

**Maria Montessori  
Institute**



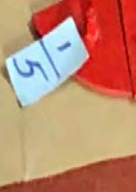
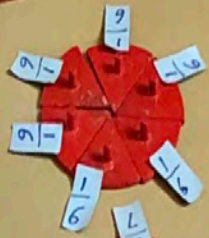
**Annual Review 2023-2024**

**We are the Maria Montessori Institute. We work for a world where Montessori education is empowering the next generation to be happier, more fulfilled, and better able to make a positive difference to their family, their community, and the planet.**

- We provide world-recognised Montessori teacher training and short courses for those looking to start a new career, the Montessori community, other professionals and parents.
- We run an exemplar school in London offering the highest-quality and most authentic Montessori education from two and half to 16 years.
- We champion the power of the Montessori approach at every stage of life including Montessori for dementia, disability and ageing.
- We run targeted Montessori initiatives to support children in the UK and around the world.







# 2023-2024 Highlights

- 731 people attended one of our courses this year and 204 children attended our school. We awarded bursaries to 77 students and 32 children.
- Our AMI Diploma pass rate was 91%.
- Our training centre inspection found that our “training is of excellent quality and offers a high level of both challenge and support to students of all abilities.”
- We engaged deeply with our school parent community with parents coming into school for classroom observations, lesson presentations and Special Visitor's Day, as well as a parents' garden party evening event.
- Our adolescent community at Hampstead launched. Our extensive building work to open a new Adolescent classroom meant several of our families were able to join our new 12-16 years community.
- We continued our new 6-12 Diploma Blended Study format combining in-person modules, online study and local teaching practice placements which has attracted high numbers of students.
- We successfully piloted new courses including one which uses the latest research and Montessori approaches to support children’s emotional wellbeing, and one which shows how Montessori can support the needs of diverse learners.
- We supported wider access to the Montessori approach by providing training and mentoring support to teachers in East Africa and developing countries.
- We raised awareness of Montessori in the UK through social media campaigning, digital promotion and working with print, broadcast and online media and providing comment on research and topical issues. We also gave talks at events and online on issues relevant to Montessori education.
- We took steps to improve our environmental sustainability through building improvements, locally sourced food and encouraging families to walk to school.
- During the year, further documents related to the history of the school and the Training Centre have been cleaned and catalogued. Relevant texts were sent to AMI for publication and dissemination.





# Our Training Centre

We are the only UK training centre to offer the world-recognised Association Montessori Internationale courses, evolved from those delivered by Maria Montessori herself. We also offer a degree in Montessori, professional development and short courses. Our trainers support the delivery of high- quality Montessori training around the world.

## 2023-24 Training Highlights

Our online courses continued to attract students from around the UK and across the world and 638 people attended our AMI Orientation (formerly Assistants Certificate) and other short courses. We held regular online information sessions with trainers for prospective students; 402 people registered for a session and many of these went on to train with us.

As well as our annual AMI Diploma 3-6 and Foundation Degree intake in September, we ran the first module of an AMI Diploma 0-3 which commenced in July 2024 and completed the second year of our new blended format AMI Diploma 6-12 which commenced in May 2023.

The Training Centre was successfully inspected by Mainland Inspection in December 2023 and Innovate Awarding for our Early Years Educator qualification in May 2024. Our glowing report from Mainland Inspection found that:

*“The Maria Montessori Institute is world-renowned as a centre of excellence for teacher training in Montessori methodology and attracts students from all over the world.”*

*“Training is held in high regard by the students who value the excellent blend of intellectual challenge and practical experience the courses provide.”*

*“Training is of excellent quality and offers a high level of both challenge and support to students of all abilities, so that each individual can make very good progress.”*

*“Pastoral care is excellent, as is the students’ cultural and moral development, which reflects the Montessori ethos and philosophy of the college.”*



## Course Bursaries

Many students in need of financial assistance benefited from assisted and full fee relief. 14 students on our Post Diploma Observation Course received full bursaries, 13 students on AMI Diploma courses and 50 on AMI Orientation courses benefited from assisted fees. 14% of students were given financial help.

The family of Ellie Kempley, an AMI Diploma 3-6 student who sadly passed away suddenly in 2022, established a scholarship fund in her memory. This year they raised £26,000 in a sponsored marathon, enough to provide 3 bursaries for the AMI Diploma 3-6 Course. The first Ellie Kempley student started her Diploma course in September 2024.





*“You will be simultaneously inspired, challenged and supported throughout a course that intertwines both theory and practice in an exceptional way. You will come out the other side with a newfound understanding, fascination and admiration for each child you encounter.”*

Rhianna Haylor, AMI Diploma 3-6 Graduate



## **AMI Diploma Courses**

93 students studied for AMI Diplomas, the internationally-recognised course that qualifies students as Montessori teachers/ practitioners. We ran 3-6 Diploma Courses in the following formats: One Year Day, Two Year Day and Two Year Evening. The pass rate of 3-6 Diploma students graduating this year was 91%. Our new AMI Diploma 6-12 Blended Study format combining in-person modules, online study and local teaching practice placements commenced in May 2023 continued this year.

## **Degree in Montessori Pedagogy (AMI 3-6)**

Students graduated from our Foundation Degree, run in partnership with the University of East London. Our degree students study over two years and also gain the AMI Diploma 3-6 as well having the option of an additional third year of study to gain a BA Hons in Early Childhood and Montessori. Students can access UK student loan funding for the degree course.

## **AMI Orientation Courses**

Seven AMI Orientation courses took place with two courses online at the 0-3 and 3-6 years level; one online and one in-person in Dublin at the 6-12 years level; and one online at the 12-18 years level. These courses are aimed at parents, classroom assistants and anyone seeking an introduction to Montessori at a specific stage of development. The online format meant they were accessible in the UK and across the world - in total, 223 people attended AMI Orientation courses during the academic year.

## **Montessori for Dementia, Disability and Ageing**

We ran workshops on how a Montessori approach can transform the lives of older people and those living with dementia or disabilities. These were aimed at professionals in the care sector and family members caring for relatives. 97 people attended these courses, held online throughout the year. The course content and audience has now been expanded to include the approach for those with disabilities, and going forward we believe this will appeal to those working in residential homes for people with disabilities as well as for family carers.



# Montessori and Emotional Wellbeing

In 2022-23 we successfully piloted a new course which uses the latest research and Montessori approaches to enable teachers to support children's emotional wellbeing. Building on this success, this year we ran two courses – one for Montessori teachers and one specifically for parents.

## AMI Refreshers

We held in-person AMI Refresher courses, including an 3-6 Refresher called *"Diverse Learners in the Children's House"*. This two-day event for Montessori teachers looked at how to address the different needs and learning styles of children including those with neurodiversity. It was attended by 86 people including our staff and people from other schools. Our AMI 6-12 Refresher entitled *"From Interpretative Reading to Reader's Theatre to Performances"* looked at how key lessons in drama, dance and song can be integrated into the work with Biology, Geography and History to help children participate fully in the writing, staging and performing of plays.



## MMI Observation Course – Post Diploma

Our MMI Observation Course is a Post Diploma course for AMI-trained Montessori teachers at the 3-6 years stage and offers a unique professional development opportunity. It was taken by UK students and students from China who joined our Mandarin translated course option. We offered several bursaries on this course including a bursary in memory of Hilla Patell and we had a higher-than-normal number of UK students taking the course.

## Montessori and Learning Differences – A Neurodevelopmental Approach

We piloted a new course for Montessori teachers developed by our Head of Training Louise Livingston called *Montessori and Learning Differences – A Neurodevelopmental Approach*. This course looks at how Montessori's focus on the individual's potential is uniquely placed to support learning differences including autism, ADHD, dyslexia and dyspraxia. The course is especially for Montessori teachers at the 3-6 years level and draws on the latest neuroscientific understanding of child development. It runs over an academic year during which participants focus on a case study in their school and discuss approaches with their fellow students.



## To Will Or Not To Will

This professional development course for Montessori teachers at the 3-6 years level looks at the concept of the development of the will and how to balance the child's will against the adult's will. We ran this course twice offering it with a Mandarin Chinese translation option as well as in English.



## Early Years Educator

The Early Years Educator Qualification awarded by Innovate Awarding has been successfully incorporated into our AMI 0-3 and AMI 3-6 Diploma courses to allow Montessori Diploma holders to be counted as qualified members of staff in UK early years settings. We also offer the Early Years Educator course online for our AMI 0-3 Diploma alumni who did not gain the qualification as part of the course when they graduated.

## Beyond the UK

Our courses continued to attract students from around the world both online and as Visa students. Our trainers also worked directly with other countries, acting as examiners and mentors, and delivering presentations and training. They worked in countries including China, Czech Republic, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Lebanon, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Tanzania.





# Our School

Our exemplar school in London offers the highest-quality and most authentic Montessori education for 2-16-year-olds. We nurture independence and creativity, promoting hands-on and joyful learning. Our children follow their interests and gain a lifelong love of learning.

## School Development and Expansion

The School's latest Ofsted rating is Good following an inspection in June 2022, where we achieved Outstanding in the areas of Behaviour and Attitudes and Personal Development.

This year 204 children were enrolled in the school and following last year's extensive building work and further reconfiguration this year at our Hampstead site we were able to launch our adolescent community for 12-16-year-olds in September 2023 with several families joining from our Upper Elementary classes. Our school management team has been expanded to include dedicated Special Educational Needs teachers at 3-6 and 6-16 levels and an operations manager.



## School Bursaries

Many children benefited from assisted and full fee relief, enabling families in need of financial assistance to attend our school. 6 children received a full bursary and 26 children benefited from assisted fees. 13% of children were given financial support.



## Engaging The Parent Community

Regular email communication from the Head of School continues to play a key role in cementing the school community. We offered parent information sessions for all age groups and increased the information available on our website. The My Montessori Child platform enables us to share observations and photos with parents.

Parents also had several opportunities to come into the school to learn more about their children's day-to-day experience in the community. This included classroom observations and "pop-up presentations" where teachers gave presentations or lessons in the same way as they are offered to the children, enabling parents to experience the Montessori work cycle and work with the materials as an active participant. Parents were also invited into the school for Special Visitor's Day where the children were able to share their personal work and demonstrate the presentations they had received.



*“Staff provide a nurturing and stimulating environment in which the school’s Montessori philosophy is firmly embedded.”*  
OFSTED



*A child building the Roman Arch.*

# Adolescent Programme

Our new Adolescent Community was established with four children, three of whom graduated from our 9-12 years Elementary class and one who was home-schooled after attending our Children's House. The numbers look set to double in the next school year, necessitating some further adjustments to our Hampstead site in order to accommodate the young people. A generous donation was received to enable these works to take place over summer 2024.

A key feature of our Adolescent community includes a residential trip early the Autumn term which fosters independence, connection with nature and a community bond. In September 2023 the Adolescent Community participated in a 10-day camping trip to Alfriston in Sussex. Despite wind, rain and freezing temperatures, the students prepared and cooked their meals and engaged in their surroundings and opportunities for learning including cycling and going on a hike. Over the course of the year the young people planned their two-week 'Odyssey' for Autumn 2024 which entailed living on an organic farm in order to learn more about sustainable agriculture. Another highlight for the adolescent community was the young people's work to research, design and begin to build their own section of the garden at Hampstead.

We believe the establishment of our Adolescent programme is an important step forward for the UK Montessori community and our school community.



## Other School Highlights

The whole school community came together for many wonderful events throughout the year including a picnic in Primrose Hill Park in May for which we once again enjoyed wonderful weather. Many parents commented on how nice it was to see the children all playing together freely and the community having the chance to visit in a leisurely way.

In the summer we once again held our annual parents' garden party and held sports days for all children. The Upper and Lower Elementary classes at Hampstead each put on a play for parents in the garden.

We embarked on the third year of our Spanish Language Programme and our Notting Hill bilingual English-Mandarin Programme. These offer the children exposure, exploration, and sensitization to a second language at a key stage in language development, with the goal of gradually building confidence and an appreciation for learning additional languages.

We celebrated religious festivals and supported awareness days such as Remembrance Sunday, Chinese New Year, Universal Children's Day and World Book Day. The children took part in Easter egg decorating and hunts and created Christmas decorations.



37 children and their families attended the Montessori Model United Nations in Rome in early May. The children and families found it to be a valuable experience and a wonderful opportunity for the children to participate in an international event and experience public speaking.



*Exploring the concept of angles using the Geometry Sticks.*

Our Upper Elementary children have worked with a local Hampstead community group to monitor air quality and we encourage all families to walk to school wherever possible. We are engaged with the Borough of Camden's 'greener street' campaign and encourage families to walk to school and not to use their cars at peak times.





*Working with the Grammar Boxes (above) and exploring the movement of the earth around the sun (below).*





# Outreach

We ran targeted Montessori initiatives to support children in disadvantaged communities in the UK and overseas, while our marketing, communications and campaigning activity took Montessori to a wider audience.

## Corner of Hope

Launched in 2010, our Corner of Hope project is an Educateurs sans Frontières initiative supporting children from vulnerable communities in Kenya including those in what was an Internally Displaced Persons camp, the Samburu Nomadic people and the people in the remote region of Pokot. The project gives these children access to education by training teachers and setting up schools and traveling schools. Two members of our staff are on the Board of the not-for-profit NGO Montessori for Kenya. In 2023-24 members of our training team spent a month in Kenya supporting the professional development of teachers in the Corner of Hope schools and also those offering Montessori schooling to the Samburu tribe in Northern Kenya as well as providing professional development workshops for all Montessori teachers in Kenya.

## Montessori in the Home

From September 2023 we offered our Montessori in the Home training as part of our outreach offer enabling more parents and professionals to adopt the approach with children in their care. We targeted the programme to those who would not otherwise be able to afford to train with us and 72 parents, carers and professionals attended online courses on using the Montessori approach in the home – one course was focused on the 0-3 years stage and one on the 3-6 years stage.

## Other Initiatives

We have convened a working group to create a Montessori course for foster carers and parents and are in the early stages of writing content in collaboration with another UK Charitable Foundation.

A member of our training team visited Ethiopia to explore ways to support a National Training Centre, founded by MMI graduates and backed by the Help The Children Africa projects (an MMI initiative).



# Increasing Awareness of Montessori

We raised awareness of Montessori and our work with promotional campaigns online and in media including national, parenting and sector outlets. Our social media campaigns reached 1.143 million people. Our Google search (organic and paid advertising) resulted in 198,000 visits to our website, an increase of 212.7% from last year's 63,316 visits.

Our communications work supported high numbers at open days and online information sessions with 732 people registering for one of these events. 402 people registered for our online trainer Q&A sessions which were held throughout the year and open to the general public and those thinking of studying with us. We organised an online "Meet a Graduate" session to promote our degree course.

Visits to our training centre and school were also arranged for those considering our AMI Diploma courses. 330 prospective parents registered for in-person school tours and we also offered classroom observations and parent talks which were also open to current parents and covered topics such as 'Practical Life: The Foundation for Learning' and 'Cultivating the Mathematical Mind'.



We published blogs and comment on topical issues in the education and Montessori sectors on our website and disseminated these via the media, emails to our database and social media. These articles engaged both those new to Montessori and our community.

We also used case studies of Diploma and Degree graduates to attract more people to train with us. Our Head of Training Louise Livingston gave talks on our latest research to the British Psychological Society and at the EdPsych conference held by the Institute of Education. Sara Brady, our 0-3 Diploma Course Co-Director, gave a free online talk on “The Practical Life of A Child Under Three”, 827 people registered for the talk and 466 attended or downloaded a recording.

This year we have developed a new website which we hope will help to increase awareness and understanding of Montessori as well as driving student and pupil numbers and providing an improved experience for the parents and students who use our site.



*Building the multiplication table of 7.*

# Staff Professional Development

As a school and training provider we are uniquely placed to give our staff unprecedented opportunities for mentoring and professional development as well as supporting professional development from other academic institutions. The skills and expertise gained by our teachers and trainers impact on their work in the classroom and training centre.

Our teaching staff attended our AMI Refresher Courses "*Diverse Learners in the Children's House*" and "*From Interpretative Reading to Reader's Theatre to Performances*". Some staff attended AMI Orientation courses at the 0-3 years and 3-6 years levels and four staff attended our Post Diploma MMI Observation course. Three staff members continued with the AMI 3-6 Training of Trainers programme; one member of staff with the 0-3; and two members of staff with the 6-12.

One staff member is being supported by the organisation in undertaking a part-time PhD in Educational Neuroscience at UCL's Institute of Education. Another completed a PGCE (postgraduate certificate in Education) Primary Early Years Initial Teacher Education at the University of the West of England.



# Sustainability

We endorse the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 4 which recognises the rights of all children to a quality education and the need for many more trained teachers to help fulfil this right. We also actively encourage all staff, children and students to recognise the need to protect our planet.

## Sustainable Development Goals

We advocate for the right of all children to a quality education by increasing the number of teachers and adults trained to deliver child-centred Montessori education and in particular to expand ways of delivering education to those who have the least opportunities to access it. We do this not only through our teacher training and school but also by our commitment to offering teaching bursaries, training and teaching expertise to our historical partners in East Africa and other developing countries.



*First steps in reading and writing.*

Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals is particularly relevant to our work: *“By 2030 ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote.....sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.”* The AMI Montessori programme promotes all of these areas and is known worldwide as an approach that embodies ‘education for peace’. The integrated syllabus of studies combines knowledge of the earth’s processes and the interdependencies of life for a sustainable planet and also underpins the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.



## Environmental Sustainability

Whilst limited by some of our school classes being located in church halls and with the Head office and largest school site occupying a Victorian listed building, we have endeavoured to minimise energy loss by refurbishing the windows and doors, committing green energy wherever possible and recycling all glass, paper, cardboard and plastic.

All of the Montessori materials in our school and training environments are made from natural materials and we have a repair rather than replace policy.

Our in-house catering team at Hampstead buys locally sourced and seasonal produce and staff are working with the children in our school to grow fruit and vegetables for lunches.

# Thank You

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to our work this year in so many ways, either through philanthropy and funding, or by supporting our students on teaching practice or serving on our Board.

## Our Board Members

Mr Ben Faccini  
Writer/Consultant to UN agencies and  
NGOs

Mr David Murphy - Honorary Treasurer  
(resigned 19 June 2024)  
Finance Director

Mrs Nicola Forsyth  
Montessori Pedagogue

Ian Stockdale – Honorary Treasurer  
(appointed 19 June 2024)  
Finance Director

Ms Sara Giwa-McNeil  
Montessori Pedagogue

Mr Richard Partridge - Chairman  
Architect

Mrs Wendy Innes  
Montessori School Proprietor

Ms Farran Scott  
Musician

Mrs Amanda Lake  
(resigned 19 June 2024)  
Montessori Pedagogue

Mrs Linda Webster - Company  
Secretary Former Primary School  
Teacher

Mrs Catherine Middlemas  
Montessori Pedagogue

Professor Carrie Weston  
Chartered Psychologist, Writer  
& Educational Consultant

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