

Nursery Vision Statement

Stoke Bishop Montessori School is committed to providing a specially prepared environment that enables children to develop a broad range of practical, intellectual, physical and social skills allowing them to achieve their fullest potential.

Through the acquisition of these diverse skills we are seeking to foster the growth of self-confidence, independence, self-discipline, respect for others, and personal and social responsibility.

We strive to support children's innate love of learning and to make their introduction to education a joyful and purposeful start to a life long journey.

Montessori Method

The Montessori Method is an educational approach that allows a child to develop in a natural and individual way. Its aim is to provide a child with the best possible conditions to promote physical, social, emotional and intellectual development to help achieve their maximum potential.

The children use exercises from everyday life such as sweeping, polishing, pouring and spooning to develop their powers of concentration and their dexterity. Young children learn through their senses so the method includes an extensive range of exercises with materials that are designed to stimulate each of the senses and to develop the child's perception and ability to discriminate fine differences. The learning materials that the method uses fully support the Government's Areas of Learning and Development as described in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Nursery Environment

Our Montessori environment allows a child to choose their own activity, and to complete exercises at their own level in their own time. Interesting and stimulating apparatus is used to make learning fun and there is a huge variety of things to do which cover almost every aspect of life itself.

Our classroom environment is carefully planned. It has a particular order and is designed to encourage children to develop their own capabilities, in a non-competitive atmosphere. This environment encourages the children's discipline, order, and co-operation with others. Individually, they develop their powers of concentration, a sense of responsibility, high self-esteem, and an appreciation for other people, and their world.

Unlike many nurseries we do not segregate children on the basis of age. We believe that children learn best in an environment where they can observe their peer's achievements and share their own experiences and achievements if they choose to.

We allocate each child to a key person who is responsible for their well-being and for liaising with parents and carers. Our staff guide the children in their learning and act as role models, nurturing the children in their spontaneous development, and providing scaffolding to the children's learning as and when it is appropriate. We build on the diversity and richness of experience that children bring to the nursery.

The Garden

The nursery benefits from a large attractive secure garden which provides opportunities for the development of physical skills as well as a flourishing habitat for flora and fauna. The children are encouraged to discover the delights of the natural world by pursuing a range of gardening activities. Both the garden and the patio area provide opportunities for refining large motor skills and can also be used as an extension of the classroom in good weather.

Meals

All our meals are prepared and cooked daily on the premises by a trained cook using fresh produce. Lunch will usually be from a varied hot menu displayed weekly in the hall. Tea will usually consist of sandwiches, home-made cakes, yoghurt, biscuits and fruit. Individual dietary needs can be catered for.

Children are able to select their snacks at a time suitable to their own needs rather than at a time convenient to the nursery routine. Whilst the novelty of this arrangement may sometimes initially override a child's discretion we find that children quickly settle into a sensible routine of their own, eating when they are hungry.

Children are encouraged to assist as far as is practicable with the preparation of food and the laying and clearing of tables. Meal times are treated as important social occasions and the staff sit down to the lunchtime meal with the children. Good table manners are reinforced and children are encouraged to get the most out of this communal time.

Safety and Security

We only release children to parents/guardians or other authorised persons. We ask that you provide photographs of all the people you wish to authorise to collect your child together with a personal identification password.

Complaints Procedure

If at any time you have concerns or grievances please speak in the first instance to your child's key person. If matters are not resolved to your satisfaction you should refer your complaint to the Officer in Charge. If you are not satisfied with how your complaint has been handled you should complain in writing to:

OFSTED
Early Years
Freshford House
Redcliffe Way
Bristol
BS1 6NL
Tel: 08456 404040

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection

We have a duty to ensure the welfare and safety of children attending the school. In cases where any of our staff have a cause for concern that a child in our care may be subject to ill treatment, neglect or other forms of abuse we are obliged by law to follow the local Child Protection Procedure and inform Bristol Social Services.

General Information

An information display for parents and carers is situated in the hall and is regularly updated about topics we have been investigating and forthcoming events. A regular newsletter will also help to keep you up to date and allows us the opportunity to invite you to share your talents and skills with the school community.

We encourage parents to become involved in the school and we welcome your comments and views. A suggestion box is available in the hall. We maintain an individual file for your child that contains observational records and photographs of your child at work in the nursery. Please feel free to access your child's file at any time. We welcome contributions to this record from home.

In order for us to meet socially we hold two open evenings a year when you can come and meet other parents, investigate the Montessori materials for yourself and discuss your child's work.

Please respect the rights of local residents by parking your car considerately when setting down and collecting your children. We endeavour to maintain good relations with our neighbours and your assistance in this regard is much appreciated.

Please send your child to school with a bag containing a spare set of clothes to change into should it be necessary. Your child will also need:-

- a pair of indoor shoes to change into in the nursery (which your child is able to fasten by themselves)
- in warm weather a sun hat and sun cream of not less than factor 25
- in cold weather a warm coat, gloves and wellington boots
- disposable nappies, nappy cream and baby wipes if your child requires them

Please ensure that all clothing sent to nursery is named, as we cannot accept any responsibility for lost articles. We do not encourage toys from home as it can be very traumatic for a child if their personal possessions get lost or damaged.

If you have any queries, or would like to discuss your child's individual requirements, please feel free to contact the nursery head:

Miss Sandra Harris (Montessori International Diploma, PGCE Early Years, EYPS, LLB, DMS)

Nursery Curriculum

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The first activities the children are introduced to in the Montessori classroom, Practical Life, develop their ability to look after themselves and their surroundings. Children improve their skills of pouring, transferring, sorting, plaiting, sewing, threading, pairing, polishing, cleaning and dressing. In this area the children can imitate aspects of the adult world and practice them in the safety of the nursery with child sized materials.

Communication, Language & Literacy

Opportunities to develop language and communication skills are present throughout all aspects of school life as well as more focused activities such as drama and story telling, role play, sharing books and news, games, songs and rhymes. Once the children have mastered a range of Practical Life and Sensorial exercises they will be developing their ability to concentrate and will have begun to acquire the fine motor movement needed to use a pencil. At this stage the Montessori language materials are introduced. These materials allow children to build and read their own words in a hands-on way using objects and pictures as stimuli.

Problem Solving, Reasoning & Numeracy

Mathematics is set in context through everyday activities such as weighing and measuring cookery ingredients or laying the table for lunch. When children are ready to extend this everyday knowledge we introduce the Maths materials. The children will already have worked with a wide range of Practical Life and Sensorial materials which will have introduced them indirectly to mathematical concepts. The children learn about pattern, shape and number using these specially designed and graded learning materials. The materials enable the children to gain a physical impression of size and quantity prior to manipulating numbers.

Knowledge & Understanding of the World

The Montessori approach places considerable emphasis on learning about the environment we live in and the global and interdependent nature of our existence. The children explore the immediate environment as well as the world around them through a range of topics through out the year. They are able to participate in simple scientific experiments related to the topics under consideration to stimulate their curiosity. They are encouraged to share and celebrate their own cultures, experiences and beliefs as well as those of others.

Creative Development

The development of the senses is a fundamental part of the approach and the Sensorial resources are designed to support this development. The children will explore sound, size, colour and texture in a structured way in order to acquire the skills needed to explore a range of media for themselves. They will have frequent opportunities to listen to music, to sing, to dance and to dramatise events to develop their powers of self expression and their individuality.

Physical Development

Fine motor skills are developed through the Practical Life and Sensorial activities using controlled manipulation of an extensive range of materials and tools. This is further refined by pre-writing exercises. Gross motor skills and co-ordination are developed through specific activities focusing on enhancing children's awareness of space and the need for physical control. There are frequent opportunities to develop agility and balance both indoors and outdoors.

