



## CURRICULUM POLICY

### RATIONALE

At Derby Montessori School our whole curriculum is concerned with the holistic development of our pupils. We provide an environment where all children delight in every aspect of learning and every child desires to learn more. We maintain stimulating environments in which all children are active learners, making their own discoveries, and progressing their individual development through hands on learning. Our school ethos includes developing a setting that is a true community, with children teaching and learning from each other as well as from the adults in the school and members of the wider community. Children's rights and responsibilities are embedded at the core of our curriculum and ensure learning environments in which children are independent and self assured yet still care deeply for one another and the world around them. Every child matters in this school and every child is seen as a unique and diverse individual. The Montessori Method forms the framework which is at the heart of our School Curriculum Policy and which guides ethos, philosophy and practice within our school.

### AIMS AND VALUES

We uphold the belief that every child has an equal right to quality education and childcare; and that all aspects of the curriculum should be accessible to every child, regardless of sex, race, religion or ability. We recognise each child as an individual and that every child has the right to be respected as such. Every child has the right to intelligent help, hands on experience, time to make his/her own discoveries and the right to develop at his/her own pace.

In planning our curriculum we pay regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and incorporate children's rights into the aims and values that underline our curriculum.

The aims and values of Derby Montessori School's curriculum are as follows:

- The school is committed to ongoing development of high quality teaching and learning across the whole school.
- We are committed to assisting our pupils in maximising their potential and developing their personalities and talents to the full, through a curriculum which is creative, stimulating and exciting.
- Children with Special Needs are identified and Individual Education Plans (IEP's) are draw up for such children to ensure they access the curriculum fully and reach their potential in all areas.
- The curriculum recognises the important contributions and prior experiences that children bring to the school, and builds on pupil's experiences, knowledge and understanding.
- Planning shows clearly the objectives and strategies intended to be employed in order that learning and development takes place.

- Observation and assessment of students occurs on a regular basis and is integrated into the planning process for continued progress and development.
- In a form relevant to their age, knowledge and understanding, students are involved in planning their own activities, assessing their own progress and setting future goals.
- All-round health and emotional well-being is promoted by and for every member of the school community. Children are treated with respect and are expected to show respect for themselves, others and the environment.
- Everyone in our school community is entitled to feel safe and secure and to benefit from sensitive care, support and guidance.
- All members of the school community are encouraged to become actively involved in the school and students are supported to become involved in the wider community.
- Students in the school are supported in developing a deeper awareness of their rights and responsibilities on a personal, social, community and global level.

## KEY SKILLS

In delivering a curriculum which is broad, balanced, relevant and purposeful; the full range of which is available equally to all students, it is intended that children should be supported in developing the following key skills:

- High levels of self-esteem, self-belief and self-motivation.
- Confidence in working both independently and in collaboration with others.
- Curiosity, creative problem solving and reasoning skills.
- Essential literacy and numeracy skills.
- The ability to acquire, build on and apply a broad range of knowledge and skills
- Recognition of the importance of being healthy and staying healthy.
- An understanding and appreciation of the diversity of our world and its people.
- An awareness on the impact that we have on the world at a personal, social, community and global level.
- An awareness of rights and responsibilities.
- A lifelong love of learning.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Principal has overall responsibility for the curriculum and is responsible for ensuring that long term, medium term and weekly planning provides for all pupils to participate in a wide range of challenging learning experiences. In consultation with the Principal, day-to-day curriculum management is delegated to the Lead Directress of each area of the three areas of the school. The Toddler Community, the Children's House and the Primary 'Cosmic Education' Class.

Lead Directresses are responsible for ensuring that the curriculum in their area of the school is implemented consistently and effectively following the agreed policy and schemes of work.

Individual members of staff are responsible for the planning and delivery of each session based on schemes of work, which outline objectives, activities and methods of assessment for the activities and/or lessons taking place.

The principal and the lead Directresses are responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in each area of the curriculum.

## MEETING STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Derby Montessori School finds that the statutory framework and practice guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sits well with Montessori Philosophy. Both recognise the unique nature of the child and the holistic way in which children learn. The Toddler Community and the Children's House both use Montessori materials, activities and practices to fulfil all the requirements of the EYFS. Derby Montessori School, comprising at that time the Toddler Community and Children's House, and at that time being registered as a Day Nursery, was inspected by OFSTED on 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

The Cosmic Education Program provides for children in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The curriculum for children of this age is based on the Montessori Elementary program. Links are made to the National Curriculum where this is seen to be in the best interests of the children and the school. National Standards are used as a basis from which the children's progress can be assessed.

The school requires children in the Toddler Community and in the Children's House to attend for a minimum of three 2 ½ hour sessions per week, though the majority exceed this requirement. Children who have reached compulsory school age are required to attend for five 'school days' which allows for 25 hours of 'teaching' time per week.

Opportunities are taken to extend the curriculum through the use of educational visits, visitors, use of the school grounds and the local community.

## SCHEMES OF WORK AND PLANNING

Schemes of work show the means by which the Montessori Method and EYFS are put into practice in the school.

In most cases Montessori Reference Folders form the guidance to the preparation of the schemes of work and provide the planning for lessons and/or activities. The folders and additional planning clearly set out learning objectives and how children will be assessed to have met these objectives.

Each class contains a mix of ages and abilities and therefore much of the planning is individually tailored to each child's own developmental progress. The Montessori Reference Folders guide the progression of activities whilst allowing for significant variations in the speed at which children learn. Many of our pupils will need to revisit ideas, themes and concepts throughout their school life and the curriculum is therefore designed to be spiral and for the children to naturally make and develop links between different areas of the curriculum in order to maximise learning.

In response to the mixed ages in each class much of the broader planning of project work employs a three year rotation of key topics and an emphasis on cross-curricular links and the opportunity to development key skills in a relevant and purposeful way across the curriculum.

Routines that address personal needs are also viewed as learning opportunities within the whole curriculum. Any routines such as toileting and meal times are recognised as a learning opportunity where high quality interaction can take place.

## INCLUSION

The Montessori Method naturally allows for diversity in ability and diversity in the time needed for students to acquire skills and concepts. Much of the curriculum is designed to support individual learning at each student's own pace. Vertical grouping within the classes also supports inclusion with the older or more able students supporting and/or mentoring the younger ones. The school is able to support children with a wide range of abilities, and has a pro-active approach to inclusion.

For those children where specific individual support is needed, an IEP is drawn up by the SEN co-ordinator and/or the child's Key Worker. The IEP sets out clear targets, strategies and time scales and is reviewed regularly and a minimum of three times a year.

The SEN co-ordinator liaises with a number of outside support agencies to ensure that the best possible outcomes are attained for individual pupils. At present these include:

- Derby City, Early Years Inclusion Support Team
- Speech Therapist
- Educational Psychologist
- Support Service for Physical Impairment

## ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

The main purpose of assessment and record keeping is to be able to support children's developmental progress through carefully targeted delivery of the curriculum. We achieve this in different ways in different areas of the school:

### Toddler Community:

- Observations of the children are carried out daily and are recorded on a weekly sheet which shows the six areas of learning as described in the EYFS.
- Observation sheets are copied weekly and distributed to parents.

### Children's House:

- Targets are set for each child at the beginning of each term and are added to and amended as the term progresses.
- Observations are carried out on a daily basis and are recorded on weekly sheets under the six headings described in the EYFS. This provides on-going assessment of the tasks and activities that individual children are working on.
- At least one in depth observation is carried out of each child during each term.
- Termly progress reports are completed for each child covering the six areas of learning identified by the EYFS.
- Foundation stage profiles are completed for children at the end of the foundation stage.
- The children's Key Workers are available at the beginning of each term for parent conferences to discuss individual children's targets and/or progress reports.

### Primary 'Cosmic Education' Class:

- Targets in all the key areas are set for each child at the beginning of each term and are added to and amended as the term progresses.
- Observations are carried out on a daily basis and are recorded on weekly sheets. This provides on-going assessment of the tasks and activities that individual children are working on.
- Children assess their own progress through the use of rubrics which may be completed individually, with the teacher/assistant, or as a class.
- At least one, and usually a minimum of two, in depth observations are carried out of each child during each term.

- During the year two progress reports are completed for each child that cover progress in the key areas of language and maths, as well as general progress in other cross curricula areas.
- The class teacher is available twice during the year for parent conferences to discuss the progress of individual children.

Children are involved in their own assessment throughout the school as many of the activities contain a built in 'control of error' which allows the child to self correct and/or assess their own progress.

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The School has an open door policy towards parents, inviting them to discuss any issues or concerns as soon as they arise. We strive to work in partnership with parents on the development of the curriculum through:

- Valuing parents as important educators
- Ensuring policies and practices are available to parents on request.
- Holding parent conference evenings, for the Children's House and above, twice during the year and completing a termly progress report for each of these children.
- Providing a school prospectus and a Parents Handbook that explain the beliefs that underpin the curriculum and the benefits in the way it is delivered.
- A Home/School agreement which sets out expectations of parents, staff and pupils.
- Questionnaires that seek the views and opinions of parents.

## CURRICULUM REVIEW

The school uses a variety of internal and external reviews to assess and review the success and delivery of the curriculum. These include:

- OFSTED reports
- Montessori Education (UK) [quality assessment] reports
- Input from Local Authority Advisors
- Input from consultants invited to review specific areas of the curriculum.
- School self assessment.
- Staff peer assessments.

Actions from the above form the basis of the School Action Plan, progress on which is reviewed monthly and which is updated and revised annually.