

## Collaborative Montessori Accreditation (CMA) Report

**Name of Assessor:** Sarah Olley

**Date/s of Assessment Visit:** 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023

**Name of Setting:** St Barnabas – New World Montessori

**Address of Setting:** St. Barnabas Church Pitshanger Lane, London W5 1QG

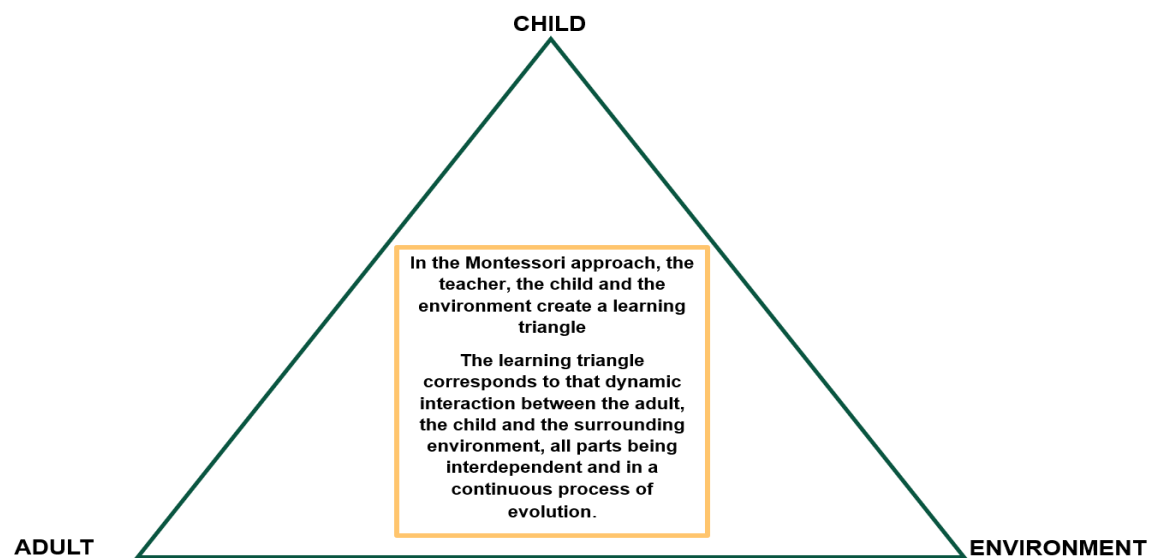
**Setting type:** Sessional care, pack away daily.

**Facility type:** Church Hall

**Ownership of the Setting:** Haleh Haledri

**Date Setting opened:** 1997 established. Owned by Haleh since 2005

**Date and grade of last Ofsted / relevant national inspection:** June 2019 - Good



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			
2 – 3	3		3
3 – 5	5		5
Over 5			

### Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:

The children at New World Montessori - St Barnabas (NWM – SB) spent the day being busy in mostly self-chosen activities, with some adult-led activities also being part of the day. Chances to move freely between the indoor and the outdoor spaces were present and children were happy and confident within their surroundings. It was very positive to observe how settled some of the newest children were. The children showed high levels of independence and a real familiarity with the routine of the day.

### Independence

The entry into the setting - from leaving their carers at the door to coming inside and sitting in for circle time - showed that all children are encouraged to manage all aspects of the early day routine independently. Some children were given more time and space to manage tasks, with staff 'keeping an eye' but not chivvying the children along, recognising that time is an important factor towards the completion of said tasks. Children had freedom to either join group activities, such as circle time and the dance class, or do something of their own choice.

Both indoors and outdoors children were actively supported to be independent: for example, a child using the easel for the first time was actively aided by a teacher to place and remove the paper, whilst this support decreased as the child became more familiar with this routine; another new child was at first reminded to return materials to the shelf but subsequently did that all on their own. It was observed that most children worked independently with the materials.

During a bug hunt activity adults reminded children of the ground rules for them to then act accordingly, supporting thus the development of the independence of the will.

Two children helped to prepare snack and whilst an adult was at the table supporting discussion her hands remained 'quiet' so the children kept being busy. The conversation about oranges and juice with one child led to a juicer being brought over and juice being squeezed and then enjoyed by the child; this was all done via verbal instructions while the child did the physical work. At lunch time children found their lunch boxes, selected where to sit, took out their food, ate and tidied up at the end, with adults helping only when required.

Following the setting's requirement, toileting is assisted by an adult; when a trip needed to be made a call-out to all other children was made. The staff is encouraged to be mindful of the intrusive and distracting nature of this practice and to find a different way to do this more respectfully.

In all activities indoors and outdoors children were encouraged to find their own way of doing things, supporting thus independent thinking. A teacher recognised that a creative activity was too advance for some of the children (cutting skills) and was able to adapt some aspects of it to enable more independence. Planning to add new cutting strips on the shelf to support the development of the skills was mentioned to a colleague.

### **Socialisation**

Across the morning the roleplay area (shop corner) was a busy part of the classroom; social skills were at the centre of the children's experience where vertical grouping and the assistance of observant adults supported the younger children in understanding roles and responsibilities. Turn taking and sharing was advocated, modelled and then verbally supported by an attentive adult. A child recalled his experience in going shopping with mummy.

At lunch time children were able to wait for each other and, together, offered thanks for their lunch before starting. The children ate with the staff around a large table space; they spoke about their food following the teachers' enquiries. There was an

interesting discussion about custard after the teacher said her food was a ham and mustard sandwich. This was a funny time when children and staff enjoyed the discussion on the difference between the words 'mustard' and 'custard' with focus on the sound 'm'. One child noted her peer was moving while at the table and said: 'No move'. The teacher explained that the child was younger and still learning about the setting's ground rules which encouraged the older child to look out for and look after his younger peer.

Outside some children played together with a variety of different resources which were freely chosen; social interactions were largely positive and showed the children's skills at negotiating with each other.

### **Exploration**

The outdoor live bug hunt offered the children opportunities to explore - picking things up to see what was underneath - and to consider where bugs might hide and therefore where to search. Children on the hunt exclaimed with glee: 'I found something' and 'Found one, found one'; 'What is it?' – These exclamations brought all the group together with the teacher using this as a chance to encourage care and respect of other living beings whilst satisfying their eagerness to explore. At the end, the found bugs were returned to the places they were found. The indoor prepared bug habitat had natural materials and plastic bugs models and gave the children a chance to further discuss this topic with an adult, providing a positive preparation for the hunt outside.

In the outside space there was a tough tray with natural materials of different textures. There were sensory materials in a basket for any child to explore but these were perhaps most relevant for younger children. There were some lovely story sack resources which children explored after lunch in a very relaxed manner.

Opportunities for risk-taking were present in the outside space with children climbing along the edge of the wall and jumping down; the children had to check it was safe for them to jump.

Outside there was a layout of balls and hoops for children to explore; these resources were used by several children on their own and with others, exploring different ways to use them.

Inside, a child with additional needs explored an orrery for quite some time, satisfying her rotation schema and this was later repeated when tracing the circle inset repeatedly. A newer child actively explored his environment being free to move around the different curriculum areas, looking for something he liked on the shelves and then taking the activity to the table. He would explore for a few minutes and then move on. He was observed by teachers who quietly assisted him in returning materials back to their original place; at times they would sit and name things for the child but recognise his explorative interest came first.

### **Movement**

Children had freedom of movement throughout the day. A dance class was led by an extracurricular teacher who included many aspects of gross motor movement in her session. More in general, the outdoor environment well supported the refinement of gross motor skills like climbing, jumping, navigating a slope and coordination while moving large equipment. The children had the chance to practise and refine small motor movements during arts and crafts work and with Montessori activities, particularly with those of Everyday Living and KUV.

### **Communication**

There was plenty of evidence of good communication between staff and children. Lunch time and snack preparation were a particularly positive example of this as children were able to express their own thoughts. At lunch one child shared an extended story about their holiday with a teacher and a friend. This was a sustained conversation with good listening, questioning and shared understanding.

The role play area was again rich with conversations between adults and children and between the children themselves. In the bug hunt children talked to each other and also enjoyed sharing their finds with me, showing confidence in themselves and their communication skills.

For the children with English as Additional Language (EAL) there were times when the staff used phrases of home language; moments were taken to reinforce words in English, when, for example, exploring activities with animals. Children who used no language and little non-verbal communication were well supported by their key person who was particularly attuned to their needs and wishes and created symbols as support.

Many interactions showed that the children were able to follow verbal instructions and it was clear that teachers were delighted at the way children express themselves and an easy sense of fun and naturalness means that communication was positive.

## **The Environment**

### **Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:**

NWM-SB is a warm and welcoming place, and it is clear that the children feel very comfortable, even those new to the setting. One parent said it was their child's 'home from home'.

The attentive preparation of the physical, spiritual and social environments was evident both indoors and outdoors. The characteristics of the Montessori spiritual environment were actively implemented throughout the session through the key

principles such as freedom of choice, respect for all and non-interference; time was given for children to work at their own pace: a child worked with the bug habitat for about 35 minutes.

The physical environment was maintained by children and staff with shelves being checked regularly and the cycle of activity being actively supported.

### **Order**

All staff were thinking ahead at all times, quietly preparing the environment for daily transitions and for the smooth running of the day; children were kept busy whilst other staff organised the room for the morning work cycle. After her lunch break the manager quietly tidied and organised the shelves ready for the afternoon session; the art teacher gathered the required resources and set up a space ready for the children.

Routines are well established, and children were able to manage transitions well, naturally flowing through the day. Children participated in the setting-up of lunch and followed an obviously secure routine. All in the setting worked actively to create a purposeful social learning environment playing their part in showing respect and taking responsibility.

The organisation of the Montessori curriculum areas is relevant to the age range of the children (2 – 4 years) and the room provides both active and sedentary spaces.

### **The activities**

Activities were well prepared at the start of the day: the shelves for each area of the Montessori curriculum areas were organised following logical academic sequences with a good range of resources offering appropriate challenge. The book corner included some lovely story telling resources like the *Rainbow Fish* spoons. The sensory tray was a good addition to support the Sensorial area. A positive range of cultural materials related to the theme of bugs well supported this topic. The spirograph was a fun addition to the arts and crafts shelf, which was clearly laid out to support easy access to resources.

There is a positive approach to education around sustainability in the setting: children placed waste food in food recycling bins and paper was sorted from other waste. When talking about bugs their part in the world was touched on.

### **The physical environment** **Indoors**

The classroom had a calm and positive welcoming atmosphere with plenty of natural light. NWM – SB is a pack-away setting which, despite the small size of the classroom, has plenty of workspace at tables and on the floor as shelves were strategically located around the edge of the room and had no clutter on their top.

As some of the younger children found it challenging to access some of the activities on the AEL shelves, the staff are encouraged to facilitate access for all. The easel has a step up to access the flat surface and a child found it hard to place the paper up themselves and so this needs reviewing, possibly easy access to magnets could be provided.

### **Outdoors**

The outdoors was prepared with a variety of resources: balls and hoops, dolls on a rug, pencils and paper, a tough tray with natural materials to explore and some conventional Montessori activities.

The outside space has to be packed away each day and so a mindful approach to what is taken out has to be considered. In the summer term, when the weather allows it, shelves are set up outside and so children spend much of their day working there. To further play opportunities outside, the use of some more open-ended resources and den making were discussed.

### **First hand experiences and active learning**

On the visit the bug hunt provided a full first-hand experience. Children had trowels, magnifying glasses and bug boxes to facilitate their hunt. In the staff meeting, planning was discussed and a visit to a local pond is being planned for the weeks ahead to support the life cycle activity which will be in class.

Trips out into the community are a part of the planning also and are regularly undertaken.

The shopping role play area was full of reality-based resources such as boxes and tins and materials expected to be found in shops; children carried out various roles such as customers and shop keepers; here critical and creative thinking was encouraged.

The dance session was very active, and cooking and science are regular activities where children are actively learning and participating. Planning for these activities show opportunities for children to be fully involved at all stages.

## **The Adult**



Adults present during the accreditation visit.

Initials, roles and responsibilities	Qualifications	Length of time at the setting	Part time	Full time
H.H - owner	Level 4 Montessori	13	x	
K.S – manager	Level 4 Montessori	Since 2016	X	
A.P	Level 4 Montessori	Since 2022 previously at other New world setting for 4 years	x	
A.M	Level 2	Since 2020		X

**Summary of evidence and assessment of practice:**

The staff were calm, caring and enthusiastic. There was a real sense of joy in their approach and a true delight in what the children shared with them. Positive statements and open-ended questions were commonplace and opened up learning opportunities for the children. Lovely extended conversations and children leaning into their teachers were proof of the beautiful trusting relationships already built. The differing needs of the children are recognised and supported by everyone.

**The Leadership Team –**

The setting is well run by the manager who is well supported by the owner. Parents have only positive things to say about the availability and level of support they receive from the leadership team. One parent commented on how she had been reassured in ‘...my anxiety about...big school’.

Throughout the morning the manager and owner were also watching out for the team, reminding them to drink water, making them a hot drink and were always ready to support them in their practice if needed.

In the staff meeting there was a real sense of the horizontal approach to management: all ideas were welcomed and valued. Benefits of past training courses was acknowledged and offers of future training were made. The use of peer-on-peer observations and mentoring is also evident on the setting's paperwork.

During the visit it was the manager who ensured the smooth running of the day with her infectious enthusiasm and sense of joy which added to the light and fun atmosphere of the setting; the owner actively supported the new child in the settling in process. The sense of where to be and what is needed was clear in these experienced, confident practitioners. The sense of 'the child' and of their spirit and the need to follow this sensitively and respectfully is obvious in the leadership team.

The leadership team could encourage their teaching team to observe more unobtrusively (by withdrawing and observing at a distance) and to avoid calling out across the room for a trip to toilet or to join a group activity. This would help to keep the atmosphere of the room quieter and more respectful.

### **The Teaching Team**

Parents made many positive comments in the Collaborative Montessori accreditation survey and when conversing with the assessor at the gate. They praised aspects of the nursery practice such as the consistency of approach, the low staff turn-over and the support offered. They said: 'The entire team is really brilliant'; 'The approach in teaching and caring for my child is excellent'. Parents appreciated the Montessori approach to fostering self-help skills and knowledge about the world.

They also said that the best thing about the nursery was the teachers: they are 'passionate and enthusiastic'; 'they prepared my child for the arrival of a sibling'; 'my child didn't talk on arrival – now chatting continuously'.

The one non-Montessori trained teacher was well integrated into the team and her practice followed the Montessori principles such as following the child and adapting activities according to the children's needs.

The principles of freedom and non-interference were evident in the practice of all the staff. They all worked actively to support independence and to recognise the differing needs of the children.

The iPad is used from time to time to collect photo evidence of activity but the use of it is unobtrusive as children were not seen to 'perform for the photo'.

Planning integrates the children's interests: in the staff meeting a teacher commented on how a child shared an interest in sea creatures and on how resources and activities on this topic can be included into their existing planning.

At the time of the accreditation visit the use of Numeracy or Literacy materials was not observed and engagement with sensorial activities was limited; the staff is encouraged to monitor these areas of the Montessori curriculum and assess if they are regularly explored by the children.

The outside space can be developed further to include work with sounds, numbers and mathematical concepts as this can support the learning and development in these areas.

### **The Key Person**

During the staff meeting information was shared by key persons about their children so all staff were aware of developmental needs and interests and of the targeted approaches being used. All staff support all children and share their observations. In a small team this is managed well; regular staff meetings and informal chats means that information is up to date, and approaches are consistently followed.

Communication with parents on their children's progress is done via an online platform; parents said that posts are '...rich with information on what the child is doing'.

## Commendations

- The work done to support children with additional needs and their parents is exemplary
- The warm atmosphere and sense of joy is palpable and certainly felt; everyone, staff and children alike, felt content and happy to be there
- The children were busy all day, followed their own rhythm and were confident to do things independently with a clear sense of the routines of the day
- Children's learning and development is actively supported with a sense of 'following the child' and providing a consistent and continuous approach

- Parents are active participants supporting the development of the children
- Montessori principles and practice are actively followed by all staff and CPD training is available to support individual professional development

### Recommendations

- Provide opportunities for staff to move between the 2 owned settings to support their professional development
- Remember to go closer to the child when wanting to communicate something or to gather the children for a group activity
- Review the current location of activities to ensure continuous and easy access for all
- Find ways to bring the children's cultural capital into the nursery in other ways. Possible ideas – inviting parents to share stories from their cultures; having familiar stories in the child's home language; keep festival boxes on the shelf for continuous provision
- CPD sessions on the sensorial curriculum, on being creative in extending activities and on outdoor learning is encouraged to maximise the potential of the outside space
- Continue to review the indoor/outdoor free flow to ensure more continuity during the day and across the year

### Conditions

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

Name of Assessor: Sarah Olley

Date of Report: 25<sup>th</sup> April 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:**  
New World Montessori –  
St. Barnabas

**Validity period:**  
From: May 2023 to: May 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.*

*This accreditation assessment has not considered the setting's compliance with its national curriculum and other regulatory requirements, nor does it provide any assessment of the setting's financial aspects.*