

# Sunshine Montessori School

Phone: 01494 880607

E-mail: [roden-sunshine@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:roden-sunshine@tiscali.co.uk)

## **Premises Address**

The War Memorial Hall  
High Street  
Downley  
High Wycombe  
HP13 5XJ

## **Correspondence Address**

20 Commonsides  
Downley  
High Wycombe  
Bucks  
HP13 5XG

Dear Parents,

I am well aware of the concerns that come with finding a place that your child can grow and be happy in. I have three children of my own and have found at each step along their path of development that I have had to make decisions wondering if they were right for my child.

One of the best decisions I made, however, was to study for the Montessori diploma. I completed it believing strongly that the Montessori Method can be right for every child. It taught me the importance of a beautiful environment; it showed me how through the structure of the room and the day each child can learn at their own pace; I saw how well it allows for the development of the individual; the depth and breadth of the curriculum was eye-opening; I saw the joy in the eyes of the young child who has mastered a skill no matter how small, and the importance of a caring, sharing, quiet and peaceful environment.

This strong passion and belief in the method fuelled my desire to open my own Montessori schools and allow yet more children to benefit from such a unique method.

I do hope the information in this brochure enlightens rather than baffles you, and I look forward to seeing you, and even more so, your child in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Virginia Roden B. Ed (Hons), Mont Dip  
Principal

***Sunshine* Montessori School**

**for  
children aged 2 to 5 years**

## **The Montessori Method**

Dr. Maria Montessori (born 1870) was a most remarkable woman of her time. She was the first female doctor of medicine in Italy, and through her interest in paediatrics, psychiatry and educational theory, she proposed her own philosophy of child development. This forms the basis for a most successful and enduring method of teaching now known as the Montessori Method. Some of her main points are outlined below: (To aid conciseness, I refer to your child in the masculine - apologies to all the girls!)

\* **All children have 'absorbent minds'**

They have a phenomenal inborn ability to learn with ease, especially from birth to the age of 6 years, but to reach their full potential their environment must be rich with learning opportunities. On entering the Montessori classroom, your child will instantly be able to choose from a great range of activities appropriate to his stage of development.

\* **Children have an inborn drive to learn**

Hence the barrage of how and why questions. In the Montessori classroom the teacher does not impose learning on your child but harnesses this desire to learn, guiding your child within a carefully structured environment designed to help him reach his full potential.

\* **Children learn through being active**

Few young children are good at sitting and listening. They learn in an active, concrete way. Most activities are self-correcting, so after being shown once, your child learns through exploring and experimenting with this unique material. From their earliest days in school, children are introduced in a fun and practical way to a far-reaching curriculum including numeracy, literacy, science, history, geography, music, art, games and dance, languages and social skills.

\* **Children pass through 'sensitive periods'**

These are phases in a child's life when he becomes particularly interested in certain skills, and learning is therefore especially fast and acute. An obvious example is the sensitive period for language development from birth to 4 years. In the classroom your child is given the freedom to choose his activities and therefore can focus on his particular interests until he moves on to his next sensitive period.

## Aims

To understand how the Montessori philosophy translates into a method of education, let us look at the most important of Maria Montessori's aims - to assist the development of the **whole** child, with equal emphasis being given to his emotional, social, physical and intellectual development:

\* **To facilitate the development of your child's unique personality**

This is achieved through providing a secure, calm, ordered environment with a happy family atmosphere where your child's rights and individuality are respected. Learning is not imposed; rather your child is guided within a carefully structured environment rich with learning opportunities.

• **To encourage your child to become a balanced, independent member of society**

The Montessori materials and the structure of the day help your child to develop independence, confidence, self-control and respect for his environment and others. Multi-cultural issues are an important feature of the curriculum.

\* **To encourage your child to become physically competent**

Your child learns primarily through 'doing'. The early materials in particular encourage your child to become dextrous, develop hand/eye coordination and concentration. Other activities refine gross motor skills such as PE, dance and our popular excursions to the adjacent common.

\* **To help your child to reach his full intellectual potential.**

Through the use of the Montessori materials, your child will quickly become an independent learner and will therefore be able to develop at his own pace following his inborn motivation. The huge scope and versatility of the materials provides equally for the child with special needs, the less able and the very able child. They are designed to encourage your child to explore, experiment and develop his creativity. Even the earliest activities start your child on his path to literacy and numeracy. The cultural and aesthetic subjects are also important, providing both breadth and depth to his learning.

By the end of his stay with us we hope that your child will be able to go out into the world with happiness and confidence, ready to extend himself to the full and equipped with a love of learning and the necessary skills to enable him to reach his potential in life.

## The Structure of the Day

So what should you see as you step through the classroom door? A beautiful environment with perhaps little vases of flowers brightening up the tables. All the activities should be within reach and freely available to your child. They should be set out in a pattern to lead the young child from the simple short activities to those that are more challenging for the more mature child. Nothing should be broken or missing.

At the start of the day your child will be busy selecting work of his choice and suitable to his particular level of learning. He will take his work to a space - be it table or floor- use it and then return it to the exact same spot, ready for the next child to use. There is a wonderful peace and quietness throughout the classroom brought about through concentration on the task in hand.

Many of the early exercises use objects often found around the home, such as small jugs for the ever popular pouring activities; dusting and polishing exercises; folding and buttoning activities to name just a few. These are designed to teach the children life skills, increase their dexterity and concentration and, as the children are familiar with the objects used, will help to make a smooth transition from home to school.

Soon afterwards your child will be introduced to the Montessori materials specifically designed to help develop his sensory awareness and his ability to make fine discrimination in size, shape and colour for example. These are later followed by materials ingeniously designed to develop the child's *concrete* understanding of language, maths and all the other areas of the curriculum. When reintroduced to these concepts in his primary school, this physical understanding will be invaluable to him.

Each day your child will be involved in one or more small group activities. Group work is considered important especially in developing social skills and is used particularly when teaching the cultural subjects, art and craft, drama, music and games. At the end of a busy, fulfilling morning, your child is ready for collection and yet tells you nothing, or very little, about his day! But in time you should notice differences, perhaps subtle, perhaps very obvious that will tell you that the magic of Montessori is working for yet another child.

## **The Curriculum**

### \* **Life Skills**

These activities are the 'beginning point' in a Montessori environment. They are designed to develop independence, confidence, social awareness, care of the environment, motor coordination and concentration.

### \* **Sensorial Exercises**

The Sensorial activities are another central element of Montessori education. They help to refine the senses, allowing the child to detect and understand differences in colour, weight, texture, size, sound, etc.

### \* **Language**

Including speaking, listening, reading, writing, spelling, grammar, prose and poetry appreciation.

### \* **Numeracy**

The child learns to understand number in a concrete way through handling the 3D materials. This gradually leads to a more symbolic appreciation of number. The curriculum includes counting skills, measuring, sorting, an understanding of the decimal system, addition, subtraction, division, multiplication and geometry.

### \* **Science**

Including zoology, botany, and simple physics experiments.

### \* **History**

An understanding of the concept of time through timelines and project work.

### \* **Geography**

The Montessori materials encourage a concrete understanding of physical geography and the study of other cultures, customs and traditions.

### \* **Art, Craft and Cookery**

### \* **Drama and Music**

### \* **PE and Dance**

As part of this area, regular excursions will be made to Downley Common.

## **The Foundation Stage Curriculum**

We ensure our Montessori curriculum also includes all the requirements of the Government Foundation Stage curriculum and Birth to Three Matters.

## Settling-in

Thinking about the prospect of leaving your child in the care of others can be a worrying time - I have been a working parent all my life and know some of the heartaches that may be making you feel anxious. At Sunshine Montessori we will aim to provide as positive a settling-in period as possible. We do this in a number of ways:

\* Newcomer's welcome sessions are organised for you and your child to come together and enjoy all that our nursery has to offer the term before your child is due to start at our nursery.

\* We ask you to provide as much information about your child as possible by completing our 'child profile' so that, as far as possible, we can adjust our routines to your child rather than the other way around.

\* True to the Montessori ethic, we provide a flexible settling-in period in which you are welcome to stay with your child until he/she settles before, in consultation with you, arranging for you to leave, initially for short periods if this is deemed in the best interests of your child.

\* Whilst you are away from your child we are happy to answer queries by telephone during the day.

\* Confidential discussion times can be arranged at short notice to discuss the needs and interests of your child with your child's key worker and the nursery manager.

We aim, and will do all that we can, to ensure that your child's first few weeks at Sunshine Montessori Nursery will be the foundation of a very happy, secure, fulfilling childhood whilst your child is with us.

## Practical Information

### **Location**

Downley Memorial Hall, High Street, Downley, High Wycombe.

From January 2011 we will be located in brand new purpose-built premises at the Downley School , Faulkner Way, Downley, High Wycombe HP13 5UA.

### **Correspondence**

Please address all correspondence to 20 Commonsides, Downley, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP13 5XG. Phone: 01494 880607.

Email: roden-sunshine@tiscali.co.uk

### \* **School Sessions**

The school year is divided into 3 terms. **Morning sessions:** 8.45am to 11.45am Monday to Friday. **Afternoon sessions:** 12.00 to 3.00pm Monday to Friday. **Full day sessions:** 8.45am to 3.00pm Monday to Friday. Part-time places (ie. less than 5 sessions a week) are available in the afternoons.

### \* **School Visiting**

Viewing the school is welcome but by appointment only.

### \* **Parental Feedback**

Detailed confidential records of your child's achievements are kept and there are regular formal and informal opportunities to discuss your child's progress.

### \* **Registration**

Reservations are made on a first-come-first-served basis. To reserve a place please fill in and return the form enclosed. You will be advised by post when a place is available. A £50 non-refundable deposit will be due at this time to secure the place. This will be deducted from the last term's fees. We prefer your child to be dry on starting.

NB: a confirmed afternoon place does not necessarily guarantee that your child will be able to transfer to a morning place. Morning sessions are always very popular and you must ensure that you request a morning placement as soon as possible, preferably at the time of your initial registration. If no confirmed morning places are available your child will be placed on a waiting list which will also operate on a first-come-first-served basis.

## Fee Schedule

Our fees are inclusive apart from school trips, which are charged separately at cost. The fees are shown on a weekly basis (because terms differ in length) but *there is a commitment to pay for a whole term* – usually 14 weeks in the Autumn term, 12 weeks in the Spring term and 12 weeks in the Summer term.

Fees are payable by standing order or cheque to Sunshine Montessori School. They are usually paid termly in advance. However they can be paid monthly in advance to spread the cost of payment. The childcare voucher scheme operated by some employers is also an accepted payment method.

### **Morning Montessori Sessions** (8.45am – 11.45am)

<b>Child under 3</b> £67.50 per week	<b>Child receiving funding *</b> Free
---	--

### **Afternoon Montessori Sessions** (12.00pm – 3.00pm)

	<b>Child under 3</b>	<b>Child receiving funding*</b>
5 sessions per week	£67.50 per week	Free
4 sessions per week	£54.00 per week	Free
3 sessions per week	£40.50 per week	Free
2 sessions per week	£27.00 per week	Free
1 session per week	£13.50 per week	Free

### **Full day places** (8.45am – 3pm)

From January 2011 a limited number of full day places will be available. Please ask for details.

*\* We are registered with the Buckinghamshire Education Department as a member of the Early Years Development Partnership. Consequently your child will be able to access 15 hours of free education per week from the term after he/she has reached 3 years of age for the morning and afternoon Montessori sessions.*

These fees are correct at the time of going to press. They are reviewed annually and therefore may have changed by the time your child starts. You are welcome to ring to check price details at any time.

# Registration Form

---

(Mrs/Ms/Miss/Mr) \_\_\_\_\_

(Postcode) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Day \_\_\_\_\_

Evening \_\_\_\_\_

Desired Term of Entry:

Autumn \_\_\_\_\_ Spring \_\_\_\_\_ Summer \_\_\_\_\_ Term, 201 \_\_\_\_\_

Morning Session \_\_\_\_\_ Afternoon Session\* \_\_\_\_\_

\* I would/would not like my child to transfer to morning sessions starting from September 200\_\_\_\_ .

**I complete this registration form on the understanding that my child will be placed on a waiting list which will operate on a 'first come first served' basis. I will be notified in writing when a place becomes available. To secure this place a non-refundable deposit of £50 will be due within 5 working days of notification.**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_