



Standards & Training Accreditation Review - Accreditation Assessor Report

Name (legally registered name of setting):	Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery – Angel
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Section 1: Overview

The purpose of this assessment is for **Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery – Angel**, to undertake a Standards & Training Accreditation Review (STAR) Accreditation application and assessment review. The Team of Accreditation Assessors involved in this assessment include **Jo McIntyre** and **Caroline Allen**.

This report is based on a review of information submitted by the setting (including self-analysis evidence) and additional evidence gathered throughout the assessment process comprising desk-based materials, discussions, interviews and on-site visits.

The scope of provision for the purposes of this report relates to formal educational provision within the **Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery, Angel** branch. The Nursery operates five classrooms and a secure garden catering for 90+ children coming from a wide catchment area and within a variety of multicultural backgrounds which are reflected in the curriculum choices and daily activities across the nursery. Within this context, **Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery, Angel** provides a central service for its local community; STAR aims to amplify this important role and provide professional insight and relevant scrutiny as evidence to external audiences and families of the essential duties carried out by this setting for its young people. The purpose of the STAR framework is to enable comparison and continuity regarding practice, principles and application of learner-centred philosophy for all applicant settings, providers and schools globally.

Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery – Angel, can be assured that their application has been considered via a rigorous and robust assessment process, concluded in **February 2023** and we are pleased to confirm **SUCCESSFUL** Accreditation within MCI's Standards & Training Accreditation Review (STAR) framework. **Congratulations!**



Section 2: Summary of Findings

As illustrated by the Montessori Group's Commitment to Quality Enhancement, STAR is a vital part of our approach to ensure the availability of high-quality educational provision through the UK and overseas. It is in support of this vision that our panel look to highlight good practice; provide narrative and commentary to share the uniqueness of each provider and highlight areas of particular notes for challenge, development or celebration now and in the future development of the provider.

Standards

- 1. Children are nurtured by well-informed and responsive staff members who support active play and exploration, helping children develop creative thinking skills, autonomy and confidence.**

Principles	Evidenced (TO BE COMPLETED BY ASSESSOR)
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>1.1 Children's spontaneous learning is of paramount importance. Such learning is nurtured by sensitive and well-informed observers who prepare rich, dynamic indoor and outdoor learning environments that actively support children's play and exploration to enhance independence.</p>	<p>Hopes and Dreams demonstrate a fundamental commitment to promote and support the holistic development of the child throughout their daily activities. Recent investment and refurbishment supports well-equipped indoor and outdoor areas, promoting independent play and exploration through a rich array of equipment and resources. The Setting is spread over 3 floors with the youngest children situated in the basement and ground floor for easy access to the nursery garden. Classes have allocated time slots in the garden area, children in the upper classes use the ground floor entrance to the garden, via the indoor stairs. At the start of their learning journey every child is allocated a Key person to develop effective and positive relationships with the child, the family and the Nursery. Rooms are well organised with creative activities and well-resourced spaces such as role play and cosy reading areas all of which invites children's spontaneous explorations. Care is taken not to interrupt children who are engaged during the 3 hour work cycle.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>1.2 Holistic support and provision for children considers the needs of the whole child and promotes physical, cognitive, social, emotional, psychological and spiritual development.</p>	<p>The leadership and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to provide a stimulating learning environment to support the holistic growth of every child through self-exploration, open-ended resources and an abundance of opportunities for supported 'everyday living' activities.</p> <p>Children attending the setting are clearly confident and well supported. Care has been given to equip environments with resources to supplement potential gaps in the provision - where outside space restricts the provision of some sensorial/physical developmental activities - a variety of resources are available in the classrooms, for example rooms include opportunities for gross motor movement in the form of toddler risers and indoor climbing frames. Trips to the local park and organised activities such as Yoga, Football and Tennis are organised on a weekly basis.</p>
<p>1.3 Children are supported to prepare for real-life, encouraged to develop tools in resilience, self-esteem, independence and self-discipline.</p>	<p>Suitable low-level furniture, washroom and cloakroom areas promote children's independence and self-discipline. There are opportunities to promote children's autonomy further at snack time: helping with preparation, self-serving their own food, washing dishes at clear up time as well as learning to dress themselves, in the Toddler plus rooms. In the baby rooms the children are encouraged to hold their own</p>



	bottle, use a feeding spoon where appropriate and develop self-care using child friendly toilets and wash facilities. Through observation and 'In the moment planning' the staff are able to implement extended learning and aid spontaneous development.
<p>ESSENTIAL:</p> <p>1.4 Every child is a unique person who is continually learning at their own pace and in their own way; leading to creative thinking.</p>	<p>Through observation and 'In the moment planning' the staff are able to implement extended learning and aid spontaneous development thus underpinning the Montessori 'follow the child' philosophy. Parents, carers and staff contribute to 'In the Moment' planning for each child through the individual's Journey book and the 'Family' software. It is important for these to be kept up to date, especially those that are displayed. Each child is given a Journey book when they join Hopes and Dreams which transitions between the setting and home to record and share memories, personal achievements and artwork. The Setting is introducing a new online Journey book to record the adventures of the Nursery pet. Materials such as glue, paint, cardboard, paper, chalk, sand etc are available to the children at all times. The children also participate in group activities such as yoga, gardening and music.</p>
<p>1.5 Children learn through positive social interactions that are warm, loving and foster a sense of belonging. Staff nurture each individual child in a harmonious and peaceful environment and are responsive to children's needs, ideas and feelings.</p>	<p>The leadership and staff understand that good relationships between children, parents and staff promote a positive and respectful culture as evidenced in the Parents as Partners policy. Each room is subtly decorated with displays of children's artwork at child level. Staff model good manners and behaviour with a strong focus on British Values which is highlighted in the settings development plan.</p>

2. Children are offered the freedom to learn at their own pace and according to their individual interests, uninterrupted, during the 'work cycle'.

Principles	Evidenced
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>2.1 Staff trust each individual child in his/her efforts to 'construct an individual'.</p>	<p>Hopes and Dreams implement themes and principles of EYFS and Montessori principles to achieve an educational program that supports the holistic development of the individual. Daily observations are recorded, data is then transferred to a new on-line tool 'Family' - previously MMC (My Montessori Child) software which tracks all areas of the child's development. Careful observations facilitate the setting to continuously create a stimulating and progressive environment.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>2.2 The setting offers a continuous provision of activities and resources with which children engage freely and repetitiously.</p>	<p>The setting maintains its ongoing practical provision within a well-resourced range of Montessori activities and a rich range of resources, combining Montessori and other materials, all of which can be accessed freely. Activities are open-ended with plenty of opportunity for the child to re-visit. Well organised storage spaces allow easy access to rotate resources, providing a spacious, uncluttered workspace.</p>



	<p>Since the start of the accreditation process the Setting has undergone several staff changes which has reduced the number of Montessori trained practitioners. The leadership team are working to address this in their SDP to help staff adopt Montessori practices.</p>
<p>2.3 Settings maintain the principles of freedom of choice; children are always given the choice to engage with an activity or not; the principle of “following the child” is embedded in practice.</p>	<p>The nursery shows a clear commitment to maintain the principles of freedom of choice and ‘follow the child’ as shown in numerous areas of the website and the setting development plan. The management proactively take steps to disseminate this practice through, staff training, planning, observation and assessment. Parents and carers contribute to the group activities that are carried out according to the monthly ‘In the Moment’ plans through the ‘Family’ software. No Tangible evidence provided.</p> <p>At the time of the on-site assessment there was some evidence of the ‘Follow the child’ principal. As more staff are trained in the Montessori approach this will become further imbedded.</p>
<p>2.4 Children’s spontaneous learning follows ‘cycles of activity’. Each cycle is determined by the child’s selection of an activity/resource, engagement with it and completing and returning of the resource to its original place, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Children in the pre-school room experience a 3-hour uninterrupted work cycle.</p> <p>At the on-site visit there was evidence of the team co-ordinator modelling to staff how to use the materials and support the ‘Work cycle’. Further training is being planned to disseminate and embed these practices.</p> <p>We look forward to seeing increased evidence of this in Annual monitoring.</p>
<p>2.5 Consistency is achieved in establishing clear boundaries of behaviour.</p>	<p>The behaviour management policy clearly outlines the settings commitment to embed positive caring and polite behaviour with staff role modelling respectful behaviour and demonstrating positivity towards diversity.</p> <p>The ABC approach is used to address behaviours – the ABC model of behaviour is an approach to tracking and understanding the behaviour of children in the classroom to enable teaching staff to improve their understanding of what triggers certain behaviours and to develop effective responses and support plans Most children attend the setting full time and their understanding of behavioural expectations is evident. Leaders have noticed the improvement in children’s behaviours since returning to nursery full-time after COVID.</p>



3. The learning environment (indoors and outside) enables children to follow their natural path of development and offers stimulating and challenging activities, both indoors and outside, throughout the 'work cycle'.

Principles	Evidenced
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>3.1 A favourable environment is carefully planned, prepared and maintained to offer accessibility, consistency and continuity of learning.</p>	<p>An embedded understanding of social and personal responsibility is clearly evident throughout the submitted documentation – evidenced in the Islington Early Years Category visit report and the Setting Development Plan April 2022. Rooms are spacious, and resources are easily accessible.</p> <p>The learning environment offers challenging and stimulating activities both indoors and outdoors enabling children to follow their own natural path of development. Resources are checked, reviewed and refreshed daily to ensure every activity is complete and ready for use.</p>
<p>3.2 The environment offers a mixed age range in each classroom. This age range is aligned to established developmental planes (such as birth to three years or three to six years). Where this is not possible, the children have plenty of daily opportunity to learn from each other and enjoy a wide age range and spectrum of activities.</p>	<p>As previously mentioned, the classrooms are situated over three floors with the youngest children in the basement and ground floor rooms for easy access to the outside/garden area. Following the most recent Ofsted inspection in 2020 the setting has introduced a wider range of outdoor equipment to further support physical development. Each age group experience separate outside time twice daily – a continuation of Covid measures. Pre-schoolers regularly visit the Toddler and baby rooms to encourage mixed learning as well as mixed age group visits to the local park, open spaces and library.</p>
<p>3.3 Learning materials are appropriately arranged; well maintained, attractive and clean. There is space in each classroom and outside for individual and group activity. There are areas for quiet and sedentary play as well as active, energetic play.</p>	<p>The setting's website offers a virtual tour of the nursery layout, demonstrating a clear consideration for easy access to resources, with open floor space and child height tables.</p> <p>A spacious, well organised environment with a comprehensive array of learning materials allows space for adult and child led group activity as well as areas for role-play and quiet time.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>3.4 The enabling environment offers resources relevant to all the children's cultures and communities and supports development of a positive sense of identity and culture. The child's need for independence is respected, enabling autonomy and initiative. The adults, and how they prepare the environment, support individual efforts and independence.</p>	<p>Hopes and Dreams works through an extensive curriculum combining Montessori and EYFS teaching, detailing intentional activities to aid the child's global development. Daily observations recorded on 'Family' (previously My Montessori Child) are evaluated by the management to enable spontaneous development. A clear example of extended learning opportunities can be seen in the settings development plan.</p> <p>As previously mentioned, the setting has undergone a substantial staff turnover – with this in mind there are currently some gaps in supporting the child's autonomous learning. As and when more staff are trained and have a clearer understanding of Montessori practices, this would be addressed.</p>
<p>3.5 Support is available for children to take risks and explore freely, enabling them to learn to do things by and for</p>	<p>The outside area offers a small garden which the Pre-school children actively take part in developing as part of the Growth cycle learning. Other resources include a mud kitchen, climbing wall, wooden blocks/tubing,</p>



<p>themselves. Intrinsic motivation is highly valued as a critical element of the child's holistic development, as is the development of concentration.</p>	<p>supported sports games and ball games. Staff are highly valued and supported – the setting is currently focusing on developing and inspiring new staff/whole team to further learn, adopt and embed Montessori practice as seen at the On-site visit. The staff training and development policy outlines the importance of professional development and training to ensure practitioners are constantly improving their understanding and practice.</p>
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4. The learning environment is prepared with reference to each child's needs and interests, which is reflected in effective planning and assessment.

Principles	Evidenced
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>4.1 The favourable environment is set up to provide for the individual needs and interests of the children, giving each child the opportunity to develop his/her unique potential.</p>	<p>The Setting uses the on-line tool Family (previously My Montessori Child) to track and follow children's learning and to help them to find the next steps in their learning, reflecting the principles and intentions of the nursery. The Management and qualified Montessori practitioner are taking steps to proactively disseminate the Montessori pedagogy through-out the Nursery, currently the Team Co-ordinator models how to use the materials and support the work cycle. Further staff training in the Montessori Approach will enable increased effectiveness.</p> <p>We look forward to seeing tangible evidence of this at Annual Monitoring.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>4.2 Staff observe children, looking to nurture their unique characteristics and learning dispositions/styles. They understand child development theory and how this aligns with pedagogy and practice.</p>	<p>The key person provides effective monitoring of daily holistic growth as outlined in the Key person policy. Management and staff observe the children on a daily basis to constantly generate a rich inspiring learning space. There is evidence of a holistic understanding of favourable environments.</p>
<p>4.3 Staff demonstrate knowledge and skill in assessing the overall effectiveness of the provision for learning and development.</p>	<p>Staff are becoming familiar with the new online tool 'Family' to record observations and plan relevant follow-on experiences.</p> <p>Staff may need support to link children's experiences to Montessori pedagogy.</p>
<p>4.4 The recording of children's needs, interests and progress is supported by evidence that documents their engagement with activities and others within the setting, both indoors and outside.</p>	<p>The school uses on-line recording tools to document engagement with the individual and map progress. Photographs are used to document and celebrate with parents, both indoors and out.</p> <p>Additionally, annual local authority categorisation reviews and an Ofsted visit in 2020 reflect how the setting are continually revising their practice.</p>
<p>4.5 Where possible, staff assessments and reflections on children's learning are contributed to by parents/carers and,</p>	<p>There is an active commitment to maintaining effective engagement with families. Parents contribute to the 'Family' software and child's Journey book. There is a weekly parent bulletin and parents are regularly invited into the setting.</p>



where appropriate, by other professionals and by the children themselves.	
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5. The adults are led by highly skilled, experienced and qualified senior staff in each class of the setting, and all staff engage in on-going professional development.

Principles	Evidenced
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>5.1 The setting is led by skilled professionals who have a profound understanding of, and commitment to, implementing a child-led and Montessori/ Montessori-inspired philosophy. They inspire their team to offer excellent, sustainable and relevant provision and they inspire others beyond the setting likewise.</p>	<p>The SMT, together with Dukes Education, has the task of furthering Montessori inspired philosophy throughout this large setting and its recently opened sister nursery. The current focus is on developing and inspiring the staff team to learn, adopt and embed Montessori practices. How this will be achieved, along with timescales, is being considered by the SMT.</p> <p>We look forward to seeing increased evidence of this at annual review</p>
<p>5.2 The setting's policies, procedures and practice are documented and linked clearly with Montessori / Montessori-inspired principles. These enable the adults to effectively manage the safety, well-being and development of the children.</p>	<p>Dukes Education policies and procedures are in place and reviewed annually. Currently these are not linked to Montessori principles.</p> <p>We look forward to seeing increased evidence of this at annual review</p>
<p>5.3 Whilst home languages are valued, the children are encouraged to develop a good level of primary language of the setting, where multiple languages are spoken.</p>	<p>English is the primary language spoken in the school with provision to support other spoken languages as outlined in the Equality and Diversity policy. Languages and Culture are celebrated through events such as, World Cultural Diversity Day and Cultural festivals.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>5.4 Staff members are excellent communicators. They nurture and enrich the language and communication skills of the child.</p>	<p>Staff role model respectful language and positive behaviour towards everyone, encouraging gentle hands, waiting, sharing along with the use Makaton signs for younger children.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>5.5 The training and development needs of all staff members are considered regularly to ensure quality development at the</p>	<p>Staff reflect on their own practise through peer-on-peer observations, self-reflection and through continuous professional development analysis leading to learning opportunities, such as guidance, support,</p>



<p>setting. These needs are recorded clearly and are met proficiently. Staff members are encouraged by the leaders of the setting to gain Montessori training and qualifications where possible.</p>	<p>and training. Management proactively monitor day to day progress with regular staff meetings and supervision to monitor personal progress and training requirements.</p> <p>As previously mentioned the Setting is in the process of increasing Montessori training to staff.</p>
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6. The adults promote positive relationships both within and beyond the setting, including strong links with each child's family.

Principles	Evidenced
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>6.1 All adults at the setting value and respect children and families equally. All the adults guide the children with respect, knowledge, skill and consistency.</p>	<p>The values and policies suggest a deep commitment to create a setting that values and respects the children and their families. Hopes and Dreams purposes to provide a caring, inclusive and progressive space for children to flourish. The welcome areas are beautifully resourced as spaces for parents to drop off, leave buggies securely and collect belongings. Such provision is thoughtful, considering the needs of the whole family.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>6.2 The key person is a significant individual for the child and their family, closely monitoring their needs and nurturing the child's learning and development. The full staff community work together to support the child in building positive relationships with other children and adults in the setting. The child's main carers are respected in their role as primary educators of their child.</p>	<p>Each student is assigned a Key person and a 'buddy'. This person works closely with the child and family during the settling in period to ascertain learning style and understand cultural background. The Key person maintains that relationship throughout the family's time at Hopes and Dreams for continuity.</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>6.3 Children thrive when there is a strong partnership in their learning environment between staff and their family. This provides the setting and the family with the means to assess and discuss the child's needs, achievements and progress collaboratively.</p>	<p>Detailed communication between the child's key person and family - through in person contact, Family software and the child's Journey book, enables well-informed communication and collaborative support.</p>
<p>6.4 The setting offers regular opportunities for parents and other stakeholders to learn about the ethos and approach of</p>	<p>Hopes and Dreams actively provide opportunities for parents to learn about the EYFS curriculum and Montessori philosophy. This is evidenced in the Parents and Partners policy as well as the Parents afternoons, the child's Journey book and shared Family data.</p>



<p>the setting; Montessori-inspired practice and how a child-led focus can be used beyond the setting.</p>	
<p>ESSENTIAL</p> <p>6.5 All the adults understand that children who have opportunities to make choices in an atmosphere of freedom with responsibility, and who are encouraged to be independent in their actions and decision-making, develop a strong sense of self, natural confidence and curiosity as well as a sense of well-being and belonging. These qualities will serve them well throughout life.</p>	<p>Family members are invited to attend the setting for ‘workshops’ and other events as well as the daily interactions. The welcome areas are beautifully resourced and provide a comfortable, safe space for Drop-off and Pick-up times. Adults are required to switch off their phones at these times to allow for mindful connections within the family group and nursery staff/ Key person. Facilitating smooth transitions. The leadership have expressed a keen commitment to the disseminate Montessori practice and principals. Adults actively encourage independence across the setting from everyday living activities and curriculum-based learning/ resources.</p> <p>We look forward to seeing further evidence of this at annual review</p>

Additional commentary:

From Assessors: **Jo McIntyre**

Hope and Dreams Montessori Nursery, Angel shows a clear commitment to maintain the principles of freedom of choice and maintains good relationships with the child and the family through the Key person and the on-line tool ‘Family’. Recent investment and refurbishment of the setting is clear, with learning environments that are prepared with well-resourced activities.

Dukes Education policies and procedures are in place with regular annual reviews. The Setting is clearly committed to the holistic development of the child and are keen to promote Montessori practice and curriculum although these are not currently linked to some of the key policies.

Through increased awareness of the Montessori pedagogy, management and staff will be better equipped to respond to the child’s needs, ideas and feelings. Allowing the child, the freedom to explore personal capabilities - promoting increased autonomy.

We look forward to seeing further embodiment of the Montessori principles in place at Annual review.

From **Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery - Angel**

