

Collaborative Montessori Accreditation (CMA) Report

Name of Assessor: Michela Castellarin

Date/s of Accreditation Visit: 13th May 2022

Name of Setting: Children's House Montessori

Address of Setting: Birling Village Hall Snodland Road ME19 5JG

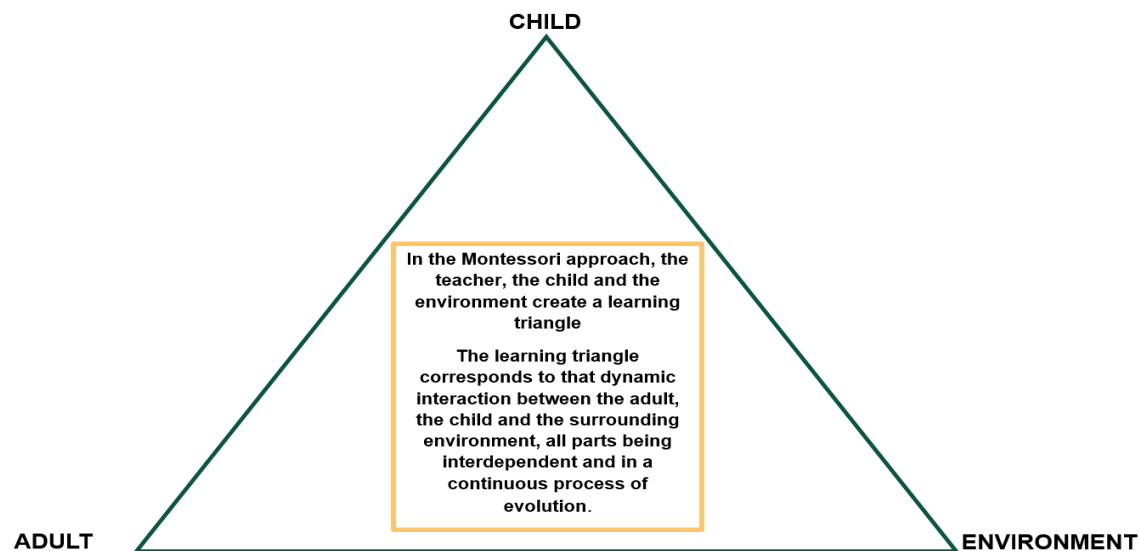
Setting type: Term Time Nursery

Facility type: Village Hall

Ownership of the Setting: Randa Williams

Date Setting opened: 2016

Date and grade of last Ofsted / relevant national inspection: October 2018



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

The child, the environment and the adult 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	N/A		
2 – 3	7		
3 – 5	13		
Over 5	N/A		

Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:

Children at Children's House Montessori (CHM) are happy, confident, active and welcomed participants in every aspect of the setting's life: children are involved in the daily environmental risk assessment routine, in the preparation of snack and in the setting up and tidying away of the activities. They are empowered and trusted to make positive choices for themselves while being encouraged to respect the wishes and needs of others; they are assertive and polite.

Independence

Children are consistently encouraged and supported in caring for their own biological and developmental needs, in a manner that often goes beyond the already well-established tasks such as dressing/undressing and helping themselves to food: for example, children regularly cover topics such as Paediatric First Aid and express their own opinions in *The Voice Book*.

They understand that 'choice' is an individual right that must work within a democratic system; for example, decisions are agreed by voting. Children at CHM value their own abilities and individual qualities as their interests, opinions and wishes are respected;

this is also supported by an environment which is speckled by written mottos such as: “*Behind you all your memories; Before you all your dreams; Around you all who love you; Inside you all you need*” and by songs such as “*I’ve got the power in me*”.

Socialisation

Socialisation and awareness of others are promoted by achievable ground rules, by the care and respect shown for resources and for all living things (including plants and animals which are either temporary – ducklings - or permanent residents (such as giant snails, tortoises, tadpoles), by preparing snack for the classroom community, by songs with lyrics modified to defeat stereotypes and by group activities such as *Mind Jar*. The vertical grouping allows children of different ages to interact, cooperate and learn together with enthusiasm and appreciation of others.

Exploration

Children have opportunities to explore, test and experiment; these opportunities are plentiful in the richly resourced outdoor environment where nature and large equipment allow children’s questioning minds to discover and take calculated risks. To develop this innate tendency even further, staff at CHM can think of further ways in which indoor Montessori resourced can also be used to foster exploration and creative thinking.

Movement

Children at CHM move about the environments confidently and skilfully; the innate need for movement and activity is well understood by the adults and is consistently fostered throughout.

Communication

Children’s developing communication needs are catered for by adults who provide a wonderful model of positive language and an environment that offers rich opportunities to speak and listen; for example: an activity named *Conversation Starter* suggests topics of conversation during lunch time and *Easy Ears* offers a variety of audio books. Staff understand that children use different ways to communicate, and artistic expressions and observations are considered useful tools to understand children.

The Environment

Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:

CHM offers spacious, richly resourced, stimulating and caring surroundings for children to develop and flourish; resources are changed according to the children's needs and interests. Freedoms are an integral part of life as are responsibilities.

The setting operates out of a church hall which is at the centre of the Birling Village, both geographically and historically; the staff at CHM have worked hard to maintain its role at the centre of this community which, in turn, has responded well to the setting's values and vision of Global Citizenship.

Order

Children are very familiar and comfortable within the setting's routines and actively partake in them; consistent and achievable ground rules contribute to creating a secure emotional base.

Resources are organised according to the different Montessori curriculum areas, and most, although not all, are displayed in a logical learning sequence; this can be easily improved to scaffold children's learning.

The activities

At CHM resources are plentiful, wide ranging and stimulating. Conventional Montessori activities are complemented by well-prepared and thoughtful homemade materials; teachers are skilful in creating activities that follow the principles of the Montessori approach, including *colour coding* and inbuilt *control of error* to aid both the children and the teachers in their use.

The Knowledge and Understanding of the World and the Creative curriculum areas are predominant features both indoors and outside; this is a reflection of the core essence of CHM which promotes the Montessori principles of Cosmic Education and of the United Nations Rights of the Child.

Technology is also cleverly introduced by for example, offering activities such as *BeeBots* which stimulates orientation and mapping.

Staff at CHM are encouraged to carry out a thorough audit of indoor resource areas and shelves to ensure that:

- all activities are clean, complete and ready for use
- activities in each curriculum area are displayed in a sequential order
- resources are carefully selected on the basis of current need and interest to avoid cluttering of shelves

The physical environment:

Indoors

The open plan hall is light, airy, welcoming and is organised to offer both table and floor workspace. There are separate areas for the kitchen, cloakroom and Sensory Room, a quiet space for children to rest and calmly interact with the adult on rota there.

The indoor environment would benefit from a re-evaluation of its wall displays and some of its permanent floor features to reduce visual overstimulation: staff are encouraged to review the usefulness and purpose of displaying children's artwork, signage, visual aids, documentation, general communication to third parties (parents, visitors) and awards.

Outdoors

CHM has a large and well-equipped outdoor area which offers children opportunities to explore and use their motor skills.

The purpose-built Art Room is a wonderful addition: it provides a wide variety of interesting art and crafts resources with which children can explore different creative techniques; children became engrossed in these resources and were also involved in the making of some of them.

The children are also fortunate to be able to use a large outdoor area, separate from the setting's grounds, where the owner organises Forest School sessions; these are well planned and structured whilst remaining flexible to follow spontaneous interest in the natural environment.

First-hand experiences and active learning

The adults in the setting understand that children learn best when they are fully engaged in real-life experiences; the outdoor environment in particular fully supports the children's active learning; they are given space and time to sensorially explore resources and their natural surroundings independently, with their peers and/or with the adults. Active learning is encouraged through a well-balanced system of spontaneous play, planned purposeful play and focused teaching.

The Adult

Adults present during the accreditation visit.

role and responsibilities	qualifications	length of time at the setting	part time	full time
RW	Level 4 and Montessori primary	since 2016		x
ZD	Level 3	since 2017		x
AA	Level 4	since 2021		x
MN	QTS and Montessori CPD	since 2016	x	
SB	Qualifying in level 2	since 2018		x
AP	none	since 2022		x
LE	none		x	
JMW	none	since 2021	x	

Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:

Adults at CHM are dedicated practitioners who know each child extremely well and who are committed to supporting their holistic development; their practice focuses on the children's well-being and personal empowerment such as through mindfulness exercises and awareness of Children's Rights.

The Leadership Team

Staff at CHM are competently led by its experienced and inspirational owner manager; her engagement with organisations within and beyond the wider Montessori community is commendable. Roles and responsibilities are efficiently organised, maximising on staff's skills and qualities; training needs are identified and provided for.

Daily briefings and weekly meetings give staff the opportunity to discuss children's individual progress, share opinions on any matter that has arisen, give solutions to possible issues, contribute to the setting's planning etc; time is also allocated to training, such as on Montessori presentations: this ensures consistency of approach across the team.

The leadership team has established a positive peer-on-peer observation system that relies on both internal and external professional feedback.

The Teaching Team

Teachers that lead the learning hold a Montessori qualification and work well with part-time staff who are fully integrated in the setting's life. All staff are positive role models, are deployed efficiently to maximise the learning and welfare of the children and are an inspiration to the local community, other settings, establishments and organisations.

The Key Person

A key person system is used at CHM. Each key person takes responsibility for ensuring that their children's needs and interests are being met, including building a sense of belonging and meaningful bonds with others. They liaise effectively with the parents who are very complimentary about all staff and are appreciative of their children's progress, saying, for example, that their child has been '...blossoming like a flower...' since attending CHM. Parents were particularly impressed with the level of independence gained by their children. CHM regularly sends out a parents' survey to inform their self-reflection and evaluation.

Communication with parents, observations and recording of children's progress are carried out efficiently and securely using an online platform; additional needs are identified, well recorded and are shared effectively with the relevant outside agencies.

Commendations

- CHM offers a wide range of stimulating resources in both the indoors and outdoors environments
- The children's well-being and creative development are particularly well catered for; the care and attention to each individual child is exceptional
- The adults' commitment toward the principles of Cosmic Education, the Montessori wider community and the United Nations Rights of Children is exemplary: CHM is a Centre of Excellence, has undertaken and achieved the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award and efficiently integrates Forest School principles into its practice.

- The relationship with children's families is excellent and parents are very complimentary and appreciative of the staff's care and professional service for each individual child; as a Centre of Excellence CHM has access to additional expert advice and can provide extra support to parents such as its Empowering Parents sessions.
- CHM has a wonderful ethos of continuous self-evaluation, growth and development and constantly strives towards best Montessori practice.

Recommendations

- Consider ways in which children are encouraged to explore and to discover during presentations of Montessori activities; practitioners are encouraged to reflect on their economy of movement and children's involvement with the materials
- Carefully consider the activities on offer: ensure that they are consistently clean, ready for use and are uncluttered on the shelves
- Ensure that resources are displayed according to the logical sequence that scaffolds the children's learning; particular attention should be given to the literacy area
- Review the physical environment as a whole to eliminate visual overstimulation for the children

Conditions

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

Name of Assessor: Michela Castellarin

Date of Report: 15/06/2022

This 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:

Children's House Montessori

Validity period:

From: July 2022 to: July 2025

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.