive to audit its own provision, involving a range of external advisers, such as Mock Inspections, Accreditations, visits from Advisory Teachers, SEND etc.</p>
<p>4.5 Where possible, staff assessments and reflections on children's learning are contributed to by parents/carers and, where appropriate, by other professionals and by the children themselves.</p>	<p>Termly summative assessment for each child is shared with and contributed to by parents at bi-annual parent events. This process starts after the child has settled into the setting (6 weeks in) and is informed by an initial home visit and a settling in session. Feedback from parents is used to drive improvements.</p>



5. The adults are led by highly skilled, experienced and qualified senior staff in each class of the setting, and all staff engage in on-going professional development.

Principles	Evidenced
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>5.1 The setting is led by skilled professionals who have a profound understanding of, and commitment to, implementing a child-led and Montessori/ Montessori-inspired philosophy. They inspire their team to offer excellent, sustainable and relevant provision and they inspire others beyond the setting likewise.</p>	<p>Fountain, Edgware are clear in their commitment to being knowledgeable early years professionals. Leaders have 5 years teaching experience and hold the minimum of a Montessori level 2 qualification. There is a commitment to develop and embed Montessori practice across the setting and train more staff. This goal is included in the Setting Development Plan (STAR). This valuable tool for setting priorities would benefit from having SMART objectives.</p>
<p>5.2 The setting's policies, procedures and practice are documented and linked clearly with Montessori / Montessori-inspired principles. These enable the adults to effectively manage the safety, well-being and development of the children.</p>	<p>Policies are all accessible on the website. They could be developed to reflect the setting's Montessori ethos and include strategies, guidance and signposting to Montessori and aligned sources of information and support. Policies state that they are reviewed at least annually, although many have out-of-date review dates. Recent mock audits have been used to ensure that all staff are familiar with all policies, such as Cultural Capital, RIDDOR and be more confident in their understanding of the 3 'I's (Intention, Implemented, Impact – What is the intention of the day/ How will this be implemented/What was the impact.</p>
<p>5.3 Whilst home languages are valued, the children are encouraged to develop a good level of primary language of the setting, where multiple languages are spoken.</p>	<p>A bilingual board is evidence that home languages are valued. There are missed opportunities to evidence procedures and practices that are used to respect multiple languages and EAL. A specific EAL Policy would evidence a greater commitment to how the setting values children's home background and languages in practice.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>5.4 Staff members are excellent communicators. They nurture and enrich the language and communication skills of the child.</p>	<p>Good and attentive relations between staff and children reflects the commitment of the setting to promote positive behaviour and grow responsive relationships. In addition, the website includes a Blog & signposting to further resources that encourage parent communications with their children at home.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>5.5 The training and development needs of all staff members are considered regularly to ensure quality development at the setting. These needs are recorded clearly and are met proficiently. Staff members are encouraged by the leaders of the setting to gain Montessori training and qualifications where possible.</p>	<p>The setting states a clear commitment to training, CPD and development for its staff team. It is advised that this is included in the Setting Development Plan with the addition of SMART objectives.</p>



6. The adults promote positive relationships both within and beyond the setting, including strong links with each child's family.

Principles	Evidenced
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>6.1 All adults at the setting value and respect children and families equally. All the adults guide the children with respect, knowledge, skill and consistency.</p>	<p>The Setting Development Plan includes a commitment to promote and develop strong links with families. Tools, such as a bilingual board and Makaton (to help children with English as an Additional Language and younger children) have been introduced after a Mock Ofsted external audit.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>6.2 The key person is a significant individual for the child and their family, closely monitoring their needs and nurturing the child's learning and development. The full staff community work together to support the child in building positive relationships with other children and adults in the setting. The child's main carers are respected in their role as primary educators of their child.</p>	<p>Each child's Key Person understands their role to engage with parents as partners. Children with additional needs are further supported by the manager who is the setting SENDCo, who accesses outside support as needed as agreed with parents.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>6.3 Children thrive when there is a strong partnership in their learning environment between staff and their family. This provides the setting and the family with the means to assess and discuss the child's needs, achievements and progress collaboratively.</p>	<p>The setting website includes a Parent Portal, with links to policies and information, such as term dates. There is also a wealth of information available on the website, including 'Aid to Life'. Here family carers can access information on how to align nursery with home experiences. Bi-annual parent events are important times for collaboration and communication between families and the nursery.</p>
<p>6.4 The setting offers regular opportunities for parents and other stakeholders to learn about the ethos and approach of the setting; Montessori-inspired practice and how a child-led focus can be used beyond the setting.</p>	<p>The setting website includes some Blogs, which could be used to extend parents understanding of the Montessori approach. Nursery policies could also be used to reinforce how Montessori methodology underpins all policies and procedures.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>6.5 All the adults understand that children who have opportunities to make choices in an atmosphere of freedom with responsibility, and who are encouraged to be independent in their actions and decision-making, develop a strong sense of self, natural confidence and curiosity as well</p>	<p>Fountain, Edgware have elected to be audited by external organisations, such as MEAB, L.A. Advisory teams, Mock Ofsted Inspection and Learning Walks. Together with parent feedback, there is clear commitment to strive for improvement so that all adults are equipped to support children's independence, confidence, freedoms and responsibility.</p>



as a sense of well-being and belonging. These qualities will serve them well throughout life.

Additional commentary:

From Assessors:

Fountain Montessori Edgware offers a bright warm environment for the children to learn and grow, through guided play and self-exploration inside and outside. The Setting benefits from a spacious outside area which the children enjoy freely – there is intention to further develop this area to create an extension of the classroom, along with a deeper provision to enhance the holistic development of the child. The Nursery is well equipped with both Montessori and non-Montessori materials. To increase the learning experience and further promote autonomy, it is suggested that materials are regularly checked to ensure they are in order of learning development and age appropriate. With an abundance of space and materials on offer in Poppies and Roses classrooms (31-60 months), the Setting may consider bringing the two classrooms together, resources would then be consolidated to create richer learning areas for individual activities - We look forward to seeing further developments at Annual monitoring.

Both desk-based review work and setting visit have been used to identify areas of strength in the nursery provision at Fountain Montessori, Edgware.

From **Fountain Montessori Pre-school, Edgware**

Report complete.

STAR summary:

Following a thorough assessment and analysis of the self-evaluation processes and evidence materials submitted by **Fountain Montessori Pre-school, Edgware**, the Assessors have been able to learn more about the individual context and specific considerations, important for the owners, managers, staff team and wider community at this time. The observation visit in **February 2023** to see the setting in-action, has assisted in this process and enabled further opportunity for **Fountain Montessori pre-school, Edgware** to indicate the current challenges and opportunities that are relevant for their children; staff and wider communities.

The STAR assessing team have scrutinised evidence and deliberated over findings to agree on this formal STAR Phase One accreditation report and taken their findings through our moderation process. The report document has been independently reviewed and fact checking by the setting directly.

Montessori group are pleased to award the STAR through this assessment process and wish your children, staff and families well through this coming year.



Annual Monitoring due 31/3/24

OFFICE USE: Compliance record
Date issued (1): 18/04/23 Date returned (1): 02/05/23 Date moderated (2): 31/03/23 Date of completion (2): 02/05/23

If you are happy to accept this report and move forwards with your public involvement with STAR, please complete the attached **STAR declaration**:

Receiving accreditation carries the expectation that the setting will continue to develop and to work maintaining compliance with all STAR Phase One Standards & Training Accreditation framework elements to satisfy a firm commitment to the Phase One Standards & Principles.

I, **Arike Aiyetigbo, Director**, confirm that **Fountain Montessori pre-school, Edgware** satisfies all features detailed above and acknowledges this award of STAR.
We have read, understood and agree to **STAR's Terms and Conditions**.

Upon successful completion of the accreditation process, we agree for Montessori group to publish our contact details (as stated on our application form) on behalf of STAR on our website.

Signature: Arike Aiyetigbo

Date: 02/05/23