

Collaborative Montessori Accreditation (CMA) Report

Name of Assessor: Mary Lazo

Date/s of Assessment Visit: 13/11/2023

Name of Setting: Frogmore Montessori Nursery School

Address of Setting: Frogmore House, 58 Frogmore Avenue, Plymouth, Devon PL6 5RT

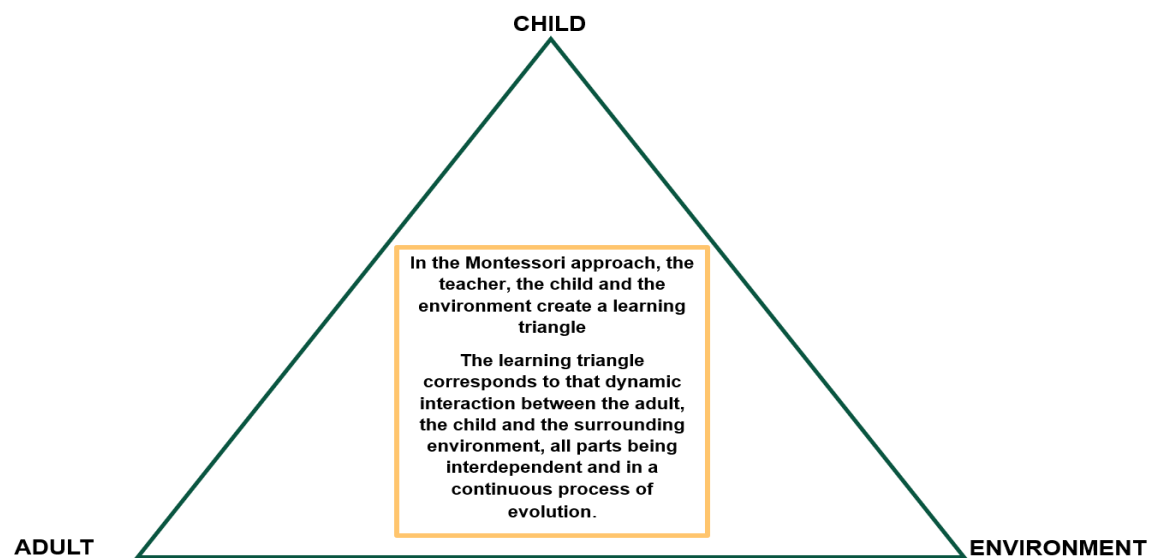
Setting type: All year round; full time

Facility type: Converted domestic property

Ownership of the Setting: Privately owned

Date Setting opened: 1991

Date and grade of last Ofsted / relevant national inspection: 19/01/2019 - 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			4
2 – 3			10
3 – 5			9
Over 5			

Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:

Frogmore Montessori Nursery School (FMNS) offers children of the three age groups (0 – 2 year old, 'young 3's' and 3 – 4 year old) freedom within boundaries, together with a large variety of opportunities for movement and exploration according to the needs of each stage of development. The children are encouraged in their independence from the youngest age through to the pre-schoolers, and this, in turn, enables their confidence and self-esteem to flourish. Parents comment on how happy their children are and how they thrive. The 'Montessori at Home' information parents receive is appreciated as it supports them in introducing and developing their children's independence at home.

Independence

Children are encouraged to be independent in choosing their own activities; younger children can choose to move between the two upstairs rooms, and, similarly downstairs, the older children can move between rooms where different curriculum areas are on

offer, as well as to the outside space. Independence is also fostered on arrival with changing shoes and hanging up coats and bags. A self-registration system is in use during snack and lunch times using name tags on boards.

In the baby room the youngest children have a wide range of suitable and accessible activities on offer; they can also choose between a cosy area to lie down, instruments, a toy kitchen, baby dolls and a car mat. On the day of the accreditation visit the babies were all mobile, and the soft climbing equipment was very popular with several children developing their gross motor coordination while climbing and crawling. The 2 year old children help prepare peppers for snack, serve themselves using tongs, and pour their own drinks. The older children also prepared snack and washed up their plates and cups after use. At lunch time they were encouraged to open the containers from their lunch boxes, and to place any wrappers in a bowl on the table.

There is freedom to join in adult-led activities or not; for example, some children chose to join in a science experiment during the morning, while in the afternoon one child chose not to take part in a group mindfulness session and, instead, enjoyed reading with a teacher.

Socialisation

Children are free to choose whom they would like to play with, and whether they want to join a small group, such as the one planned to support language and attention skills. A few older children spontaneously joined a peer who was being shown how to do addition with small number rods, while another child worked independently with wildlife matching cards. Children are encouraged to follow the ground rules, such as replacing their activity on the shelf; some 2 year old children were observed sweeping up spillages on the floor after using an activity with noodles and rice. Older children helped to set up the table for snacks, developing responsibility and respect, and building a sense of community.

Although the children are grouped by age, there is flexibility for them to socialise together. For example, one of the older children joined a 2 year old child for snack, and after lunch, some of the younger children joined the older group. This supports not only their socialisation skills but also their well-being, as they interact with all adults in the different rooms in preparation for transitions.

Exploration

Whilst babies explore some activities independently, such as climbing and sliding, others are presented by teachers. For example, a baby was engaged with identifying and replacing animal puzzle pieces while two other babies were fascinated by an adult blowing bubbles and their consequent popping. Their slightly older peers next door use paint with paintbrushes or natural objects, for example pinecones; they also became very interested in experimenting using their hands to transfer coloured noodles and rice. This was a sensory experience that also involved tools such as tongs, scissors and provided opportunities for creative exploration. Downstairs, a tuff tray was prepared with beads, flowers and gems which, together with spoons, tongs and small sieves, provided

children with the opportunity to explore and transfer the small objects and then, make their own creative displays. This transient art activity was linked to the festival of Diwali, providing an opportunity to explore other cultures and festivals.

Movement

FMNS offers plentiful opportunities for children to develop and refine their gross and fine motor skills in all areas of the environment. The babies have space to crawl and walk freely and climb and slide on soft climbing equipment, besides using child size kitchen metal pans, puzzle pieces and vehicles. Two year old children can move between their two rooms, where they can access activities at low tables, such as water play, cutting and mark making, or work on the floor to build and use early sensory education material. The pre-schoolers have a variety of inviting activities to refine their fine motor skills such as lacing, and transferring water with a baster, and using a sieve or funnel. Outside, there are spacious areas for children to use appropriate ride-on vehicles and bikes, besides two climbing frames and slides for different age groups, and space to run and move freely. Further resources are available in two sheds, one of which houses pre-literacy activities such as mark making with a variety of chalks and colouring materials. Fine motor development is also resourced on a shelf of tray-based activities, and children were engaged in threading laces through cotton reels, and transferring water with a dropper.

Communication

Children at FMNS have developed trusting bonds with the teachers and are listened to with interest and respect. Adults are attuned to the children's different stages of development and are aware of additional needs, for example with listening and attention skills, which are fostered through appropriate interventions in a focus group. Children in this activity were very keen to take part in recognising animal sounds and names, and in talking about the illustrations in a story read to them. The adult skilfully supported the development of listening and turn-taking skills, including the use of Makaton signs to aid communication.

Children hear positive language as they learn the ground rules, for example, to walk inside and put their work away, and rich language is offered when attending a science experiment, with descriptive vocabulary such as 'prickly thorns', 'red food colouring', and 'pink carnations' being introduced.

A child with one-to-one adult support has the aid of an iPad for communication; its use is expertly guided by the teacher and fully understood by the other children. The responsive adults engage in sensitive conversations with the children, who express their feelings and wishes with confidence.

The use of contextualised language could be further implemented, for example by commenting on the children's activities, and extending their words and phrases during verbal interactions. This would ensure that the youngest children in particular can benefit to the maximum from a language rich environment.

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The Environment

Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:

FMNS is located in a large two-storey house, with extensive outdoor grounds. The setting offers full day care from 8.00 to 5.45 for the 0 - 2 year old children, with 'early bird' and 'twilight' sessions available on request. Funded children (3 years and older) can attend from 8.00 or 8.30 to 4.00 pm, with further flexibility when required. The youngest children (babies and two year olds) use the upstairs rooms, and are taken to the garden daily, during the morning and/or afternoon sessions. The 3 and 4 year old children have access to two rooms downstairs and free-flow to the garden.

Parents comment very favourably on the physical and emotional environment provided, saying that it is 'nurturing, homely, warm and enriching' and that their children in turn 'thrive' and 'greatly benefit' from all that is on offer.

Order

Order is very evident in the various rooms at FMNS, as the spaces are arranged by curriculum areas with activities carefully sequenced on accessible shelving.

The children seem very comfortable with the routines and transitions: for example, the children downstairs know how to prepare and wash up after snack; a child helped to bring the lunch boxes when it was time to prepare a room for lunch. After lunch the children take their lunch boxes to the porch ready for going home, and know that they have a quiet time prior to the afternoon activities. Upstairs the babies and younger children's individual rhythms are very much respected and known; for example, babies have naps when required, whether before or after lunch, and their access to the outdoors is facilitated around these.

Parents commented on the 'calm, nurturing' environment, and the staff team commented on how close and supportive they are with each other. This has a positive impact on the children's levels of well-being, and is enhanced by the adults gently and consistently modelling the ground rules across the setting. This helps the children to feel safe, and to build trusting relationships with all the adults.

The physical environment

Indoors

FMNS is spread over two floors. The upstairs baby room is a comfortable, calm space for up to 6 babies, adjoining the sleep room with cots. The year old children have a room for craft activities, where they also have snack, lunch and tea. In another light and spacious room, there are materials for early Sensorial, Numeracy and Pre-literacy, besides activities for nature exploration, sorting and grouping, and clothes for dressing up. In the main ground floor room, the Activities of Daily Living support children's

developing independence and sense of order, and are set out sequentially on accessible shelving, with a low-level sink so that children can access water when needed. The 3 and 4 year old children have snack and lunch downstairs, where art and craft activities are also available, together with activities for imaginary play such as a train track and vehicles. The pre-school children have the Big Room as their main base, with free flow to another classroom and outside. This room houses the other curriculum areas: Sensorial, Numeracy, Literacy and Knowledge and Understanding the World, with all activities sequenced on shelves. Here, there is also a comfortable soft seating and book area, a corner focusing on emotional well-being materials, the Peace Table, and the home of the pet Giant African Land snails.

The hall with registration boards and coat hooks at child height leads to the children's toilet facilities, and also provides access to the upstairs.

Outdoors

The very spacious outdoors is divided into 3 main areas: one smaller patio for the babies, a large patio area with a shed for covered play, and another shed for resources that are brought out according to the weather and the children's interests and needs. There is also a large grassed area with a wildlife pond, where animals such as frogs and newts are frequently observed; a woodland walk under tall mature trees is accessed for Forest School activities.

On the day of the accreditation visit there were a variety of resources outside, such as a small slide for the youngest children, a rocker, ride-on vehicles, building blocks, a toy farm and animals and some shakers which two children played with while singing a song. The main patio had a larger slide, two playhouses, guttering for water, various transferring activities, and a large-scale numeracy activity on the ground involving counting a quantity of leaves to match the corresponding numeral. There is also a picnic bench and a comfortable seating area. In the afternoon bikes were used by a group of children.

Parents value the opportunities offered by the outdoors at FMNS and comment on the 'wonderful outdoor area which encourages connection with nature'.

First-hand experiences and active learning

Children have plenty of access to first-hand experiences, such as caring for plants and the Giant African Land snails inside, and bird watching through the windows to the garden. Outside, a variety of wildlife can often be found and observed closely, including frogs and newts in the wildlife pond and insects, birds and squirrels. These encounters lead to discussions and more focused work on life cycles, how animals die, what animals need, and food chains. Children also sow seeds and care for plants, such as carrots and tomatoes, which they then eat. A variety of experiments support the building of hypotheses and observation of results such as sinking or floating, or what will happen to flowers if their stems are placed in coloured water.

The Adult

Adults present during the accreditation visit.

Initials, roles and responsibilities	Qualifications	Length of time at the setting	Part time	Full time
BT – Manager/SENDCo	Mont. Int. Dip. Level 4; EYPS	12.5 years		x
TD – (Acting) Deputy Manager/DSL	Mont. Int. Dip. Level 4	3 years (+ 6 years at sister setting)		x
SR – Baby Room leader	Level 3	3.75 years		x
ZW – one to one support	PGCE & QTS; level 3	2 months		x
HY – early years practitioner	Mont. Int Dip level 4	8 years	x	x
RT – early years practitioner	Level 3	6.75 years	x	
SMT – early years practitioner	Mont. Dip.	10 months		x
IE – early years practitioner	Level 3 (Health & Social Care)	10 months	x	
GH – early years practitioner	Level 3 trainee	8 months	x	

Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:

The staff team is very close, and all members share the Montessori ethos, which is disseminated through observing one another's practice and in-house training. The team excels at nurturing and caring for the children at the setting, and parents comment very favourably on the 'friendly', 'knowledgeable', 'engaging and well-qualified' staff team. One parent says how they 'really put love and care into everything they do' which is evidenced through how easily children settle and thrive at FMNS.

The Leadership Team

The Leadership team comprises the Manager and Deputy Manager, both of whom are experienced Montessori qualified teachers. They are supported by the owner and Principal, who has run this very well-established setting for over 30 years. The team ensures that the provision values and applies the Montessori ethos throughout, by, for example, deploying a Montessori qualified teacher on each floor. The teaching staff speak very highly of the Leadership Team and how supportive it is for instance, during the induction process which made them feel 'very safe' and 'part of a family'. The staff also praise the Leadership Team's support with training during staff meetings, with peer observations and giving feedback, and with the monitoring and recording of children's progress.

The Manager and assistant Manager understand the importance of the team's well-being, share the roles of conducting planned supervisions and appraisals twice yearly, holding further supervisions when requested or needed. The twice termly staff meetings also provide opportunities for giving updates on procedures and offering training on particular aspects of Montessori practice. Information is shared with parents via a monthly newsletter and regular social media updates. Parents are invited into the setting to share aspects of their work, read a story, and for events such as a session on reptiles, and Father's Day. Parents also contribute to their child's 'next steps' and can share aspects of their learning at home on Summative Assessments. Outreach to the wider community has been successfully carried out, for example in fundraising for a defibrillator which serves the nursery and local area. Raising funds for Children in Need and collecting food for food banks are examples of other projects that the setting has embarked on, working in partnership with external agencies.

The Teaching Team

The teaching team prepares a rich learning environment for the children, which is changed according to the children's interests and needs, and to follow a seasonal or cultural focus. For example, on the day of the accreditation visit, there were Autumn related displays and activities involving leaves and vegetables which were suitable for different age groups, such as cutting, matching to numbers, and sensory exploration. There were also Diwali activities on each floor so that children can be exposed to some aspects of different cultural festivals.

The team follows each child's progress closely, recording observations and planning next steps in their Individual Learning Records; monthly narrative observations are also carried out and shared with parents. The adults are effectively deployed in the different spaces so that they can efficiently oversee the development of the children they care for. Flexibility with moving to the outdoor area when required is present.

Allocating a particular responsibility for the large outdoor space to one or more team members may be beneficial to ensure that maximum use is made of its different areas and many resources, and that these are valued to the same extent as those indoors.

The Key Person

The key person approach is very well established at FMNS, and it is evident that children have close bonds with all adults. As one parent commented, it is 'like home from home' with a 'loving' atmosphere. Formal meetings to share the children's progress are held twice a year but parents can request additional meetings if needed; there is more contact during the flexible settling in sessions. Parents are happy with the information shared verbally at pick up; they also appreciate the information on various aspects of the day written on a chalk board and know that their child's key person or another member of the team would be available to speak should it be requested.

Children with additional needs have excellent support, whether through one-to-one assistance from a teacher, or through small groups sessions such as the one for speech and language. All members of the team are aware of the children's needs, receive bespoke training on how to support them, and are diligent in putting plans into practice.

Commendations

- Very close staff team who share the Montessori ethos and are supportive of one another.
- Welcoming and warm towards parents
- The teaching team prepares a very caring and loving environment for the children where the children's interests, needs and well-being are prioritised.
- Inclusive practice that ensures a strong sense of belonging and community.

Recommendations

- Have a focus on how team members can take responsibility for maintaining the outdoor area and resources, to optimize the use of the space available.
- Ensure that adult/child interactions, especially with the youngest children, offer contextualised language and provide feedback through extending the child's utterances.

Conditions

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

Name of Assessor: Mary Lazo

Date of Report: 21/11/2023

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:

Frogmore Montessori Nursery School

Validity period:

From: December 2023 to: December 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.