



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

INSPECTION REPORT FOR THE NURSERY SETTING AT IMAGINE MONTESSORI SCHOOL, VALENCIA

Key judgement	The nursery setting for this school meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
----------------------	---

Date of inspection: 24 April 2018

SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The school's current setting for two to three year olds, which has been operating since the school opened in September 2016, meets the Spanish and English requirements for provision for children of this age, and is recommended for authorisation. Currently there is capacity for 16 children, which has already been reached, and the setting is working well. The school proposes to open an additional parallel class admitting a further 16 two to three year old children in September 2018, for which authorisation is also recommended.

The school follows the Spanish pupil admissions system based on the calendar year of birth, rather than the academic year, and some children are admitted before their second birthday. Under the English regulations the ratio of adults to children aged under two is one adult for every three children; for those aged two to three years the required ratio is one adult for every four children. There is a lead teacher working with two assistants and a volunteer. The staff are appropriately qualified, and most have Montessori teaching qualifications, but the school needs to ensure that the required ratios of adults to children are met at all times, including times in the school year when some of the children are aged under two years. The class occupies a good sized room with its own toilet and washing area. Although the classroom does not have direct access outdoors, this is well managed by the staff. Most children are becoming toilet trained and the school manages this well. The children's learning and development are particularly well supported by staff using the Montessori approach to teaching. Thus, children are becoming confident and effective learners, with good social skills and consideration for others. The learning requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are met, and teaching is good with some outstanding features. The school's curriculum policy and the Parents' Handbook address the EYFS. The latter also indicates the relationship between the EYFS and the Montessori approach. The setting is well led and managed and will benefit from the more structured approach to induction and staff training which is currently under development.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Although not specifically required to do so for registration, the proprietor may like to consider the following points for further development:

- ensure that the correct staffing ratios are preserved throughout the year by employing additional personnel when some of the children are aged under two years;
- continue to develop more structured staff induction procedures in addition to the current informal procedures;
- ensure that staff are able to access Montessori training so that more gain such qualifications; and
- ensure that child protection procedures are updated in the autumn of 2018 to take account of the revised guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', effective from 3 September 2018.

SECTION B: INFORMATION

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service at the request of the school and its proprietor. The purpose of the inspection is to inform the British Council and Spanish authorities of the suitability of the provision to admit children aged between two and three years of age. The school must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The inspection follows the inspection framework laid down by the School Inspection Service. It was conducted by an independent qualified professional inspector who examined the premises, evaluated documentation, interviewed staff and observed nursery age children currently attending the school. The present inspection is the first to consider Imagine Montessori's admission of two year olds.

The inspector was:

Reporting Inspector:	Dr Martin Bradley
----------------------	-------------------

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SETTING

Imagine Montessori School opened in September 2016. It is in an urban area of Valencia and currently has 79 pupils aged from two to eight years. At the time of the inspection, sixteen children were aged between two to three years. When admitted in September 2017, some were not yet aged two years. It is proposed to admit a further 16 children in September 2018, making a second class for this age group. The school was inspected by the National Association of British Schools in Spain (NABSS) in February 2018. 140 pupils are registered for September 2018. The school also holds a summer school throughout July for three to six year olds.

SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

EYFS Learning and development requirements

The quality of classroom work with the two year old children is good and in several respects it is outstanding. This is largely due to the staff's clear expertise in the Montessori approach, encouraging the children by example, modelling behaviour and the use of materials without excessively directing learning. The class rightly focuses on the prime areas of learning – communication and language, physical development and personal and social development. All children make good progress relative to their starting points, including those with special educational needs. Circle time encourages the use of simple English words with each child making their own contribution, as well as learning to listen to others and take turns. One significant feature is the development of cooperative play between children at this early stage. Most prefer to use activities and materials on their own, but they are able to share and take turns, sensitively encouraged by the staff. This also supports the children as they become more self-confident both in their learning and in personal hygiene and dressing. The specific areas of learning are, appropriately, not directly addressed with this age group, but elements begin to emerge, for example where charts record the day of the week and the weather. Outdoor activities support investigation and both shared and individual activities. Healthy eating is encouraged with snacks and lunches cooked on the premises. These are greatly enjoyed by the children.

Overall, the children are acquiring good social and learning skills. Their social and emotional development is good, and they very evidently feel safe, secure and happy. The use of the Montessori equipment successfully promotes their physical skills, including fine manipulative skills and finger control, as well as good coordination. The school policy documents have been revised to refer directly to the Early Years Foundation Stage, and to identify Montessori areas of learning. This supports classroom practices and the organisation of the transition from one class to the next to ensure continuity of planning and practices.

The quality of teaching of the two year olds is good and has some outstanding features. The staff have very clear and high expectations of the children and how to promote their learning, based on their current achievement. Well considered teaching strategies mix group work and individual tasks, enabling individual learning to be extremely well promoted. Links with parents are good, with regular meetings to discuss the children's progress, supplemented by a record keeping computer program which enables the parents to understand how they can support their child's learning and development.

Assessment of two year old children

The school uses the 'My Montessori Child' program to record children's progress with information on each child being uploaded twice a week. Parents have secure access to their child's records. Reports are good and are being reviewed to provide more summary information based on the computer records. This is a useful approach which is supplemented by trimester meetings with parents.

Pedagogical meetings with parents are also held to explain the school's approach of covering the English National Curriculum through Montessori teaching.

Assessments are made of the children's progress at the age of two. Where there are any concerns about a child's development and learning, the school can call on the support of a psychologist.

Safeguarding and welfare requirements

Arrangements for safeguarding are good and meet the requirements. The school has a clear statement of Common Human Values. British documentation regarding safeguarding is fully in place, along with policies for child protection and safe recruitment of staff. Day to day risk assessments are recorded in classrooms or outdoors. Fire drills conducted by the Valencian Fire Service are recorded in detail, and the school organises termly drills to supplement these. Outdoor play is well supervised and safety is maintained.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The class for two year olds successfully promotes children's achievement and commitment to learning through a positive culture at all times. This consistency is a major feature of the staff's work. The children become confident and self aware. They are beginning to share toys and equipment and to show an awareness of the needs of others. They are well-prepared for the next stage in their learning, and are emotionally secure and happy. Behaviour is good and they are beginning to understand healthy eating. The class has a good range of activities, including work with small objects and the more physical exercise outdoors. There is a good range of cultural experiences.

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher is one of the co-founders of the school. The newly appointed curriculum coordinator has a clear view for the development of this area, including assessment. The school management has purchased a good amount of Montessori equipment which is being well used with the two year olds. There is a clearly developed management system for the school which seeks to evaluate its practice and to improve children's life chances. Equality and diversity are actively promoted, as is the sense of community which the school wishes to develop amongst the parents and families sending children to the school. Arrangements to promote children's welfare also deal with the prevention of radicalisation and extremism.

Appropriate checks are made on all staff including the required British Disclosure and Barring Service checks on UK citizens. All staff hold a Certificado de Delitos de Naturaleza Sexual which confirms that their names do not appear on the sexual offences register. The two to three year old class currently has three teachers and a student working with the 16 children. It is important that the ratio of one member of staff for every 4 children is maintained.

Policies have been written for most of the school's work. The school makes good efforts to ensure that curricular links and shared teaching styles maintained

where the Children House classes cover both the EYFS and subjects for the National Curriculum. The school intends to add another Children's House class in September 2018. This will increase the need for coordination across all the classes for three to six year olds and with the two year olds' class. The School Policies document and the Parents' Handbook refer to the EYFS Areas of Learning, indicating that these are addressed through the Montessori work cycle and including reference to Montessorian areas such as sensorial play and practical life. The two year old class focuses on the Prime Areas of learning, but this is not explicitly noted in the Handbook.

Risk assessments and the Complaints Policy meet the requirements. A structured approach to the induction of new staff is being developed by the curriculum coordinator. Self evaluation is at an early stage, although the recent appointment of a curriculum coordinator is beginning to systematise this.

Outcomes for children

The children make good progress from their various starting points. They meet, and in several cases, are exceeding the level of development that is typical for their age. They are well prepared when they move on to the next stage in their education.

SETTING DETAILS

Type of inspection:	Inspection of proposed early years' provision
Name of school:	Imagine Montessori
Address of school:	Calle Meliana, 5 45019, Valencia, Spain
Telephone number:	+34 961071925
Email address:	hello@imaginemontessori.es
Proprietor:	Zubi Education S.L.
Name of Manager:	Mercedes O'Leary Estrela
Type of setting:	Pre-Nursery Class in a Primary School
Age range of school:	2 to 8 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Total of proposed places in the pre-nursery classes:	32
Purpose of inspection:	suitability of the setting for the admission of children aged 2-3 years

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, and members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship. The report is available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk