

HOUSE SCHOOLS GROUP

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Prospectus for Montessori Course Students Academic year 2011/12

Aims of the course

- To introduce students to and teach them the Montessori method
- To develop and extend their teaching abilities and proficiency within the Montessori method
- To prepare students thoroughly for the course leading either to the Foundation Certificate (Level 2) or to the International Diploma of the Montessori Centre International (Level 4)
- To provide extensive and relevant classroom experience with children aged 3 - 6

Early Years Foundation Stage (children aged 3 to 5)

Montessori teachers work principally with children aged 3 to 5; in the UK this is known as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Since September 2008 the qualifications of adults who work with children in the EYFS have been strictly regulated by the government and every qualification has been awarded a level dependent on the complexity of the course of study. To have sole charge of a class or a group of children larger than 8 any teacher or child care professional must now hold a Level 6 qualification. The International Diploma is graded as Level 4 and the Montessori Foundation Certificate is graded as Level 2. Prospective students must therefore be aware that they will need to undertake further study after finishing the course to enable them to have sole charge of a class larger than 8 pupils.

Structure of the course

The course is over a single academic year running from the beginning of September to the middle of July. Students are required to be present at the school five days a week from 8.15am to 4.30pm (5.00pm on one of the days) but with breaks in the morning and at lunchtime. Leave of absence is allowed during the week marking half term and during the Christmas and Easter school holidays.

Students spend much of their time in the classroom working alongside a qualified teacher and are given additional time for study. In order both to provide experience with a wide variety of age groups as well as access to the personalities of different teaching staff, students move to a different classroom each half term. Students follow the MCI distance learning course, which for the Diploma entails fourteen essays and compulsory attendance at three Saturday morning seminars. The requirements for the Foundation Certificate are considerably less demanding. A weekly lecture in the theory and a weekly practical seminar are given. During the second part of the year students are required to prepare a teaching practice file with structured assignments.

Students must also complete 420 hours of supervised teaching practice. During the course of the academic year students are required to attend a two week workshop at the MCI and to sit two examinations, one in the use of practical materials and the other in the theory of the Montessori method. Following a satisfactory assessment by an assigned tutor the International Diploma is awarded.

Entry Requirements

Students must enjoy being with children! They are expected to have good standards in literacy and numeracy and a very good command of spoken English. Successful students in the past have not been solely those with degrees, A levels and GCSEs but encompass those with a wide range of backgrounds and experience. However, the individual achievements of the candidate are always taken into account.

Student bursary

Students receive a basic bursary of £450 monthly from the school, payable on the last day of each month from September 2011 to July 2012.

In addition to the basic bursary, a discretionary termly bonus of up to £550 may be awarded, at the discretion of the headmistress, subject to satisfactory attendance on the MCI course and conduct at the school and an end of term interview with the headmistress in December, March and July. To qualify for this discretionary bonus a student must provide evidence at regular intervals that:

- The student is up to date with all assignments for the MCI
- The student's spoken English is of a high standard (or the student is taking measures to improve his or her command of the language)
- The student's punctuality and attendance record are very good both at the school and at the college.

A contract incorporating these and other details is exchanged between the school and the student.

Lunch is provided free of charge each day during term time to students at Bassett House and three times each week during term time at Orchard House but there are no kitchens at Prospect House so lunch is not provided there. To compensate for this, students at Orchard House receive an extra £16 per month and at Prospect House receive an extra £40 per month.

Whilst technically taxable, in practice, unless the student has income from other sources, no tax is deducted because everyone is entitled to tax-free income of £7,475 in the tax year (which runs from 6 April in one year to 5 April in the next). If the student has paid tax on pay received between April and August before starting the course, this is likely to be repaid automatically over the autumn term. National insurance contributions (effectively a payroll tax) would be likely to amount to between £143 and £158 over the 11 months of the course.

Other fees paid by the school

In addition the school pays the fees (a total of approximately £3,110) charged by MCI for:

- The distance learning course (approx £1,050)
- The workshop (approx £800)
- The teaching practice assessment (approx £750)
- The examination fees (approx £270)

Thus the basic bursary and study fees are together worth approximately £8,060, in addition to which a discretionary bonus of up to £550 per term (£1,650 over the academic year) may be awarded.

Additional benefits

The student will obtain invaluable "hands on" experience of working in the Montessori classes of a leading co-educational independent school. In addition, the student benefits from:

- Mentoring by an experienced Montessori teacher on the school's staff
- The opportunity to compare notes and share experiences with other students sponsored by the school
- The provision of stationery, use of computers and access to a photocopier for the completion of essays.
- Hot drinks at breaks (and, at Bassett House and Orchard House, lunch)
- Support in finding a teaching job for the following academic year (although a job cannot be guaranteed)

Application procedure

Bassett House, Orchard House and Prospect House are sister schools. A candidate is required to complete an application form and to send it to the school of his or her preference together with a recent passport sized photograph and a curriculum vitae. Candidates may then be invited to meet children and staff in their chosen school and have the opportunity to discuss the course with the headmistress. Candidates may also be asked to spend 20 minutes on a short exercise.

Successful candidates will be required to pay a deposit of £250 to the school to secure their place. Subject to satisfactory attendance during the year and successful completion of the course, this is refunded at the end of July at the same time as the school pays the final instalment of the bursary and, if awarded, the bonus for the summer term.