

Who was Montessori?

Maria Montessori was born in Italy in 1870. In 1896 she became the first woman to graduate from the University of Rome Medical School and in 1907 she founded the Montessori method – an approach to education based on her intuitive observations of the way a child learns.

What is the difference between Montessori and traditional education?

Montessori represents an entirely different approach to education, allowing the child to develop in a natural way. Firstly, there is an appreciation of the innate potential of the child and his/her ability to develop in environmental conditions of freedom and love. The prepared environment is calm, peaceful and appropriate to the child's needs.

A major principle of Montessori is that a young child learns through sensory motor activity – by doing. The method also emphasises learning through all five senses, not just through listening, watching or reading. Child-sized sensorial equipment together with language materials, practical life exercises and cultural and environmental activities are offered.

Children in Montessori classes learn at their own individual pace, and according to their own choice of activities from hundreds of possibilities. Learning is an exciting process of discovery, leading to concentration, motivation, self-discipline and love of learning. The result of the Montessori method is that each child is given the best possible conditions to promote physical, social, emotional and intellectual development, wherein the aim is to help the child fulfil their potential.

What ages does Montessori serve?

Springfield Lodge Montessori Day nursery offers Montessori from age 2-5, and there are elementary (6-12) and adolescent (12-15) schools nationally.

What is the role of the Montessori teacher?

It is the teacher's role to maintain the order created, to maintain beauty and ensure there is respect for all members of the community. Caring and kindness to each other is of paramount importance. The teacher protects the child's concentration and does not permit interruptions. He/she encourages the child by putting them in touch with the environment, showing them how to do things and then allowing them to discover for themselves. In doing so the teacher encourages independence, self-confidence, concentration, motivation, flexibility and creativity. A social environment is created which is democratic, supportive and encourages co-operation.

Who oversees Montessori nurseries and schools?

Montessori nurseries are accredited by Montessori Education (UK) Ltd through the Montessori St. Nicholas Centre, London.