



Frequently Asked Questions July 2008.

Q. Why should I get my school accredited?

The most commonly asked question by parents, government and local authorities is how do we ensure minimum standards in Montessori? With your accreditation plaque hanging in your school you have the support and confidence of the national body representing Montessori. With nearly 3,000 members the MSA speaks to everyone for you and for Montessori, and if you are or want to be seen as a genuine Montessori school then you should aim to be accredited.

Q. What are you expecting from my school?

We appreciate that all schools operate under different circumstances and pressures so our scheme has been designed to look at how 'genuinely' you apply Montessori practices and philosophy in your school. The assessors are all experienced Montessorians and understand the difficulties you may face whilst the Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board is looking to ensure schools are trying their best and achieving a good Montessori practice within the challenges they face.

Q. How thorough is the process?

Very. The scheme operates by communicating and supporting at all stages. You will have a direct contact point at the MEAB office which is staffed full time Monday – Friday. We also have in Barbara Isaacs a real expert as our Senior Accreditation Officer so there are plenty of people to talk to. Assessors are trained and sensitive but they have a job to do and they have to set a standard and, where needed, will tell you where they feel you need to improve your practice to become accredited.

Q. What does the accreditation entail?

- Application
- Selection by MEAB
- Completion of registration documents
- Arrangement of the visit
- Contact by assessors
- The visit itself
- Feedback
- Agreement of report
- Validation of accreditation by the scrutiny group and MEAB
- Publication of report on the MSA website

Q. What happens if I don't make the standard first time?

Many schools will need to reflect on what they are doing and this is a good thing. With a new national standard we can't expect everyone to sail through. If an assessor feels you need to develop areas then they will tell you and you can also chat to Barbara Isaacs and then look at your provision and re apply. We want to accredit as many schools as we can but we must adhere to the national standard.

Q. What happens if I am accredited?

- ✓ You will receive a letter informing you of your accreditation under the MEAB scheme.
- ✓ You will then be asked to work with us on a press release for your parents and local newspapers – this will be a proud moment for you and your staff.
- ✓ You will be listed as an accredited school with a kite mark on the Charity website which is the largest UK database of Montessori schools in the world and receives hundreds of hits each day.
- ✓ Your local authority will be informed by us as will Ofsted
- ✓ Finally you will be invited, along with your staff to either have your plaque presented at your school or to a national ceremony to be held once or twice a year.
- ✓ The accreditation is valid for three years

Q. Is there a cost?

The short answer is yes – though the whole scheme *is* subsidised by the St Nicholas Charity. Ofsted will be charging a commercial rate for inspection over the next few years and we are aiming to replace Ofsted altogether and combine an inspection visit with an accreditation visit within two years. Initially however the accreditation process per school will cost in the region of £650 against which we would like schools to pay £150 for the entire accreditation process – this is a one off fee with no other charges and lasts for three years.

Q. Who has backed the scheme?

We are very pleased to have the support of the BAC (British Accreditation Council) and the ISI (Independent Schools' Inspectorate) both of whom have assisted through the design and training process to create a scheme that is both fair to schools who wish to reach a standard but also rigorous enough to ensure this accreditation process is respected.