



Standards & Training Accreditation Review - Accreditation Assessor Report

Name (legally registered name of setting):	Fountain Montessori Nursery, Colindale
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Section 1: Overview

The purpose of this assessment for **Fountain Montessori Nursery, Colindale** is for a Standards & Training Accreditation Review (STAR) Accreditation. The Team of Accreditation Assessors involved in this assessment include **Jo McIntyre** and **Preeti Patel**.

This report is based on a review of information submitted by the setting (including self-analysis evidence) and additional evidence gathered throughout the assessment process comprising desk-based materials, discussions, interviews, and on-site visits.

The scope of provision for the purposes of this report relates to formal educational provision within **Fountain Montessori Nursery, Colindale** acquired in 2017. The Boutique setting operates in an open plan environment, offering provision for 30 children per day, between the ages of 12 months to 60 months. Within this context, **Fountain Montessori Nursery, Colindale** provides a central service for its local 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 Nursery, Colindale 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** Accreditation within the Montessori Group's 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 notes for challenge, development or celebration now and in the future development of the provider.

Standards

- 1. 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>Fountain Montessori Nursery, Colindale is situated within a business complex on the 2nd floor. The setting has access to an enclosed, spacious garden that is reserved solely for children attending the nursery during the opening hours. There is a separate outside area, well-equipped with a large water play area, sand pit, mud kitchen and steps/climbing equipment to develop independence and gross motor skills – This area was undergoing structural improvement at the on-site visit. We look forward to seeing this area in action at annual monitoring.</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>Although the classrooms are small, the area has been set up carefully to facilitate a good level of support for the child’s holistic development. The shelves are well equipped with Montessori resources, there is a snack station where children can serve themselves and steps to support independent toileting. Due to a limited amount of floor space, the tables are adapted to facilitate structured messy play and adult led group play.</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>Children are encouraged to change from their outside clothing to inside clothing and vice versa, independently – to enable the child to develop further in this area, it would be good to see the adult allowing time for the task to be completed without extra input.</p> <p>It was nice to see the children serving themselves at snack time, to further develop in this area, the children could wash their own crockery.</p> <p>In addition to this the children would benefit from having access to a cleaning station, to clean their hands, face and noses. We Look forward to seeing this at Annual monitoring. N.B See Setting comments.</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>Children are clearly well supported to engage in learning and activities, with staff readily available to offer support where needed. The setting looks for ways to promote independence across the indoor and outdoor areas. With current structural works on the main building in place, the smaller outdoor area is closed off. The leadership have addressed this in their SDP with the Manager responsible for monitoring that sufficient equipment and materials are available in the garden to stimulate children’s learning.</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>The nursery offers a warm and nurturing environment with staff readily available to offer support and encouragement. It is clear to see that the children feel safe and valued. Children were seen to engage in conversation with staff and their peers during play and adult led group activities. Staff were seen to be gentle and soothing as the babies woke from their nap time.</p>

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</p> <p>2.1 Staff trust each individual child in his/her efforts to ‘construct an individual’.</p>	<p>The setting has made good use of the compact open space, offering a section dedicated to the babies for sleep and play. The learning space for Toddlers and Pre-school provides low level shelving for easy access to materials along with child height tables and chairs. With the large number of toddlers within the setting it is important to ensure that the environment is accessible to all ages – it was noted at the on-site visit that the tables and chairs were too high for some of the smaller children to navigate their chosen activity.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>2.2 The setting offers a continuous provision of activities and resources with which children engage freely and repetitiously.</p>	<p>The Nursery is well equipped with Montessori and non-Montessori materials, with the baby section filled with an array of materials and toys to engage with. Babies are encouraged to choose their own snack and with support change into their outdoor wear. Further opportunities for baby independence - help take sheets off their sleeping mats.</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>Fountain Montessori, Colindale provide a rich learning environment for the children to grow and thrive as individuals. Whilst there is a clear commitment to implement Montessori practice and ethos within the setting. A deeper understanding of the value of observation and less adult intervention will promote further independence and autonomy - We look forward to seeing more of this in practice at annual monitoring.</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>Evidence of ‘cycles of activity’ was seen at the on-site visit. Children were seen to work independently as well as in peer groups. Children were encouraged to complete activities. As previously mentioned, increased adult observation will create opportunities for practitioners to ensure the equipment is being used correctly and offer richer teaching provision.</p>
<p>2.5 Consistency is achieved in establishing clear boundaries of behaviour.</p>	<p>There is a clear behaviour policy in place. A Key person is assigned to disseminate the codes of practice to new staff and keep up to date with current sources, to promote positive behaviour in correspondence with Personal, Social and Emotional training. Adults work closely with parents/carers to understand and support individual behaviours.</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>Learning resources are readily available and within easy reach for the child to access independently. Regular checks of resources to ensure they are ready to use will offer continued accessibility. It is also important for shelves to be prepared in order of progression.</p> <p>We look forward to seeing further evidence of this at annual monitoring.</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>As previously mentioned, the compact space has been utilised to provide a quality educational environment. The attached exclusive outdoor garden provides a rich array of fine and gross motor activities including: a large, covered sand pit, water tray, mud kitchen, climbing steps and trycs. This area was being renovated at the on-site visit – we look forward to seeing this at annual monitoring.</p> <p>An embedded understanding of social and personal responsibility is clearly evident throughout the submitted documentation.</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>A well organised environment with a comprehensive array of learning materials. The open plan space is sectioned to provide areas for seated activities, a small area for floor work and a book corner. Free flow arts and crafts including painting and messy play were evident at the on-site visit. Practitioners adapt the space to facilitate adult and child led group activity. Shelving is well equipped with materials and separated into areas of learning.</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>The school uses EyLog to document the child’s daily activity and map progress. Photographs are used to document and celebrate with parents, both indoors and out. Monthly key person observations are shared to EYlog. The setting provides a scrapbook for children over 2 to practice learning at home as well as ‘I can cards’ that highlight areas for extra home support. Childrens artwork, Nursery news along with staff details and qualifications are displayed in the entrance area.</p> <p>Additionally, internal mock Ofsted report inspections and continual staff meetings and observations reflect how the setting are continually looking to revise their practice.</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 has free flow access to a large outside area in addition to the exclusive garden. This area offers a wide range of activities – which is currently the only outdoor play area. The SDP outlines the importance of creating further opportunities for outdoor experiences, such as walks to the local park.</p> <p>The staff training and development policy outlines the importance of professional development and training to ensure practitioners are constantly improving their Early years practice.</p> <p>Senior team members are passionate to embed Montessori pedagogy throughout the staff and setting. Further in-house training and CPD will anchor a deeper understanding of why and how.</p> <p>We hope to see further dissemination of Montessori principles amongst staff in practice at annual monitoring</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>Fountain Montessori, Colindale is bright and clean. Limited space requires the setting to be imaginative in the set up and rotation of learning materials.</p> <p>The room is well equipped with resources and materials to encompass all areas of the curriculum. Free flow arts and crafts including painting and messy play were evident at the on-site visit. Children were in engaged in independent activities – completing cycles of activity and engaging in child-to-child learning.</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 children’s development is shared and recorded onto Eylog. As mentioned in 4.4, the setting provides Scrapbooks and ‘I can cards’ to encourage and support individual learning styles in the home.</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>Staff use EyLog to record observations and plan relevant follow-on experiences. Additionally, the setting use Eyman to monitor staff qualifications and training. Through increased sharing the setting has seen an increase in parent engagement and feedback through this platform and are subsequently developing a stronger method of communication with parents and families. To ensure continual growth, Staff may need support to link children’s experiences to Montessori pedagogy. N.B See setting comment.</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 school uses EyLog to document the child’s daily activity and map progress. Photographs are used to document and celebrate with parents, both indoors and out. Monthly key person observations are shared to EYLog. The setting provides a scrapbook for children over 2 to practice learning at home as well as ‘I can cards’ that highlight areas for extra home support. Childrens artwork, Nursery news along with staff details and qualifications are displayed in the entrance area. Additionally, internal mock Ofsted report inspections and continual staff meetings and observations reflect how the setting are continually looking to revise their practice. Weekly team meetings measure the impact of child development and the impact of materials.</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>There is an active commitment to maintaining effective engagement with families. Parents contribute to the EyLog and Eyman software. Home learning and activities are shared through the child’s scrapbook and Key staff engage with parents at drop-off and pick up.</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>Leadership has a minimum of 5 years’ experience in teaching and leading, with Montessori qualifications level 2 and above. Leaders are also trained SENCO’s. Regular reviews, supervisions, and appraisals are a priority. Staff are subject to the setting’s safer recruitment procedure and internal training and monitoring plan – involving essential online training via educare and an orientation pack for new staff. Internal monitoring in the form of; learning walks, mock Ofsted, advisory teacher visits, SENCO needs and wellbeing, identify areas for monthly and whole setting training requirements.</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>Fountain Nursery policies are updated regularly. Elements of the Montessori principles can be seen in the settings policies. Particular areas to support and develop the individual - child and adult alike – are reflected in the following policies: Valuing diversity, parental involvement, menopause policy and behaviour policy.</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>English is the primary language spoken in the school. Other languages and cultures are celebrated. The Knowledge and understanding of the world areas are well equipped, linking languages and culture through play and stories. The children's artwork displayed on the main entrance door from the book Handa's Surprise reflects the settings commitment to embrace diversity and celebrate cultural differences.</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>Staff are warm and attentive. The setting demonstrates a commitment to promote positive behaviour and grow responsive relationships. Children clearly feel safe and valued. Further information and resources to support families outside of the Nursery setting can be found on the website.</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>Regular Management proactively monitor day to day progress with regular staff meetings and supervision to monitor personal progress and training requirements. Weekly team meetings monitor the impact of materials and learning. Weekly online management meetings to share concerns and objectives – these are filtered down to staff. Monthly peer reviews and observations to promote self-reflection and evaluation. Individual observations are filmed for the staff to review and reflect on for personal development plans.</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 values and policies suggest a deep commitment to create a setting that values and respects the children and their families. Fountain Nursery purposes to provide a caring, inclusive and progressive space for children to flourish.</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 is assigned a Keyperson. This person works closely with the child and family during the settling in period to facilitate a smooth transition. The key person is responsible for developing a strong relationship with the child throughout the learning journey and for monitoring the child progress. They are the key contact for parents on a day-to-day basis.</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. Fountain Montessori, Colindale are dedicated to support families through the early stages of growth, from potty training through to dietary advice. Which can be seen on the Fountian Montessori blog.</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 demonstrates an ongoing commitment to develop strong relationships with families and share the Montessori ethos. This is evidenced on the website and through increased communication with parents via the Eyman portal.</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 as a sense of well-being and belonging. These qualities will serve them well throughout life.</p>	<p>The setting demonstrates a clear commitment to support children's independence, confidence, freedoms, and responsibility. On-going training and continued deepening of the Montessori pedagogy within the staff community will ensure consistency and growth.</p>



Additional commentary:

From Assessors:

Fountain Montessori nursery, Colindale, is an intimate setting situated in the heart of Colindale centre. The exclusive outdoor garden and communal play area are a welcome addition, providing a natural space to promote gross and fine motor development. The open space setting has been carefully set out to accommodate children from 6 months to 4 years. The nursery benefits from an on-site kitchen providing freshly cooked meals daily. Staff are warm and encouraging and management are clear in their commitment to provide quality early years education. The building is currently undergoing extensive structural improvements which has prohibited access to the exclusive outdoor provision. Temporary steps are in place to ensure the larger communal space is equipped to provide a holistic learning environment. The indoor learning environment is bright and clean with an abundance of rich learning materials. We hope that the accreditation process has provided opportunities for reflection and highlighted some potential for development as documented in the report.

From Fountain Montessori, Colindale:

The setting has requested that the following points be noted:

- *Along with the two outdoor spaces the children have regular access to the local park. Purpose built community play materials are used to facilitate messy play including water tray and floor trays. There is a cleaning station for hands, nose and faces adjacent to the free flow snack area.*
- *Montessori Assistant and Montessori Level two courses are provided/completed for all new staff after their Early year's courses have been completed; training days are provided on inset days throughout the year (4 in total)*
- *"We use the Montessori steps and stages on eylog and each child has an individual learning plan. We share Montessori tip videos and 'aid to life' materials to parents through monthly and termly newsletters along with eylog videos".*

STAR summary:

Following a thorough assessment and analysis of the self-evaluation processes and evidence materials submitted by **Fountain Montessori, Colindale**. 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 **Fountain Montessori, Colindale** 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, Colindale** 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 accreditation report and taken their findings through our moderation process. The report document has been independently reviewed and fact checking by the setting directly.

The 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 by 31/03/24

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 work to maintain compliance with all STAR Standards & Training Accreditation framework elements to satisfy a firm commitment to the Accreditation Standards & Principles.

I, **Arike Aiyetigbo, Director**, confirm that **Fountain Montessori pre-school Colindale Branch**, 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 the Montessori Group to publish our contact details (as stated on our application form) on behalf of STAR on our website.

Signature: Mrs Arike Aiyetigbo

Date: 02/05/2023