



**The Maria Montessori Training Organisation**  
trading as  
**The Maria Montessori Institute**

## **Curriculum Policy**

The curriculum in this document refers to the planned activities organised in order to promote learning, personal growth and development (the Intent). It includes not only the formal requirements of the Montessori Programme, but also the additional educational activities that the school organises in order to extend the experience of the children. The Montessori Programme is value based (the implementation) and therefore also encompasses an 'implicit' programme which derives from the way the children are treated, the way they are expected to behave with one another and other adults and the way they interact with their environment. We aim to teach children how to grow into positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with others while developing knowledge and skills, so that they achieve their true potential (the impact.)

### **Values**

Our Montessori programme is underpinned by the values that we uphold at our school. The Programme is the means by which the school achieves its objective of assisting the child's development by enabling them to acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives.

Our school is in full agreement with the values statement included in the introduction to The National Curriculum Handbook for Teachers in England. These are the main values of our school, upon which we have based our programme:

- We value the way in which all children are unique, and the Montessori Programme promotes respect for the views of each individual child, as well as for people of all cultures. We value the spiritual and moral development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth.
- We value the importance of each person in our community. We organise our Programme so that we promote co-operation and understanding between all members of our community.
- We value the rights enjoyed by each person in our society. We respect each child in our school for who they are, and we treat them with fairness and honesty. We aim to enable each person to be successful, and we provide equal opportunities for all the children in our school.
- We value our environment, and we aim, through our Programme, to teach respect for our world, and how we should care for it for future generations, as well as our own.



## Aims

The Intent of our school programme is:

- to enable all children to learn and develop their skills to the best of their ability at their own pace;
- to promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that children enjoy coming to school, and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning;
- ensure that pupils develop essential speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
- to enable children to be creative and to develop their own thinking;
- to inform children about their developing world.
- to help children participate in Britain's cultural heritage;
- to enable children to acquire positive attitudes towards the social and cultural norms of society
- to teach children to have an awareness of their social obligations and the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviours.
- to help children understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all;
- to enable children to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem, and to be able to live and work co-operatively with others.
- to promote a healthy lifestyle
- to promote high standards in all teaching and learning

## Objectives

**In line with DfE regulations, we will ensure that:**

- we will provide full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), providing a high quality of experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
- all subject matter is appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of children, including those pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan;
- all children acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills appropriate to their age;



- consideration for extra provision is given to children whose first language is other than English;
- where a pupil has an EHC Plan, they will receive an appropriate education which fulfils the requirements of that plan;
- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) will reflect the School's holistic aim and ethos;
- a programme of appropriate activities will be provided for children in the Early Years to reflect their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills;
- all children have the opportunity to learn and make progress;
- opportunities are provided to prepare children for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

### **Organisation and planning (Implementation)**

We plan our Montessori programme as follows: We agree on an overall plan for each child each term. This also indicates what general topics are to be covered during the term. This plan is kept under review on the basis of need.

Additional short-term plans in both the Children's House and Elementary (primary) class take into account the needs of individual children in the class.

The Montessori Programme adopts an interdisciplinary approach enabling the teachers to chart a varied and complete programme for the children as they make their explorations and discoveries. We plan the programme carefully, so that there is coherence and full coverage of all aspects of the Montessori Programme and early learning goals, and there is planned progression in all programme areas ensuring that both the early learning goals and the national curriculum are covered.

### **Children with special needs**

The programme in our school is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend the school. If we think it necessary to adapt the programme to meet the needs of individual children, then we do ensure that parents are kept fully informed.

If a child has a special need, our school does all it can to meet these individual needs. We comply with the requirements set out in the SEN Code of Practice in providing for children with special needs. If a child displays signs of having special needs, the teacher makes an assessment of this need. In most instances the teacher is able to provide resources and educational opportunities that meet the child's needs within the normal class organisation. If a child's need is more severe, we consider the child for a statement of special needs, and we involve the appropriate external agencies when making this assessment. We endeavour to provide additional resources and support for children with special needs.



## **The Early Years Foundation Stage**

*A programme of appropriate activities will be provided for children within the Children's Houses to reflect their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills.*

We incorporate into our Montessori approach the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2021, which is based on the seven areas of learning and development. These areas are subdivided into three prime areas and four specific areas. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The specific areas are

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive arts and design

Our school fully supports the principle that children learn through active experience, and by engaging in a variety of well-planned activities.

We are well aware that all children need the support of parents and teachers to make good progress in school. We strive to build positive links with the parents of each child by keeping them informed about the way in which the children are being taught and how well each child is progressing. Children often remain with the same adults during their duration of their stay in the Children's House subject to the continued employment of the staff member in that class.

In the Montessori setting we are aware that each child and adult is different and a child may be drawn to more than one adult. Each adult therefore is aware of each child's development through observation, record-keeping, frequent staff meetings and is assigned a particular role and responsibilities. Communication between members of staff and parents is vital for the child's care and development. The Lead Teacher holds parent conferences at regular intervals and appropriate feedback is related to the staff. Parents are free to discuss issues with teachers outside of these times.

### **Key skills**

The following skills have been deemed 'key skills' in the current National Curriculum:

- communication;
- application of number;
- information technology introduced at Elementary (primary) level;
- working with others;
- improving own learning and performance;
- problem-solving.



The Montessori Programme highlights these skills, so that the children's progress in all of these areas can be identified and monitored. Our school believes that all children need to make good progress in these areas in order to develop their true potential.

### **Delivery of the Curriculum:**

Staff are expected to actively promote and seek to secure the curriculum aims (above) and, in particular to:

- enable children to acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills;
- foster in children the application of intellectual, physical or creative effort, interest in their work, and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
- demonstrate effective teaching, suitable activities and wise management of class time;
- show a good understanding of the aptitudes and needs of the children, and ensure these are taken into account in their planning;
- demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- utilise effectively classroom resources of an adequate quality, quantity and range;
- demonstrate that a framework is in place to assess children's progress regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan lessons so that children can progress;
- utilise effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging children to behave responsibly;
- work in partnership with other staff, parents/carers and the wider community to achieve shared goals.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability**

The curriculum is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend the School. If a child has a learning difficulty and/or disability the School does all it can to meet their individual needs. If a child displays signs of having a specific learning difficulty, the teacher makes an assessment of this need. In most instances our school is able to provide resources and educational opportunities which meet the child's needs within the normal class organisation. If a child's need is more complex extra support may be offered and, if necessary, the appropriate external agencies are involved.



## **Homework**

Formal homework assignments are not set by the School although we often find The children wish to continue their learning at home. We encourage the children to participate in the home and family life building independence and learning life skills. Children are encourage to read for 20-30 minutes every evening at the Elementary level.

## **Personal, Social and Health Education**

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) reflects the School's holistic aim and ethos and provides a vital foundation for the personal development of young people in preparing them for adult life. We aim to educate the child as a whole person and build this into the curriculum on a day-to-day basis.

## **Sex Education**

The School provides sex education in the basic curriculum for children, in which they are encouraged and guided by moral principles and taught to recognise the value of family life. In the Upper Elementary, sex education is specifically taught within Relationship Education.

## **Assessment**

The opportunity for children to learn and progress is at the heart of the school curriculum. Children's progress is constantly monitored through a programme of continuous assessment, both formative and summative. The progress of each child is tracked, and appropriate challenges, support and intervention are put in place. The School's Assessment Policy gives further detail.

## **Monitoring the Programme (Impact)**

Each class is assigned a Mentor.

The role of the Mentor is to:

- provide strategic counselling;
- support and offer advice to colleagues on related issues;
- monitor the implementation of the programme in relation to children's progress;
- provide strategies for the teachers to help them achieve successful outcomes.

The Head of School is responsible for the intent and implementation of the Montessori programme and ensuring that it is effectively practised in the school. The impact of the Programme is monitored throughout the school. The long-term and short-term planning is also monitored to ensure appropriate teaching strategies are used. Staff also are involved in peer-mentoring and individual staff are offered professional development as required.

## **Adolescent Curriculum**

The Montessori adolescent programme (12-16) builds on the foundation of the Children's House and Elementary classes, by offering students opportunities to consolidate, broaden and deepen their knowledge, to explore how this knowledge is applied in the world, and,



importantly, to give the adolescents opportunities to apply discipline knowledge in practical, productive, and economically meaningful work.

The aim of the Montessori adolescent programme is to provide an educational environment that enables students to:

- transform themselves into independent, self-regulating, resourceful, and adaptable adults
- become interested observers, listeners and collaborators, critical thinkers and engaged citizens
- express their own opinions, develop their own talents, make decisions, and solve problems, on their own or collaboratively, with a confidence that is grounded in the practical, social, and intellectual knowledge, skills, and values they are developing in the Montessori environment
- contribute productively, with enthusiasm and integrity, to family, school, and community life, and to the wider society, both national and global
- dedicate themselves to the future of humanity

The Montessori **adolescent curriculum** is divided into three main domains. These are *intellectual development*, *self expression (creative and physical)*, and *preparation for adult life*. These three domains are closely interwoven across the curriculum, with the *intellectual development* and *creative expression* domains having a particularly strong cross-curricular orientation.

### Intellectual Development

The domain of intellectual development is made up subjects that comprise the knowledge students need in order to make a contribution to society. This domain has a cross-curricular orientation, traversing all areas of the curriculum.

First, this domain covers an area of study, which in the Montessori context, is called *moral development*, and which focuses on the study of *civility, citizenship, civil society, and community life*. This area of study includes opportunities for students to participate in, and contribute to, the immediate community. Through these activities, students have the chance to extend the domain of *grace and courtesy* into learning how to engage with members of their own and the wider community, in everyday interactions, financial interactions, problem-solving, debate and discussion with civility and a concern for the needs, dignity and well-being of all involved. Through their community participation students develop a social conscience and a sense of social responsibility, as well as opportunities to develop independence, leadership skills and skills related to making ethical and wise choices.

Second, in order to make a positive contribution to society, citizens must be numerate and literate. For this reason, studies in mathematics and English language are included in this domain. As part of their civic responsibility, students also are expected to become familiar with the content and standards of the mandated curriculum that all students are required to study and achieve.

The subjects studied in this domain are: relationship education, including preparation for parenthood, religion, citizenship, and community life (civil society and moral development), mathematics, including arithmetic, geometry, algebra, and measurement, language, English language, as well as at least one language other than English.



In this domain *English* and *Mathematics* are studied in discrete lessons, as a means of building and consolidating foundation knowledge and skills. These subjects are also embedded in all areas of the curriculum, wherever language and mathematical skills are needed to engage productively with curriculum content.

### Self Expression

The domain of self expression is made up of subjects oriented to personal expression, specifically linguistic, artistic, and imaginative expression. This domain also has a cross-curricular orientation in the Montessori adolescent program because self expression of all kinds can become the means adolescents use to represent knowledge and skills gained in any area of the curriculum.

The subjects in this domain of the curriculum are:

- language for creative expression
- music
- visual arts
- digital media
- drama/dance
- sports

As students study in the domain of self expression, they are taught skills in all areas of the arts, including literature and creative writing, visual arts, crafts, music and performance. They are then given opportunities to use these skills to demonstrate and display knowledge and understanding gained in any area of the curriculum. For example, to display what they have learned while undertaking a research project on ancient Alexandria, a group of students might present a dramatic representation of the character of Socrates, another might create artworks relevant to the historical time in which Socrates lived, while another might perform a musical recital that relates to that time.

### Preparation for Adult Life and Contemporary Culture

The domain of the Montessori adolescent curriculum that prepares students for adult life and contemporary culture includes the subjects of *science* and *history*. It also includes the *occupations*, the work of the adolescent community.

In the Montessori adolescent community, the Science curriculum is organised under two headings:

- *The Study of the Physical Universe, the Earth, and Living Things*, incorporating studies in:
  - Earth and space sciences: cosmology, including astronomy; geology and physical geography, including the geology and geography of prehistoric periods
  - Biological sciences: biology, including studies in botany, zoology, ecology, physiology, comparative anatomy, and health sciences (including nutrition and exercise science, sex and health education)





- *The Study of Human Progress and Civilisation*, incorporating studies in:
  - Physical sciences: physics and chemistry
  - Contemporary sciences: mechanics and engineering, computing, history of science and technology, including genetics

In the Montessori adolescent community, *History* is studied with the broader context of the *Humanities*, which include *Geography, anthropology, politics, and economics*. This study is organised under two headings:

- The study of humanity
- The study of the building of human civilisation

Through the study of *history and the humanities* adolescents can understand how humans have progressed through time. For this reason, students study in depth the history of particular historical periods, and are given the opportunity to immerse themselves in the culture, including an exploration through visual and dramatic arts, music, food, culture and daily life of these periods of time. In this way they engage with the knowledge both emotionally and cognitively. This area of study includes the following topics:

- geographical exploration
- relation of humans to the environment
- contact between different peoples
- war, religion and the love of one's country and culture
- a detailed study of an historical period
- a detailed study of one person's life
- a detailed study of the present day
- a detailed study of our nation
- law and government in our nation and other nations
- literature

Alongside the more traditional subjects, pupils in a Montessori 12-16 environment engage in "*occupations*" including:

- practical daily life tasks, including maintenance of the community environment
- working the land, including, for example, care of the natural environment, horticulture, agriculture and animal husbandry
- contributing to the micro-enterprises of the community

This work is undertaken collaboratively. From the Montessori point of view, work of this type does not hinder a student's study; instead, it enhances the quality of the study as students have the opportunity to apply their knowledge to solve problems and to contribute to the community. The *occupations* enable students to build independence, to the point where they experience what it means to be economically independent in society.

## Pedagogy

Montessori adolescent pedagogy integrates concrete and active learning experiences with opportunities for reflective and contemplative study of increasingly abstract concepts and ideas. Secondly, the pedagogy integrates intellectual and ethical development, creative



expression, and the academic disciplines, giving students the opportunity to apply discipline knowledge, judgement and creative skills to problem solving in projects that require physical activity, ethical choices, self-expression and abstract application of interdisciplinary knowledge. The focus of the pedagogy is the adolescent's civic, ethical, and social development as well as the adolescent's adaptation to the demands of the changing natural and human world.

To facilitate the interdisciplinary approach, teachers who work with the students in the adolescent community are qualified to teach across a group of related subjects and are experts in these areas. The students also work with teachers who are experts in practical and specialised skills. These specialised teachers work on their own projects, giving the students opportunities to work alongside them to achieve practical and real-world goals that are meaningful in the adult world.

Learning experiences include opportunities to address individual learning needs through individual and small group tutoring, as well as opportunities for collaborative learning through group work, project-based learning, seminars, workshops, discussion groups, book groups, research tasks, practical projects, and community work.

In summary, the pedagogy can be described as expansive. It combines both active and reflective approaches to learning through interdisciplinary studies in the context of collaborative projects in which adolescents work alongside specialists to achieve socially and economically meaningful goals.

The expansive nature of the curriculum, and the pedagogy used to implement the curriculum, ensures that the curriculum can be adjusted to accommodate knowledge, skills and understandings required by the National Curriculum and the demands of external examinations. Students become active participants with teachers in the task of identifying individual learning needs and, where needed, to design individualised learning programmes to meet these requirements and demands. The goal is to hand over to students increasing responsibility for planning and managing their own learning as one aspect of the overall aim of the Montessori learning environment prepared for adolescents: to prepare students for social and economic independence.

## Assessment and Qualifications

Progress in most subjects in the Key Stage 3 years is internally assessed. The teacher and pupil have weekly advisory meetings. The purpose of these one-to-one meetings is for the pupil to take increased ownership of their learning and be increasingly responsible for deciding how to use their time. The teacher facilitates this process, providing greater or lesser structure and direction for the period ahead, depending on the individual student, in light of their longer-term goals. The teacher's objective is to help the student manage their time well, keeping the educational objective in mind for the purpose of the pupil developing skills in self-reflection.

The meetings are an opportunity for the student to discuss their work as it stands, and the direction they intend to take it in the following week. Support and direction they may need from their Teacher during that period emerges from these conversations.



These one-to-one meetings between student and Teacher lead to increased ownership and independence. Additionally, pupils present their work to the parent and wider community.

An annual comprehensive report on progress will be sent to parents.

As pupils approach the GCSE year, they will practice past examination papers.

Students will sit a minimum number of 5 GCSE's to include English, Maths and Combined Science GCSEs. The international nature of our current intake means that we aim to offer Cambridge International GCSE's in many subjects.

### **Concerns and Complaints**

Parents who have concerns about any aspect of the curriculum should discuss these in the first instance with their child's Lead Teacher. If the issue is not resolved parents should seek a meeting with the Head of School. If issues are still left unresolved parents may follow the School's Complaints Policy and Procedure for Parents, which is available on the school website or upon request from the school office.