

# **Montessori Evaluation and Accreditation Board**

## **School Accreditation**

### **Guidance 2: Guidance for observation of sessions/ activities/ lessons**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

On accreditation visits, it is the responsibility of the Assessor to determine which activities and lessons are to be observed. This should be discussed with the school. In deciding on this, the assessor should bear in mind the following principles:

- Visits will last for two sessions. Where schools are open in both the morning and the afternoon, one session of each should be observed. This need not be on the same day, but, if not, should be on successive days;
- where possible, every age group should be seen (this will not be possible in wider age range schools, but a sample across the school should be seen. Where, for example, only the nursery works to Montessori principles and only this section is seeking accreditation, it will not be necessary to visit other age groups, however discussions with staff in the next age group – such as YR or Y1 – should be briefly held to gain their perspective on the Montessorian approach);
- observe the widest range of activities possible;
- it is unlikely that an assessor will be able to see the whole of a session from start to finish especially where there are more than one group or class;
- accreditation visits will normally begin about 30 minutes before the start of the session and end after the session, following discussions with the staff/ proprietor; and
- unless it is a very small setting or school, do not attempt to see every teacher. Instead, try to have a discussion with as many staff as possible during the visit, without disrupting the work of the school.

Before the assessor visit takes place, the setting/ school will have been informed of these general principles.

In addition, settings/ schools will have been given guidance as to what to expect from assessors. In particular, staff should be aware of the following:

- in reporting on children's development and learning, assessors must write in general terms and do not identify individual staff or children by name; and

- assessors value the opportunity to discuss activities and lessons with staff, though this may not always be possible immediately: assessors should try to arrange convenient times for professional discussion.

## **THE ASSESSMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND LESSONS**

Assessors do not grade activities or lessons – they are not inspectors. Instead, they seek to assess how far the activities and lessons follow Montessorian principles, as set out in the *Guide to the Early Years Foundation Stage in Montessori settings*. They will also examine the setting's/ school's documentation to see how far this supports staff in working to Montessorian principles, including their planning, assessment and record keeping.